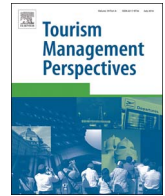


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Tourism Management Perspectives

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The changing landscape of academic tourism research towards a hopeful academy



When I was being interviewed for the position of editor-in-chief for *Tourism Management Perspectives*, I had talked to many academic mentors and friends for their thoughts on whether I should take up the position. I was cognizant of being at a relatively early stage of my career, where I should focus more on securing grants rather than reviewers for manuscripts. As expected, the answers were never clear-cut, but I was left with pages of notes to help me make the decision, a decision that led me to writing this editorial. The most compelling push factor was reading my own reflexive analysis, in a paper I wrote for the Critical Tourism Studies conference in 2014, where I uncomfortably reflected on our responsibilities as tourism researchers (Khoo-Lattimore, 2018). I ended this paper with a promise that I will always attempt to add value to the community that I have been socialized into, and actually a community that I love. Taking up this position is keeping this promise.

Ironically, the actual experience of publishing that reflexive article was another reason why I accepted this editor position. I had written the paper in July 2014, it was accepted for publication in November 2015, but as at December 2017, Khoo-Lattimore (2018) is still not yet published. With no ill-intention or disrespect to the special issues' editors, the editor, the journal or the reviewers, this is an issue in academic publishing that affects us all. I saw the opportunity to try and change this frustrating climate for us. After three months of being on the job, I now appreciate journal editors a lot more than I did. I now understand the many factors that affect publication speed. One of the first things I did for the journal was to put together an active editorial board. Given that my aim was to turn around manuscripts quickly, I knew I needed people whom I can count on. So rather than inviting expressions of interest and choosing from impressive CVs, I went with people I have worked with, people whom I know are reliable. My invitation email spelled out my expectations for active and collegial board members, and that means they can expect to review a lot, and to review quickly, as well as provide constructive comments. I also deliberately limited appointments to a period of one year, so I can retire those who might not be able to commit, and appoint new people who want to, and can serve the academy.

Now that I have the opportunity to change things, I wanted to try and provide a more just platform. I wanted the editorial board to reflect the academy - diverse in terms of age, gender, career phase, ethnicity, language, research areas, methodology knowledge, and geographical location. The board is not yet perfect, and I am working to have representations in Africa and many parts of Asia as well as Europe so the search will continue. The quest for diversity also extends of course to gender, but also career-phases. The editorial board now consists of seasoned and well-published authors, and people who are reputable in their fields of studies. Complementing this are a number of very clued-up mid and early-career researchers on the rise, doing fascinating research and I hope their perspectives will keep the articles we publish in *Tourism Management Perspectives* fresh. Most importantly, I wanted editorial board members who are collegial, people who still care and not merely, "publishing machines" (of course they can be publishing machines and also care). These people's values are important to me, which I hope will underpin the culture of the journal, its reviewers and its authors. It's early days yet but I would highlight that almost everyone on my editorial team has been awesome so far!

I have begun some (what I hope to be) meaningful projects for this journal. One of them is now completed and presented to you in this volume. It is a special issue comprising 20 opinion pieces on ten tourism research areas. I labelled this special issue, *Top Tourism Thoughts*, because each of the ten topics were commissioned to two tourism scholars who are reputable in their respective sub-fields, but at different stages of their careers. They were asked to reflect on past and current research trends in their own areas, and to project their reflections into the future for scholars embarking on new research projects. They were also limited to only ten references because the aim was to tap into their research experience, expertise and thoughts rather than having them review the literature. One did not know who the other person was, and the idea was to see if these two thoughts converge or otherwise, and how interesting would it be to revisit them in a decade! Naturally, we have to begin with tourism research, and it was clear that the former editor-in-chief for *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Chris Ryan should write about this. His opinion piece acknowledges and underscores the changing landscape of universities; tourism as an industry; tourism as an academic subject; and the research techniques we employ. His "Other" on the same topic is Donna Chambers, who demonstrates how three key "movements" have inspired contemporary tourism knowledge production and calls for us as tourism scholars to be courageous enough to change the way we do research. This theme on change is resonant in all the 20 articles but this is where the similarity ends. I will not elaborate on each article but it is sufficed to say that each piece has its own personality, many are controversial, some are down-to-earth, a few are imaginative, and most if not all, are truly thought-provoking. In fact, I am confident that many readers will be inspired by least one article in this special issue. Even if they are not your research area, I invite you to read them all, because sometimes the ideas, despite being on different topics do collude. In no particular order, please enjoy the contemplations that went into the remaining 18 articles, two each on the following nine research topics:

