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Introduction to the International Journal of Tour Guiding Research

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Introduction to the International Journal of Tour Guiding Research

Cover Page Footnote

Introduction to Issue 1 of the International Journal of Tour Guiding Research

Editorial : Introducing the First Issue of the IJTGR

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Introduction

Welcome to the first issue of the *International Journal of Tour Guiding Research*. This paper introduces the Journal, which began its life as an idea presented at the 6th *International Research Forum on Guided Tours* in Malta in 2019. Since then, a busy group of interested participants has developed the idea, and this First Issue is the starting point from which we hope will develop a lively and engaging publication of quality and rigour.

About the IJTGR

The *International Journal of Tour Guiding Research* aims to be a high-quality, international, open access, online, double blind reviewed publication which deals with all aspects of Tour Guiding. The *International Journal of Tour Guiding Research* (IJTGR) was founded in 2019 by the *International Research Forum on Guided Tours* and it is published by Technological University Dublin, in Ireland. All articles in the journal are full text and available on open access.

The Journal aims to be the leading international journal for all those concerned with Tour Guiding.

The journal takes an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary international approach and is inclusive of all aspects of Tour Guiding (local, regional and national) and tour management. The journal's online platform facilitates a truly integrative approach. While the main emphasis is

on primary empirical research articles, it also welcomes suitably relevant discussion papers, research / review pieces, industry focused case studies and evaluations, management guides and reports, economic evaluations, book reviews, announcements of forthcoming meetings etc. Papers / articles should be relevant to both academics and practitioners.

All papers are subject to 'double – blind – review'. Papers can include a variety of media elements including audio and visual files, a range of image formats and hyperlinks to websites and other online resources.

We hope that by offering this dedicated platform we can assist in developing both the skills and the recognition of this important profession.

From the outset, we have sought to make this a truly international project, and this is reflected in our Editorial Board which, at the outset of the Journal is comprised of the following:

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Kevin A. Griffin, Technological University Dublin, Ireland.

Associate Editors

Areej Shabib Aloudat, Yarmouk University (Jordan)

Rosemary Black, Charles Sturt University (Australia)

Miguel Brito, Escola Superior de Hotelaria e

Turismo do Estoril (Portugal)

Glen Ferrugia, Institute for Tourism Studies
(Malta)

Dineke Koerts, Breda University of Applied
Sciences (The Netherlands)

Jane Widtfeld Meged, Roskilde University
(Denmark)

Duygu Yetgin, Anadolu University
Eskisehir (Turkey)

Vincent Zammit, Institute for Tourism
Studies (Malta)

As the Journal develops in scale and scope, we will be appointing members to our *Scientific Board* and our *Industry Advisory Board*. Interested parties should contact the editors, who will consider all applications.

Introduction to Issue 1: Papers from The 6th IRFGT

The *6th International Research Forum on Guided Tours* took place in Malta in 2019. This conference discussed a number of issues pertaining to the operations of Tourist Guides and their role within the tourism industry. The following questions, which are core to tourist guiding research were addressed by the presenters:

- How can the ideas of academics and authors such as Cohen (1985) and others be applied to the current situation within the tourist guiding sector?
- How can tourist guides prepare themselves to provide the best service, utilising both formal learning as well as continuous professional development?;
- How can tourist guides contribute towards tourism policy-making?;
- Are tourist guides being involved and consulted by governments in large scale tourism projects?;
- Are tourist guides considerate of new tourism products?;
- How can the employment situation of tourist guide improve?

In addition to a reflective Editorial piece by *Miguel Brito and Glen Farrugia*, which sets the scene for the overall Journal, this current issue presents four papers from the 2019 Maltese conference, each of which touches upon the aforementioned themes and questions.

Ruth Azzopardi's paper focuses on language teaching for Tourist Guiding and argues that language courses in tourism institutes should not separate the teaching of a language from wider political and cultural spheres. The study discusses the core components of language instruction within a tourism perspective while looking at issues and proposed solutions that could contribute to a more holistic development within the *curriculum*. Such developments may transform the teaching of foreign languages at Higher Education Institutions, such as the Institute of Tourism Studies in Malta, in order to increase the engagement of learners and also visitors with the realities of various communities, cultural scenarios and other social groupings and challenges that characterise any tourist destination.

Vincent Zammit's contribution draws on his decades of experience as an internationally licensed tourist guide and member of the academic staff at the Institute of Tourism Studies where he was tasked with the continuous development of the Tourist Guiding study programme. Zammit argues that a number of improvements were made to the course in order to bring the programme in line with European Union standards. Considerable networking with Tourist Guiding counterparts, such as with the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations, has also taken place and is still ongoing – this is key to keeping abreast of the latest developments within the industry. Zammit discusses the importance of proper Heritage Interpretation and storytelling as a crucial element that all guides must embrace to provide the best experience to tourists. The author concludes that no study programme in Tourist Guiding should remain static – this sector is extremely dynamic and providers of tourism education should acknowledge such changes and adjust their teaching and learning accordingly.

In her paper, *Veronica Barbara*, who is a licensed tourist guide and archaeologist by academic training, explores the different values that archaeological artefacts and heritage sites have for different people. Barbara's arguments draw from her Master research on multi-vocality in heritage where she discusses how a cultural visit can initially focus on tangible elements but then transform into an intangible experience. By researching the relationship between heritage, individuals and communities, Barbara's research objective is to present a multi-vocal model for the presentation of heritage (mainly archaeological but not exclusively), and consequently outline the role of the tourist guide as the mediator in the heritage experience. The author argues that while the work of the tourist guide is typically to be seen as the front-line storyteller on-site, they must also engage in a synergistic way with the activities and practices of heritage managers.

Miguel Brito discusses deregulation of the Tourist Guiding Profession as a result of the neoliberal market economy and how this has resulted in an uncontrolled and unregulated provision of guiding service in certain countries. The author takes Portugal as a case study and questions the relevance of formal tourist guiding education nowadays in view of such reforms. Brito presents the outcome of a qualitative research he carried out with key stakeholders on this subject and provides suggestions on how the situation can be improved.

We believe that these papers provide a really interesting foundation, upon which future issues of the Journal will build. We encourage all of our readers to share news of this new initiative far and wide, and join us in our mission to be egalitarian and open to innovation and change. We welcome suggestions, offers of assistance, papers, special issue proposals, connection with conferences and workshops and any other initiatives that you feel would fit within the scope and ideals of this project.

References

- Cohen, E. (1985) The Tourist Guide: the origins, structure and dynamics of a role, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12(1) 5-29.