

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The influence of tour guide service quality on enhancing tourist experiences: A qualitative study in Bandarban, Bangladesh

Md. Hasan Imam Rifat^{1*}, Supria Rani Debi¹

¹Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Business Studies, Noakhali Science and Technology University, Noakhali, Bangladesh

Corresponding author: Md. Hasan Imam Rifat. email: hasan2114@student.nstu.edu.bd

Received: 16 August, 2025, Accepted: 12 December, 2025, Published: 15 December, 2025

Abstract

This research discusses the ability of tour guide services quality to improve tourist experiences, gratification and devotion in Bandarban, Bangladesh. Based on the qualitative study that entailed fifteen semi-structured interviews and observations, the results indicate that cultural interpretation, effective communications, hospitality, safety assurance, and flexibility are some of the main factors that are key to developing positive visitor experiences. Emotional connections, repeat visit, and achieving positive word-of-mouth were created by guides who integrated storytelling, language proficiency in a bilingual environment, and showered personal attention on the visitors. Additionally, active safety standards, genuine food suggestions, and insights into the ecology not only contribute to the experience of travelling, but also contributed to a positive image of the destination and thus created awareness of sustainability. The findings emphasize the role of tour guides as cultural facilitators of quality experience in the sense that they are not framed providers of services only but their professional skills and empathic interaction have a direct impact on the perceptions of tourists and their behavioral intentions. This paper underlines the necessity of specialized training courses on cultural competence, effective communication, sustainability, and crisis management as measures that can contribute to the improvement of service quality, tourism competitiveness, and long-term destination development. The given research can help to reveal an important role of guiding services in the development of visitor satisfaction and sustainable destination development because it shows how tour guides can produce transforming and memorable experiences.

Keywords: Tour guide; Tourist satisfaction; Communication skills; Safety management; Environmental awareness

Introduction

Tourism has in fact become a vital part of the world economy, with most states and regions venturing into ways of exploiting their natural, cultural and historical resources in order to gain tourists (Zahrah & Pangestu, 2018). Bandarban is a south eastern region of Bangladesh situated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the region is also considered a beautiful region of dramatic hills, rich tribal cultures and the favorite destination of adventure tourism. The tourists employ the services of registered local guides, preferably the ones with official

identification badges issued by the Tourism Development Department, to guarantee safety, genuine inquiry and more meaningful exposure. Tour guides play a critical role in the tourism sector since they are the crucial connection between the tourist destinations and tourists (Wong & Wang, 2009).

A tour operator or a travel agency hires a tour guide (also known as a tourist guide) with a professional certificate. This individual tags along with the tourism activities by following a tour program with the tourists or a tour group as a visitor on a given visit (Huang et al., 2010). Guides have a significant role in the tourism industry since they offer guidance, ideas and knowledge of the country to the Muslim tourists (Tangkliang et al., 2025). The role of tour guides is central in determining the kind of experiences that visitors go through and creating positive perceptions about the destination in the world tourism sector (Bafail & Hanbazazah, 2025). Guides are very important because they guide and take the roles of following visitors in new environments, in countries where communications are difficult to find due to language and cultural differences (Yılmaz et al., 2025). The tour guides also contribute significantly to establishing a relationship between the information provided and the visiting tourists (Pusparani et al., 2025). The satisfaction of tourists bears a large association to customer loyalty, revisit and positive word of mouth (C. L. Ellis & Vogelsong, 2003). The outcome-based satisfaction may be defined as customer satisfaction, which implies describing satisfaction in terms of the final state of the consumption process, or in terms of a process with a focus on the perception, evaluation, and psychological processes involved in customer satisfaction (Permana et al., 2024). Guided tours tend to greatly rely on professional competence and conduct of the tour guides who lead them, and these two factors can substantially influence the satisfaction of the visitors to the guided tours in terms of the service and the way the holiday looks to them (Black & Weiler, 2005; Carù & Cova, 2006; K.-C. Chang, 2014; Pereira, 2015; Zhang & Chow, 2004). This research paper aims at gaining insights into the importance of perceived service quality of tour guides in shaping the quality of tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty which are major tourist attractions within the area or city of Bandarban in Bangladesh. More precisely, the question it will tend to answer is related to the impact that tour guides can have on the general conception that visitors of the travel destination can develop regarding the travel experience they had there and how that can, in turn, influence their propensity to recommend the destination or visit it again. Special attention will be paid to determining which particular dimensions of the tour guide service quality including communication skills, knowledge of the destination, professional behavior, and empathy with the needs of tourists have the greatest influence on increasing the level of satisfaction the latter receive and enjoy during their overall experience in Bandarban.

This research paper is structured into a number of major structures. The literature review that follows the introduction documents the current theoretical and empirical studies that are associated with the quality of tourist guide services, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The qualitative research design is presented in the methodology section that includes the sampling procedures, data collection methods used, and data collected. Results analysis gives a detailed thematic result of interviews and observations. The discussion section is used to make the interpretation of the findings based on the theoretical frameworks and previous studies. Lastly, the conclusion is a summary of the major findings, implications, and future research recommendations.

The study will be a review of the general effect of tourist satisfaction and the impression about the destination, such as Bandarban, with the service quality provided by tour guides. It also aims at trying to understand the correlation of tour guide performance with behavioral intentions of tourist in terms of their readiness to visit Bandarban again and refer others about the destination. In addition, the paper will attempt to determine various dimensions that the study believes is most influential in the tour guide service quality like communication effectiveness, cultural knowledge, punctuality, friendliness, and ensuring of safety which will ultimately lead to formation of a pleasant and memorable experience by the tourist. In this way, this study would be able to

determine the areas of the tour guiding in Bandarban that needs to be improved so that the practices could result to high tourist satisfaction hence leading to the growth of sustainable tourism.

Literature Review

(Ap & Wong, 2001) pointed out that tour guides are not only seen as mediators in culture but also as the service troops that affect the value of a destination. Studying in Hong Kong, they found out that the competency and attitude of tour guides had a great impact on the way tourists evaluated their overall journey. Effective communication would also be synonymous with success in tour guiding. (Chang et al., 2022) found out that tourists who saw guides being easy to understand and stimulating in their explanations had a greater likelihood of rating their experiences as satisfying. The results showed that the clarity of communication and language proficiency directly affected the perception of the quality of service in a Taiwanese environment. On the same note, cultural interpretation is a necessary task. A study conducted by (Kim & Weiler, 2013) on cultural heritage tours revealed that guides with the capability to convey true, applicable, and emotionally appealing narrations are able to create a stronger rapport between the tourist and the place visited thereby increasing the level of satisfaction.

Additionally, professionalism and the ability to fulfill the task in time are also the dimensions of perceived service quality. (Zhang & Chow, 2004) conducted a study in China and revealed that the experience of managing time, ability to solve unforeseen problems, and a polite manner at all times during the trip were highly important factors on behalf of the tourists. According to Akbar & Wadud (2024), the factor of affective or emotional influences on customer satisfaction is based on individual feelings and experiences of the customer. Such qualities increased confidence and made a good impression overall. Moreover, the attribute of tour guides such as friendliness has been demonstrated to boost the element of interpersonal warmth, which, as (Huang et al., 2010) wrote, among other things, contributes to the development of emotions and the intention to recommend or revisit a destination in tourists. Finally, the primary duty of the tour guide is to give out safety and responsibility assurance. According to (Holloway, 1981), the psychological ease that is experienced by people because of the presence of a qualified and accountable guide when in an unfamiliar setting was crowned. When visitors feel safe and taken care of, it enables them to unwind and have a good time which they will recommend to another person.

Tour Guide

The article by (Binti et al., 2022) revealed a positive correlation between tourist satisfaction and service quality of the tour guides to be significant within the tourism industry of Malaysia.

Likewise, (Permana et al., 2024) have recounted that the quality of the tour guides is a very crucial determinant of tourist satisfaction in Indonesia, particularly when the guide shows professionalism, ability to communicate effectively, as well as emotional intelligence. (Ho, 2023) have highlighted that the role of tour guides, especially in trust and cultural interpretation, influences to a great extent the experiences of group tours and the satisfaction of tourists and whether they intend to travel in the future. This is similar to (Huang et al., 2010) who conducted a study in Shanghai that showed a direct correlation between the performance of tour guides and the development of satisfaction to guiding services as well as overall tour satisfaction.

