

**Tour Guides and Sustainable Development:
the Case of Hainan, China**

by

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Abstract

Tour guides are one of the most visible players in tourism but, to date, little scholarly attention has been given to tour guides and guiding, not to speak of the links that tour guides may have with sustainable development. This study addresses the gap by promoting an understanding of how tour guides can assist in moving tourism in a sustainable direction. Three research objectives are identified: to understand sustainable development and the relationships between sustainable development and tourism; to explore the roles and responsibilities of tour guides and their implications for the promotion of sustainability; and to examine whether, to what extent and why (or why not), in practice, tour guides exert their functions to support sound tourism development.

Sustainable development is expected to improve the quality of life for all people without causing undesirable ecological and socio-cultural outcomes. As one development option, tourism may be incorporated as part of the strategy to achieve the destination's sustainability. In doing so, each of the tourism players has their own roles and responsibilities to contribute in the quest for a sound tourism performance.

As a central agent in the entire tourism system, tour guides have direct contacts with both the visitor and the visited, working across all of the sectors of the tourism industry. They have a variety of roles to play in response to the expectations of the various tourism stakeholders including the tourists, the destination resources, the local communities, the employers, the governmental authorities and the guides themselves. A literature review suggests that tour guides can support sound tourism development leading towards sustainability by actively exerting their functions on experience management, resources management and local economic promotion to assist tourists to obtain enjoyable and rewarding experiences, to facilitate environmental conservation in destination places and to stimulate consumption and the production of local products and services. Interpretative guiding is the means by which tour guides can realize these above potentials.

A case study was conducted in Hainan, China. The guiding performance there was examined to see whether and to what extent tour guides are contributing to the achievement of

local sustainability. It was discovered that the tour guides in Hainan do not exert (well) their expected functions either in enhancing enjoyable experiences for tourists, in supporting local resource conservation, or in promoting the healthy development of the local economy. Their potentials are blocked by the issues and problems of instant money-making-centered guiding conduct, below-cost group receiving industry practices and unfair remuneration system for the guides, absence of protection measures to ensure the guides' interests, opportunism in guiding and lenient certificating requirements, lack of professionalism and effective training, ineffective monitoring measures, and limited awareness of sustainable development. In order to better the situation, unhealthy travel and trade industry practice should be banned; effective certificating, training and monitoring measures should be developed and implemented; tour guides' personal interests should be protected and local awareness of sustainability, in particular that of the industry members, should be fostered. Serious efforts of the government administration as well as industry members and tour guides are required if tour guides are to fulfill their potential as agents of sustainable development.

Keywords: Tour guides, Sustainable development, Hainan, China

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Guiding is one of the world's oldest professions. The Oxford American Dictionary and Language Guide (1999) defines the term 'guide' as "a person who leads or shows the way or directs the movements of a person or group...who directs a person in his ways or conduct..." (p.433). The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) refers to a guide as one who, specifically, is "hired to conduct a traveler or tourist (e.g., over a mountain, through a forest or over a city or building) and to point out objects of interest" (VI, p.929). Although the precise origin of guiding is impossible to pinpoint, it is considered that the earliest guides emerged when someone was needed to provide geographic direction as prehistoric people banded together and roamed to look for food or shelters. Later on, enterprising men traveled for trade and guards were hired as safety escorts. As these basic needs for direction and safety were satisfied, excursions were taken by the rich and the privileged to seek pleasure, to fulfill their curiosity about the world and to represent or protect their territories or out of other motivations. Correspondingly, the guides came to have multiple functions. In historical accounts, people who were addressed as 'pathfinders' and 'cicerones' were antecedents of today's guides (Pond, 1993).

Since Thomas Cook's first organized group pleasure tour, guiding services have been important elements in modern mass tourism, especially in packaged group travel. Data about tour guides worldwide are not readily available or may not even exist. However, the significance of tour guides can be observed and divined from the dynamics of group tour activities. Group travel is a major force in the tourism industry (Sheldon, 1986). It takes a significant portion of both domestic and overseas shares of travel in many countries (Reilly, 1991). According to 2001 U.S. National Tour Association (NTA) data, every year at least 11 million Americans choose escorted trips. Group travel in the United States constitutes about 4% of all consumer travel. This may not sound that significant until it is considered that the group participants from the United States and Canada spend over US\$11 billion yearly on tours in the States and, in 2001, expenditures made by them world-wide amounted to US\$70.7 billion. Moreover, surveys indicate that this form of

journey is accelerating at a pace that is outstripping that of the general travel industry and group members' spending is increasing at about 15% yearly (Mancini, 2001). Outside of North America, among the international holiday visitors to Australia in the first quarter of 2005, 15% were group travelers (Australia Tourism Bureau, 2005). In Asia, group travel is even more popular in many countries and places such as China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan, especially for international trips (Nozawa, 1992; Mok & Armstrong, 1995; Wang & Sheldon, 1995; Prideaux, 1998; March, 2000; Wong & Lau, 2001), and it is likely to retain its popularity for some time to come (Fuller, 1994 cited in Wang, Hsieh & Huan, 2000; Hooper, 1995).

1.1 Sustainable development, tourism and tour guides

Sustainable development is about integrating environmental concerns (both ecological and socio-cultural) and development (including material and spiritual well-being) in progressive and balanced ways. It is an alternative form of development to the many other forms of development that have gone before (Wall, 2002). The key objectives involve enhancing the quality of life for all people whilst maintaining the ecological and socio-cultural integrity of the world's human and natural resources (Twining-Ward, 1999). It provides a bright prospect and a sound direction towards which all development efforts should be oriented. Tourism is no exception. As one development option, all tourism initiatives should aim to contribute to the realization of sustainable development goals and objectives or, at least, their survival should not contradict with and undermine the maintenance of sustainable development principles (Tosun, 1998).

Tourism is an open system consisting of a set of interrelated components. Its operation encompasses a wide range of activities of various players. How each of them perform in practice and how well they cooperate with each other will influence whether tourism is a facilitator or saboteur of sustainable development. In other words, each of them has their own roles and responsibilities in the quest for a sound tourism performance. Many of these players such as the government, tourism developers, non-government organizations and the local community have been investigated with regard to their functions in promoting sustainability. As a result, a number of planning and management strategies have been suggested, including, for example, involving

local people in tourism planning, establishing public and private cooperation, controlling the scale and rate of development, and introducing codes of ethics and guidelines into the industry. One aspect that has received relatively little scholarly enquiry is the role of tour guides (Weiler, Johnson & Davis, 1991; Weiler & Davis, 1993; Gurung, Simmons & Devlin 1996; Weiler & Ham, 2001a; Black & Weiler, 2005) even though they occupy a special position in the tourism industry.

A literature review indicates that the tour guide is a central agent in the entire tourism system. As important links between the visitor and the visited, their activities usually centre on the questions of where the tour is to go, what the tourists are to see, how they are to see and what they are to do. Therefore, how tour guides operate influences not only what experiences tourists will obtain but also how destination resources will be interpreted as well as what economic and socio-cultural impacts will be brought to local communities. This suggests that tour guides should have important roles to play in the effort to achieve sustainability in destination areas. However, research has seldom been done to explore these roles and empirical studies have rarely been conducted to examine whether or to what extent tour guides can exert their functions to contributing to the development of a sound tourism industry, and why or why not. More research is needed.

1.2 Research goals and objectives

Overall, this research attempts to promote an understanding of how tour guides can contribute to moving tourism development in a sustainable direction. In doing so, several specific objectives are to be achieved, including: to understand sustainable development and the relationships between sustainable development and tourism; to explore the roles and responsibilities of tour guides and their implications for the promotion of sustainability; to examine whether and to what extent in practice tour guides exert their functions to support sound tourism development and why or why not. By fulfilling these research objectives, it is expected to enhance the comprehension of the linkage between tour guides and sustainability, which is beneficial to both practical tour guide management improvement and theory development. As an investigation of the tour guiding phenomena all over the world is not possible, the research purpose is to be achieved through a

case study.

