

The Importance of Interpretation Role of Tour Guides in Geotourism: Can We Called Them as Geotour Guides?

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Abstract

This study has drawn a frame for the importance of interpretation role of tour guides in geotourism by reviewing the literature broadly. Initially, the "geotour guide" term was suggested in order to specialize the tour guide who performs in geosites and geoparks. The concept was defined in the frame of geotourism literature. Their roles in geotourism were reviewed and, their interpretation role which is essential for geosites and geoparks was stressed. Even though there are some studies on geotourism interpretation, there is still a gap in the literature, as existing studies mainly focused on non-personal techniques than the personal ones, especially applied by tour guides. Although this study was not supported with an empirical research, it is believed that it can attract the attention of the researchers about geotour guide concept and their necessity on geotourism interpretation.

Key Words: Geotourism, Interpretation, Tour Guide, Sustainable Tourism, Geotour Guide

1.1. Review of Geotourism

It has been suggested that greater attention should be paid to environmentally innovative forms of tourism which are related to both environmental and social responsibility as well as interpretation standard and interdisciplinary approach (Paskova, 2012, p. 106). One new emerging type of tourism which is environmentally innovative is "geological tourism", in the short geotourism (Dowling, 2013, p. 60). The concept has emerged two decades ago and has become an important activity on the local, national and international levels (Ruban, 2015, p. 1).

As it is a relatively new concept in the tourism industry (Heggie, 2009, p. 257), there are two main approaches to the definition of the term, as either 'geological' or 'geographical' tourism (Dowling, 2013, p. 62). Hose (1995) who first introduced and defined the term, stressed the geological and geomorphological standpoint of geotourism (Ollier, 2012, p. 58; Dong, et al, 2014, p. 41). He (2000, p. 136) defined geotourism as, "*provision of interpretative facilities and services to promote the value and societal benefit of geologic and geomorphologic sites and their materials, and ensure their conservation, for the use of students, tourists and other recreationists*". The latter approach has been characterized by National Geographic Society (Bonadie, et al, N/A p. 1; Dowling, 2013, p. 62; Swarna, Biswas and Harinarayana, 2013, p. 1361) and defined as "*tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents*" (<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/pdf/about-geotourism.pdf>). According to the association, the prefix 'geo-' in geotourism is related to geography and does not necessarily relate to geology or geomorphology (Dong, et al, 2014, p. 41; Ollier, 2012, p. 59). This has led to the confusion surrounding the definition of geotourism (Dowling, 2013, p. 62).

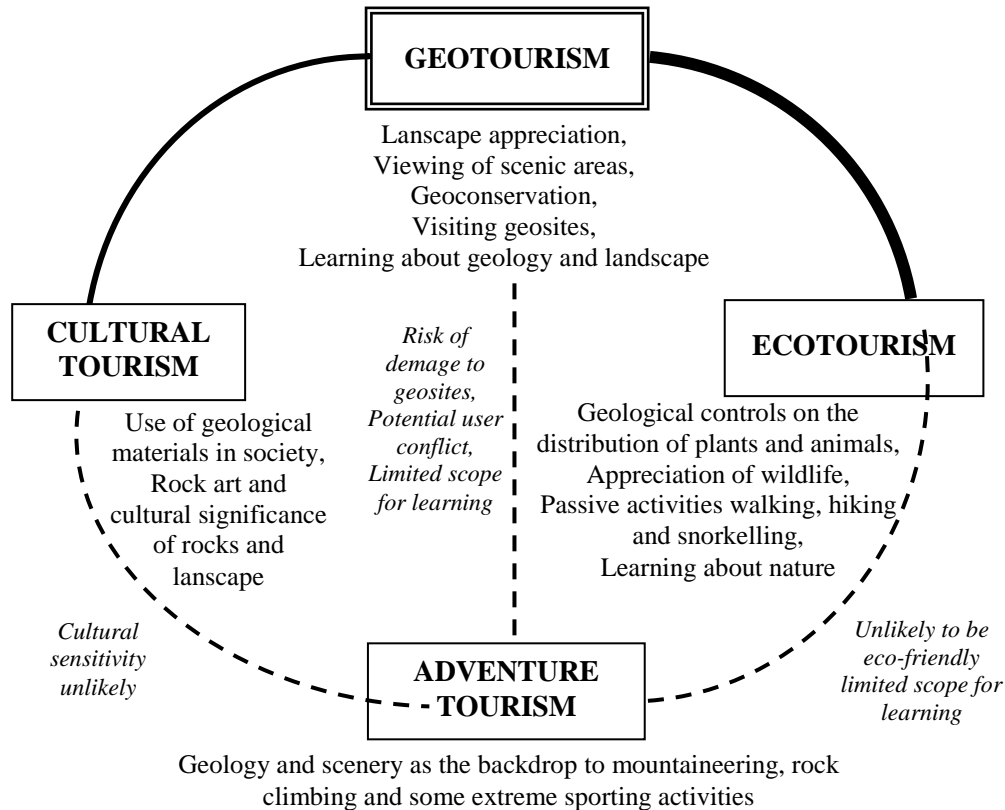
According to Słomka and Kicinska Świdarska (2004) (as cited in Farsani, Coelho and Costa, 2014, p. 1), in Poland, geotourism is a branch of cognitive tourism or adventure tourism, which emphasizes geological objects (geosites) and recognition of geological process. Rybár (2006) (as cited in Farsani, Coelho and Costa, 2014, p. 1) recommended geotourism with an accent on mining tourism. Heggie (2009, p. 257) and later Wang, et al, (2014, p. 384) noted volcano tourism is an important segment of geotourism, which takes into account the geological heritage of unique landscape features. Moreover, Rocha and Silva (2014, p. 735) stated that geotourism is closely linked with medical geology.