Table 1. Contemporary studies on tour guide service

Author(s)	Title	Methodology	Key Findings
(Wang et al., 2025)	Rapport, satisfaction, and eWOM: Unpacking the impact of online tour guide influencers	Quantitative study	Online tour guide influencers build rapport through professional competencies and personal attributes, which enhances tourist satisfaction and fosters positive eWOM.
(Permana et al., 2024)	The Impact of Tour Guide Service Quality and Tourist Experience Towards Tourist Satisfaction in Discova Indonesia Tour and Travel	Quantitative research. (n=100)	Customer satisfaction can be defined as outcome-based satisfaction that describes satisfaction as the end state of the consumption experience, or as a process that emphasizes the perception, evaluation, and psychological processes that contribute to customer satisfaction.
(Syakier & Hanafiah, 2022)	Tour guide performances, tourist satisfaction and behavioural intentions: a study on tours in Kuala Lumpur city centre	Quantitative study (n=384)	TTour guide performance positively influences tourist satisfaction, which in turn enhances tourists' behavioral intentions, including their likelihood to revisit and recommend Kuala Lumpur.
(Lin et al., 2017)	How tour guides' professional competencies influence on service quality of tour guiding and tourist satisfaction: An exploratory research	Quantitative study. (n=120)	Tour guides' professional competencies significantly influence service quality, which in turn positively impacts tourist satisfaction.
(Çetinkaya & Öter, 2016)	Role of tour guides on tourist satisfaction level in guided tours and impact on re-visiting Intention: a research in Istanbul	Quantitative survey; factor analysis (n=530)	Tour guide performance positively influences tourist satisfaction, which in turn strongly affects tourists' intention to revisit Istanbul.

Source: authors

In addition, the interpretive performance and cultural competence are regarded as the focal point of provision of the memorable tourism. (Shi et al., 2023) showed that efficient cultural interpretation in tour guiding leads to the loyalty of the tourists that is revealed through the revisit desire and positive word-of-mouth. Within the assessing tour guide performance in Saudi Arabia, (Bafail & Hanbazazah, 2025) emphasized the idea that local cultural and historical knowledge is the most appreciated feature when considering the indicators of tour guide performance in the context of sustainable tourism. According to their observation, the ability of tour guides to relate the visitor to the cultural and environmental aspects of a destination could improve satisfaction as well as knowledge concerning sustainability. The quality of tour guide services is highly connected to the overall perceived tour. The findings of (Hwang et al., 2023) allowed the researchers to conclude that with the help of experience economy factors-- such as educational and esthetic value, the quality of services provided by tour guides can increase the levels of tour satisfaction and future travel behavior. Numerous authors investigated the issue of the quality of tour guide services which is shown in Table 1.

Dimensions of Tour Guide Service Quality

The level of the tour guide services also plays an essential role in the general satisfaction of the tourists and the quality to remember during the participating of such experiences. Communication has been touted as a core skill of the tour guide since it allows her to impart knowledge to the tourists in an effective and efficient manner. (Eren et al., 2025) point out that guides that can communicate stories effectively and consider the language to a variety of visitors make a huge contribution to increasing the comprehension of tourists and their satisfaction. On the same note, (Rivera & Croes, 2010) emphasize that the potential to convey the complex cultural and historical background in a form that is not hard to learn and grasp is vital to the enrichment of the visitor experience. The tourist experience is more physical and material, i.e., the comfort of facilities or quality of service (Sari et al., 2024).

Other than communication, the proficiency in cultural knowledge and how to read the local tradition and heritage in a local context is the most important. According (C.-F. Chen & Chen, 2010), guides capable of displaying high levels of cultural competence do not only teach visitors, but also establish a deeper understanding of how unique the destination is, which measure positively on satisfaction. Such cultural mediation activity motivates the tourists to participate more intensively in the place and enhances sustainable tourism through the conscious attitude towards the local traditions (Shi et al., 2023). The dimension of timeliness and professionalism figures out to be another driving force in impression of service quality. Tourists require the guide to be significant and disciplined in terms of schedules, good at logistics and the presentation should be professional. (Wu & Li, 2015) revealed the fact that the timeliness has a direct relationship with the trust and overall assessment of the tour by tourists since delays can decrease the perceived quality of the experience.

Assuring of safety has become a major component of service quality by tourists. (Huang et al., 2010) argue that guides that share embodied safety instructions clearly and take actions for the safety of the tourists eliminate risks and also make the tourists feel safe and secure, thus increasing the satisfaction levels.

Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions

A better perception of the overall travel experience will be created by obtaining satisfaction through positive interactions and sufficient services, which will make it enjoyable and memorable (Pusparani et al., 2025). Satisfaction among tourists is at the middle of deciding whether the tourist will revisit the place or will advise others to visit the place. (Constantin et al., 2022) also used site management and guided services as the pre-tour destinations study proposing a research article on the ecotourism across destinations in Romania. In their research article findings, it was discovered that satisfaction of site management and offered services led to a substantial variation in the level at which the tourists revisited their sites or services. Also, such a conclusion can be related to the heritage tourism setting whereby (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022) study revealed that positive impact of memorable tourism experiences, especially that induced by appealing storytelling and emotional involvement, was of high value in terms of tourist revisit and recommendation.

Another article focused on the outbound tourists of China, by (Chen et al., 2020), discovered that on tours enjoyment and emotional engagement was critical in determining the subsequent tourism behaviours. The guided interpretation is also important in strengthening satisfaction and loyalty. Cultural storytelling makes tourists feel emotionally and intellectually attached to a place and, as such, more willing to engage in positive word-of-mouth spreading. This was depicted by (Shi et al., 2023) in their research of heritage interpretation which showed that useful interactions with guides create loyalty via affective linkages.

Frameworks in Tour Guide Service Quality

The evaluation of tour guides has been improved in recent decades, and researchers have used numerous methodological tools, as well as paid attention to different sets of criteria (Bafail & Hanbazazah, 2025). Researchers have come up with different measures to evaluate and improve the quality of service providers in terms of tour guides. A prominent set of (Min, 2016) embraced the dual approach to mix the Delphi method with Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and came up with six dimensions of tour guide service quality: tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and cultural competency. These included execution ability coming at the top of the list of the most significant factors impacting perceived quality underlining the importance of a guide being able to pass information and handle the group in a proper way. In an analysis where Hong Kong tourism sector was the area of interest, (Chan et al., 2015) suggest a three-fold construct of core service delivery (e.g., itinerary planning and commentary), customer-targeted behavior (e.g., keeping the needs of the tourists in mind) and efficiency in communication. All these elements fall in line with the expectations of the tourists and are correlated positively with the levels of satisfaction (Chan et al., 2015). Equally, (Mak et al., 2011) placed a great deal of importance on emotional and cultural intelligence in their suggested scheme, revealing that guides who were culturally sensitive and interpersonally versatile had a profound effect on tourist life.

Also, most tourism literature modifies the SERVQUAL conceptualization first proposed by (Parasuraman et al., 1990) which comprises several dimensions that include: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The construct has been used to assess the quality of tour guide services, which are usually modified in various ways, including destination knowledge, and tour delivery narrative (Cheng et al., 2019).

Methodology

Research Approach

A qualitative research approach is essential in understanding how people speak and what emotional standards and perspectives they attain as it explains how people narrate their world knowledge (Bryman, 2016). This research uses qualitative research design as this research study aims at understanding the intensity of the service quality of tour guides with the tourists in Bandarban. Semi-structured interviews will be given to find extensive narratives involving both the tourists and local guides, which will allow the participants to provide their perceptions and experiences openly. The approach is aligned with several recent empirical cases when the study has focused on the same approach by placing increased emphasis on the evaluation of the qualitative traveller feedback as a leading factor (Agag & El-Masry, 2017; Nie et al., 2020). This study found that semi-structured interviews can be extremely effective in tourism research on the understanding of complex social phenomena as it is both directional and less constraining, and thus the data gathered is rich and contextualized (Eletxigerra et al., 2021). Moreover, the paper also uses expert information as the researcher will participate in guided tours to get a first-hand observation of the interaction between the guides and the tourists. Making use of participant observation, it is possible to trace the real-time communication process and verbal and non-verbal prompts as well as the context of the environment that defines the quality of the services (Li, 2014). This immersion acts as a validator and a complement to the data obtained through the interviews, since it complements them with an experience-based opinion.