In this context, the research questions to be answered are:

- What roles and responsibilities do tour guides actually undertake on guided tours?
- How do tour guides conduct tours in practice?
- Whether and to what extent do tour guides exert their functions to facilitate tourism development towards sustainable objectives?
- What are the issues and problems existing in guiding practice as well as tour guide and guiding management that hamper tour guides' enthusiasm or action to contribute to sustainable development?

Tour guides are one of the most visible players in tourism but they have been almost invisible to researchers in comparison with other stakeholders or participants. This research is intended to address the gap. According to Weiler and Ham (2001a, p.259): “due to the lack of profile....the contribution and impacts of tour guides and tour guiding are usually glossed over by researchers, planners and managers”. This study will provide an objective portrait of tour guides by investigating their guiding practice against sustainable development goals and objectives. In addition, this research will contribute to the literature on sustainable development and the enhanced management of tour guides.

1.3 Thesis organization

This thesis is comprised of six sections. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 is a literature review that develops a conceptual base for this research after scanning extensive previous theoretical as well as empirical studies on topics of sustainable development, tour guide and guiding. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology and process. Chapter 4 presents the detailed facts observed in the study site. Chapter 5 makes an in-depth analysis of the findings of this research, and Chapter 6 is concerned with the conclusions and implications.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter begins with a discussion of the concept of sustainable development and the relationships between tourism and sustainable development (2.1). Then the basic knowledge about tour guides and tour guiding is introduced and tour guides are defined for the purpose of this research (2.2). After that, links between tour guides and sustainable development are established through the exploration of the roles that tour guides have, their functions in promoting sustainability and the means by which they can exert their potentials in practice. Potential factors are also identified that facilitate or impede tour guides in the conduct of their functions in contributing to a sound tourism development. Besides, management strategies for tour guides and tour guiding are reviewed and implications are considered for enhancing tour guides' performance in facilitating the movement of tourism in the direction of sustainable development (2.3). The chapter ends with a brief summary (2.4).

2.1 Tourism and sustainable development

Tourism is often one of the most welcome development options, especially for places that are abundant in attractive environmental and cultural resources. Globally, it has been identified as one of the largest and fastest growing industries (Miller, 1990; Hunter, 1995b; McMinn, 1997). For many parts of the world, tourism makes up a critical component of local, regional and national economies, contributing significantly to employment creation, GDP growth and foreign exchange earnings. The notion of sustainable development, raised in the 1980s as a response to the call for global concern and action over environmental and sustainability issues, quickly entered into the common vocabulary of policy makers, academic researchers and industry practitioners (Hunter, 1995a). As a result, increasingly at all levels (and in all industrial sectors, it may be added) development is being remodeled along the lines of sustainable development (Farrell, 1999). Tourism's connection to sustainability dialogue has lasted about two decades and, as can be seen from the literature, is fraught with debates and arguments. Nevertheless, an understanding of their

relationships is fundamental for this research.

2.1.1 Understanding the concept of sustainable development

The concept of sustainable development is a product of heightened environmental awareness and the advent of the green movement. Its origin can be traced back to the Paris Biosphere Conference and the Ecological Aspects of International Development Conference in Washington, which were held in 1968 (Caldwell, 1984). It then received much more attention at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Barbier, 1987). However, the term was not made popular until after the publication of the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development report entitled *Our Common Future* (also known as the Brundtland Report). It was given further endorsement with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

2.1.1.1 Definition and meanings

The most widely quoted definition of sustainable development is the one provided by the Brundtland Report. It says: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p.43). According to Wood (1993, cited in Wall, 1997) and Hunter (1995a), two important ingredients are included in this statement: human needs and environmental limitations. For the World Commission, the major objective of development is to satisfy human needs and aspirations for a better quality of life for all people. It emphasizes the issue of equity in terms of access to wealth-generating resources and the distribution of development costs and benefits not only between the individuals and groups making up today’s society (intra-generational equity) but also between the present generation and those that are to come (inter-generational equity). For these goals to be achieved, economic growth is fundamental, especially in those places where basic needs are not being met. At the same time, in recognition that there is a limit to the ability of the natural environment to meet present and future needs, the Commission’s view was that economic growth must coincide with

environmental capabilities. At its most basic, sustainable development means long-term economic sustainability within a framework of long-term ecological sustainability plus the issue of equity (Woodley, 1992). Indeed, the tension between economy and natural environment was the dominant dilemma addressed by the Brundtland Report (Ding & Pigram, 1995; Garrod & Fyall, 1998; Wall, 2002). However, there are other dimensions which deserve to be sustained, like culture (Craik, 1995; Wall, 1997; Butler, 1998). Farrell (1992) also understood sustainable development as the need to find a balance in the development system between economy, environment and society, such that no single aspect should have more importance than the others.

Miltin (1992) noted that sustainable development has two components: the meaning of development and conditions necessary for sustainability. The concept of development has evolved over time. Initially, it was mainly conceived narrowly as economic growth (Rostow, 1960) but, later, economic growth by itself was no longer considered to constitute development, although it still remained a cornerstone of it (Hapgood, 1969; de Kadt, 1979). Social, moral, ethical and environmental concerns (Ingham, 1993) and, later, local empowerment (Wall, 1993a) were incorporated into the concept. Today, development is generally viewed as a process that improves people's living conditions (Bartelmus, 1986), but it is not just about increased wealth. "It means change, changes in behaviour, aspiration, and in the way in which one understands the world around one" (Hapgood, 1969, p.20). It involves broader concerns about the quality of life, such as life expectancy, educational attainment, access to basic freedoms, nutritional status and spiritual welfare (Pearce, Barbier & Markandya, 1990). In other words, the definition of development has been broadened to encompass a continuous, global process of human development guided by the principle of self-reliance, which embraces economic, socio-cultural, environmental as well as ethical considerations (Wall, 1997; Sharpley, 2002).

2.1.1.2 Debate over the concept

Since its emergence, the term 'sustainable development' has been the subject of vigorous debate. Generally, it has been criticized for being both inherently contradictory and ambiguous (Redclift, 1987; Worster, 1993). It is regarded as an oxymoron in which two apparently disparate concepts –

sustainability and development – are brought together. The former implies maintaining in perpetuity while the latter, basically, means to change (Wall, 2002). Its ambiguity lies in an absence of both semantic and conceptual clarity or consensus, which is reflected by the varied definitions and interpretations of it. On the questions ‘What is to be sustained?’ and ‘What is development?’ people from diverse fields possess very different perspectives (Wall, 2002) and, consequently, they use the term in a variety of contexts with different approaches and biases (Lélé, 1991; Heinen, 1994). Other unresolved fundamental problems related to this notion are how to achieve sustainability and how to measure and monitor progress toward it (Coccosis, 1996; Wall, 1997; Butler, 1999; Wall, 2002). Therefore, skeptics challenge the usefulness of the term sustainable development as being a fuzzy concept that merely couches tensions in the language of ‘balance’ while offering limited insight on how to define and reach the meeting point between environmental, economic and social goals. They suggest that, despite the strategy’s apparent attractiveness and theoretical validity, it is impossible or difficult to implement practically (McCool, 1994; Ioannides, 1995; Hunter, 2003).

On the other hand, it is argued that the very weakness inherent in the imprecision associated with sustainable development actually represents a strength. According to Wall (1997, 2002), the value of this fuzziness lies in the fact that it allows people with different perspectives to “buy into” the concept (2002, p.90), to generate dialogue and an exchange of views, after which learning may happen among individuals whose interests may appear to have little in common; it permits flexibility and fine-tuning to meet the needs of different places and cultures, encouraging integration of environmental and economic considerations in decision making. Turner, Pearce and Bateman (1994) suggested a spectrum of views encompassing different ethical stances and management strategies. Within this spectrum the concept of sustainable development becomes malleable, allowing its interpretation to range from very weak to very strong, from the extreme resource-preservationist stance through to the extreme resource-exploitative stance, according to the specific status of human-environment interaction. The validity and utility of such a framework may be open to discussion; however, the flexible and adaptive approach that these authors have adopted towards its interpretation is valued. Hunter (1997) also advocated a spirit of flexibility in

understanding sustainable development within often widely different environmental, economic and socio-cultural settings. He also emphasized that the 'balance' is not absolute. As he stated: "...different interpretations will have applicability according to specific circumstances, involving a different set of trade-off decisions between the various components of sustainability" (p.855).

