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Editorial

Thirty years of *Tourism Management*

In 2009 *Tourism Management* moves into its 30th volume. Given this, it was suggested to the editor that some brief review of the journal's progress over three decades might be in order. In a sense, three decades represents a significant period in the history of tourism research. While recognising this to be the case, it is not the purpose of this editorial to chart the changes in tourism research *per se*, but to simply note changes in the journal alone. Yet the journal, its nature and readership is impacted by the research environment. Four factors are thought to have induced these changes, and they are (a) changes in our understanding of social science research, (b) changes in the industry and phenomena that form the subject of our research, (c) changes in the dissemination of our research findings and the role of publishers and (d) changes in the status of university academic staff and researchers.

Tourism Management, as I understand it, commenced as an initiative of colleagues at the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom. The first editor was Andrew Burkart and the first issue (in 1980) was 69 pages in length, and yet carried 16 contributions. Of these 6 were full-length articles. The editorial noted that the journal was designed to 'serve policymakers' and that contributors 'will be drawn from those involved in the day-to-day conduct of tourism' (Editorial, 1980, p. 2). However it is worth noting that all but two of the contributors were university academics, including Brian Archer, Victor Middleton, Tony Veal and David Edgell. By the time of the 10th volume its editor had changed and Frances Brown was editor, but the editorial message still remained one of a 'further commitment to answering the needs of practitioners … to publish articles that are directly relevant … and of interest to academics and practitioners alike' (Brown, 1989, p. 3). The journal issue had extended to 84 pages, and contributors included Chris Cooper, John Westlake, Steve Page, David Gilbert, Greg Richards and Zhang Guangrui. There were a total of 18 contributions of which 7 were full-length articles. There were but two non-academic contributors. To mark the journal's 20th volume a special issue on research methods was published with the joint editors being myself and the late Bill Faulkner. The journal issue had doubled in size to 170 pages when compared to issue 10(1) and a total of 13 full-length articles were published that included authors such as Keith Hollinshead on Foucault, Yvette Reisinger and Lindsay Turner on structural equation modelling, Jennie Small on memory work, Rob Law and Norman Au on neural modelling and other articles on semiotic paradigms, life and work histories and much else. Gone was the emphasis on practitioner issues – the journal was now wholly academic. (In passing I also note with some surprise that I have become the longest established editor of the journal!) When I became editor in 1993 I had asked for a subscription list from Elsevier. That clearly showed that 95 percent of our subscribers were universities and the remaining 5 percent were almost wholly research centres or research arms of tourism organisations. Just as academic journals have proliferated in number over the years – so too have trade magazines and papers, and it had seemed to me then, as now, that if you wish to address your research findings to industry you do so by submitting material to those trade papers, talking to industry directly and attending trade shows. Indeed, I am of the view that the majority of contributors to the journal, even in the early years, tended to be writing for their peers as researchers and as university teachers. To be wholly an academic journal thus seems to me to be simply an honest recognition of reality.

A number of observations emerge from looking at the early issues of the journal. First, Jafari (2005) is generally right in his appraisal of the early stages of the field being dominated by an industry focus. Second, looking back, many of the articles appear to me to be mono-cultural in assumptions, being primarily based on a North Atlantic nexus of the USA–UK, but with strong representation from Canada (see Table 1). Third, as is evident by the very brief review above of the 20(1) issue, research paradigms and techniques have become more complex when compared to the early period. Fourth, an analysis of recent volumes indicates the growing role of research with an Asian context, and the growing numbers of authors of Asian ethnicity who contribute to our subject area. Table 1 indicates the changing nature of countries from which articles are now drawn. Indeed it underestimates the date because many of Korean, Chinese and other Asian backgrounds might be working for universities based outside of their own country. Nonetheless many of these authors are today researching within Asian universities and the challenges posed by cultural filters of our research understandings thus continue to challenge us more. Indeed I would suggest that it should be challenging us more than it actually does, and that an over-dependence on quantitative methods fails to tease out some of the cultural nuances that are important to tourism. This is not, I should add, a call to arms against the march of post-positivism that some colleagues might endorse, but I do see advantages in mixed methods and pragmatic research as endorsed by Tashakkaori and Teddle (2003).

As the editor of a journal I have an interest in the ways in which publication of research has moved with increasing rapidity from the hard printed copy to dissemination through the Internet. This has several implications in addition to us being more desk bound to a computer and not making physical trips to a library. First, there is a current concern with the standing of journals as measured by ISI Impact measures and other bibliometrics. To my mind this is a hangover from the days when we did go to a library and generally looked at physical copy. To save time we would look at the 'leading journals'. Today our electronic searches are by key words and links for papers

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Table 1
Number of articles published.