Study Area, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

The research will be conducted in Bandarban, a hill district of southeastern Bangladesh which is highly culturally diverse, home to the indigenous people and with eco-tourism potential. The location holds immense potential to study the impacts of tour guide services quality on the experiences of visitors. Purposive sampling technique will be used to select the participants who will offer information-rich data often comprising of tourists who have recently undertaken guided tours and the tour guides who operate in the region. The commonness of the purposive sampling strategy in qualitative studies is well-founded as it guarantees that only participants directly related to the research civic aims of the study would be included (Vasileiou et al., 2018). To supplement the same, snowball sample will be applied, whereby the first respondents can refer other parties with appropriate experiences, especially in remote sections of tourism.

The size of the sample will not be restricted to a number but will be determined by the data saturation concept. According to the research by (Gandy, 2024), thematic saturation usually happens within homogeneous groups on the 12th interview, whereas according to (Hennink et al., 2017), up to 15 interviews might be necessary to reach a meaning saturation, which involves important aspects of the interview. Based on these suggestions, the proposed research will expect to have 20 semi-structured interviews, with the actual size depending on whether additional themes are defined (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Face-to-face interviews will be used where convenient but remote interviews will serve as a fallback to the participants in distant regions. The combination of purposive and snowball-snowball methods ensures that it produces rich and context-specific information with regard to the real nature of tour guiding and tourism experiences in Bandarban.

Sampling and Population

The research focused on two segments of the tourism ecosystem in Bandarban, which is firstly, the domestic and international tourists who have invested in the guided tour and secondly, the professional tour guides based in the area. It was purposive sampling because the participants included had to have firsthand and significant experiences with tour guide services to fully express deeper and context-sensitive information (Galletta, 2013). The sample constituted 15 participants (tourists and tour guides) and the sample size was considered fixed. Qualitative research standards informed this decision and point to the fact that even small samples carefully choosing can deliver rich and meaningful data (Anderson, 2023). Although the concept of data saturation that further interviews do not provoke even a single new theme was taken into account, previous research on tourism states that 15 participants are likely to be sufficient to collect a wide range of opinions and position to a depth of analysis.

The sample was recruited by using snowball sample of local tourism networks, suggestions by the community leaders as well as referrals of earlier respondents. Such method is particularly useful when dealing with the qualitative tourism researches when the participants can be either scattered or located within particular social groups (Noy, 2008). The demographic features of the participants were to be determined to obtain the true reflection of this study (Alvi, 2016). In this research paper, a purposive sampling technique was employed, where the respondents were selected because of their experiences as opposed to being randomly selected. The sample is described in Table 2 showing age, gender, nationality and occupation of the sample of 15 participants. The present study participants were persons of same nationality as the sample of Bangladesh (aged between 20 and 50) having a wide array of professional backgrounds.

Data Collection

This qualitative research will mostly rely on the semi-structured interviews and participant observation as a source of data collection. The semi-structured type of interviews is firmly established as an effective method to further develop the live experience, attitude, and perception of the participants and permits the freedom to ask questions concerning emergent issues (Kallio et al., 2016). The approach is also ideal in bringing out subtle views of tourists, as well as tour guides, on the quality of services in Bandarban.

Table 2. Demographic information

No.	Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Occupation
1	Jihad	40	M	Bangladesh	Private service
2	Saiful	34	M	Bangladesh	Programmer
3	Farhana	24	F	Bangladesh	Student
4	Mahmud	28	M	Bangladesh	Teacher
5	Nusrat	31	F	Bangladesh	Fitness trainer
6	Kamrul	35	M	Bangladesh	Game developer
7	Rafi	26	M	Bangladesh	Student
8	Shirin	29	F	Bangladesh	Web developer
9	Delwar	30	M	Bangladesh	Teacher
10	Ashraf	36	M	Bangladesh	Athlete
11	Dipika	43	F	Bangladesh	Air host
12	Imran	25	M	Bangladesh	Content creator
13	Rakib	23	M	Bangladesh	Consulting coordinator
14	Jabin	24	F	Bangladesh	Entrepreneur
15	Rahim	32	M	Bangladesh	Businessman

Source: authors.

The interviews will be face-to-face wherever feasible resulting in the participants being in a better position to engage in richer communication laced with both verbal and non-verbal cues however, virtual interviews are an option when face-to-face meetings are impossible (Johannessen et al., 2025). Research questions will be established with an aim of developing a research interview guide which will be geared towards trying to capture the concept of communication effectiveness, cultural interpretation, and this will be done by obtaining overall satisfaction of the tour guide services provided. The guide would also enable them to report some insights that they did not expect when they started the research. Table 2 presents the demographic profiles of the 15 participants, encompassing their age, gender, nationality, and occupation.

Besides interviews, the use of participant observation will also be used where the researcher will join a few guided tours and check out interactions, behaviors, and situational attributes affecting service quality (Prough, 2022). The benefit of this method is that it gives credibility to the self-reported data and first-hand insight on the process of tour guiding in its natural context. All interview sessions shall be audio-taped with the consent of the participants and transcribed word-to-word with accuracy being their aim in analysis. Observation field notes will be also kept. The interview with the observational results collected will contribute to the triangulation of results and, therefore, higher trustworthiness and richness of the study (Flick, 2018).

Results and discussions

Tour Guide Knowledge of Local Culture

(Ap & Wong, 2001) point out that intense cultural interpretation is crucial to the enhancement of tourist experiences, which renders sightseeing into a worthwhile cultural experience. Proper cultural interpretation is useful in enabling tourists to have clearer perceptions and value of the uniqueness of the heritage of the location they visit thereby making their experiences memorable (Iacob et al., 2024). In addition, stories blending historical facts and personal or communal stories motivate the tourists to experience the stories emotionally and cognitively to enhance an increased connection to the location (Cohen, 1985). This indicates that simultaneously integrating factual knowledge with the storytelling skills of the guide is a key component toward establishing an immersive experience that could appeal to the tourists on a variety of levels. In such a way, guides not only help to understand it intellectually but manage to bring emotional connections with a destination. As observed by one of the respondents of this study, Nusrat, commented:

“The history the tour guide provided on the history of the tribal communities was rich in context and very vivid, a kind of experience that made one feel immersed in the past as it was happening in the present. His narration was not just a matter of fact, it included the cultural connotations and interpretative skills that enhanced the level of comprehension and emotional connection as well.”

All this elaborate account of history and stories indicate that the guide has the capacity to contextualize information and this leads to what (Poria et al., 2003) define as meaningful cultural tourism that goes beyond mere observation at the surface. This underlines the significance of depth and context in interpretation, which allows the tourists to think the destination as a living culture instead of it being a set of attractions.

Similarly, another participant of this study, Rafi, stated,

“I found it helpful that the guide discussed the local customs, and was very informative, thus, giving a lot of cultural background to understand the community better. Nevertheless, sometimes I had the impression that it would have been better to include more firsthand stories and personal examples told by the residents. These tales would have provided more information about the experience of it, perhaps building the idea as related more closely with emotion, and the culture in more of a palatable way.”

This inclination to hear the local voices corresponds with the existential authenticity proposed by (Ning, 2017) stating that tourists are looking to find real experiences that allow them to relate to people and places. Guides can also use personal experiences to augment the reality of the experience which was found to boost tourist satisfaction and connection to the emotional value (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010). It highlights that personal narratives may be integrated into tours to help bolster the emotional connections that tourists have with the destination, leading to more fulfilment and, conceivably, increased repeat visitation.

