


August 2022

Editorial: academic peer reviewers – The good, bad, and the ugly

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Recommended Citation

Ali, F., & Dogan, S. (2022). Editorial: academic peer reviewers – The good, bad, and the ugly. *Journal of Global Hospitality and Tourism*, 1(2), 182-184. <https://www.doi.org/10.5038/2771-5957.1.2.1015>

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Editorial: Academic Peer Reviewers – The Good, Bad, And The Ugly

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My academic research journey started a decade ago as a Ph.D. student at the Azman Hashim International School, University Technology Malaysia. Since then, I have authored over 150 peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, books, and book chapters. In addition to guest editing several special issues for academic journals, I also had an opportunity to serve as the Director of Research for numerous professional organizations. Furthermore, I have served in senior editorial positions for numerous well-established hospitality and services management journals for the last three years. All these roles involve sending out invitations to review the manuscripts. The usual scenario is where some invitees accept to review, and others decline. However, what stands out is that many invitees do not respond to the invitation or send a review comprising three to four sentences.

Conferences and special issues usually are tight on time schedules because of deadlines. Journals also need to publish timely research. Most of it is possible with a quality review provided on time. Hospitality and tourism management is a relatively smaller discipline, and it is difficult for many editors/conference chairs to manage reviewers for an increasing number of submissions. Consequently, at times, many scholars receive dozens of review invitations every month with shrinking deadlines to get the job done. Including myself, I know of numerous scholars who review over hundred articles every year. The question, however, is if this is fair to be putting a burden of reviewing on a relatively smaller number of people.

Recently a discussion on TRINET MAILSERV attracted some of the prominent scholars in our discipline with exciting viewpoints. An interesting question was raised in the discussion - "How many papers should an active researcher review every year?" To answer the question, while some mentioned a numeric number, others responded with an emphasis on the quality of reviews instead of the quantity. I stand for both of these arguments. I think an active researcher should publish a certain number of papers every year and try to beat that number the following year without compromising the quality of the feedback. I also think that reviewing for a journal should be incentivized. Monetary incentives can be lucrative but not practical. Some journals have started including quality and reliable reviewers on their editorial boards. It is a great practice that can benefit early-career researchers but is not being practiced by all journals. Another incentive can be pushing for the recognition of reviewing process. Recently, there has been an increase in journal editors working with Publons to provide recognition to reviewers.

Another reason why many junior faculty members do not want to review academic journals is the simple cost-benefit equation. Providing quality reviews for several papers every year takes considerable time. However, reviewing is often given little weightage in an already minimum share of service for tenure-track faculty members towards their tenure and promotion. Since most of the

editors in the hospitality and tourism discipline are senior faculty members, there is an increasing need for them to push for having some weightage to 'reviewing' in the tenure and promotion guidelines within their colleges/schools/departments. It is important because I know a few younger faculty members who love to review papers and provide feedback but cannot do it because it is not considered a performance metric.

Lastly, just like anything else, reviewers also need to be developed. Many institutes and conferences hold panel discussions and workshops on research methodology or publishing papers. It is good for the benefit of the authors. However, there are no workshops provided to train reviewers. Recently, I moderated an online webinar, "Academic Peer Review: Benefits and Challenges." Panelists included Dr. Ulrike Gretzel, Dr. Stanislav Ivanov, Dr. Metin Kozak, and Dr. Marissa Orłowski. Here is a link for all of you to watch the webinar and forward it to your students or colleagues. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nJ66YyeEdk>). The webinar generated a huge interest from around the world, further strengthening my viewpoint about the need for such activities. In the peer review process, reviewers act as the gatekeepers, which signifies their importance in advancing knowledge. However, most of the reviewers are self-taught or mentored in-house by their advisors. It is time for journal editors and conferences to step up and think about holding workshops to train the reviewers on how to review. It can be done at a major conference such as the Annual ICHRIE Conference or the Graduate Conference with a larger graduate student population to cultivate the next crop of reviewers. It can be a valuable step not only to deal with the shortage of reviewers but also to ensure quality reviews.