Overall, Dowling and Newsome (2010, p. 3) refined the definition of geotourism, which includes the wider aspects of tourist activity: "*geotourism is a form of natural area tourism that specifically focuses on geology and landscape. It promotes tourism to geosites and the conservation of geodiversity and an understanding of earth sciences through appreciation and learning. This is achieved through independent visits to geological features, use of geo-trails and viewpoints, guided tours, geo-activities and patronage of geo-site visitor centres*".

Recently Hose and Vasiljevic (2012, p. 38) called the concept as modern geotourism and redefined it comprehensively as "*the provision of interpretative and service facilities for geosites and geomorphosites and their encompassing topography, together with their associated in situ and ex situ artefacts, to constituency-build for their conservation by generating appreciation, learning and research by and for current and future generations.*" These definitions re-emphasize the educational usage and essential geoconservation component of such provision. Further, they indicate that geotourism includes an examination and understanding of the physical basis of geological (and geomorphological) sites (Hose, 2000, p. 136). Geotourism can promote geoconservation and an understanding of earth sciences through appreciation and learning (Hose and Vasiljevic, 2012, p. 38). Therefore, its main objectives include the promotion of geological knowledge, an increase in the awareness of geological heritage and its conservation needs, and the diversification and sustainable development of the tourism industry (Ruban, 2015, p. 1).

Much like ecotourism, geotourism incorporates the concept of sustainable tourism in that destinations should remain unspoiled for future generations (Heggie, 2009, p. 257). As Bonadie, et al. (N/A, p. 1) and Dowling (2013, p. 61) stressed, a key element of geo-tourism is the idea of sustainable tourism. It means that it focuses on experiencing the earth's geological features in a way that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation, and is locally beneficial. It is about creating a geotourism product that protects geoheritage, helps build communities, communicates and promotes the geological heritage and works with a wide range of different people (Dowling, 2013, p. 61; Dowling and Newsome, 2010, p. 1).

Geotourism differentiates itself from ecotourism through focusing on the geographical and geological character of a region, whereas many of ecotourism's definitions limit ecotourism to occurring only in protected or natural areas (Farsani, Coelho and Costa, 2014, p. 1). Similarly, Newsome and Dowling (2010) stressed that ecotourism, which by definition can only take place in natural areas whereas geotourism can occur in either natural or human-modified environments (Figure 1) (Dowling, 2013, p. 62).

Figure 1. The relationship of Geotourism with Other Forms of Tourism

* Solid and dashed lines represent interconnecting pathways. The connection between ecotourism and geotourism is represented as a particularly strong relationship.

Source: Dowling, R. K. (2013). Global Geotourism – An emerging form of sustainable tourism. *Czech Journal of Tourism*, 2(2), p. 60.