Apart from this ongoing dispute, generally sustainable development, as presented in the Brundtland Report and other notable literature, is about integrating the environment (both ecological and socio-cultural) and development (including material and spiritual well-being). It is a form of alternative development (Wall, 2002). The key objectives involve enhancing the quality of life for all people whilst maintaining the ecological and socio-cultural integrity of the world's human and natural resources (Twining-Ward, 1999). It advocates holism and an appreciation of the interconnectedness of phenomena. It is predominantly considered as a long-term endeavour, and it promises an inter- and intra-generational balanced level of welfare.

2.1.2 The essence of sustainable tourism

Since its popularization, sustainable development has raised such widespread interest across various industrial sectors and academic disciplines that numerous scholars have attempted to translate aspects of this general concept to their own disciplinary or intellectual frame of reference. Tourism is not immune to this tendency. As a result, much academic and policy-orientated research has been devoted to examining the theory and practice of sustainable development in the context of tourism. Consequently, the term 'sustainable tourism' has emerged, which has enticed academics and practitioners into arguing about what it means.

Although sustainable tourism may be defined in a variety of ways (for example, Garrod and Fyall (1998) listed in their paper eight sample definitions for it), the term is considered to be a slightly modified form of 'sustainable development' (Wall, 1997) which simply limits the meaning of the latter to those particular elements associated with tourism (McMinn, 1997). According to Coccossis (1996), sustainable tourism is being understood variously based on different perspectives. It can be translated as 'economic sustainability of tourism' in which the

basic goal is the viability of tourist activity, a goal to be achieved mainly through strengthening, upgrading or differentiating the tourism product; as ‘ecologically sustainable tourism’ which addresses the concern that tourism activities should not disturb the natural environment in meeting the needs of the industry’s own survival; or as ‘sustainable tourist development’ which recognizes the importance of environmental quality as a competitive factor in ensuring the long-term viability of the tourist activity. No matter how different in appearance, all of these expressions are stressing the same thing, that is, “tourism in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time” (Butler, 1993, p.29). Here, the emphasis is placed on the need to achieve a balance between commercial and environmental interests for the sake of ensuring the perpetuation of tourism itself (Butler, 1993) rather than the broad sustainability of, ideally, an entire system (Wall, 1997).

This approach has been criticized for interpreting sustainable development from a tourism-centric viewpoint without a full appreciation of the implications of this notion (Wall, 1997). To some extent, a sector-specific approach is understandable since academics and practitioners from different backgrounds must bring their own expertise to the issues involved, focusing on those of most immediate relevance. However, an overt single-sector perspective fails to acknowledge intersectoral competition for resources, ignores the implications of one sector’s activities for others as well as the potentials and opportunities of other sectors to contribute to sustainable development. Therefore such a sector-centric and parochial approach could cause misunderstanding of, even detachment from, the original meaning of sustainable development and, in the end, render impossible the realization of the goals of a sustainability in particular and those of sustainable development in general. This is particularly true of tourism which, by its nature, is a nebulous industry characterized by many direct or indirect connections with other sectors, interests and activities (Hunter, 1995b; 2003).

2.1.3 Tourism and sustainable development: clarification and positioning

Tourism is not the only user of resources. More often than not it competes with other activities for the use of limited resources such as land, water and capital. Moreover, the appropriation of

resources in the narrow interests of the tourism industry may not be compatible with the best interests of the broader community (Wall, 1997). This suggests that tourism is unlikely to be the sole development option for destination areas or that it may not always be the best one. “Diversity, whether it be in economy or biology, is likely to promote rather than detract from sustainability more broadly conceived” (Wall, 1997, p.486) and, “a balance must be found between tourism and other existing and potential activities... in other words, trade-offs between sectors may be necessary in the interests of the greater good” (p.486).

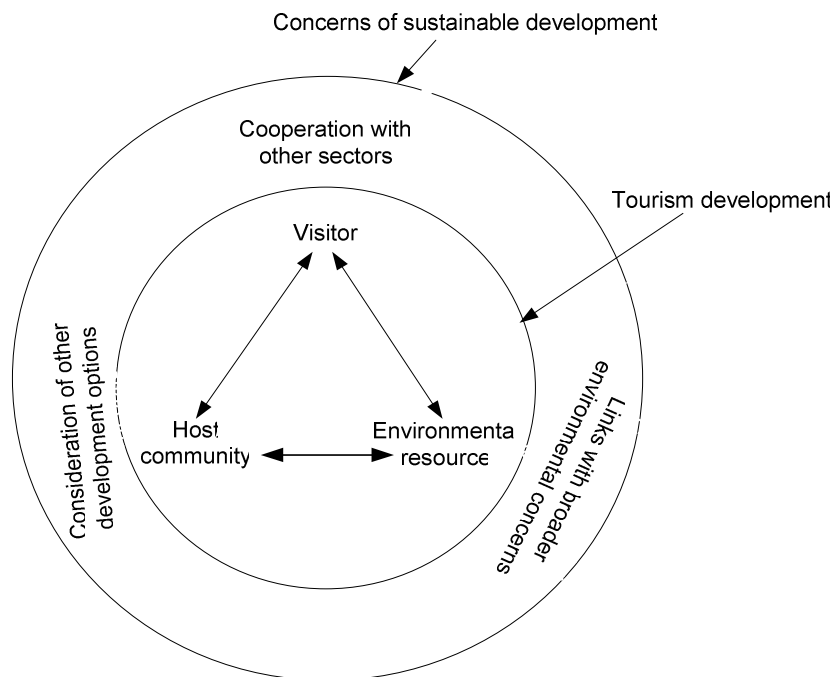
Sustainable development, adopting a multi-sector perspective to development, requires holism and an appreciation of the interconnectedness of phenomena (Wall, 1997; 2002). It may incorporate tourism as part of the strategy to achieve sustainability (Tosun, 2001) without ignoring the potential of and opportunities for other sectors to do so. This implies that the tourism industry should not seek for its own perpetuity at the cost of others. Instead, what we need to look at is whether and how tourism can facilitate a broader sustainability (Wall, 1997) or, at least, whether its survival does or does not contradict the maintenance of the principles of development over an indefinite period without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs and desires (Tosun, 1998).

For tourism to be a facilitator in promoting sustainability rather than a saboteur undermining it, its development should be made consistent with the general tenets of sustainable development by determining specific principles in the light of them (Lanfant & Graburn, 1992; Stabler & Goodall, 1996; Twining-Ward, 1999). In other words, specific principles can and should be developed to guide tourism operation in a sound direction. Wherever the development is found to be deviating from these guidelines, as shown through monitoring systems, corrective measures should be taken. In this sense, sustainable development can be considered as the ‘ideal’ to arrest tourism’s damaging effects. As discussed before, the essence of sustainable development is to integrate the environment (both ecological and socio-cultural) and development (including material and spiritual well-being), with the key objectives of enhancing the quality of life whilst maintaining the ecological and socio-cultural integrity of the world’s human and natural resources over an indefinite period of time. In line with this, several specific principles for ensuring sound

tourism development are summarized below.

