

Overseas Report (Category of Overseas Travel: Other-International Conference)

Participation in the 2024 ICRTH International Conference and Exhibition

Institution : National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism

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Destination Country : Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

With the immediate and foreseeable future being focused on sustainable development, the International Conference on Responsible Tourism and Hospitality (ICRTH) once again managed to successfully bring together global tourism and hospitality stakeholders, to share resources, network, and build collaborations, to continue to advance responsible tourism for sustainable development. The ICRTH's 2024 theme was 'Tourism and Peace: Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development' and was held at the Theatre Hotel, Kuching, Sarawak. There were a host of activities to engage in, inclusive of Pre-Conference Workshops, Main Conference and Post-Conference Responsible Tourism Fieldwork. The opportunities to network and build partnerships was evident and provided an avenue for us, NKUHT International Master's students in Tourism and Hospitality, to observe, partake, foster lifelong learning, and make meaningful connections and friendships.

The Conference brought together global tourism and hospitality stakeholders, from both the private and public sector, academic institutions, associations, and local communities. It was a tremendous opportunity for showcasing many aspects of the global tourism and hospitality industry. A number of participants were academics within the higher learning environment and their research was insightful and motivating to be a part of the change needed in responsible tourism for sustainable development.

Keywords: ICRTH, NKUHT, responsible tourism, sustainable development, opportunity

Table of Contents

TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
Purpose	4
Process	5
Personal Experience and Suggestions	6
Appendix	8

Purpose

The 2024 International Conference on Responsible Tourism and Hospitality was held in Kuching, Malaysia and is an event organized by the Sarawak Research Society. This year the Conference' s scope and tracks covered numerous areas; Sustainable Tourism Practices and Peace, Challenges and Risks in Tourism for Peace, Impact of Sustainable Tourism on Peace, Tourism and Conflict Resolution, Tourism & Cultural Heritage Conservation in Asia, Low Emission, Zero Waste & Biodiversity Conservation, Tourism & SDGs, Tourism& Community Empowerment, Sustainable Hospitality Management, The Future of Tourism & Hospitality Education, Tourism, Innovation & Destination Management, Tourism Marketing & Entrepreneurship, Economic Impact of Tourism on Peace, Technology and Innovation in Peaceful Tourism, Inclusive Tourism for Accessible Society and Regenerative Tourism. Submissions were made under two (2) categories; Impact Story, for industry practitioners and, Extended Abstracts for the academic entrants.

The Conference brought together global tourism and hospitality stakeholders, from both the private and public sector, academic institutions, associations, and local communities. The Conference' s Keynote and Panel included profound individuals from across the world, who held different portfolios within the tourism and hospitality industry, demonstrating the diversity in the efforts of the ICRTTH to promote responsible tourism for sustainable development.

In addition, the conference was a tremendous opportunity for showcasing many aspects of the global tourism and hospitality industry. These included Malaysia' s Ministry of Tourism, Malaysian local artists and vendors demonstrating their talent and displaying their product offerings, entrepreneurs from local and neighboring countries, and representatives of higher education, such as the National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism.

Representing our university were four (4) current students, one (1) recently graduated student, two (2) professors and one (1) Administrative Assistant in the International Master' s in Tourism and Hospitality (IMTH) Department. Our delegation was exceptionally equipped to give a memorable representation of the university.

Process

DATE	ACTIVITY
August 5, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure from Taiwan • Arrival to Kuching, Malaysia
August 6, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Preconference Workshop 1: Research Methodology (with Prof. Ramayah Thurasamy) • Listened to the mutual concerns of fellow postgraduate students within the global university community • Gained insights and advice on how to address certain common methodological issues
August 7, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended physically the Conference' s Opening Ceremony and Keynote Speech • Networked with industry professionals and fellow colleagues within the global university community • Interacted with visitors to our university' s booth • Visited and engaged with other booth representatives • Viewed and supported the presentations of NKUHT colleagues • Viewed and supported the presentations of other non-NKUHT participants
August 8, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented paper titled <i>‘Transforming Stories into Revenue An Analysis of Marketing Strategy at a Traditional Hotel’</i> • Attended the field trip to Paku Rock Maze Garden, Sandy Ramparts • Attended the Networking Dinner • Observed local cultural show
August 9, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended the Prizegiving and Closing Ceremony • Departure from Kuching, Malaysia

Personal Experience and Suggestions

The 2024 ICRTTH was the first conference and activity of its kind that I attended. To say that the conference attracted many people would be an unfortunate understatement, since mention should not only be made of the quantity of attendants but also the quality of those in attendance. As I sat amongst so many different faces, races, cultures, and statures, I felt a distinct sense of pride to be able to be a part of what tourism and hospitality stood for, represents and aspires to be through responsible tourism for sustainable development.

