

Report on Study Tour Abroad (Category of Study Tour Abroad: International Conference)

ICRTH (International Conference on Responsible Tourism and Hospitality) International Conference Report

Service Organization: NKUHT IMTH

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Abstract

This report reflects on my experience presenting at an international conference in Cavite, Philippines, where I had the opportunity to represent the International Master's Program in Tourism and Hospitality (IMTH) at the National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism (NKUHT). It was my first time presenting on an international platform, and I was honored to receive the Emerald Publishing Special Award for my research titled "Diaspora Tourism and Holi: Cultural Identity in Taiwan's Indian Community." My study explores how Holi celebrations among the Indian diaspora in Taiwan serve as a means of cultural preservation, social cohesion, and the promotion of diaspora tourism. The research highlights how cultural festivals support identity formation and reduce feelings of isolation in a non-Western host country. Presenting this work to an international audience was both a challenging and rewarding experience, significantly improving my academic communication and public speaking skills. The conference also provided valuable feedback, broadened my academic network, and encouraged future cross-cultural research collaborations. Overall, this experience was a milestone in my academic and professional journey, while also enhancing NKUHT's global academic presence.

Purpose:

As part of the International Master's Program in Tourism and Hospitality (IMTH) at the National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism (NKUHT), students are highly encouraged to participate in international conferences to enhance both academic growth and institutional visibility on a global level.

First, attending international conferences provides students with valuable exposure to global trends, innovative practices, and emerging research in tourism and hospitality. These events offer a dynamic platform for engaging with industry professionals, scholars, and fellow students from across the globe. Such experiences deepen our understanding of the global tourism landscape, broaden our perspectives beyond Taiwan, and develop the skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected industry. Networking with international experts also nurtures meaningful academic and professional connections that can inspire future research and career opportunities.

Secondly, conference participation is a graduation requirement for the IMTH program. Students must accumulate at least six academic points through presentations and professional engagements. This system ensures that we remain active in academic discussions and are continuously enhancing our expertise in the field.

Finally, representing NKUHT at international conferences helps enhance the university's reputation worldwide. By showcasing our research and academic achievements, we contribute to promoting NKUHT's excellence in tourism and hospitality education. This global presence not only underscores the strength of the program but also paves the way for international collaborations, institutional partnerships, and future research initiatives.

Process:

Date	Schedule
June 13	Taiwan → Philippines → Cavite
June 16	Conference Opening Ceremony Academic Presentation (My Presentation and attending others' presentations)
June 17	Academic Presentation (attending others' presentations) IMTH, NKUHT session (Assisted in the session) Networking Dinner
June 18	Awards and Closing Ceremony
June 20	Philippines → Taiwan

Personal Experience and Suggestions:

Attending and presenting at my first international conference overseas was a significant milestone in my academic and professional development. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to share my research, *“Diaspora Tourism and Holi: Cultural Identity in Taiwan’s Indian Community,”* with an international audience of scholars, industry experts, and fellow students. This experience was both academically enriching and personally transformative, providing me with valuable insights into the global academic community while deepening my understanding of my research.

Preparing for the presentation was both exciting and nerve-wracking. Knowing that I would be speaking in front of an international audience, I invested considerable time in organizing my presentation to ensure it was clear, focused, and engaging. My research explores how Holi, as celebrated by the Indian diaspora in Taiwan, serves not only as a means of cultural preservation and social bonding but also contributes to diaspora tourism. I aimed to effectively communicate these themes in a way that resonated with a global audience.

On the day of my presentation, I felt a mixture of anxiety and anticipation. Standing in front of an international audience for the first time was both empowering and intimidating. However, as I

began presenting, I noticed positive reactions—some attendees nodded in agreement, and others took notes, which reassured me that my work was being well-received.

Despite the overall success of the presentation, I did face a few challenges. One of the most difficult moments occurred during the Q&A session, when I was asked in-depth questions about Taiwan's government initiatives related to diaspora festivals or tourism. At the time, I was not fully prepared to address this topic, as my research had primarily focused on the community-level aspects of Holi celebrations rather than policy or government support. This gap in my understanding made it difficult to respond confidently. However, the experience highlighted an important area for further research and reminded me of the importance of anticipating broader contextual questions, especially when presenting at an international conference. Moving forward, I plan to deepen my understanding of how government policies and support structures influence diaspora tourism and cultural events.

A particularly rewarding aspect of the conference was the opportunity to network with academics and professionals from different countries. Through discussions and cultural exchange, I gained diverse perspectives on diaspora experiences, identity formation, and tourism development in various parts of the world. These conversations not only enriched my understanding of the global relevance of my research but also opened the door to possible future collaborations.

Overall, presenting at an international conference for the first time was a transformative experience. It helped me improve my skills in public speaking, academic discourse, and intercultural communication. More importantly, it gave me the confidence to pursue more research and engage in future academic challenges with greater preparedness.

I am honored to have represented NKUHT and the IMTH program on this international stage and proud to have received the *Emerald Publishing Special Award* for my research. This recognition has inspired me to continue contributing to the field of tourism studies, particularly in areas related to cultural identity and diaspora tourism.

Pictures:



Opening Ceremony



My Presentation



Assisted in IMTH NKUHT Session



Networking Dinner (Representing Taiwan and NKUHT)



Award and Closing ceremony