Communication and Language Skills

According to (Zhang & Chow, 2004), the achievement of proficiency in language is regarded as one of the key service quality attributes of tour guides since it propagates the ability of adjusting the communication to different audiences. Communicative competence, both nonverbal and verbal, of tour guides positively and statistically

influences the satisfaction of tourists (Priharjuna et al., 2025). Easy and flexible communication will help not only to understand each other but also to decrease the feeling of anxiety, which is important in multicultural tourism environments (Ap & Wong, 2001). Moreover, body language including tone of the voice, pace, and gestures also play a highly significant role towards the success or failure of the message (Gudykunst, 2004). Jihad, one of the respondents, opined that through verbal and non-verbal communication, proficient tour guides can easily attend to different groups, thus a more inclusive and comfortable environment is realized by the tourists. Communication therefore becomes a solution bridge that narrows a down on misunderstandings and increases the overall satisfaction. Jihad shared,

“Communication in the guide was expressive and well-articulated in English, which ensured that information was being passed across effectively to the rest. He was also linguistically flexible in the sense that he could effortlessly switch to Bangla when asked to do so and observed the wishes of the group. This bilingual method created a feeling of comfort, inclusivity, and cultural affiliation in the respondents, hence making the tour experience more fulfilling.”

This language versatility implies the competency of the guide in handling diversity of the group, this supported the argument by (Huang et al., 2010) that bilingual guides enhance the sense of belonging and satisfaction of the tourists.

Similarly, a participant, Delwar, added,

“The measurement of the guide had a clear and well-articulated speaking style that aids in understanding and especially in non-native speakers, hence the ability to understand the factors contributing to tour content accessibility. Nevertheless, adding the aspects of humor or interactive activity may contribute to the increased levels of participant attentiveness and preserve a high level of interactivity in the process.”

It is acknowledged that humor can also be used in tourism as it helps build a relaxed environment as well as helps form social bonds (Pabel, 2016). Integration of humor is in line with the affective communication methods, which boost engagement and impression on tourists in a positive manner (Krolikowska et al., 2020). Therefore, humor integration is not only able to make the tour more engaging; it builds stronger social networks, which result in more favorable ratings and word of mouth spreading.

Friendliness and Hospitality

According to (Volchek, 2020), friendly touristic behavior gives rise to emotional attachments and increased tourist satisfaction. Hospitality in tourism means more than providing services to include personal care and cordiality of the interpersonal relationship in the process, and this has been correlated with the quality of the tourist experience as a whole (Pizam & Ellis, 1999). According to social exchange theory (Homans, 1958), such positive social interaction promotes mutual feeling of goodwill of tourists. This means that in cases when guides express genuine friendliness toward tourists, they will feel more appreciated and emotionally attached thus helping the overall experience and urgency to recommend the destination a great deal.

One of the respondents who are referred to as Imran remembered:

“Since the first moment of meeting the guide, he was very friendly and helpful even beyond the framework of the tour activities. There was that human element which counted.”

This individual attention adds to the feeling of added value of the experience and this has been shown to result to a positive word-of-mouth publicity (Mattila & Enz, 2002). These little personalized care indicates how minor acts enhance building of trust and loyalty which form an important key towards long-term satisfaction of tourists and positive destination image. Another participant, Jabin, echoed:

“The guide was always open and friendly, smiling a lot and greeting every participant by name which promoted a feeling of individualized attention. This customized attention added to the environment of camaraderie, which made participants feel like having been invited to be valued guests instead of seeing themselves as of customers.”

As Enjelita et al. (2025) claim, interpersonal communication, such as, openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality, plays a vital role in improving the quality of relationships between tourists and tour guides, which, in turn, substantially contributes to increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty levels. Another important relational skills is the capability of remembering names and creating familiarity that boosts the feelings of belonging and trust to tourists (Pearce, 2005). These affective factors change the guiding experience to the relational form instead of transactional thereby enhancing visitor loyalty (Hosany & Witham, 2010). The shift highlights the imperativeness of having an emotional connection in service interactions implying that the content of relational warmth is the most significant motivator in the creation of memorable tourism and repeat visits.

Safety and Comfort

According to (Morgan & Dimmock, 2006), safety management was found to be one of the main core competencies of tour guides to guarantee the safety of the tourists, in risky activities. The sense of safety directly relates to the satisfaction and intention to offer their services in adventure tourism activities undertaken by tourists (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). The offer of reassurance and active risk management is key elements of quality guiding (Hall et al., 2012). This explains the immense importance of guides as conduits of experience as well as the keepers of safety, where their watchfulness is able to reduce anxieties and bring about trust. Efficient safety management thus, would play a great role in the spreading a favorable opinion about the tour. On this note, Kamrul explained,

“At some point, our guide would visit us in the track and to ensure that we were all fine, notably as we went through slippery areas.”

The presence of guides and regular check-ups show duty of care and this gives a reassurance to the tourists that they are secure and eliminates their anxiety (Becken & Simmons, 2002).

Ashraf, another participant, has made an interesting comment,

“I also felt very safe during my tour because there was a time in which the guide always stood in front of the group to be a leader. His active preparation of pointing out and mentioning possible risks even prior to our actual experience of it showed a very high situational awareness and care about the wellness of participants. This level of attention reduced physical danger as well as increased the whole level of trust and confidence in the guiding service.”

Such proactive leadership is not pertinent to situational leadership in outdoor tourism expeditions (Vigane & Dyrstad, 2022) by which tourist safety is mitigated as tsunamis and volcanoes are predicted, and the overall experience is made more comforting. That kind of insightful behavior is characteristic of how tour guides can establish a safety in the environment so that tourists will enjoy their surroundings to the max without losing focus or getting scared, increasing satisfaction and their readiness to share the experience with friends.

Local Food Recommendations

(Kivela & Crotts, 2006) point out that the roles of food experiences in creating destination image and general tourist satisfaction are critical. Country specific culinary tourism has come into the limelight as a medium to exchange and immerse culture (Long & Lexington, 2004). The tour guides are cultural mediators, who open up cultures to genuine food experiences, which in many cases might bypass them (Wheeller, 2005). This demonstrates the extension of tourism not only through sightseeing, but using guides in the overall visitor experience in engaging the senses and most importantly the culture of the destination to the tourist, making them to relate to local customs through food. Guides facilitate knowledge and understanding of the culture and culinary pleasures in a foreign setting by acting as a liaison between the scene and a tourist. The same thing was declared by Mahmud,

“The guide took us to a small local restaurant that is known to have some of the best bamboo chicken thus giving us a taste of the local culinary experience. It is doubtful that we would have found this special dining experience without having his help.”

This advice justifies the work of tour guides to introduce the tourists to the culinary gems of a place, bringing them better knowledge and enjoyment of the local (A. Ellis et al., 2018). One of the respondents, Shirin, shared,

“It had a riverside tea stall, the guide suggested as to where to reach there and the tea provided was far better in quality and the experience to the senses was to remember. This suggestion gave us a feeling of exploring an original, less popular place, which contributed to the cultural immersion of the tour in general.”

Tasting the features of the local dishes provides the tourists with the overall satisfaction with the trip, and the image of the destination is also reinforced, which often triggers the desire to visit a specific place again or recommend it to others (Martin et al., 2021) . The special gastronomic experiences contribute to tourists developing long-term memories attached to place, which in turn can develop an emotional connection and motivate future visitation or incentive to refer.

Environmental Awareness

(Ham & Weiler, 2007) point out that a specially prominent part in environmental education is played by tour guides who incorporate the messages about conservation in their remarks. It has been found that an educative trip, which explains to a tourist what the environmental attitude should be, has a chance of shaping the attitude and prodding the tourist to think sustainably (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011). Dipika, one of the participants, emphasizes, the role of guide, not only as informer but also as the agent of behavior alteration, where the constant messaging in the environment might allow developing awareness and responsible attitude towards touristic

activities among the travelers. The educational interventions are very essential in propagating sustainability in the natural tourism destinations. Dipika reflected,

“I also liked the guide who was keen in reminding us about collecting and disposing our plastic bottles to ensure environmental conservation. Further, the fact that he was keen on disrupting local wildlife as little as possible was an indicator of the desire to leave the natural system untouched and develop a respectful approach to tourism.” This reinforces Ballantyne and Packer’s (2011) findings that consistent environmental reminders during tours can increase tourists’ sense of responsibility.”

