

The 2nd Conference on Managing Tourism Across Continents, April 1-3, 2021 (MTCO'20)

The 2nd Conference on Managing Tourism Across Continents (MTCO) was held virtual on 1-3 April 2021 by Turkey Tourism Scholars Association (TUADER) with the support of the University of Florida and Turkey's leading universities and in cooperation with world-renowned tourism academics. The conference was organized under the honorary chairmanship of TUADER President Prof. Muharrem Tuna (Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University) and by the co-chairs of Prof. Cihan Cobanoğlu (University of Florida, USA) and Prof. Ebru Günlü Küçükaltan (Dokuz Eylül University) with participants from different continents to discuss new trends and developments in the field of tourism. Co-coordinators of the conference were Asst. Prof. Alaattin Başoda (Selçuk University) and Asst. Prof. Seden Doğan (Ondokuz Mayıs University). Organized for the second time under the theme of "Tourism for a Better World," MTCO'21 is the product of a devoted team's work with the Organizing Board of 36 people, the Advisory Board of 37 people, and the Scientific Board of 190 people. At the conference, 186 papers were presented in a total of 46 sessions from 28 different countries.

The event program featured opening speeches, plenary sessions, scientific sessions, panels, conversations, best paper awards, and closing speeches. In addition, the day before the conference, a total of eight hours of Research Academy was held between 15:00 - 22:50 under the direction of Prof. Cihan Cobanoğlu and Asst. Prof. Faizan Ali (University of Florida, USA). In this enlightening event focused on enhancing the participants' understanding of research methods, some tips, tricks, and techniques needed to conduct quality research were discussed. Within the scope of Research Academy, which attracted great attention from pre-conference participants, "Identifying and Presenting Research Gaps," "Basics of Research Design and Methodology," "Basic Mistakes in Research and How to avoid them" and "An Overview of SmartPLS - Hands-on example" were discussed.

The first day of the conference, 1st of April started with the opening speeches of the honorary chairman of the conference and the conference co-chairs in Turkish and English. In the first plenary session of the conference, keynote speaker Prof. Larry Dwyer (University of Technology Sydney, Australia) made a presentation on "Planning for Sustainable Development: The Importance of

Resident Wellbeing." Dwyer, who emphasized the importance of human well-being in sustainable development, talked about the "Beyond GDP" approach and the potential of this approach to guide destination development. Within the scope of the event, different panels and conversations were held with distinguished invited speakers from all over the world. In this sense, the technology panel titled "High Touch vs. High Tech? Or Both?" moderated by Prof. Cihan Cobanoğlu left its mark on the first day of the conference.

The role of technology in the tourism industry, especially in accommodation, was discussed in the panel with the participation of Prof. Ulrike Gretzel (University of Southern California, USA), Prof. Stanislav Ivanov (Varna University of Management, Bulgaria), Prof. Iis Tussyadiah (University of Surrey, UK) and Assoc. Prof. AJ Aluri (West Virginia University, USA). Parallel scientific sessions were held in 10 different breakout rooms from the first to the last day of the event.

The second day started with the aforementioned scientific sessions. In these sessions, papers on crisis and tourism, destination marketing and management, and digital transformations in tourism, food and beverage management, smart tourism, media, and technology in tourism, new business models in tourism, special interest tourism, tourism and environment, tourism and recreation, tourism planning and regional development, tourist behavior, urban tourism, rural tourism, and cultural heritage were presented.

Especially the studies on the Covid-19 pandemic provided important information to the participants in understanding the global crisis experienced by the tourism sector. In the second plenary session of the conference, Asst. Prof. Rut Gomez Sobrino from San Pablo CEU University from Spain was hosted as the keynote speaker and made a presentation titled "Re-shifting tourism in a transformed world." The unprecedented opportunity to integrate the sustainable approach into the sector". This session moderated by Assoc. Prof. Gürhan Aktaş (Dokuz Eylül University), it was emphasized by Gomez Sobrino that the problems related to sustainability existed before but became more prominent in the post-Covid 19 periods and this could be considered as an opportunity, and that for sustainability, issues related to quality rather than quantity in tourism should be addressed.

In the second plenary session of the second day, a seminal presentation was made by keynote speaker

Steve Hood (Founding Director of STR SHARE Center) by the moderation of Asst. Prof. Muhittin Çavuşoğlu (Northern Arizona University, USA). Hood, in their presentation titled “COVID-related Research Opportunities,” explained the effects of COVID-19 on the hotel industry in figures and, based on these data, suggested nearly 50 topics worth researching to the participants. A few hours after this productive session, the first of the Experience Conversations took place. Asst. Prof. Katerina Berezina from the University of Mississippi in the United States, Asst. Prof. Lisa Cain from Florida International University and Asst. Prof. Minwoo Lee from the University of Houston participated in the conversation moderated by Asst. Prof. Faizan Ali (University of Florida, USA). The purpose of this conversation is for the invited speakers to share with the participants their experiences regarding their academic journey. It was a productive and inspiring session, especially for the career journeys of young academicians.

The last day of the conference, 3th of April, was the busiest day in terms of scientific sessions, as more than half of the papers were presented in four scientific parallel sessions that took place in 10 breakout rooms. In addition, two experience conversations were held on the last day. The first conversation was moderated by Asst. Prof. Gaye Deniz from Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, and the guests were Prof. Kemal Birdir from Mersin University, Prof. Azize Tunç Hassan from Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, and Prof. Öcal Usta from Istanbul Kent University. In the session in question, the professors, who have an important place in the field, had a sincere conversation with the participants about their academic careers and experiences. The last one was a conversation where lecturers from abroad, well-known in the field of tourism, were hosted.

The invited speakers of this session, moderated by Assoc. Prof. Gökçe Yüksek from Anadolu University, were Prof. Doğan Gürsoy from Washington State University, Prof. Osman M. Karatepe from Eastern Mediterranean University, and Asst. Prof. Bendegül Okumuş from the University of Central Florida. In this session, the adventure of being an academic abroad was specially mentioned. The closing session, in which the best papers and the papers which were entitled to receive honorary mention were announced, was held in two languages, as in the opening session. Thanks were given to the participants of the conference, the scientific board, the advisory board, and the organizing committee.

MTCON'21, which was successfully completed, has been terminated to be re-organized next year.

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