On the other hand, both tourism forms demand the high level of complexity of qualification, responsibility, creativity and experience. The interpretation plays an important role in these environmental innovative tourism forms in general because it influences the consumption and spatial behaviour pattern of visitor and thus represents an effective visitor management instrument. Interpretation thus serves as one of the most important tools for prevention of tourism environmental impacts, and not only in situ but it influences also visitors' opinions and attitudes to nature and landscape conservation in general (Paskova, 2012, p. 106). Likewise, Paskova, Dowling (2013, p. 65) stated that there are three key principles which are fundamental to geotourism: geologically-based; sustainable and educative. He stressed that educative principles can be achieved through geo-interpretation. All three characteristics are considered to be essential for a product to be considered an exemplar of geotourism.

Tourists who participate in geotours are generally interested in interacting with local communities as well as viewing landforms and other geological features. This occurs when they interact with local people through viewing geo-attractions or participating in related activities (Dowling, 2013, p. 66; Newsome, Dowling and Leung, 2012, p. 21). Here earth education and geo-interpretation are seen important tools in creating an enjoyable and meaningful geotourism experience (Dowling, 2013, p. 67).

1.2. From Tour Guide to Geotour Guide: The Roles of Geotour Guide

There are various definitions of a tour guide. But an internationally accepted and comprehensive definition was given by the International Association of Tour Managers and the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (EFTGA). According to EFTGA a tour guide is "a person who guide groups or individual visitors from abroad or from the home country around the monuments, sites and museums of a city or region; to interpret in an inspiring and entertaining manner, in the language of the visitor's choice, the cultural and natural heritage and environment" (Min, 2011, p. 158; Huang, Hsu and Chan, 2010, p. 6; Huang and Simkin, 2009, p. 11; Skanavis and Giannoulis, 2009, p. 55; Khalifah, 2007, p. 643; Ap and Wong, 2001, p. 551).

A number of studies (Holloway, 1981; Almagor, 1985; Cohen, 1985; Fine and Speer, 1985; Katz, 1985; Geva and Goldman, 1991; Hughes, 1991; Weiler and Davis, 1993; Ryan and Dewar, 1995; Ap and Wong, 2001; Howard, Thwaites and Smith, 2001; McDonnell, 2001; Weiler and Ham, 2001; Dahles, 2002; Haig and McIntyre, 2002; Yu, Weiler and Ham, 2002; Leclerc and Martin, 2004; Bowie and Chang, 2005; Black and Weiler, 2005; Ormsby and Mannle, 2006; Reisinger and Steiner, 2006; Huang and Simkin, 2009; Randall and Rollins, 2009; Huang and Weiler, 2010; Rabotic, 2010) focusing on tour guiding have identified a range of roles that the guide play in tourism. Tour guides are expected to perform a wide range of roles in facilitating the tourist experience. These roles of both general guides, ecotour guides and nature-based guides can be summarized in Table 1, which is adapted from the researchers mentioned in the table and expanded by the author in her Ph.D. thesis (Tetik, 2012, p. 208).

Table1. The Key Roles of Tour Guides Identified in Selected Researches

	Schmidt (1979)	Holloway (1981)	Almagor (1985)	Cohen (1985)	Fine&Speer (1985)	Katz (1985)	Geva&Goldman (1991)	Huges (1991)	Pond (1993)	Weiler&Davis (1993)	Ryan&Dewar (1995)	Ballantyne&Huges (2001)
Cultural broker	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓			
Mediator	✓	✓		✓		✓					✓	✓
Information giver	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓
Interpreter	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Educator	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Leader		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		
Motivator of conservation	✓	✓		✓					✓	✓		✓
Navigation/safety	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓						✓
Company representative		✓		✓					✓			
Catalyst	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓
Tour and group manager/organizer				✓				✓		✓		

As it is seen from the table, the most emphasised roles of guides by researchers are interpreting and educating. There are also some other key roles of guides such as actor (Holloway, 1981), ambassador (Holloway, 1981; Pond, 1993), buffer (Schmidt, 1979), caretaker and salesperson (Fine and Speer, 1985) identified by the same researchers.

More recent studies indicate that the guide has more specialist roles to play in tourism types such as ecotourism and nature-based tourism. Because these types of tourism require skills in interpretation, motivate visitors to modify their behaviour to minimize impacts on the resource and instill conservation values, and provide associated underpinning knowledge/expertise (Black, 2007, p. 319). Thus ecotour guide, a modern and relatively new concept, emerged with the rise of ecotourism (Black and Crabtree, 2007, p. 141; Hillman, 2003, p. 70).