Country	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	By May, 2008
English speaking world								
Australia	0	2	3	7	13	16	14	9
Canada	2	5	4	4	3	5	7	6
New Zealand	0	1	1	4	8	1	2	5
South Africa	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
United Kingdom	4	20	5	8	9	17	14	7
United States	5	7	5	7	15	24	30	15
Total	11	35	18	30	48	64	67	43
Non-English speaking world								
Mandarin								
China - People's Republic	0	1	0	0	1	2	4	3
Hong Kong	0	1	0	0	6	6	8	3
Macau	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Singapore	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Taiwan	0	0	0	0	4	14	11	7
South Korea	0	0	0	2	8	8	11	2
Japan	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0
Other Asian	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Total	0	2	0	4	16	33	38	16
Spanish speaking								
Spain	0	0	0	0	8	14	18	5
South and Central America	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	8	14	18	5
Total number of papers published	23	45	31	43	67	100	114	64

we wish to see as useful – and the source of the material is less relevant other than it comes from a refereed journal. As researchers we make our own assessments of the value of an article to our current research project independent of where the work was published. Second, there is a concern with numbers of citations. This too is flawed in that often comparisons are made between 'oranges' and 'lemons' – little surprise that the answer is 'bananas'. Thus, a colleague from a marketing department may have an article published in a marketing journal and secure more citations than a colleague publishing in a tourism journal. Does that prove the marketing academic is a better researcher? Not necessarily – it may simply mean there are more academics in universities working in the field of marketing and there are more marketing than tourism journals! Of course, it might also be a 'bad' article that everyone wishes to criticise! Bibliometrics have thus many well known flaws, and thus decisions as to research funding and its allocation must continue to be made on peer endorsement of published work, academic standing and direct assessments of research outputs and not only on proxy measures. A third consequence of current trends in electronic publication arises from the fact that researchers in different fields seeking material through electronic means will increasingly draw that material from outside of their own discipline or research area. Equally, as an editor, I use the same electronic resources to identify referees who may not have published in a tourism journal, but have knowledge of economics, human resource management, image studies etc., from which they can assess an article that applies those fields to tourism. Accordingly as an editor I have increasingly less sympathy with the author who argues that they need to publish essentially the same material twice because they are addressing the needs of two different audiences – say in human resource management and in hospitality management if publishing research on the stress of shift work. Both audiences are likely to access the same article via the electronic sources. A fourth trend is that the publishers increasingly are able to share information more easily as their databases become increasingly congruent – and one of the key ways that this will influence us is through identifying plagiarism. Here the publishers will be helping academics in identifying what is generally regarded as poor practice.

One question as to why this practice occurs relates to the fourth of my points outlined in the first paragraph. Perhaps it was always thus, but I have concluded that today many publications are not driven by an author feeling they have something important to say, but rather by a wish to have anything published in order to enhance their career. Research becomes driven not so much by intellectual interest but by a wish to secure tenure at higher levels to obtain reasonable pay given the way that, in many countries, the extension of university education has been achieved in part by an erosion in academic salaries.

So, how does one envisage *Tourism Management* when it commences its 40th volume? First, I am confident there will be a journal of that name. Second, I am sure that it will be in electronic form only. Already 85 percent of our subscribers accept only the electronic version. Third, the process of continuous publication will have taken us to the point where, as is the present case, once checked by an author for grammar, correct referencing, and submitted to the publisher prior to final submission, it will appear on the web as an uncorrected proof. Indeed I am puzzled by an AACSB Research report that complains that it takes two years from acceptance to get published (AACSB, 2008, p. 40). This seems a cry from yesteryear! However minor changes will include the disappearance of issue and page numbers – perhaps to be simply replaced by sequential numbers as URLs are such long things to type in! I would like to think that in 10 years hence, articles that are published today because they are driven by some new analytical technique will have become the new commonplace, and the emphasis will be more on conceptual originality than technical ingenuity. But I suspect the same problem will exist. Should I publish an article because it attracts us to a new analytical technique – yet the results remain prosaic and do not advance our understanding from a conceptual perspective? I will admit I do publish such articles in the hope that the new technique in the hands of a more original thinker will actually take us further forward. From a technical viewpoint many of the econometric tourism forecasting articles are more sophisticated in than in the past, but perhaps still tell us exchange rates are important and exogenous effects have impacts. Compared to the past, the better qualitative articles of today are both more reflective and use means of analysis other than simply an intuitive thematic analysis without recourse to better analytical tools. In ten years time artificial intelligence (AI) techniques may be more commonplace in our analytical thinking. We may borrow more from the physical sciences in certain areas in the use of analogies to explain, for example, the flow of visitors through space. Perhaps by 2019 articles on space tourism and virtual reality will be more than speculative. Environmental issues and tourism research will continue to grow. Of the one thing I am sure, the last 10 years has seen a significant growth in downloads of articles from *Tourism Management*, and currently about 600,000 articles are being annually downloaded. Hence I strongly suspect this number will be more in 2019. I certainly expect *Tourism Management* to continue to be a leading journal in the arena of tourism research.

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