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- tourism policy and governance (Tazim Jamal and Blanca Camargo vs Marion Joppe)
- sustainable tourism development (Bernard Lane vs Freya Desboilles-Higgins)
- heritage tourism (Maria Gravari-Barbas vs Dallen Timothy)
- crisis management and resilience in tourism (Lori Pennington-Gray vs Girish Prayag)
- technologies in tourism (Phil Xiang vs Marianna Sigala)
- festival and events tourism (Jennifer Laing vs Kenneth Backman)
- hospitality management (Dogan Gursoy vs Alison Morrison)
- gender in tourism (Annette Pritchard vs Paolo Mura)
- tourism education (Miyoung Jeong and Jenny Kim vs Cathy Hsu)

Since we are on the topic of change, I wanted to trial at *Tourism Management Perspectives*, different ways in which we present and represent knowledge. In her opinion piece on tourism education, Cathy Hsu talked about how educators “need to learn new tricks and change the way they teach, refining a new approach that cannot be based on how they learned from the previous generation” - I have believed this for a long time. This is why I have presented at conferences with a hand puppet. This is also why for this special issue, I have worked with various singers, artists, broadcasters, and graphic designers to curate a collection of videos. It is my hope that you and your students will enjoy them as much as I have creating them. You can use them in different ways. You could use it as a ‘teaser’ to get them to read the corresponding article, or you could use it as ‘warmer’ to begin talking about a relevant issue. You could also use this as a ‘prompt’ by stopping the video halfway and asking them to predict what the rest of the video is going to say. I have used it as a ‘model’ for students to begin creating their own videos based on the subject matter as a replacement for writing an essay or sitting a test. Regardless, I hope you will find them entertaining, and that you will share them with colleagues. Most of all, I hope the videos will be inspiring stimuli for change.

There are more changes in the pipeline for this journal. For example, Joseph Cheer, who is also on the editorial board, is planning for his role as Film Review Editor (no, we do not have, and do not intend to have a Book Review Editor) while Ryan Yung who is researching virtual reality in tourism for his PhD is experimenting with ideas in his role as Media Engagement Editor for this journal. We have special issues planned on *Tourism in the Spanish-speaking World* and *Tourism in Asia*, and we continue to explore ways to feature good scholars whose voices may not necessarily be heard in many traditional English-language journals. I take this opportunity to call for your help in making the tourism academy more inclusive. If you have any ideas you think we can implement at *Tourism Management Perspectives*, or have recommendations of names or conferences that you feel we should be supporting, please write to me.

In [Khoo-Lattimore \(2018\)](#), I have already confessed my inadequacies in trying to strive for excellence in research and scholarship. As I embrace this new role, I am once again being vulnerable. I am opening the door to risk-taking, and with it, potential criticisms and possible judgments. But risk-taking is necessary in this changing landscape of academic tourism research, and as [Pritchard, Morgan, and Ateljevic \(2011\)](#) put it, “even to speak of hope and love as academics makes us vulnerable, as this is associated with weakness, irrationality and emotion—particularly in an academy conditioned to principles of distance, objectivity and rationality. Yet this engages directly with the nature of hopeful tourism knowledge...” (p. 952). It's a privilege and an honour, yet a great responsibility to be appointed editor-in-chief for a reputable journal such as this one. I will not take it for granted, and I will do it with everything I have, for the community in which I have found wonderful friendships; for the academy that has fuelled my appetite for stimulating intellect; and for future scholars in the academy of hope ([Ateljevic, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2013](#)). This is my promise.

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