A geotourism tour guide like ecotour guide needs to have key roles mentioned in Table 1 and especially specific roles such as being interpretative, informative, educative and protective. Here the concept "geotour guide" similar to ecotour guide arises. We can define geotour guide by adopting the definition of geotourism that was put forward by Hose (2000). That is, "a geotour guide is a person who interprets geological and geomorphological sites and their materials, promotes geoconservation in order to ensure sustainable tourism and, increases the tourists' knowledge and awareness of geological heritage and geodiversity as well as ensuring quality tourist experience".

Among the early researches into the roles (Table 1) that tour guides play on guided tours, perhaps the most systematic one was done by Cohen (1985) who examined these roles in two main categories: the pathfinder and the mentor. Then he renamed these two roles to make them more relevant to modern tour guiding and called the pathfinder role the "leadership sphere", and the mentor role the "mediatory sphere". These two spheres with "outer-directed" and "inner-directed" components represented the guides' instrumental and interactionary roles, and social and communicative roles, respectively (Hillman, 2003, p. 72; Hu, 2007, p. 25; Huang, Hsu and Chan, 2010, p. 6; Pereira and Mykletun, 2012, p. 77; Randall and Rollins, 2009, p. 359).

Most studies to date are based on Cohen's (1985) model of guiding, which describes the guiding role in terms of group management (i.e., the guide's ability to organise and entertain the group) and mediation (i.e., the guide's role as a group leader and teacher). Recent studies suggest, however, that tour guiding may be more complex, and that it often varies depending on the environment, topic and type of tour conducted (Ballantyne and Huges, 2001, p. 3). In recent years, attention has turned to the guide's roles in relation to sustainability outcomes, including improving levels of understanding and valuing of sites, communities, cultures and environments, influencing and monitoring on-site visitor behaviour, and fostering pro-conservation attitudes and behaviours (Weiler and Walker, 2014, p. 91). Taking into consideration of this tendency, Weiler and Davis (1993) added a third dimension to the model for nature-based tour guides and they termed this sphere as "resource management". The resource management focus contains two roles (Figure 2): "motivator" and "environmental interpreter" (Howard, Thwaites and Smith, 2001, p. 32; Pereira and Mykletun, 2012, p. 78; Randall and Rollins, 2009, p. 359; Weiler and Ham, 2001, p. 550). It can be said that geotour guides perform the same roles like ecotour guides as they need to undertake motivator and interpreter roles. Therefore, ecotour guides' roles were changed to geotour guides' in this study. These roles can be seen at Figure 2.

Figure 2. Geotour Guide's Roles

	Outer Directed	Inner Directed
Leadership (focus on group)	<i>Instrumental</i> • direction • access • control	<i>Social</i> • tension management • integration • morale • animation
Mediatory (focus on individual)	<i>Interactionary</i> • representation • organisation	<i>Communicative</i> • selection • information • interpretation • fabrication
Resource Manager* (focus on geosite/geopark)	<i>Motivator</i> • modification of tourist behavior and impacts on geosite/geopark	<i>Geosite Interpreter</i> • promote long-term environmental behaviors

* adapted from Cohen's (1985) and Weiler and Davis's (1993) model and transferred the roles from ecotour guide to geotour guide by author of this article.

As it is seen at Figure 2, geotour guides have added roles as motivator and geosite interpreter. Guides play motivator role in order to provide motivation for environmentally friendly behaviour and to control their behavioral impacts on geosites and geoparks. They play geosite interpreter role for promoting long-term environmentally responsible behaviors at geosites and geoparks through interpretation (Haig and McIntyre, 2002, p. 41; Hu, 2007, p. 30). Consequently, geotour guides motivate tourists to respect the environment including geosites and geoparks and to contribute geoconservation and discourage their potentially harmful behaviors. They also stress the natural resources fragility at these sites and their significance for the local community.

1.3. Geotour Guide Interpretation

Interpretation communicates what is significant about places, people or events. The essence of interpretation provides insight for visitors about what is special and how and why it is valued.

It is connected to sites and objects, artwork or living things and it can happen anywhere; in parks, visitor centres, historical sites, geological and geomorphological sites, city streets, museums, zoos or galleries, at special events or promotions, and in publications (Colquhoun, 2005, p. viii). It has been described as ‘an educational activity’ (Tilden, 1977), ‘a communication process’ (MacFarlane, 1987), ‘a management tool’ (Sharpe, 1982) and ‘a process of stimulating and encouraging appreciation’ (Carter in Wearing and Neil, 1999) (Wearing, et al, 2008, p. 3). There is no one definition of interpretation but the well-known definition has been done by Tilden (1967, p. 8), the pioneer of interpretative philosophy, as; “*interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information*”.