First, tourism initiatives should be considered alongside other land-use alternatives or development options, with costs and benefits fairly distributed among tourism businesses, promoters and the host community (Cronin, 1990, cited in Sharpley, 2002). This implies that tourism should ideally be complementary to rather than dominant over local economies. It is thus “... not an end in itself, nor a unique or isolated procedure, but rather an interdependent function of a wider and permanent socio-economic development process” (Godfrey, 1998, p.214). Second, it should aim to improve local residents’ quality of life (i.e. their economic and subjective well-being), while providing quality experiences to visitors and protecting the quality of the environment (Inskeep, 1991; Müller, 1994; Hunter, 1995a,b). Third, it should recognize the interdependency between maintaining a prosperous industry and successful management of the local resources on which it is based (Hunter, 1995a,b; Godfrey, 1998). In this way, it will be making an effort to keep the continuity of visitor interest by ensuring the continuity of both the environmental and the cultural resources of destination areas (Wall, 1993b). Fourth, it should balance the needs of hosts, guests, the environment and the industry (Harris & Leiper, 1995). Fifth, it advocates cooperation between the tourism sector and other sectors in destination areas in order to ensure the integrity of the resource base, since they share these environmental and cultural attributes (Murphy, 1994). Last but not least, it should recognize the links existing between destination areas and the wider environment and, therefore, seek to contribute to sustainable development at regional, national and global levels, and propose an intra- and inter-generational equity of welfare (Hunter, 1995a). These principles can be displayed clearly in the following visual model (Figure 2.1):

Figure 2.1: A visual model of principles guiding tourism development towards sustainability



Source: adapted from Hunter, 1995b and Lane, 1991.

2.2 Tour guides and tour guiding

It is necessary to clarify here again that although a tour guide can be a book, a map or a holiday brochure, in this research the term is applied strictly to a person who conducts a tour.

2.2.1 A brief review of the guiding history

Specific reference to guiding can be traced back to the time of the Roman Empire. Since then the evolution of tour guides and the guiding history of the Western world was divided by Pond (1993) into four periods. The first one was in the era of the great empires (3000 B.C. to A.D.500) when tourism saw its first major development. Sightseeing by sea flourished during the Greek Empire; travel surged throughout the reign of the Imperial Rome with its legendary paved roads and great economic success. As these activities increased, so did the number of guides. They acted as ‘leaders around’ or ‘explainers’ who assisted visitors journeying abroad. The second stage happened in the Middle Ages (approximately A.D.500 to 1500), a period after the fall of Rome

and before the Renaissance. At that time, religious pilgrimages by the upper and middle classes were the main type of journey. Because the fall of the Rome resulted in chaos in the economy and the social order, the issue of safety came to be a main concern of travelers. Therefore, as well as being pathfinders, guides had to serve as protectors, safety escorts and even bribers to assure safe passage. The third phase covered the period of the Renaissance and the Grand Tour (A.D.1500 to around 1700). During this time, taking excursions for educational and cultural reasons became a fashion for the ‘Grand Tourists’, the youth of the upper classes. These promising young men, usually assigned and accompanied by a cicerone, expected or were expected to broaden their horizon, to improve their self-cultivation and to enrich their knowledge through long journeys. The cicerone, named after Cicero the most esteemed guide in European society, was intended to be a knowledgeable, grave and respectable person. They were mainly personal tutors and spiritual advisors. At this time, most travelers going to and touring within the New World throughout the 17th and 18th centuries were explorers for the purpose of discovering a new way of life. Pleasure excursions to and from there were a dalliance of a few privileged and curious Europeans. Therefore, almost no New-World guides are known to have existed during this period. The Modern Age began in the 19th century. The first group pleasure travel happened in 1841 when Thomas Cook organized an excursion train tour to a temperance meeting in England. Within a few years after, as the tour guide or tour manager, he led his clients to Paris and in 1856, conducted the first of many of his Grand Tours of Europe. No evidence of organized guiding service exists prior to the 20th century other than that of Thomas Cook’s company. Cook is also respected as the “patron saint” of today’s tour guides. Outside Europe, the Gettysburg Battlefield Guides were among the first well-documented tour guides in the United States.

Direct records about tour guides and guiding practices in the ancient oriental world are not easy to find; however, conjecture can be made by reviewing historical travel activities. For example, in ancient China people traveled for various reasons. The poor moved to find food or shelters; emperors took tours for inspection (e.g. Emperor Qin Shi Huang’s inspection tours to the east sea in the Qin Dynasty (221 B.C.-206 B.C.), Emperor Qian Long’s trips to the south of the Yangtze River in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911)); envoys crossed borders for political, economic

and cultural exchanges (Zhang Qiang's Diplomatic Mission to the West Region (138 B.C.-126 B.C.), Zheng He's Great Voyages to the West Seas (1405-1433)); businessmen journeyed for trade (e.g. the Silk Road); monks trudged for religious purpose (e.g. Monk Xuan Zang's (600-664) journey to India, Monk Jian Zhen's (688-763) travel to Japan;); poets, artists and scholars traveled to seek pleasure, inspiration or psychological peace or for doing research (e.g. the noted traveler and geographer Xu Xiake (1587-1641)). Besides, inbound tourism also existed. For instance, Chang An, the capital city in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), was already an international metropolis at that time. Foreigners' faces, such as Koreans, Japanese, Russians and Persians, could be easily found on the street. Study and business were their main purposes. One person who should be mentioned is Marco Polo, probably the greatest of ancient western travelers, who came to China during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). He stayed there for about 17 years and, after he returned, his book '*The Travels of Marco Polo*' left tremendous impacts on contemporary Europe. He was the first person to introduce China to the Europeans. It is believed that in any of the above cases, certain guiding practices would have undertaken and guides would have been employed as pathfinders, guards, explainers, translators and cultural mediators.

2.2.2 Reasons for modern people taking guided tours

Modern tourism began and developed rapidly after World War II, thanks to the great advances in the means of transportation. Statistics show (see introductory chapter) that group travel is one of the main modes of travel in modern mass tourism. Why do people favour group tours today? A number of researchers have examined various reasons for this and it would be difficult to list them all (Schmidt, 1979; Crompton, 1979, 1981; Holloway, 1981; Quiroga, 1990; Reilly, 1991; Braidwood, Boyce & Cropp, 1996; Mancini, 2001; Yu, Weiler & Ham, 2001). However, some motives seem to be common to the bulk of guided-tour clients.

Convenience is the single biggest cause. Indeed, tour participants do not want to worry about logistical matters when they are on vacation. Guided tours help cushion clients from hassles because there is always someone else taking care of all the planning before the tour and ready to solve all the problems en route. Economy is also a big advantage of group tours. A well-designed

and conducted tour minimizes wasted time; it ensures that the client sees all the essentials in a convenient, efficient manner. Furthermore, the group purchasing power of a tour company yields substantial savings on hotels, meals and attractions. Much of these savings is passed on to the consumer. Thus the cost per member is much lower than it would be for an individual paralleling the tour on their own. In addition, because the price of a tour includes most travel components, clients know and pay for most of their vacation costs before they even leave home. Safety is another consideration. Being a stranger in a strange place can be an uncomfortable feeling. Guided tours provide a considerable amount of relief and safety, especially in countries or places where language and customs are unfamiliar. An experienced and knowledgeable tour guide is capable of easing the transition from the known to the unknown, thus making members more secure. The social nature of humans also provides an important motive for group travel: companionship. Loneliness is abhorrent to people. We seek company of others when away from home. The price of a tour, its destination and its activities will automatically predetermine and then gather group members that are similar in socio-economic levels and interests. It is no accident that long and deep friendships are often forged among the participants in a tour.

In addition to all the above, a very important factor attracting people to a guided tour is certainly the tour guide. Tour guides are of significance for tourists to obtain a rewarding experience and this is determined by the mediated nature of tourism activities. According to Ooi (2002), mediation is central to tourism consumption at two levels. Firstly, the post-modern tourists, especially the group travelers, are subject to three fundamental conditions: their visits are short, they have little or superficial knowledge about destination environment and cultures, and they are engaged in leisure activities. Consequently, while touring, they often do not have or are not willing to invest much energy and resources to find what they seek, or even perhaps they lack the necessary abilities to do so. As a result, destination areas may mean only collages of fleeting images and signs running past their eyes and minds. It is tour guides who help tourists to move around, point out and interpret to them interesting cultural features and events that otherwise might be ignored or meaningless. Through the narrating voices of tour guides, a deeper understanding of the destination may be fostered and tourists may indeed make sense of the place.

