

Report of Study Tour Abroad (Category of Study Tour Abroad: Inspection)

Presenting in Cavite, Philippines for the International Conference of Responsible Tourism and Hospitality 2024

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Service Organization: National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism

Name and Professional Title: Nsibandze Sifiso Mlungisi Master's student of the International Master's program of Tourism and Hospitality Countries Dispatched to: Philippines

Period of Study Tour Abroad: June 15 2025 to June 20 2025

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Abstract

This report summarises my participation in the 5th International Conference on Responsible Tourism and Hospitality (ICRTH), which took place from June 15 to 20, 2025, in Manila, Philippines. As part of the International Master's Program in Tourism and Hospitality (IMTH) at NKUHT, I presented my individual case study, "Performing & Negotiating Womanhood: Exploring Gender & Cultural Heritage in Eswatini's Umhlanga and Baganu Festivals." This was my first presentation at an international conference. The experience provided useful input on how to improve my study, including advice for reducing the number of frameworks to keep the emphasis clear and manageable. These observations are influencing the direction of my upcoming thesis.

I participated in productive discussions with researchers and industry professionals who specialize in sustainable, heritage, and responsible tourism, in addition to giving a presentation. I also participated in NKUHT's promotional activities, where I introduced our program to potential students and scholars. The conference enhanced my comprehension of the intersection of academic and industry perspectives in tourism and identified new research and career opportunities.

While the academic experience was enriching, logistical issues, especially with accommodation, were a challenge. I recommend stronger institutional support for future student participants. Overall, this was a valuable academic and professional development opportunity.

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Purpose

The primary purpose of attending the 5th International Conference on Responsible Tourism and Hospitality (ICRTH), held in Manila, Philippines, from June 15 to 20, 2025, was to present my case study titled “*Performing & Negotiating Womanhood: Exploring Gender & Cultural Heritage in Eswatini’s Umhlanga and Buganu Festivals.*” This marked my first time presenting and participating in an international academic conference.

I joined the conference to get feedback and expert opinions on my study, which I plan to build into a master’s thesis. One of the most helpful comments I received was a suggestion to narrow the number of theoretical frameworks to avoid making the study too broad. I also learnt how to improve my methodology and clarify the logic behind my argument and reasoning.

Beyond academic development, the conference was a graduation requirement under the IMTH program at NKUHT, as it contributes to the necessary credit points. I also took part in promoting NKUHT’s International Master’s Program in Tourism and Hospitality. This included direct engagement with prospective students and researchers, as well as giving a short promotional presentation in one of the classrooms.

ICRTH, known for blending scholarly and industry-focused discussions, brought together academics, professionals, government officials, and community leaders. I was particularly interested in sessions on innovative waste management practices and the safeguarding of cultural heritage. These themes helped me connect scholarly research with practical industry applications and sharpen my understanding of where my research and future career might contribute to the tourism sector.

Process

The study tour began with travel from Kaohsiung to Manila, followed by ground transport to Cavite, where the 5th International Conference on Responsible Tourism and Hospitality (ICRTH) was held. I traveled alongside several classmates and professors from NKUHT, including the Department Director, Dr. Li-Hsin Chen. One of the logistical challenges was finding accommodation that was both affordable and close to the venue, especially given the extensive multi-day program.

The main conference took place from June 16 to 18, 2025, with a post-conference workshop on the evening of June 18. This was followed by responsible tourism workshops on June 19 and 20. I did my presentation on June 17 during the first session of the day, as the second presenter in Room C607. My presentation was on my research, “*Performing & Negotiating Womanhood: Exploring Gender & Cultural Heritage in Eswatini’s Umhlanga and Buganu Festivals.*”

In preparation, I practiced thoroughly and trusted the strength of the research I had done. I brought cultural artifacts related to the Eswatini festivals to give the audience a more grounded understanding of the traditions I was presenting, especially since most were unfamiliar with the context. I also took part in NKUHT’s promotional session, introducing the IMTH program to

prospective students and researchers.

Beyond presenting, I attended several sessions of interest, including presentations by my classmates and other scholars. One notable presentation involved the use of immersive media and board games in the “TIRTHAYATRA” program to create nostalgic tourism experiences in Indonesia. I also joined practical sessions exploring topics like coffee and music therapy in tourism practice.

After the conference, I continued conversations with scholars and industry professionals, including follow-ups with new contacts. I brought back business cards and contact information that may serve future research or career opportunities.

Experience and Suggestions

Presenting at the 5th ICRTTH was a major milestone. My research on Eswatini’s Umhlanga and Buganu festivals sparked real interest, and the feedback I received, especially on narrowing my theoretical scope, was helpful. It gave me more clarity on how to strengthen the work for my thesis.

The conference also helped me see how tourism research connects to real-world practice. Conversations with scholars and industry professionals expanded my understanding of the industry and where I might fit into it.

Logistics, however, were tough. Finding affordable, nearby accommodation was difficult and stressful. Since this was a school-required activity, it would be better for accommodation to be included in reimbursable costs. A bit more support would really help.

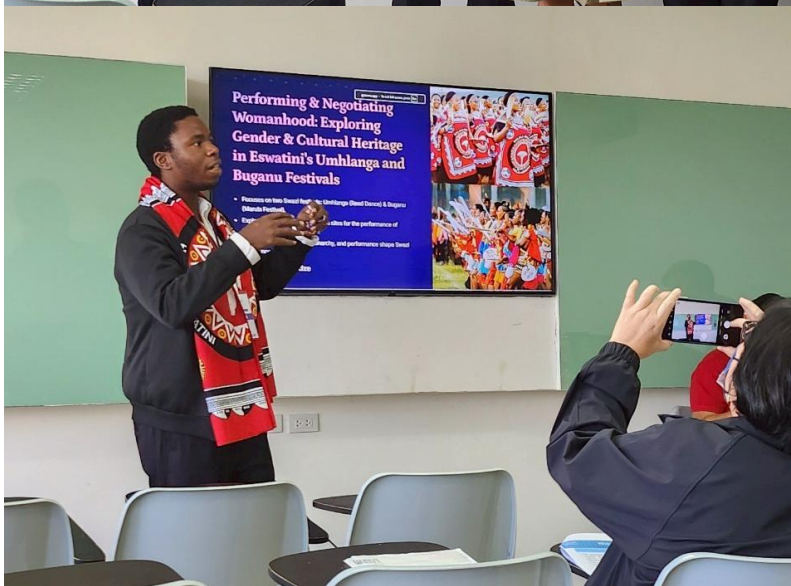
Appendix

Opening Day





Presentation session



IMTH Promotional Session



Networking Dinner





Closing and Award Ceremony