Knudson, Cable and Beck (1995) list six objectives for interpretation, indicating the wide scope of activity inherent in the concept (Wearing, et al, 2008, p. 3):

1. to increase the visitor’s understanding, awareness and appreciation of nature, of heritage, and of site resource
2. to communicate messages relating to nature and culture, including natural and historical processes, ecological relationships, and human roles in the environment
3. to involve people in nature and history through first-hand (personal) experience with the natural and cultural environment
4. to affect the behaviour and attitudes of the public concerning the wise use of natural resources, the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, and the respect and concern for the natural and cultural environment
5. to provide an enjoyable and meaningful experience
6. to increase the public understanding and support for an agency’s role, its management objectives and its policies.

As it was seen above, the goal of interpretation is not merely to provide information, but rather to convey the magnificence of a place, pass on its legacy, inspire visitors, and ultimately convince them of the need to preserve park lands (Pond, 1993, p. 71). Tilden (1967, p. 38) stressed the importance of interpretation with the following monograph as; “*through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection*”.

Interpretation seems a better term to describe the function dealing with subjects that for most people are unfamiliar -geology, biology, botany. It is almost like learning a new language. The process of translating this language, the language of the earth, suggests the term interpretation (Pond, 1993, p. 71). It is a tool for imparting management objectives and increasing awareness and appreciation of tourism destinations, which may encourage behavior that minimizes environmental impacts (Heally, et al, 2016, p. 575).

Lee (2003) (as cited in Cheng, 2005, p. 19) examined whether the interpreter services influence tourists’ satisfaction at recreation areas on three aspects, “leisure experience,” “the receiving of ecological knowledge” and “the agreement with the nature conservation of fireflies”. A survey was developed to assess tourists’ satisfaction after they received interpreters’ services. Results showed that participants agreed that interpreters did enhance their experiences, knowledge, and the importance of natural conservation. The respondents further expressed a willingness to utilize interpretive services provided by the destinations in the future.

Lee and Moscardo (2005) (as cited in Poudel and Nyaupane, 2015, p. 662) found significant changes in tourists’ environmental knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and behavioral intentions after staying at an ecotourism resort in Queensland, Australia.

Powell and Ham (2008) investigated the efforts of one Galapagos National Park tour operator to explore whether a well-conceived interpretation/ecotourism product could influence tourists’ educational outcomes and support of environmental conservation. Results suggest that well-designed and delivered interpretation during the ecotourism experience can increase knowledge of the host-protected area, supportive attitudes towards resource management issues facing the host-protected area, general environmental behavioural intentions and philanthropic support of conservation.

Without interpretation, however, the significance of the site and educational goals of investors may not be fully realized (Heally, et al, 2016, p. 576). Moreover, inappropriate interpretive facilities and services can, in fact diminish the natural resources of an area (Wearing, et al, 2008, p. 4).

Interpretation techniques include two main categories (Chen, et al, 2006; Cheng, 2005; Colquhoun, 2005; Jacobs and Harms, 2014; Poudel and Nyaupane, 2015; Wearing, et al, 2007):

- off-side (non-personal) interpretation - e.g. interpretive signs, interpretive brochures, displays, visitor centres, audio guide, multimedia guide
- on-site (personal) interpretation - e.g. tour guides, on-site interpreters

Several research studies have suggested that personal interpretation services are more effective than non-personal interpretation services (Cheng, 2005, p. 4; Chen, et al, 2006, p. 1168). For example as Cheng (2005, p. 4) mentioned in his study that Zeng (2000) assessed the degree of tourists' satisfaction and the association between different tourist attributes and their preferences for interpretation services in a recreation area. Even though visitors used non-personal interpretation services, personal interpretation services were considered to be the most effective method to increase their satisfaction levels.