All sessions were appropriately planned, every aspect, from correspondence to meals to speakers and presentations were well organized, everyone was so hospitable. The industry practitioners who shared their impact stories and offered demonstrations of their products and services were very inspirational. I marveled at just how excited and intrigued everyone appeared in their interactions.

The speakers, panelists and judges offered insightful and valuable information regarding our presentations and the industry's issues. Discussions were engaging and thought-provoking. Some memorable bonds were made, and I look forward to future conferences. I would encourage any and everyone who has an avid interest in responsible tourism through sustainable development, whether they are a part of the industry, to become involved. From the first time I heard Dr. Hiram Ting; Conference Chair, and Prof. Dr. Joseph M. Cheer speak at the Sustainable Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality: 2023 Global Student Challenge hosted by our IMTH department, I was inspired. Additionally memorable was a guest lecture to our department by Dr. Aaron Tham, so making the decision to want to become involved in the 2024 ICRTTH was not a difficult one since I had positive first impressions of those involved.

The Sarawak Commitment to Responsible Tourism is an inspirational and essential one. More entities should follow their example. Its focus lies on the importance, urgency and significance of responsible behaviour and collective actions for economic, socio-cultural, and environmental well-being. Its advocacy for responsible tourism will undoubtedly drive positive change and benefit the planet not just for us but future generations. This conference was indeed an eye-opening experience for me, and through the initiative of the IMTH department, I am grateful for the opportunity to represent the IMTH and NKUHT, by extension.

I was able to observe all my colleagues' presentations one day prior to my own. Each presented efficiently and within the allotted time. Despite feeling a sense of anxiety when it was my scheduled time to present, that feeling quickly passed once I started sharing. My presentation was based on a case study that I had done as part of a course, and it allowed me to be fully versed on my topic. My Question-and-Answer session was handled well, I was able to respond to the questions posed and enjoyed the experience immensely. I also observed that some participants were academics within the higher learning environment and their research was leaps and bounds ahead of ours, so

seeing this was a motivation to continue in my progression towards being a part of the change needed in responsible tourism for sustainable development.

APPENDIX



Attendees at the Preconference Workshop 1:
Research Methodology with Prof. Ramayah Thurasamy



IMTH Presenters



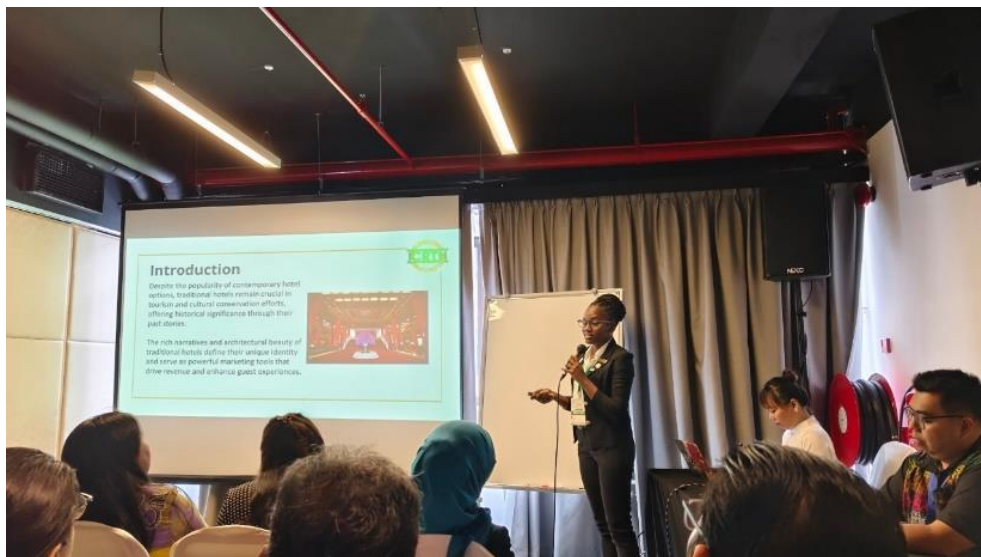
IMTH Classmates at our booth in the exhibition
area



Networking with Industry Professionals and learning about their product and service offerings



Patronizing a local artist



Presenting paper titled *‘Transforming Stories into Revenue; An Analysis of Marketing Strategy at a Traditional Hotel’*



Attending the field trip to Paku Rock Maze Garden, Sandy Ramparts



Prizegiving and Closing Ceremony