

**CONFERENCE REPORT ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> ASIA EURO CONFERENCE 2012 ON  
TOURISM, HOSPITALITY, AND GASTRONOMY: EXPLORING  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES**

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This reports on the 4<sup>th</sup> Asia Euro Conference: Tourism, Hospitality, and Gastronomy that was held from 28<sup>th</sup> of November until 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2012. The theme of the conference is 'Exploring Multidisciplinary Approaches'. This conference is mainly organized by Taylor's University, and co-organized by Universite De Toulouse Le Mirail from France, for once every two years since 2006.

The main purpose of the conference is to address the political circumstances, economic volatilities, sociological evolutions, environmental issues, demographic changes, and new technologies that affect the businesses in tourism, hospitality, and gastronomy. These specific and general environments are affecting business practices. Hence Taylor's University and Universite De Toulouse are attempting to address the issues arose in the environments through this conference as a platform for academicians, industrialists, and governmental agencies to discuss the issues, challenges, trends, and approaches in making tourism a better industry. The fundamental idea of such gathering is to allow the stakeholders of tourism and hospitality industry to discuss and learn the trends and developments in the sectors within tourism, and hospitality with gastronomy.

The conference had an approximately of one hundred scientific members from locals and overseas to review the papers submitted to the conference. The scientific committee members were from Malaysia, Turley, UK, Hong Kong, France, USA, Australia, Philippines, Bulgaria, China, Argentina, Greece and Singapore. Commitment and participation from all over the world strengthened the value of academic research, research design and exchange of ideas.

Of all the 141 papers printed in the abstract proceedings of the conference, 71 papers submitted for tourism track, 18 papers for hospitality track, 16 papers submitted for gastronomy, 22 miscellaneous papers, 14 papers for sociology and anthropology of food. The paper submission came from more than 24 countries.

Selected papers were given the opportunity to be published in 8 international journals: Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management, European Journal of Tourism Research, International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, Tourism Review, Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, TEAM Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, and Journal of Vacation Marketing.

This conference was also held the International Association of French Language Association, European Network for Comparative Analysis on Food and tasting, TTRA, and UNESCO.

There were few new trends and interesting issues that were presented in the conference such as analysis on the impact of 2011 natural disasters, assessment on protected areas, research on gay tourism, and climate change factors that affecting tourists' behavior. Such papers and issues would enable the researchers and industrialist to comprehend even more on the practices and happenings in the industry, and to identify the opportunities that could be tapped in short future as a response to restructure business practices for better economical cost and benefits. Apart from that, papers that related to regulations and employment were highly concentrated too. A session on authentic food, iconic food, products and services, and foreign employment was attended by most of the French representative from Universite Del Toulouse. The session held up a good question and answer session in understanding the trends and challenges faced by the industry. The international participants seemed keen to try to understand the macro system of a country that affected the micro practices in business organization. They were keen to know the movement of foreign employees in hospitality and tourism, and the type of work they performed, with the type of training be provided, and the retention strategy of the workers in the sectors.

Academic conferences attended by industrialists would enable to bridge the gap between research findings and current business practices. For example, a study done by Ragavan, Tan Ai Ling, and Muda on the case study in Malaysia suggested that Singapore was rated top in three out of the four attributes service quality, product quality, and shop environment, Thailand rated for its price competitiveness, and Malaysia was placed third in price competitiveness and shop environment. The finding suggested that further study could be done in improving Malaysia's attributes in attracting tourists.

The participant managed to identify that certain government agencies in Malaysia also attended the conference every time it was held. There was one senior officer from the governmental agency mentioned that she could recognize and identified few repetitive presenters to the conference. Not only that the issues presented in the past conferences by the identified presenters were also well remembered by the senior officers.

From the strong commitment by the government, extensive academic research, and industrial participation, the industry of tourism, hospitality, and gastronomy could expand and better services could be provided to the tourists by utilizing the efficiency in gaining best effectiveness. Such cost and benefit practiced by the industry will enable the industrialists to gain more competitive advantage, and tapping new opportunities for their businesses in tourism, hospitality, and gastronomy.

Asia-Euro conference that was held by Taylor's University was undoubtedly being one of the best tourism conferences organized by a Malaysia University, attracting academicians, industrialists, governmental agencies, and a big number of postgraduate students as well.