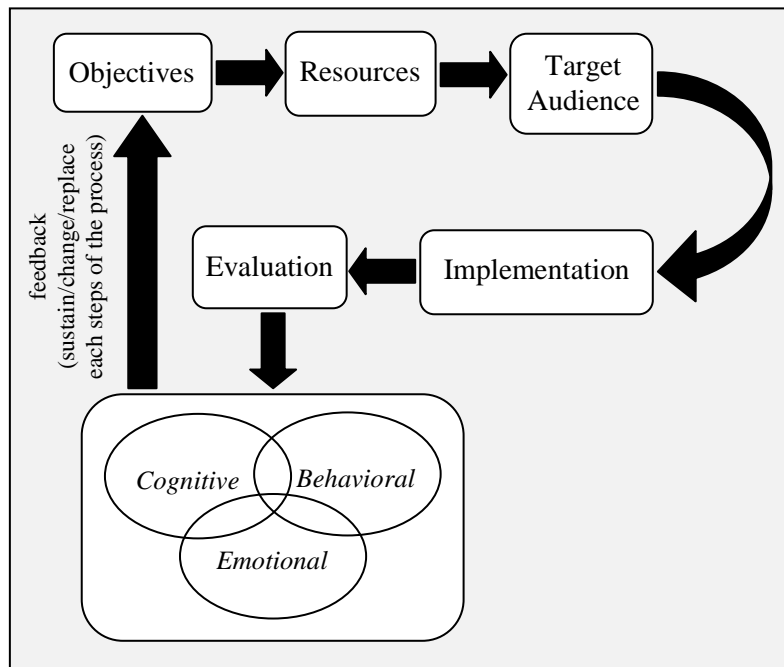
Jacobson (1988) tested the effectiveness of three interpretive media format (guided tour, brochures, and signs) in a Malaysian National Park. She found that there were significant differences between personal interpretation and non-personal interpretation. Respondents who received guided services showed higher satisfaction levels for their visiting experience.

Personal interpretation is one of the most powerful approaches to interpretation services because the interpreter can continually adapt to each audience (Cheng, 2005, p. 18). Moreover, guide's presentations can provide highly memorable experiences of a place of visitors. If training and support are provided, it's a great way to involve the local community and develop knowledgeable volunteers (Colquhoun, 2005, p. 50). As Failte Ireland (2010, p. 6) stated, interpretation, particularly if carried out personal, can be 'the voice of the place'. It is believed that interpretation delivered by trained local tour guides is the most effective environmental educational tool (Howard, Thwaites and Smith, 2001, p. 33; Poudel and Nyaupane, 2015, p. 660). It is often given by a well-informed, well-trained and responsive guide who is steeped in an understanding of the site and passionate about welcoming visitors into its story (Failte Ireland, 2010, p. 6). Interpretative guiding does not ignore other responsibilities of tour guides, but it emphasizes the application of the principles of interpretation and sustainable development to the business of leading tour groups and managing the visitors' experiences. Each tour, for tour guides, is a process of guiding. Each guiding process should be transformed into an interpretative guiding practice (Hu and Wall, 2012, p. 82). Therefore, guided tour can be very powerful and highly effective if applied properly (Newsome, Moore and Dowling, 2013, p. 304).

However, as Cheng (2005, p. 18) stressed, personal interpretive services usually are only available for a limited amount of time because of the high cost and not enough trained interpretive staff. It is usually more costly compared to non-personal interpretation on a per visitor basis. For this reason, a combination of personal and non-personal interpretation services have been found to be the best in aiding visitors and improving their experiences. Geotourism is a interpretative provision that seeks to both inform geotourists about, and to engender their empathy for a particular geosite in order to promote geoconservation (Solarska, et al, 2013, p. 68). Therefore, geotour guides can play a vital role in the interpretation of geotourism. What tour guides do and say has a great influence on how tourists experience the destination, how they view the local culture and people, and how they behave on the tour. These things influence the nature of the impacts of tourist activities on the environment, the culture and the economy, as well as on the people of destination areas (Hu and Wall, 2011, p. 81). They strive to encourage visitors' learning in order to increase their knowledge about the visited sites, to stimulate the development of their empathy towards local environments, cultures and people, to modify any inappropriate conducts and to foster responsible behaviors (Black and Crabtree, 2007, p. 4; Hu and Wall, 2011, p. 83). Experienced guides make their commentaries meaningful by using common language and by employing analogies, metaphors and other methods of bridging the unfamiliar world of the tour route, content and environment to the things already known and familiar to the group. Similarly, when commentaries focus visitors' attention on things they already care about, an attentive audience is almost guaranteed (Weiler and Ham, 2001, p. 555). For example, the ANZECC report prepared by Earthlines Consortium showed that the most common interpretation products and services appeared to be interpretive signs and guided walks/drives for organisations (Earthlines consortium, 1999, p. 42).