Secondly, tourism products in general and cultural representations in particular, when packaged for tourists, inevitably lose some of their aura. The aura is the essence of local culture and a basis of authenticity; it has a special inimitable status which lures tourists. The packaged product can only approximate the real thing that it aims to represent because the original culture is decentred. For tourists to get an impressive and authentic experience during their consumption of sites, re-introduction of the elements of their aura into the products is required and cultural mediators are actively engaged in the process of recentring. Tour guides do this by directing the attention of tourists towards significant local cultural elements, explaining and interpreting their meanings, persuading tourists that the products are authentic, and teaching them how to consume the products with a sense of the products' aura. Thus, a well-trained tour guide gives tourists 'in-residence expert' comments on almost anything: history, geography, architecture, trees, bushes, birds—whatever merits the kind of insight that the average tourist craves but can seldom achieve on their own. “Without a guide the Forum of Rome is little more than an accumulation of pillars, stones, and rubble. On a tour, however, it becomes a place alive with the imagined footsteps of Caesars, senators, and centurions” (Mancini, 2001, p.3).

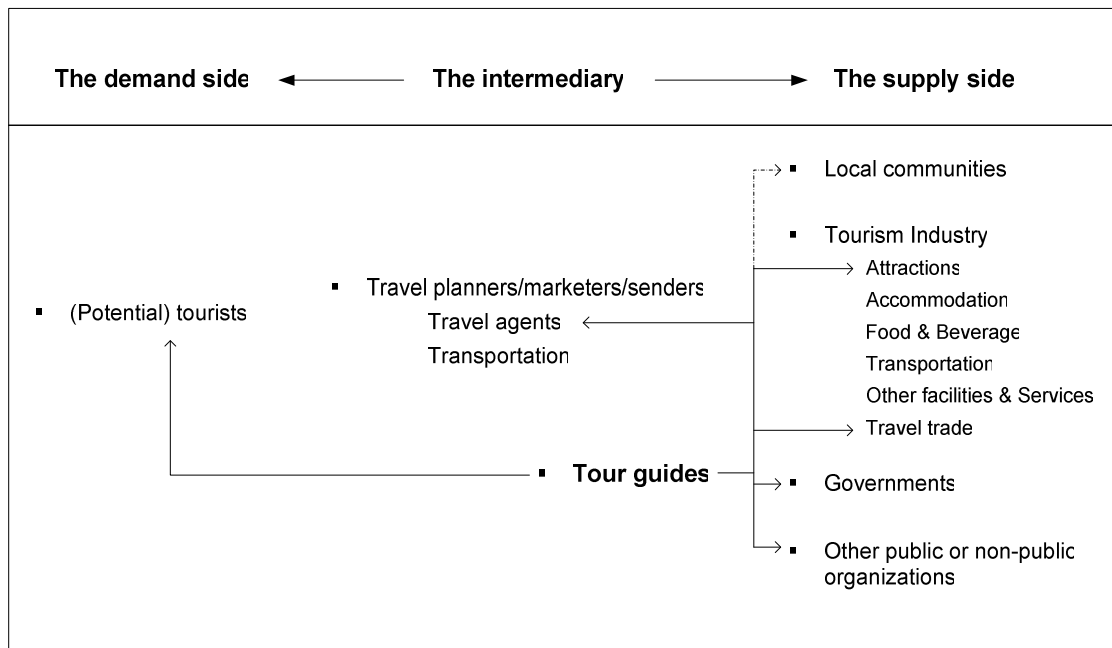
2.2.3 The position of tour guides in the tourism system

Tourism is an open system consisting of a set of inter-related components (Hudman & Hawkins, 1989; Leiper, 1990; Gunn, 1994; Mill & Morrison, 1998; McKercher, 1999). In order to demonstrate how tourism works, as well as to trace the complex relationships which exist between the various elements that constitute a tourism system, several models have been established. These models are based either on representing the flow of travelers between the tourist generating region and the receiving region and summarizing its characteristics (e.g. Leiper, 1990), or on depicting the various activities involved in the process of tourism product delivery (e.g. Mill & Morrison, 1998). Nevertheless, a review of them indicates that, basically, a tourism system has three common parts: the demand, the supply and the linkage or intermediaries (Hudman & Hawkins, 1989; Burns & Holden, 1995). The demand refers to the tourists. The supply side involves several stakeholders or players, mainly including local communities, the tourism industry,

government authorities and various other organizations. The tourism industry is itself multi-dimensional and encompasses at least six components: attractions, accommodation, food and beverage, local transportation, other facilities and services (e.g. places of entertainment and souvenir shops), and the travel trade (i.e. travel operators, travel agents) (Alberta Tourism Education Council (ATEC), 1992). The intermediary component is composed of travel agents and transportation companies (in both the guest community and the host community) who function as travel planners and travel senders, drawing up and arranging travel packages and transporting tourists between origins and destinations (Nozawa, 1992).

Tour guides occupy a very special position in the system. In terms of affiliation, they are an essential part of the supply-side components. They can work for all of the supply-side stakeholders, within all of the sectors of the tourism industry. No matter who they are working for (e.g. attractions, travel operators/agents, governments, public organizations, private corporations or themselves independently), tour guides are generally considered to be service providers for visitors (Pond, 1993). However, since they have direct contact with both the visitor and the visited during the actual travel experience, they are functioning as a bridge or a linkage between the demand and the supply sides. Particularly, in cross-cultural settings, they also need to act as cultural translators and interpreters (Nozawa, 1992; McDonnell, 2001). In this sense, tour guides also form part of the intermediary component (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: The position of tour guides in the tourism system



2.2.4 Significance of tour guides to the tourism industry

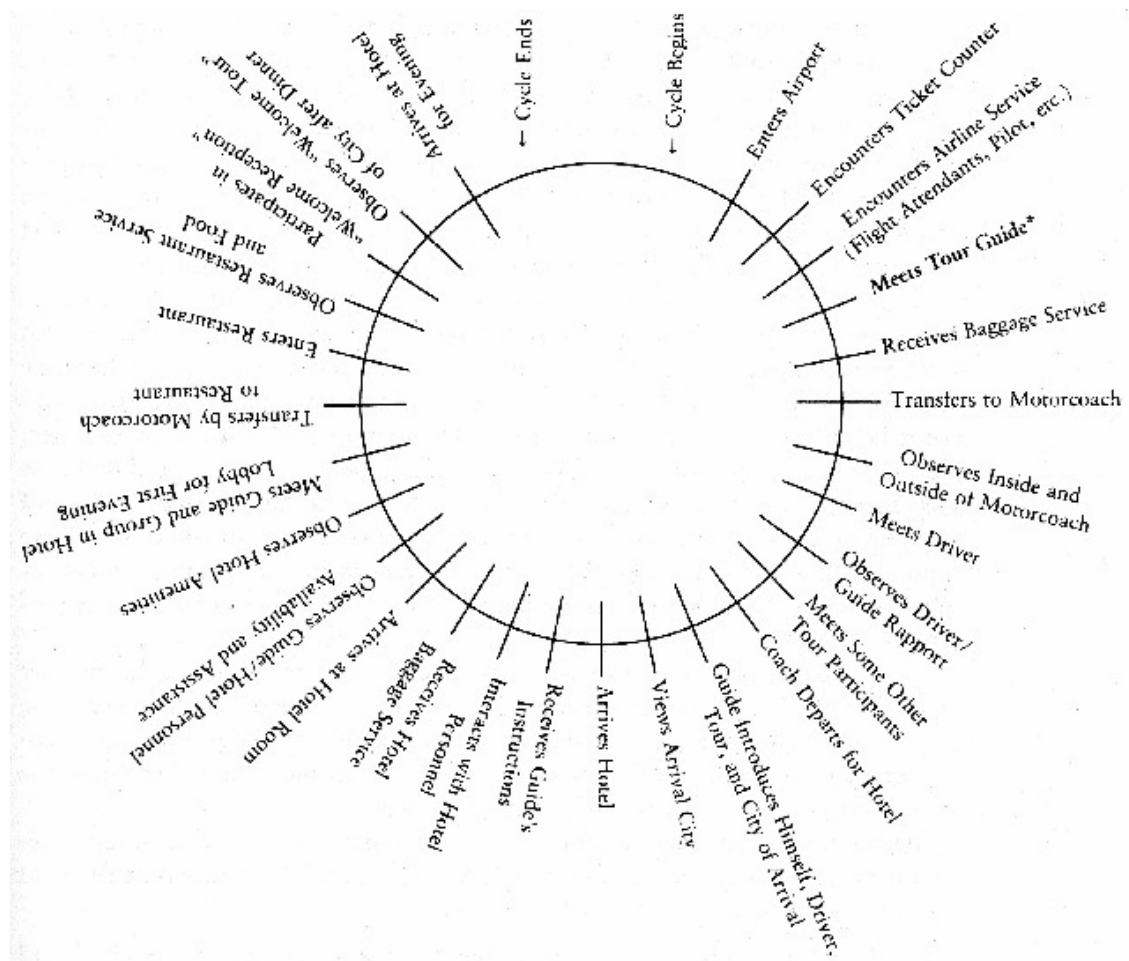
After the identification of the position of tour guides in the tourism system, the significance of tour guides to the tourism industry can be easily comprehended. Their importance lies in the following facts.