Another participant, Saiful, left a comment,

“The discussion on the effects of waste pollution in the local waterfalls within the guide made me as an individual to think seriously about my personal environmental practices. His observations successfully made the point of the impact of each person on the natural ecosystems, promoting greater responsibility in people.”

These thoughts reflect on transformative theory of learning (Mezirow, 2015) where new ways of thinking can lead to changes in behavior by the tourists after exposure to new views as it happens in tours. This implies that highly educated guides can develop learning experiences which lead to influencing tourists towards maintaining a pro-environmental attitude forming their long run behaviour of preserving fragile ecosystems.

Problem-Solving and Flexibility

According to the findings of (Mak et al., 2011), because flexibility in dealing with unexpected eventualities increases tourist trust and satisfaction. Dynamic tourism contexts require the capacity to adapt in these circumstances, and the premises of contingency theory (Fiedler, 1964) which states that situational circumstances are necessary to make successful leaders. Our participant Farhana was surprised by the leadership of the tour guide. This flexibility indicates the significance of adaptive leadership in tourism, where guides have to describe emerging conditions and decide quickly to generate a positive tour. Flexibility does not only negate the adverse effects but can also stimulate the emergence of memorable situations that will positively affect the way tourists perceive the quality of the services. Farhana said,

“Upon the breakdown of our jeep, the guide quickly found an alternative transport by hiring a local van and this meant that the program was interrupted the least. Moreover, he managed to put the situation into a different perspective of the whole adventure, keeping morale of the group and maximising on the tour experience.”

Tour guides are seen to offer high-quality service where they are flexible allowing them to handle any complaints or unpredicted experiences, responsive, and their tourists leave a report of increased satisfaction with the entire tour (Songshan et al., 2010). The given statement demonstrates that flexibility can make the potentially negative event a positive experience, which is confirmed (Hewlett & Brown, 2018) who emphasize that it is very crucial to frame issues as challenges in tourism.

Similarly, another participant, Rahim, recalled,

“The rain had negatively impacted our normal setting of going on hikes but our guide was rather proactive and had made us a proposal of attending a culture show instead. This very meaningful shift saved not only the day, it actually turned out to be the most unforgettable and rewarding point of my trip.”

By proposing real options when disturbances occur, the satisfaction levels of the tourists will be sustained and fulfill the observation of (Cohen, 1985) that flexibility will contribute to the overall tourist satisfaction by facilitating any other smooth activities. This active problem-solving makes the tourists stick to it and be open to new experiences which is crucial in the development of resilience and satisfaction to deal with unpredictability in situations in the context of travel.

Theoretical Perspectives

The quality of tour guide services can be more comprehended when one applies the set theoretical frameworks that purport to show how tourists perceive and assess their experience. Here, two significant theories will apply which are Social Exchange Theory and Experiential Marketing Theory.

According to Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958) the society is governed by reciprocity in the sense that there are imbalance exchanges that hold satisfaction and loyalty depending on other perceivable gains. This is shown by the manner tourists view the friendliness factor and a personalized attention to them as a worthwhile social bonus by the guide.

One of the respondents, Rahim, said

“Starting with the first meeting on the first day of our tour, the guide showed a very warm and welcoming fare which showed her eagerness to help even when it was not part of the planned things to do during the tour period. Such a personalized care greatly contributed to our overall experience and helped us to feel a lot of care and support.”

Similarly, Dipika shared,

“To facilitate such a relaxing environment, the guide was always smiling and welcoming, which was very pleasant and friendly during the tour. He also cared to remember and address each of the participants by their first names and this personalized the experience. This kind of interest created a feeling of camaraderie and we did not feel like customers but people who are appreciated as friends.”

These quotes demonstrate that based on felt experience of emotional valuing and personal recognition, the tourists can be more ready to form favorable attitudes and inclination to *wurdenlab2009return*, which is aligned with social exchange psychological phenomenon of reciprocity.

The Experiential Marketing Theory (Schmitt, 1999) underlines that a holistic, sensory-emotional experience should be created which evokes emotional appeal to the customers on sensory, emotional and cognitive levels. This theory assists in explaining the great effect of immersive narration and cultural analysis which occur during visiting.

Rakib, a participant in this study, stated,

“The tour guide had explained in a detailed and rich manner, which led to a very immersive experience so as to make me feel that I was traveling backwards into the past. His narrations were not his recounting of just matters of fact but he constructed purposeful narratives that implied the cultural value and life of people being communicated.”

In the meantime, Farhana made this remark,

“The guide was very well explained about the local customs that provided me a good cultural experience and made me understand the locals much better. There were however times when I wondered why he just did not include more personal stories and first-hand accounts of local residents. The addition of such narratives would have given a more individual, richer idea of what the nature of the lived experiences was like in the community.”

Tourist guided storytelling greatly increases the emotional, experiential and educational perceived values of the tourists, and contributes to the co-creation of meaningful and memorable tourism experiences (Leong et al., 2024). It is in such contemplations that one gets to realize that rich stories and genuine cultural interaction with the tourists will help them connect profoundly, satisfying the urge to have good experiences that are memorable, changing. This experiential augmentation can be linked to the emphasis of (Schmitt, 1999) of trying to induce emotional and cognitive value which are not restricted to service delivery.

These two theoretical perspectives used together emphasize that tour guides shape the perceptions and behaviors of tourists by engaging them socially and structuring their experience to indicate the complexity of service quality in services of tourism.

The results of the research emphasize the central task of tour guides in defining the tourist experience (culture-emotional-experience) and support the already existing theoretical approaches to service quality and satisfaction of tourists. In line with deep cultural interpretation emphasis made by (Ap & Wong, 2001), the capability of the guide to contextualize the historical facts using meaningful narrations was identified as one of the factors which made the generation of immersive experiences. This strategy can be applied to the concept of (Moscardo, 1996) who considers that a cultural interpretation can turn passive sightseeing into active cultural experience that leads not only to intellectual but also to emotional committal. It coincides with the statements (Cohen, 1985) and (Ning, 2017) on the role of the authentic, emotionally intense experience in satisfying the tourist craving to live up existentially. The participants are appreciative of the tales beyond the facts that considerably involve the cultural meanings and personal histories. Therefore, guides that effectively combine local voices and personal stories in a well-blended mixture will intensify emotional connections of tourists and increase satisfaction.

Leaders are found to be able to change the passive sightseeing experience into an active cultural and emotional experience when they employ culturally relevant narrative interpretation, that is, the use of local voices, history, folklore and place-identity, and general satisfaction with place among tourists extends when guides employ culturally relevant narrative interpretation to engage tourists (Karacaoğlu, 2024). Another skill that emerged was communication skills in carrying out inclusive and accessible settings, especially in multicultural tourism settings. Linguistic flexibility of the guide, when he alternated both English and Bangla, overcame the problem of language barrier and created a cordial environment, which supports the findings by (Zhang & Chow, 2004) and (Huang et al., 2010) on the need of bilingual competence to create a greater sense of belonging by tourists. Furthermore, the recommendations given by the participants to use humor more often allow considering that the communication techniques based on affect can help to sustain interest and provide a relaxed atmosphere in social interactions as suggested by (Krolikowska et al., 2020; Pabel, 2016).

The results also demonstrate how warm interpersonal relationships and personal attention can affect the overall experience of the tourists. The warmth of the guide, the frequent references to personal names and help outside the tour formalities are illustrations of the relational side of hospitality given by (Wong & Wang, 2009) and (Pizam & Ellis, 1999). Such gestures can be seen through the concept of Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958) in which it serves as a social reward that generates a goodwill appreciated on both sides, thus making tourists more attached and loyal to the company organization (Mattila & Enz, 2002). This kind of affective engagement not only makes the guiding service to be a social encounter rather than a transaction but helps in positive word-of-mouth and repeat visitation.