Newsome, Dowling and Leung (2012, p. 26) stressed that there is a need for high-quality geo-interpretation but for it to work it will be necessary to have active programmes of staff and tour guide training. Knowledge of how to deliver geological information is lacking in many situations and a limiting factor in the development of successful geotourism. As Failte Ireland (2010, p. 6) stated, well-planned geotour guide interpretation makes the experience of 'being there' richer and more relevant. Geotour guides may follow the interpretation process given below (Figure 3) for providing effective interpretation services. The interpretation process is edited by the author of this article by taking into consideration of the studies of Barrow (2013), Colquhoun (2005), Failte Ireland (2010) and "INTERPA" (2010).

Figure 3. The Process of Geotour Guide Interpretation



1. *Indicating Objectives (why do we want to interpret the geosite?)* – This step represent general objectives and needs. It is important to detail the results and benefits expected to achieve with the combination of following:

- *Educational Objectives*
To stimulate the interest for the visited geosite
- *Leisure/Entertainment Objectives*
To offer a quality recreational product
- *Visitors Management Objectives*
To manage to make visitors have a respectful behaviour towards the geosite
- *Economic Objectives*
To create jobs
- *Public Involvement Oriented Objectives*
To involve visitors in the management of the visited place
- *Local Community Inclusion Oriented Objectives*
To link the local community to its geosite
- *Geosite Conservation Oriented Objectives*
Conserve the geosite's value

Moreover, there are more three specific objectives in geosite interpretation. These are:

- *Cognitive Objectives*
What visitors might *think*, know or believe as a result of interpretation
- *Emotional Objectives*
What visitors might *feel* as a result of interpretation
- *Behavioral Objectives*
What visitors might *do* or be *motivated to do* as a result of interpretation

2. *Analysing Resources (What are we going to interpret?)* – The geotour guide must have a very broad and deeper knowledge of the resources to be able to speak with property and rigor. He/she must be knowledgeable about the past and contemporary issues and the condition of the interpreted site and its resources. Moreover, he/she needs to analyse several factors such as security or access, visits impact, the resource's attractiveness or if it is subject to seasonality, etc.

3. *Identifying Target Audience (Who is the interpretation addressed to?)* – It needs to be defined tourists such as who are them and what they want from the guide and geosite. The geotour guide needs to take into account the following for defining the audience:

- socio-demographic features (age, gender variance, education level, occupation, etc.)
- specific needs (if they have - i.e. school groups, disables, families, etc.)
- desires and interests
- expectations from guide and site
- travel choices and features
- previous knowledge - knowledge backgrounds about geotourism, geosites and geoparks
- learning motivation levels
- number of people of the tour group

4. *Implementation - Clarifying Representation Model and Equipment (How, when and where are we going to interpret?)* – The geotour guide needs to decide how, when and where the visitors will establish contact with the interpretive message. People behave according to the situation or environment in which they find themselves. For this reason, geotour guide doesn't limit himself/herself to referring to terms or technical information, without explaining them. Otherwise, people may generally be stop paying attention. A good communication is the best way to built an effective interpretation So guide needs to pat attention followings:

- *be enjoyable* - stimulate the attention, curiosity and/or interest of the audience
- *be relevant* - be related to their lives and experiences.
- *be well organized* - Strive for message unity – use appropriate materials (sounds, colors, materials, graphics, music, etc. that thematically support the message).
- *thematic* - illustrate a common theme, message or "big picture" concept for the visitor and revolve around it

Also, geotour guide needs to know how to express the theme in the best way possible in order to attract the audience's attention. To achieve this guide may give attention to the following points:

- go from the familiar to the unknown
- use examples, metaphors, analogies, classifications, personification, quotations, humour, legends, stories, anecdotes, props, etc.
- use diagrams and illustrations, pictures and photographs, archives and documents, etc.
- use authentic objects and local memories
- give current news and events
- use similes
- encourage people to use all their senses
- demonstrate cause and effect
- focus on a single individual
- invite people to take part
- avoid technical vocabulary

5. *Evaluation - Getting Feedback from Tourists - (effective response - emotional, cognitive, behavioral)* - This serves a guide to check that if the interpretation plan is running, effective and achieves the established objectives. Guide need to collect data through several techniques as following:

- Direct evaluation by talking with tourists
- Observation
- "Infiltrated" (This means that a person gets infiltrated into the guide's group and accesses comments what the audience probably would not express to the guide directly)
- Follow-up
- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Expert groups

Each of these techniques has its advantages and disadvantages, so it is advisable to use a combination of all of them.