First, tour guides play a pivotal role in bringing to fruition the ideas of planners, marketers, consultants, operators and travel agents (Welgemoed, 1993). All the others have made preparatory steps and laid the groundwork, but it is the guide who is the ultimate agent and purveyor of all these services. Guides deal most closely and intimately with the clients, assuring that the services contracted for are provided and the promises fulfilled. They are, indeed, a very important link in an industry that “involves billions of dollars, millions of people, innumerable programs, thousands upon thousands of attractions both natural and man-made, untold numbers of shops, souvenir stores, bus companies, large and small hotels and restaurants, and a host of ancillary services” (Porrath, 1978, p.xix). They are a mainstay of the industry.

Second, tour guides are one of the key front line players in the tourism industry (Pond, 1993; Ap & Wong, 2001; Hounnaklang, 2004). Previous research suggests that the success or

failure of service industries is highly dependent on contact employees who exert a strong influence on the service quality as perceived by consumers (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1995; Goldsmith, Flynn & Bonn, 1994; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). Jan Carlzon, a former president of Scandinavian Airlines, named the precise instant when the customer comes into contact with any aspect of a business and, on the basis of that contact, forms an opinion about the quality of the service as 'moments of truth'. He further recognized that the critical moments of truth for customers of his airline occurred not with the corporate executives but rather with ticket agents, flight attendants and other 'front-line employees'. After its advent, this concept has had a marked effect on the service industry. Now it is widely accepted that in a global, service-oriented economy, moments of truth will determine the very existence of many businesses (Pond, 1993). In order to identify and assess the moments of truth, Karl Albrecht, one of the leading forces in service industry training, introduced a model called 'cycle of service'. By applying this model to tourism, Pond (1993) drew a traveler's 'cycle of service' which highlighted the moments of truth for tourists on the first day of a tour (Figure 2.3). He illustrated with this model that the tourists' moments of truth begin well before they meet the guide. Moreover, once the tourist arrives at destinations, the guide becomes directly and indirectly responsible for countless moments of truth as they are in a continuous and intense contact with the tour participants throughout the tour's entire duration. This cycle of service model also indicates many of the demands placed upon guides as well as the need for guides to work cooperatively with travelers and other players, including tour operators, hotel and restaurant employees, and the like. As their link to a city, region or subject area, guides themselves are truly critical 'moments of truth' for the tourism industry (Pond, 1993).

Figure 2.3: The traveler's cycle of service: the first day of a tour



Source: Pond, 1993

If this is the case, then clearly the tour guide's performance will be a predominant factor influencing the customer's perception of travel service quality (Quiroga, 1990; Mossberg, 1995; Wang, Hsieh & Huan, 2000; Dahles, 2002; Chan, 2004). They are very much responsible for the overall impression and satisfaction with the tour services offered by a destination (Ap & Wong, 2001). Their behaviours or presentations can break or make a tour (Schmidt, 1979; Geva & Goldman, 1991). Research has already provided much evidence for such statements. For example, Whipple and Tach (1988) illustrated that the quality of a tour escort was the discriminating service attribute of trip satisfaction and interest in another tour. By contrast, Pizam, Neuman, and Reichel (1978) found that poor performance of tour guides could shape the traveler's entire perception of

fulfillment and potential rebooking with the same travel agency. Porrath (1978) also emphasized how important a qualified and duteous tour guide is. He commented that every attractive and salable tour package comes into being owing to various talented, hard-working, well-meaning professionals investing much energy, money and time in program development and detailed arrangements. Their labours would be frustrated if, at the most crucial juncture in the package, they found that an immature, inexperienced and ignorant guide had spoiled everything. All the efforts that have gone into organizing a package have been a prologue to the trip itself. When the trip is a disappointment, all the time, energy, funds and dreams have gone to waste (Porrath, 1978).

In addition, tour guides are tourism promoters and they sell the next tour. Underlying this belief is the assumption that satisfaction with the guide's performance will directly translate into an enhanced image of the tour company and then to repeat purchase and favorable recommendations to potential customers (Geva & Goldman, 1991). Surveys show that the tour guide is regarded as being an important element in selecting a charter tour (Mossberg, 1995) and in forming revisit intentions (Whipple & Tach, 1988; Chan, 2004). Therefore, a skilful guide is one of the most valuable assets a tourism company can have (Pond, 1993). When recognizing the valuable service they perform and helping them to become more proficient and more professional, the travel and tourism industry will reap the benefits of higher profits and greater efficiency (Porrath, 1978). In addition, tour guiding constitutes a strategic factor in the representation of a destination area or a country (Pond, 1993; Dahles, 2002), good guiding resulting in economic benefits for local communities (Dahles, 2002).

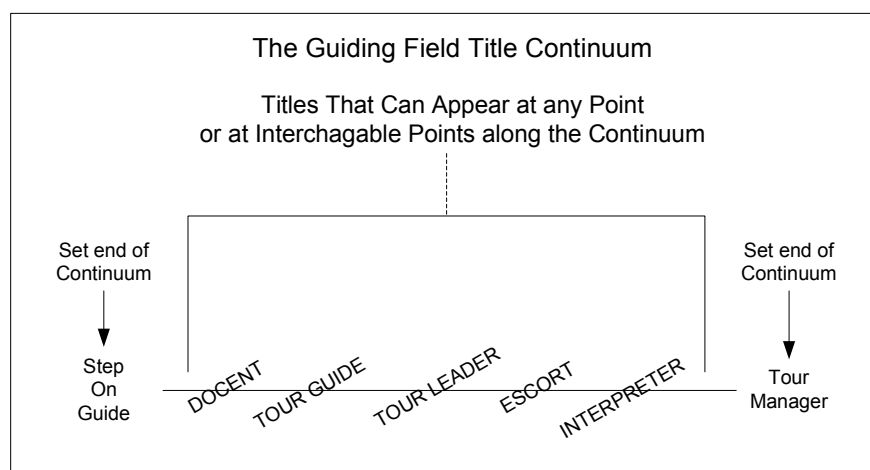
2.2.5 Typologies of tour guides

In its strictest industry definition, a tour guide refers to "someone who takes people on sightseeing excursions of limited duration" (Mancini, 2001, p.4), or "one who conducts a tour...one with a broad-based knowledge of a particular area whose primary duty is to inform" (Pond, 1993, p.17). However, in its broadest sense, the term can be applied to any person who is engaged in guiding people in any way. Consequently, tour guides bear a number of other titles such as tour leader,

tour manager, tour escort, local guide, docent, interpreter, and so on. This makes the term very confusing, especially for those people who are outside of the tourism industry. As a result, various typologies have been provided by academic researchers and industry practitioners with the intention to address the confusion.