The security and the comfort were also recognized as those elements of tour quality that is inherent. Proactive attitude to safety as demonstrated by the guide (leadership of the group, pointing out hazards, etc.) increased the level of trust and decreased the level of anxiety of the tourists, validating the results of both (Morgan & Dimmock, 2006) and (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005) regarding direct correlation between the perception of safety and satisfaction. This type action at the top is representative of the situational leadership theory (Vigane & Dyrstad, 2022) and shows how the vigilance of guides has made the environment safe where tourists can participate in the experience to its fullest.

Local cuisine suggestions offered the tours a cultural peculiarity, which functions as sensual entrances of access to the heritage of the place. The guide served as a cultural mediator by showing guests of the country the real culinary experiences of the culture, which helped in supporting the idea of cultural exchange with food which is called culinary tourism (Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Wheeler, 2005). Place identity emerges by means of these gastronomic interactions, which supplements the tourists with memories and binds them emotionally to the place (Oh et al., 2007).

Sustainability and environmental awareness were part of the guiding service. The outstanding habit of the guide to remind, comment and educate on the topic of waste management and wildlife respect used, proved to be a winning tactic of interpretation (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011; Ham & Weiler, 2007). These interventions are in line with transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2015), implying that competent guides will have the opportunity to do so by motivating visitors to behave in a fashion that aligns with responsible tourism principles, without which the intact ecosystem becomes threatened.

Lastly, the versatility and troubleshooting skills of the guide towards unseen difficulties, injuries to any means of transport and weather interferences proved vital in ensuring tourist satisfaction that was at its peak. This flexibility is a factor of both contingency theory (Fiedler, 1964) and the use of reframing negative events into positive experiences (Hewlett & Brown, 2018). The ability to introduce alternative activities and keep the morale of the group was shown by the guide as he effectively used situational leadership thus increasing resilience and the quality of the tourism experience as a whole.

The combined results allude to the complexity of what entails tour guide service quality consisting of cultural knowledge, communicability, friendliness, safety management, cultural mediation through foods, environmental learning, and adaptive leadership. With theoretical underpinnings of Social Exchange and Experiential Marketing, the research cements the fact that proper guidance extends beyond factual provision, builds emotionally appealing, culturally accurate and non-forgettable experiences that contributes to tourist satisfaction and loyalty in addition to sustainable destination development.

Conclusion

This paper shows the pivotal role played by tour guides in influencing the cultural knowledge, emotive experiences and overall satisfaction of the tourists when they have a visit to Bandarban. The results show that

tour guides are not only sources of information but cultural brokers that can convert the usual sightseeing into highly-significant and self-enhancing events. Providing culturally-contextualized interpretations in combination with their bilingualism skills and the appropriate application of humor make them more accessible and involving to various types of visitors. The ability to make the human relationship genuine and to create the human warmth between people is equally significant in enhancing the social environment of the tour and developing emotional commitment, loyalty of the visitors and favorable word-of-mouth.

Besides, the research also points out the active involvement of guides in safety and comfort as well as logistical organization during the travelling experience. Their forward-thinking approach to the risks and difficulties, including weather disturbances or transport-related problems proves the dynamicity and responsiveness of the tour guiding profession. Such flexibility not only ensures that dissatisfaction is at a minimum level but in many cases unexpected circumstances become central and enjoyable experiences to the tourists. Besides this, the focus of guides on environmental education and traditional cultural practices enhances the learning aspect of tourism by making tourists explore destinations in more responsible, ethical and sensorial ways.

On the whole, the findings support the idea that the quality of tour guiding has a great impact on the satisfaction of tourists, their emotional attachment to the destination, and their sustainable behavior. This set of results highlights the need to invest in lifelong learning among tour guides with emphasis on cultural sensitivity, interpretive communication, environmental responsibility, and management of crisis events. These competencies will not only improve the experiences of the individual tourists but also lead to the sustainable development and the desirable destination image of the cultural tourism destinations like Bandarban.

Further studies should be conducted on the changing nature of tour guiding in future by discussing how digital technologies and hybrid forms of guiding can be used to supplement the traditional forms of guiding. Also, research that examines the environmental conservation guiding behavior effects on the long-term behavior of guiding would prove helpful. Collectively, these areas of investigation can advance the current knowledge on tour guiding as a multi-dimensional profession and a key factor that can bring sustainable and transformative tourism experiences.

Declaration

Acknowledgment: The authors would like to wholeheartedly express gratitude to all participants in Bandarban who shared their precious experiences, which served as the basis to complete this study. It is also appreciated by the support and help given by family and peers during the research.

Funding: The authors declare that the research presented in the text of the article was self-financed.

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflict of interest associated with the publication of this paper.

Ethics approval/declaration: The authors assure that no violations of publication ethics and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Consent to participate: All participants agree.

Consent for publication: All participants agree.

Data availability: The data used in this study were collected from those tourists who visited Bandarban, Bangladesh.

Authors' contribution: **1) Md. Hasan Imam Rifat:** Conceptualization, writing-original draft, analysis of results and findings and discussion, manuscript structure. **2) Supria Rani Debi:** Literature review, methodology and Data collection.

AI Generative text statement: The authors hereby declare that they did not use generative artificial intelligence tools during the preparation of the manuscript.

References

- Agag, G. M., & El-Masry, A. A. (2017). Why do consumers trust online travel websites? Drivers and outcomes of consumer trust toward online travel websites. *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(3), 347–369. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287516643185>
- Akbar, A., & Wadud, M. (2024). The Effect Of Speed And Reliability Of Service On Customer Satisfaction Mediated By Employee Performance In Using Agency Services At PT Bukit Prima Bahari. *Management Studies and Entrepreneurship Journal*, 5(2), 5138–5154.
- Alvi, M. (2016). *A manual for selecting sampling techniques in research*. Munich Personal RePEc Archive. <https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/id/eprint/70218>
- Ap, J., & Wong, K. K. (2001). Case study on tour guiding: Professionalism, issues and problems. *Tourism Management*, 22(5), 551–563. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(01\)00013-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(01)00013-9)
- Bafail, O., & Hanbazazah, A. (2025). Optimizing Tour Guide Selection: A Best–Worst Scaled Assessment of Critical Performance Criteria for Enhanced Tour Quality. *Sustainability*, 17(9), 4213. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17094213>
- Ballantyne, R., & Packer, J. (2011). Using tourism free-choice learning experiences to promote environmentally sustainable behaviour: The role of post-visit ‘action resources.’ *Environmental Education Research*, 17(2), 201–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2010.530645>
- Becken, S., & Simmons, D. G. (2002). Understanding energy consumption patterns of tourist attractions and activities in New Zealand. *Tourism Management*, 23(4), 343–354. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(01\)00091-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(01)00091-7)
- Binti, N. H., Halidin, I., Yuricka, A. V., Izzudin, M. Z. A., & Rahmany, F. (2022). The the quality of tour guides on tourists’ satisfaction in Malaysia tourism industry. *TOBA: Journal of Tourism, Hospitality, and Destination*, 1(2), 99–104. <https://doi.org/10.55123/toba.v1i2.603>
- Black, R., & Weiler, B. (2005). Quality assurance and regulatory mechanisms in the tour guiding industry: A systematic review. *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 16(1), 24–37.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press. <https://global.oup.com/ukhe/product/brymans-social-research-methods-9780198796053?cc=bd&lang=en&elderly>
- Carù, A., & Cova, B. (2006). Expériences de consommation et marketing expérientiel. *Revue Française de Gestion*, 162(3), 99–113. <https://doi.org/10.3166/rfg.162.99-115>
- Çetinkaya, M. Y., & Öter, Z. (2016). Role of tour guides on tourist satisfaction level in guided tours and impact on re-visiting Intention: A research in Istanbul. *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation*, 7(1), 40–54. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ejthr-2016-0005>
- Chan, A., Hsu, C. H. C., & Baum, T. (2015). The Impact of Tour Service Performance on Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions: A Study of Chinese Tourists in Hong Kong. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 32(1–2), 18–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2014.986010>
- Chang, K.-C. (2014). Examining the Effect of Tour Guide Performance, Tourist Trust, Tourist Satisfaction, and Flow Experience on Tourists’ Shopping Behavior. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 19(2), 219–247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2012.739189>
- Chang, K.-Y., Chang, W.-H., & Yeh, Y.-C. (2022). How to improve tour leaders and guides service performance through emotional display rules—The moderating effect of job stress. *Journal of Tourism and Services*, 13(25), 156–175. <https://doi.org/10.29036/jots.v13i25.403>