If a geotour guide affects tourists' cognitive, emotional and behavioral understanding positively, it can be said that the guide succeeded in the interpretation process. Then, the guide can sustain the interpretation plan or revise it by taking into consideration of these outputs.

1.4. Conclusion

This study makes a contribution to the literature in terms of geotourism interpretation. It is aimed to clarify the geotourism concept and geotourism interpretation and to provide a framework for understanding the importance of guides' interpretation role on geotourism.

Geotourism is relatively a new concept in a young stage, approximately two decades years old. However, it has become one of the most important tourism activities performed at geological and geomorphological sites, geoparks and also natural sites and heritage sites. It is seen as a part of sustainable tourism, as its main objectives are to contribute to natural, social and economic environments of geosites and geoparks and to provide conservation awareness of these places, as well as to create tourist satisfaction.

It was proved by the literature that interpretation is the most powerful and effective way of contributing geotourism activities and its sustainability. Correspondingly, there is an increasing consensus among researchers on the importance of geotourism interpretation both in terms of geosites and quality tourist experiences.

As it was mentioned before, there are some interpretation techniques applied in geosites and geoparks, among them one of the most effective ones is the personal interpretation especially provided by tour guides. It is effective because it is based on communication techniques that one can not use in non-personal ones.

It is expected from tour guides to perform several roles including information giver, mediator, educator, leader, communicator, interpreter, organiser, and so on. Besides, if a guide is specialised in an area such as the natural park, protected area, geosite or geopark or, tourism types such as nature-based tourism, ecotourism or geotourism, his/her roles multiply adding to being a conservationist, being responsible for the environment, locals and economic development and being sustainable. Because these roles are inherent to these tourism types. Here, the concept of geotour guide arises. The guide can be called as geotour guide so as they have specific roles mentioned above in geotourism like ecotourism. Geotour guide is like a bridge who connects tourists with geosites and locals by performing his/her roles in an interpretation manner. Therefore, geotour guide interpretation is inevitable for the success and sustainability of geotourism.

Successful interpretation based on the process that geotour guides need to follow. In this frame, this study offers geotour interpretation process for the good of geotour guides. The process consists of a sequence of steps; determining the objectives, examining broadly the area and target group, applying correct representation model and techniques in the light of collected information, and finally getting feedback from tourist to find out whether the guide is succeeded in interpretation. This offered process, if applied carefully and completely, can contribute to the geosite and locals, the satisfaction of geotourists, the quality of geotour guides, as well as the image of tourism establishments.

On the other hand, it is not fair to believe that only tour guides must shoulder all responsibilities about geotourism and interpretation. Governments also need to actively take part in developing geotourism by applying legislations and policies which take into consideration of conservation of the geosites/geoparks and its surroundings. They also implement a monitoring system for tour guides and tourism stakeholders performed in geosites and geoparks. Locals also need to be taken into consideration by governments. Government authorities enable locals to understand the importance of geotourism conservation and local development. They need to give the opportunity the locals to participate in geotourism applications. Thus, both welfare of locals can be provided and local economic development can be achieved. Besides, tour operators and travel agencies need to review and revise their tour programs in order to adopt sustainable geotourism approaches and applications. Another essential point is about education. Geotour guides need to be encouraged to update and upgrade their knowledge and improve their skills. In order to reach this aim, regular education, training and qualification programs including wider information on geology, geomorphology, geography and local life, culture and economy need to be organised by both governments and tour organisers.

Although geotourism interpretation is widely mentioned in the literature as a fundamental tool for achieving sustainable and quality geotourism products and applications, the studies are still rare taking into consideration of guides' interpretation skills. This study handled geotour guides' interpretation role by reviewing and examining existing studies in the literature. For future research, it is recommended for researchers to examine geotour guide's interpretation role in order to support the importance of interpretation with an empirical study conducted on both tour guides and geotourist. Besides, guides' interpretation performances and expectations from guides can be evaluated from tourists' perspective. Researchers focused on such areas can make a contribution to sustainable geotourism and quality interpretation provided by geotour guides.

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