Poynter (1993) presented a guide hierarchy in order to try to clear up misunderstandings by showing how terms are positioned in the guiding field title continuum (Figure 2.4). Using professional level as the criterion, the continuum starts with the step-on guide, the entry-level position, and ends with the tour manager, the most experienced and professional in the guiding field. Others like docent, tour guides, tour leader, escort and interpreter are located at different points between the ends of the continuum.

Figure 2.4: The guiding field title continuum



Source: Poynter, 1993

Pond (1993) differentiated a tour guide from a tour manager by considering that the major task of a tour guide is to give an in-depth commentary about the destination while a tour manager, as the name implies, manages administrative and logistical aspects of the tour to make certain of a smooth trip. The guide ensures that the itinerary is followed, that travelers have satisfactory hotel rooms and meals, and that local sightseeing trips and promised events actually happen. Mancini (2001) further pointed out that the term 'tour guide' is often used within the industry as a synonym for 'local guide', that is, it includes both site-based guides and non-site-specific guides.

In the case of the site-based guide, also called an interpreter, their duties come to an end after their visitors leave the site. The non-site-specific guide accompanies tourists throughout their itinerary until the guests leave the destination area. Besides, according to the nature of employers, the word tour guide may include a wide range of guides such as government guides, business or industry guides, community guides and self-employed guides.

Braidwood, Boyce and Cropp (1996) divided the guiding business into two categories: local guides and tour directors. Local guides were further subcategorized into site guides, step-on guides, driver guides and meet-and-greet guides. Usually, they serve no longer than a single day. Tour directors, the synonym of tour manager, tour leader or tour escort, provide multi-day services with additional planning duties.

Hounaklang (2004) distinguished a tour guide from other titles by the following description: *a tour guide* is a person who conducts tourists around places of interest in a country and imparts information during the itinerary; *a tour courier* is a person who welcomes, accompanies and looks after tourists in terms of their welfare, accommodation, transport, etc. during their visits; *a tour manager* often combines the above duties, but with an emphasis on courier responsibilities, and works chiefly internationally, accompanying tourists on extended tours of several countries; *a guide lecturer* is a person who is a specialist in particular areas or fields of knowledge and accompanies a group nationally and internationally, guiding and giving lectures where appropriate.

2.2.6 Defining tour guides for this research

Obviously, descriptions and categorizations overlap considerably and vary from region to region and country to country. While there are various definitions of a tour guide, this research follows an internationally accepted one given by the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (FEG): a tour guide is a person who “guides groups or individual visitors from abroad or from the guide's own country around the buildings, sites and landscapes of a city or a region; to interpret, inspiringly and entertainingly, the cultural and natural heritage and environment in the language of the visitor's choice”. This definition indicates that the local tour guide, but not the interpreter or

tour manager, as differentiated by Pond (1993) and Mancini (2001), is the focus of this research.

2.3 Promoting tourism development towards sustainability: roles of tour guides

As discussed before, tour guides are central agents in the tourism system. They have direct contact with both the visitor and the visited and they work across all of the sectors of the tourism industry, for nearly all of the stakeholders. Therefore, their significance should not be limited only to helping tourists obtain impressive experience and assisting the tourism business to be prosperous. They should be able to function more in order to support a sound tourism development. However, only after an examination of the various roles that tour guides act in practice can we identify what parts they can play in promoting sustainability.

2.3.1 Roles of tour guides on guided tours

Among the early research into the roles that tour guides play on guided tours (e.g. McKean, 1973; Gorman, 1979; Schmidt, 1979; Holloway, 1981; Cohen, 1982, 1985; Pearce, 1984), perhaps the most systematic examination was done by Cohen whose framework is frequently cited as a basis for subsequent investigation (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Schematic representation of the tour guide's role

	Outer-directed	Inner-directed
Leadership Sphere	Original Guide (pathfinder) (instrumental primacy) a. direction b. access c. control	Animator (social primacy) a. tension management b. integration c. morale d. animation
Mediatory Sphere	Tour-leader (interactionary primacy) a. representation b. organisation	Professional Guide (mentor) (communicative primacy) a. selection b. information c. interpretation d. fabrication

Source: adapted from Cohen, 1985.

Cohen (1985) noted that modern tour guides inherit, combine and expand the roles of both their antecedents: the pathfinder and the mentor. The pathfinder leads geographically through an unknown environment and also leads socially, in a setting which is unfamiliar to his followers. The mentor, illustrated by the 'tutor(s)' who led young Englishmen on the 'cultural pilgrimage' of the Grand Tour of Europe, mainly serves as a spiritual advisor. Cohen 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'. Within each of these spheres, he further differentiated the guide's responsibilities between the outer-directed and the inner-directed. The outer-directed involves using resources outside the tour group to meet the needs of tourists and the inner-directed is concerned with employing resources within the tour party to fulfill the clients' expectations. In this way, Cohen produced a 2×2 matrix of tour guide roles. He referred to the outer-directed aspect of the leadership sphere as the instrumental component and the inner-directed aspect as the social component. He called the outer-directed aspect within the mediatory sphere the 'interactional component' and the inner-directed aspect the 'communicative component'. Correspondingly, each of these components was identified with a role name: in order, the pathfinder, the animator, the tour-leader and the mentor. The concrete responsibilities attached to each of these roles are shown in the framework. Briefly, the pathfinder role relates to the guide's duty to bring about the smooth accomplishment of the tour. The animator role involves facilitating relationships, bringing cohesion and morale, and creating an entertaining atmosphere within the touring party. The distinction between the tour leader role and the mentor role lies in the fact that in the first case, the guide is conceptualized as a 'social middleman' and in the second, as a 'cultural mediator'. As a tour leader, the guide mediates sites and institutions as well as tourism facilities between his party and the local community. As a mentor, they pass on and mediate information and knowledge to the tourist. Specifically, they point out objects of interest to the touring party and then give explanations by introducing figures or facts about these objects. In cross-cultural settings, they also need to translate any strangeness into a cultural idiom familiar to the client.

Although Cohen recognized that guides have responsibilities both to the guided group (i.e.

to facilitate learning and enjoyment and to nurture and manage interactions among clients) and outside the group (i.e. to facilitate and mediate interaction between clients and host communities) (Weiler & Ham, 2001b), all the roles in his model are oriented towards the needs of the tourist (Weiler *et al.*, 1991; Weiler & Davies, 1993). However, as an important link in the entire tourism system, tour guides also have many other masters to whom they are, more often than not, accountable. Key among these are the guide's employer, the host community and the government authority. Therefore, to obtain a comprehensive view of the roles that tour guides are required to fulfill in guided tours, it is necessary to discuss the various stakeholders' requirements and expectations of tour guides.