- Chen, C.-F., & Chen, F.-S. (2010). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions for heritage tourists. *Tourism Management* 31(1), 29–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.02.008>
- Chen, X., Cheng, Z., & Kim, G.-B. (2020). Make it memorable: Tourism experience, fun, recommendation and revisit intentions of Chinese outbound tourists. *Sustainability*, 12(5), 1904. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12051904>
- Cheng, Y.-S., Kuo, N.-T., Chang, K.-C., & Chen, C.-H. (2019). How a Tour Guide Interpretation Service Creates Intention to Revisit for Tourists from Mainland China: The Mediating Effect of Perceived Value. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 15(1), 84–104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388160.2018.1517067>
- Cohen, E. (1985). The tourist guide: The origins, structure and dynamics of a role. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12, 5–29. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(85\)90037-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(85)90037-4)
- Constantin, C. P., Ispas, A., & Candrea, A. N. (2022). Examining the relationships between visitors profile, satisfaction and revisit intentions: Evidence from Romanian ecotourism destinations. *Land*, 11(2), 186. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11020186>
- Eletxigerra, A., Barrutia, J. M., & Echebarria, C. (2021). Tourist expertise and pre-travel value co-creation: Task-related processes and beyond. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 37, 100772. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100772>
- Ellis, A., Park, E., Kim, S., & Yeoman, I. (2018). What is food tourism? *Tourism Management*, 68, 250–263. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.03.025>
- Ellis, C. L., & Vogelsong, H. (2003). Assessing indicators relating to overall tourist satisfaction of ecotourism developments in Eastern North Carolina. In R. Schuster (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 2002 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium (Gen. Tech. Rep. NE-302, Pp. 52–57)*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northeastern Research Station., 302. <https://doi.org/10.2737/NE-GTR-302>
- Enjelita, N. L. D., Wijayanti, N. P. E., & Rahadiarta, I. G. N. P. S. (2025). Interpersonal Communication for English-Speaking Tour Guides at Discova in Improving Relationship Quality and Tourist Satisfaction. *J-TRUE: Journal of Travel and Leisure*, 2(1), 1–10.
- Eren, A. S., Dedeoğlu, B. B., & Okumus, F. (2025). Does tour guides' ethical behavior matter for tourists' revisit and recommendation intentions? Examining with a gender perspective. *Tourism Review*, 80(5), 1017–1033. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-10-2023-0708>
- Fiedler, F. E. (1964). A contingency model of leadership effectiveness. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 149–190). Elsevier. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0065260108600519>
- Flick, U. (2018). *Designing qualitative research*. <https://www.torrossa.com/gs/resourceProxy?an=5019380&publisher=FZ7200>
- Galletta, A. (2013). *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: From research design to analysis and publication* (Vol. 18). NYU Press. <https://chooser.crossref.org/?doi=10.18574%2Fnyu%2F9780814732939.001.0001>
- Gandy, K. (2024). How many interviews or focus groups are enough? *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 24(3), 211–223. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035719X241266964>
- Gudykunst, W. B. (2004). *Bridging differences: Effective intergroup communication*. Sage. <https://sk.sagepub.com/book/mono/bridging-differences-4e/toc>

- Hall, C. M., Timothy, D. J., & Duval, D. T. (2012). *Safety and security in tourism: Relationships, management, and marketing*. Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9780203049464/safety-security-tourism-michael-hall-dallen-timothy-david-timothy-duval>
- Ham, S. H., & Weiler, B. (2007). Isolating the Role of On-site Interpretation in a Satisfying Experience. *Journal of Interpretation Research*, 12(2), 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109258720701200202>
- Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2017). Code Saturation Versus Meaning Saturation: How Many Interviews Are Enough? *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(4), 591–608. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316665344>
- Hewlett, D., & Brown, L. (2018). Planning for tranquil spaces in rural destinations through mixed methods research. *Tourism Management*, 67, 237–247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.01.011>
- Ho, C.-H. (2023). Examining The Relationship Between The Roles Of Tour Guides, Their Service Quality, And Tourists' Behaviour In Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. *Journal On Tourism & Sustainability*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8044862>
- Holloway, J. C. (1981). The guided tour a sociological approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 8(3), 377–402. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(81\)90005-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(81)90005-0)
- Homans, G. C. (1958). Social Behavior as Exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(6), 597–606. <https://doi.org/10.1086/222355>
- Hosany, S., & Witham, M. (2010). Dimensions of Cruisers' Experiences, Satisfaction, and Intention to Recommend. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(3), 351–364. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287509346859>
- Hwang, J., Joo, K., & Moon, J. (2023). Relationships among experience economy, tour quality, tour satisfaction, and word-of-mouth in the senior tourism context in Korea: The moderating role of tour guiding services. *Sustainability*, 15(8), 6367. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15086367>
- Iacob, V., De Jesus, S. N., & Carmo, C. (2024). An overview of mindfulness theories applied to tourism: Systematic review update and bibliometric analysis. *Quality & Quantity*, 58(3), 2213–2235. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-023-01736-2>
- Johannessen, L. E. F., Rasmussen, E. B., & Haldar, M. (2025). Five Misconceptions About Interview Modes or: How to Improve Our Thinking About Face-to-Face Versus Remote Interviewing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 24, 16094069251317808. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069251317808>
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), 2954–2965. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031>
- Karacaoğlu, S. (2024). The Role and Power of Tour Guides as Storytellers in Cultural Heritage Tourism. *Journal of Management and Economic Studies (JOMAES)*, 6(2). <https://avesis.bilecik.edu.tr/yayin/4e3f92ce-a66b-42d3-aec2-4adfc21daed/the-role-and-power-of-tour-guides-as-storytellers-in-cultural-heritage-tourism>
- Kim, A. K., & Weiler, B. (2013). Visitors' attitudes towards responsible fossil collecting behaviour: An environmental attitude-based segmentation approach. *Tourism Management*, 36, 602–612. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.08.005>
- Kivela, J., & Crotts, J. C. (2006). Tourism and Gastronomy: Gastronomy's Influence on How Tourists Experience a Destination. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 30(3), 354–377. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348006286797>
- Kolar, T., & Zabkar, V. (2010). A consumer-based model of authenticity: An oxymoron or the foundation of cultural heritage marketing? *Tourism Management*, 31(5), 652–664. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.07.010>