Overview of This Issue

This is the second issue of the Journal of Global Hospitality and Tourism. This issue features five exciting research papers and two viewpoints. The first paper written by Noradiva Hamzah, Norlida Hanım Mohd Salleh, Izuli Dzulkifli, and Tengku Kasmini Tengku Wook, sheds light on intellectual capital from the Islamic Value dimension to Muslim-friendly Medical Tourism. Using a case study approach, this study gives some directions for the hospital's management in developing and managing its intellectual capital and Islamic values. This study also explains how they can better leverage their intellectual capital and create added value to respond successfully to the increasingly competitive environment. It is pioneering research that develops a theoretical model to incorporate Intellectual Capital dimensions and Islamic Values in Muslim-friendly Medical Tourism.

The second paper is written by Shaniel Bernard, Imran Rahman, Sijun Liu, and Luana Nanu. It examines the effect of reliance on different sources of information on the credibility of COVID-19 information (BCI). In addition, the effect of BCI on fearfulness and the corresponding fear on intention to use accommodation services and stay at home are analyzed. The authors collected data from 1,017 American consumers and analyzed them using a structural equation model. The results confirm the significant effects of trust in media and government on BCI and the corresponding positive effect of BCI on the scarecrow. However, the adverse effects of fear on intentions to visit hotels and restaurants (general and Chinese) and the positive effects of fear on intentions to stay at home and use third-party meal delivery services are confirmed.

Rami K. Isaac conducts the third study from the Breda University of Applied Sciences. This research aims to understand better the impact of terrorism on risk perceptions and attitudes of

Dutch travel behavior towards Egypt. The researcher obtained data from 414 respondents, and findings show that (potential) Dutch tourists are less likely to take risks when traveling with children. For example, people who often travel with children avoid traveling to countries in the MENA region due to terrorism-related unrest. Furthermore, it was determined that more than half of the sample size did not consider traveling to Egypt due to the current travel advice of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The fourth paper is written by Michael Vieregge from the University of Western Colorado. Although the demand for rural destinations has increased after the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of studies on this topic is scarce. This study contributes to the field by focusing on local gastronomy in rural communities. The archival research study focuses on 549 Cittaslow and non-Cittaslow towns and cities in 19 European countries. According to the research findings, rural towns offer more local gastronomy than cities, and towns with Cittaslow certification are more common than non-Cittaslow ones. The research suggests rural towns should focus on expanding their local gastronomy, and Cittaslow recommends expanding cities even further.

The last article is authored by Cecily Martinez, Amy Bardwell, Julie Schumacher, and Jennifer Barnes. This study is based on implementing six nutrient claims evaluated by a group of registered dietitians. The snack items were conveniently placed near the cash register to "nudge" purchases, and sales of snacks before and after the claims implementation were examined. The authors applied paired-sample t-tests and indicated that after nutrient claims were implemented, sales of snacks increased in both groups. Results indicate that nutrient claims that had a significant impact on sales differed between the two groups.

In addition to these five research papers, this second issue of JGHT also has two viewpoints. The first is an academic viewpoint, written by Prof. Stanislav Ivanov from Varna University of Management. He suggests academic research accepts and pays more attention to the economics of technologies in travel, tourism, and hospitality. According to Ivanov, travel, tourism, and hospitality (TTH) are intrinsically connected to technology. At the same time, tourists book their flights and accommodation through technology, reach their destination with the help of technology, explore the destination with technology, and share their experiences online with technology. Economic principles, like any other business, run them. Economic factors also drive their decisions to invest in technology. That is why academic research needs to acknowledge and pay more attention to the economics of technologies in travel, tourism, and hospitality. This academic viewpoint also outlines several directions for future research in the field.

The second viewpoint is industry-focused and is authored by Mr. Murat Toktaş. He is the founder/president of KATID (Black Sea Tourist Operators Association), the founder/president of SKAL Karadeniz, and the founder/vice-president of TUROYD (Tourism Hotel Managers Association) and a member of the Board of Directors of TUROFED (Turkish Hoteliers Federation). In his viewpoint, he explains how destination management organizations (DMOs) work with local governments in Turkey. He suggested a successful destination marketing strategy for the Turkish Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA). Collaboration between local and DMOs is essential for destinations to be adequately promoted and become a successful brands. Marketing is effective when a destination's artistic and cultural features are correctly promoted, as in the case of TGA. This viewpoint also concludes with several future research directions.