

The 21st Annual Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism

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The 21st Annual Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism was successfully hosted by the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Temple University, Philadelphia, on 7-9 January 2016. Philadelphia is the largest city in the state of Pennsylvania and the fifth most-populous in the United States. Its history can be traced back to 1682, when it was founded to serve as capital of the Pennsylvania Colony. Philadelphia played an instrumental role in the American Revolution, and served as the US capital for ten years between 1790 and 1800. Its long history and rich culture make Philadelphia a popular destination. Temple University is the largest provider in tourism, hospitality, sport, and recreation management education in the Philadelphia area and is renowned for the quality of its graduates and faculty. The conference was held in the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Philadelphia Center City, which is located within walking distance of many famous attractions and shopping centers, such as City Hall, Reading Terminal Market, and Macy's.

As highlighted by the Founding Chairman, Professor Kaye Chon, the conference was established with four specific objectives: To provide a platform for the exchange of cutting-edge research in the field of hospitality and tourism, to foster a healthy research culture in the field, to provide a forum for networking among graduate students and faculty, and to serve as a career mart for graduate students who are completing their degrees.

This year's conference received more than 280 submissions, of which 129 papers were accepted as stand-up presentations, and 124 were poster presentations. They covered a wide range of topics: Consumer behavior, finance and economics, food service, hospitality and tourism education, human resource, information technology, lodging, management, marketing, and travel and tourism. Unlike previous conferences, poster presenters this year were asked to make three-minute oral presentations of their work-in-progress, followed by interactions. This creative format can stimulate greater exchanges between presenters and audiences in a relaxed and active way.

On 6 January, a pre-conference training session on "Certification in Hotel Analytics" was conducted on the main campus of Temple University. In the evening, the conference officially commenced with a welcome reception held in the Reading Terminal Market, which was consolidated from two historical public markets. Delegates met in this traditional marketplace and enjoyed the local cuisine.

On the next day, two poster sessions and two concurrent sessions were conducted and in total 96 papers were presented. A session titled "So You Want to Publish – Views of Editors" was held in the afternoon, with journal editors Kaye Chon (*Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* and *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*), Jay Kandampully (*Journal of Service Management*), Richard Perdue (*Journal of Travel Research*), and Chris Roberts (*Journal of*

Hospitality and Tourism Research) as panelists. The discussants shared valuable insights with young scholars about publishing in top-tier journals. Though different journals have different targets and principles, the advices from the editors are rather similar. They noted that, before submission, authors should have a clear understanding of a target journal's features, such as its objectives, research realm, and submission/stylistic requirements in order to reduce the chances of rejection. Meanwhile, due to the large number of submissions every journal receives, editors have limited time to judge each paper. As a result, an article's title, abstract, introduction, methodology, and contributions receive the most editorial attention at its submission. They advised that, after receiving a decision, authors should study the reviewers' comments carefully and address them one by one. Submitting to another journal without making any changes is not recommended. Kandampully also commented that reviewing others' manuscripts is one of the best means to improving one's writing. The first day was concluded with the Sponsoring School's Reception. This was the occasion for delegates to exchange information and for graduates to seek career opportunities.

On 8 January, two poster sessions and three concurrent sessions were arranged, covering nine research topics. There were two panel sessions whose aim was to assist young faculty with grant writing and promotion. The first panel was "Grant Writing and External Funding – The New Normal". Moderated by Robert Li, the discussants shared their experience and offered advices. Young scholars were advised to first apply for internal university funding before going for external grants. There were also advices on maintaining consistency amongst teaching, research, and projects to benefit grant applications. The other panel session concerned "Tenure and Promotion" of young faculty members. As summarized by four senior researchers, the pursuit of tenure or promotion should not be the only motivation for research, passion and curiosity are often the best sources of good research in the long run, and collaboration with colleagues is also an efficient way to enhance ones' overall capacity.

On the last day of the conference, both poster and concurrent oral sessions were conducted. The last panel was titled "A Discussion with Junior Faculty – Finding Your First Job and Early Career Success". A panel of young scholars shared their views with graduates on how to find the right job. They put preparation as essential for job hunting. Before applying, graduates should obtain information on their target schools from various sources in order to make sure that they want to work there; in their application, candidates should provide clear and correct information to target schools; during the interview, candidates were encouraged to emphasize what they can contribute to the school and how they would work with others. These tips can help inexperienced fresh graduates to find their first job.

The conference ended with an award-conferring banquet hosted in the Ormandy Ballroom of the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in the evening on 8 January. Upon the recommendations from 179 reviewers and ten track chairs, the committee selected four best conference papers:

- "The Consequences of Experienced Customer Incivility in the Hospitality Industry" by Haemi Kim and Hailin Qu from Oklahoma State University, recognized by the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*;
- "Developing a Destination Brand Personality Scale of China" by Lu Lu and Dogan Gursoy from Washington State University, and Li Pan from Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, recognized by the *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*;

- “Reconciling Unsatisfying Tourism Experiences: Message Type Effectiveness and the Role of Counterfactual Thinking” by Saerom Wang and Xinran Lehto from Purdue University, and Ksenia Kirillova from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, recognized by the *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*; and
- “Investigating Dining Experiences at Chinese Restaurants Using User-Generated Content and Topic Modeling” by Xiaoye Li, Bongsug (Kevin) Chae, Chen-Wei Tao, and Junehee Kwon from Kansas State University, and Han Wen from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, recognized by the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*.

Two individual awards were also presented. Richard Perdue (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University) received the Founder’s Award in recognition of his world-class scholarship and contribution to tourism and hospitality research. Fevzi Okumus (University of Central Florida) received the University of Delaware Michael D. Olsen Research Achievement Award, which recognizes scholars who have focused on hospitality at a higher level and have contributed new knowledge to the field.

In conclusion, the conference served as an effective and active platform for graduate students, research faculty, and industrial professionals in the field of tourism and hospitality to exchange opinions, get reunion, and move forward. For more information and to read the conference papers, please visit <http://sthm.temple.edu/templegradconference/>. The 22nd annual event will be hosted by the University of Houston, Texas, USA. We look forward to another great conference!

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