- Krolikowska, E., Kuenzel, S., & Morrison, A. M. (2020). The ties that bind: An attachment theory perspective of social bonds in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(22), 2839–2865. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2019.1677571>
- Leong, A. M. W., Yeh, S.-S., Zhou, Y., Hung, C.-W., & Huan, T.-C. (2024). Exploring the influence of historical storytelling on cultural heritage tourists' value co-creation using tour guide interaction and authentic place as mediators. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 50, 101198.
- Li, M. (2014). Cross-Cultural Tourist Research: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 38(1), 40–77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348012442542>
- Lin, Y.-C., Lin, M.-L., & Chen, Y.-C. (2017). How tour guides' professional competencies influence on service quality of tour guiding and tourist satisfaction: An exploratory research. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 7(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v7i1.10602>
- Long, L. M., & Lexington, K. Y. (2004). *Culinary Tourism*. The University Press of Kentucky. University Press of Kentucky. https://books.google.com/books/about/Culinary_Tourism.html?id=SrQo2-qXO9oC
- Mak, A. H., Wong, K. K., & Chang, R. C. (2011). Critical issues affecting the service quality and professionalism of the tour guides in Hong Kong and Macau. *Tourism Management*, 32(6), 1442–1452. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.01.003>
- Martin, C. A., Izquierdo, C. C., & Laguna-Garcia, M. (2021). Culinary tourism experiences: The effect of iconic food on tourist intentions. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 40, 100911.
- Mattila, A. S., & Enz, C. A. (2002). The Role of Emotions in Service Encounters. *Journal of Service Research*, 4(4), 268–277. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670502004004004>
- Mezirow, J. (2015). Transformative learning. *Challenging Educational Theories*, 319.
- Min, J. C. H. (2016). Guiding the guides: Developing indicators of tour guides' service quality. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 27(9–10), 1043–1062. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2015.1060123>
- Morgan, D., & Dimmock, K. (2006). Risk management in outdoor adventure tourism. In *Tourism in turbulent times* (pp. 171–184). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780080457321-16/risk-management-outdoor-adventure-tourism-damian-morgan-kay-dimmock>
- Moscato, G. (1996). Mindful visitors: Heritage and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(2), 376–397.
- Nie, R., Tian, Z., Wang, J., & Chin, K. S. (2020). Hotel selection driven by online textual reviews: Applying a semantic partitioned sentiment dictionary and evidence theory. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 88, Article 102495. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102495>
- Ning, W. (2017). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. In *The political nature of cultural heritage and tourism* (pp. 469–490). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315237749-27/rethinking-authenticity-tourism-experience-wang-ning>
- Noy, C. (2008). Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(4), 327–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401305>
- Oh, H., Fiore, A. M., & Jeoung, M. (2007). Measuring Experience Economy Concepts: Tourism Applications. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46(2), 119–132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287507304039>
- Pabel, A. (2016). The role of humour in contributing to tourism experiences. In *Positive tourism* (pp. 100–118). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315707129-16/role-humour-contributing-tourism-experiences-anja-pabel>

- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1990). SERVQUAL: Une échelle multi-items de mesure des perceptions de la qualité de service par les consommateurs. *Recherche et Applications En Marketing (French Edition)*, 5(1), 19–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/076737019000500102>
- Pearce, P. L. (2005). *Tourist behaviour: Themes and conceptual schemes* (Vol. 27). Channel View Publications. https://books.google.com.bd/books/about/Tourist_Behaviour.html?id=OtRiNRU_aSQC&redir_esc=y
- Pereira, A. M. (2015). Tour guides and destination image: Evidence from Portugal. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 3(7–8), 129–150. <https://doi.org/10.17265/2328-2169/2015.08.001>
- Permana, I. N. W. A., Aryasih, P. A., & Puja, I. B. P. (2024). The Impact of Tour Guide Service Quality and Tourist Experience Towards Tourist Satisfaction in Discova Indonesia Tour and Travel. *J-TRUE: Journal of Travel and Leisure*, 1(2), 73–78. <https://doi.org/10.52352/jtrue.v1i2.1657>
- Pizam, A., & Ellis, T. (1999). Customer satisfaction and its measurement in hospitality enterprises. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 11(7), 326–339. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596119910293231>
- Poria, Y., Butler, R., & Airey, D. (2003). The core of heritage tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(1), 238–254. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(02\)00064-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(02)00064-6)
- Priharjuna, B. A., Aryasih, P. A., & Puja, I. B. P. (2025). The Influence of Tour Guides' Communication Competence on The Satisfaction of German Asian Trails Indonesian Tourists. *J-TRUE: Journal of Travel and Leisure*, 2(1), 46–59.
- Prough, S. (2022). *Whose Interpretation Matters? Centering Participants Through Observation Debrief*. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/12440>
- Pusparani, P., Rachman, A. F., Hutagalung, M. H., Boediman, S. F., & Enggriani, M. (2025). The Role of Tour Guides in Enhancing Tourist Experience and Satisfaction at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah Jakarta. *TRJ Tourism Research Journal*, 9(1), 29–41.
- Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Seyfi, S., Rather, R. A., & Hall, C. M. (2022). Investigating the mediating role of visitor satisfaction in the relationship between memorable tourism experiences and behavioral intentions in heritage tourism context. *Tourism Review*, 77(2), 687–709. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-02-2021-0086>
- Reisinger, Y., & Mavondo, F. (2005). Travel Anxiety and Intentions to Travel Internationally: Implications of Travel Risk Perception. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(3), 212–225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287504272017>
- Rivera, M. A., & Croes, R. (2010). Ecotourists' loyalty: Will they tell about the destination or will they return? *Journal of Ecotourism*, 9(2), 85–103. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14724040902795964>
- Sari, R. J., Winston, T., Prawira, P. A. S., & Pracintya, I. A. E. (2024). The Effect Of Physical Facilities Quality On Tourist Satisfaction At Taman Ayun Temple Attraction By Vitruvius Theory As A Moderating Variable. *Journey: Journal of Tourismpreneurship, Culinary, Hospitality, Convention and Event Management*, 7(2), 133–142. <https://www.ojs-journey.pib.ac.id/index.php/art/article/view/226>
- Schmitt, B. (1999). Experiential Marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15(1–3), 53–67. <https://doi.org/10.1362/026725799784870496>
- Shi, L., Ma, J.-Y., & Ann, C.-O. (2023). Exploring the effect of tour guide cultural interpretation on tourists' loyalty in the context of the southern journey by Emperor Qianlong. *Sustainability*, 15(15), 11585. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151511585>
- Songshan Huang, Hsu, C. H. C., & Chan, A. (2010). Tour Guide Performance and Tourist Satisfaction: A Study of the Package Tours in Shanghai. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 34(1), 3–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348009349815>

- Syakier, W. A., & Hanafiah, M. H. (2022). Tour Guide Performances, Tourist Satisfaction And Behavioural Intentions: A Study On Tours In Kuala Lumpur City Centre. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 23(3), 597–614. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2021.1891599>
- Tangkliang, U., Visuthismajarn, P., & Kongchouy, N. (2025). The competency and service of tour guides affecting satisfaction of Muslim tourists. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, 9(2), 751–761.
- Vasileiou, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S., & Young, T. (2018). Characterising and justifying sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: Systematic analysis of qualitative health research over a 15-year period. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 18(1), 148. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-018-0594-7>
- Vigane, Å., & Dyrstad, S. M. (2022). Learning leadership in outdoor education: Effects of feedback. *Journal for Research in Arts and Sports Education*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.23865/jased.v6.2969>
- Volchek, E. (2020). *Tourist satisfaction with personalised information service*. <https://theses.lib.polyu.edu.hk/handle/200/10480>
- Wang, X., Liu, K., Song, Y., & Zheng, J. (2025). Rapport, satisfaction, and eWOM: Unpacking the impact of online tour guide influencers. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 63, 236–246. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2025.05.002>
- Wheeller, B. A. (2005). Tourism and sustainability: Development and new tourism in the third world. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(2), 499–501. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315795348>
- Wong, J.-Y., & Wang, C.-H. (2009). Emotional labor of the tour leaders: An exploratory study. *Tourism Management*, 30(2), 249–259. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.06.005>
- Wu, H.-C., & Li, T. (2015). An Empirical Study of the Effects of Service Quality, Visitor Satisfaction, and Emotions on Behavioral Intentions of Visitors to the Museums of Macau. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 16(1), 80–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2015.966298>
- Yılmaz, N., Özsoy, A., & İli, N. D. (2025). Tour guide performance through the eyes of tourists: An analysis of user-generated reviews on Expedia. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Tourism*, 10(1), 65–78. <https://doi.org/10.31822/jomat.2025-10-1-65>
- Zahrah, W., & Pangestu, R. A. (2018). Reconstruction and Development of Tourism Potentials in the Fishermenâ€™s District Village of Medan Belawan. *International Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*, 2(2), 157–167. <https://doi.org/10.32734/ijau.v2i2.401>
- Zhang, H. Q., & Chow, I. (2004). Application of importance-performance model in tour guides' performance: Evidence from mainland Chinese outbound visitors in Hong Kong. *Tourism Management*, 25(1), 81–91. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(03\)00064-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(03)00064-5)