

EXPLORING A NEW ROUTE TO OLD ROOTS FOR INTERNATIONAL MATHEMATICS EDUCATION CONFERENCES IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA

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Since the first ICMI conference began in 1908, conferences have been playing an essential role in building the international mathematics education community. By networking and disseminating advancements in research and practices, the community established the discipline of mathematics education as a “learned society” (Leung, 2015). Despite the travel restrictions due to the global pandemic, international conferences have been serving mathematics education community by adopting virtual platforms to involve participants in our community.

In this study, we investigated how mathematics education researchers reflect on their experiences after attending face-to-face and virtual international conferences. We conducted three focus group interviews (Onweugbuzie et al., 2009) with international mathematics education researchers who have different backgrounds in terms of regions, genders, and academic careers. We grouped interviewees based on their roles in the conferences as attendees, presenters, and organizers. Each focus group participated in a two-hour semi-structured interview with three leading questions: (a) how did the participants perceive face-to-face and virtual conferences? (b) how did they view advantages and limitations of virtual conferences?, and (c) how did they envision mathematics education conferences in future? Focus groups shared advantages and limitations of virtual conferences compared to face-to-face conferences in terms of accessibility, presentation, network, and technology. For example, most of interviewees said virtual conferences allowed participants to attend conferences. This suggests that virtual conferences increased affordance, which could address the inequity. Many participants developed a new meaning of attending conferences after attending virtual conferences: (1) attending conferences without presentation, (2) attending conferences without traveling, (3) attending conferences in their own space such as home or workplace, (4) networking in virtual platforms. This study will shed light on seeking a new route in hybrid and virtual conferences to provide a broader community in mathematics education with meaningful conference experiences.

Reference

- Leung, F. K. (2015). *The coming of the age of mathematics education as a discipline and the role of East Asians*. Plenary Lecture at EARCOME-7. Cebu, The Philippines.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Dickinson, W. B., Leech, N. L., & Zoran, A. G. (2009). A qualitative framework for collecting and analyzing data in focus group research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(3), 1-21.