Employers like tour operators expect the guide to provide a high-quality service to maximize not only visitor satisfaction but also the company's profit margins (Weiler & Ham, 2001b). Once the tour starts, tour guides become representatives of their employers. Their performance influences not only current visitors' travel experiences but also potential visitors' intention to purchase the company's products because of the word-of-mouth effect. In this respect, guides have a marketing role (Pond, 1993; Hounnaklang, 2004). Many sites, corporations or organizations utilize tour guides specifically to present a particular message or image to visitors; government authorities in some parts of the world control tour guides' narratives for the purpose of projecting a political philosophy; local residents may also view them as ambassadors for the place in which they live. In these cases, tour guides act as public relations representatives (Pond, 1993). In addition, one of the most important tasks of the guide is to encapsulate the essence of a place, meaning that, as far as the destination area's environmental and cultural resources are concerned, tour guides are interpreters. Last but not least, tour guides carry the responsibility for themselves. This is particularly stressed by ter Steege, Stam and Bras (1999) and Bras (2000a,b) who argued that academic researchers usually lay a great deal of emphasis on tour guides' functions of satisfying their various masters (e.g. tourists, employers, local communities, government authorities, protected area managers) and keeping the destination's tourism development in balance while ignoring guides' self-expectations. They pointed out that in practice, tour guides do not have a vocation to be totally altruistic mediators; an important part of their

activities is centered on the question of how they themselves derive the greatest benefit from their work. To make this happen, they "...sell images, knowledge, contacts, souvenirs, access, authenticity, ideology... (they) build social networks, monopolize contacts, exploit the commission and tipping system... to make encounters as profitable as possible" for themselves (ter Steege *et al.*, 1999, p.115). In this sense, tour guides are more like entrepreneurs.

Figure 2.6 presents a summary, based on Cohen's work and other notable research undertaken previously, of almost all the roles that tour guides may play on guided tours. It takes a multiple perspective approach by which expectations of the various stakeholders from tour guides are reflected. The value of this new framework is that it fully takes into account the position of tour guides in the entire tourism system and their complex relationships with the other players. Thus, it provides a basis on which to conduct a clear and thorough examination of tour guides' practices as well as the implications of these practices in promoting tourism development towards sustainability. It is important to note that although these roles are categorized according to the perspectives of different stakeholders, they are actually interwoven and interactional. At the same time, these roles are not likely to be in harmony all the time; rather, they may sometimes be in conflict with each other (Holloway, 1981). Moreover, tour guides are unlikely to wear only one hat at a time, nor may they take all the roles on a single tour. Rather, what roles they prefer to act and the extent to which they operate more dominantly in some roles than in others depend on the nature of the group, the nature of the excursion, the circumstances of the destination place and the wishes of their employers as well as of themselves.

Figure 2.6: A comprehensive framework: roles of tour guides on guided tours

For whom tour guides are responsible	Roles of tour guides	Description of responsibility
Tourists	Pathfinder Group leader Mentor Animator	To satisfy tourists' needs and expectations through solving the problems of where to go, how long to stay, what to see, how to see, what to do and how to deal with locals
Resources of destination places	Interpreter	To reveal meanings, values and significance of local environments and cultures
Local communities	Representative	To show hospitality, to foster understanding
Employers	Salesperson	To help to maximize economic benefits; to project a particular message or image, or help to realize some other political purpose
Government authorities	Public relations representative	
Guides themselves	Entrepreneur	To seek as much income as possible; to improve own social status

2.3.2 Functions of tour guides in promoting sustainability

The above figure indicates the roles tour guides have on guided tours in response to different tourism players' expectations. In turn, how tour guides carry out these roles inevitably affects the realization of the various players' expectations and benefits. In actual practice, all the activities that tour guides perform are centered on determining where the tour is to go, what to see, how to see, what to do and how long to stay. Therefore, what tour guides do and say has great influence on how tourists experience the destination, how they view the local culture and people, and how they behave on the tour. This can further influence the nature of the impact of tourist activities on the environment, the culture and the economy as well as on the people of destination areas. Hence, it can be reasoned out that tour guides are vital in promoting sustainability, particularly in providing quality experiences for tourists; improving the well-being of the host community through the promotion of economic development which conserves and perpetuates the natural, cultural and physical values to be found in those destination areas; and taking into consideration the needs and benefits of hosts, guests, and the destination's resources and the industry. In other words, tour guides can contribute to the realization of sustainable development objectives by

actively managing the tourist experience, by helping to husband and conserve tourism resources, and by promoting the local economy.

The function of tour guides in the management of the tourist experience is evident in Cohen's (1982, 1985) analyses. Their potential in managing tourism resources has been investigated by Weiler *et al.* (1991), Weiler and Davis (1993) and Howard, Thwaites and Smith (2001). By applying Cohen's framework to their research on nature-based tour guides, Weiler identified two roles that tour guides can and should play to fulfill their obligations to the natural environment for the sake of promoting responsible tourism: those of *motivator*, to modify tourists' behaviour and impact on-site, and *environmental interpreter*, to foster understanding and appreciation of environmental issues to facilitate responsible tourist behaviour in the long term. Haig (1997, cited in Weiler & Ham, 2001b) tested and confirmed these two new roles in a survey of ecotourists and non-ecotourists. He found that ecotourists particularly valued the role of the guide in motivating environmentally friendly behaviour. Howard *et al.* (2001), after investigating the roles of aboriginal guides at Mutawintji National Park, Australia, suggested that indigenous tour guides can fulfill a useful function by interpreting contemporary aboriginal culture and conserving local cultural values (to do with both site and society). The study shows how the guides contribute to the achievement of an appropriate commodification of local culture by acting as *gatekeepers* who not only restrict the tourists' access to certain "sacrifice" areas but also control how much information and interaction tourists have with the Paakintji culture. In addition, they serve as *heritage interpreters* who, through challenging stereotypes or misconceptions held by the participants, are intending to create long-term changes in visitors' values, attitudes and behaviours towards both the historic and contemporary nature of the indigenous culture as well as the site. Although the research was conducted to address issues associated with aboriginal cultural tourism, these findings have important implications for training both indigenous and non-indigenous tour guides in the context of mass tourism, and the research itself demonstrates the guide's role in facilitating socio-cultural conservation, integrity and continuity.

Tour guides can act as facilitators to promote local economic development. It is obvious that the success and prosperity of the tourism industry very much depends on the performance of

tour guides (Zhang & Chow, 2004) who serve as ‘the moment of truth’, represent the image of the travel company and the visited places and influence the satisfaction level of incoming tourists as well as their intention of repurchasing and returning. Besides these direct contributions to the tourism business in destination areas, another rationale behind this assertion is that tour guides are capable of stimulating demand for locally produced goods and services. During tours, tour guides offer their clients familiarity with the local environment, including the availability of local specialities. They make recommendations and guide tourists about where to go, what to buy, and how long to stay. In this way, they are able to support the destination economy both by encouraging the native people to provide local products for the use of incoming visitors and by encouraging visitor consumption of local products (Gurung *et al.*, 1996).

All this means that tour guides have tremendous opportunities to help the tourist obtain an enjoyable experience and, at the same time, to acquire an in-depth understanding of the destination areas’ landscapes and peoples. Guides also have the potential to facilitate positive social and environmental encounters between the visitor and the visited which not only ultimately enhance visitor satisfaction but also assist in the maintenance of the ecological and cultural resources of tourist destinations and in the perpetuation of the economy of local communities led by the tourism industry. The functions of tour guides in promoting sustainability are summarized in the following Figure (2.7). Then the next question is how indeed tour guides can exert these functions as much as possible on tours.

Figure 2.7: Functions of tour guides in promoting sustainability

Functions	Roles particularly relevant	Responsibilities and objectives
Experience management (Focus on tourists)	Pathfinder Group leader Interpreter (educator) Animator	To help tourists have enjoyable and rewarding experiences, to ignite interest and new understanding about destinations, to foster positive host-guest encounters
Resources management (Focus on destination places)	Interpreter (educator, gatekeeper, motivator)	To encapsulate the essence of destination places, to foster appreciation and caring attitudes towards destination resources, to modify inappropriate tourist behaviours and manage tourist impacts on-site and to encourage long-term responsible behaviours
Local economic promotion (Focus on local communities)	Facilitator	To promote local economic development by stimulating consumption and production of local products and services

2.3.3 Interpretative guiding: linking tour guides and sustainable development

Where tour guides are able to promote sustainable development, interpretative guiding is the means by which such links are established. Here the term ‘interpretative guiding’ is borrowed from Weiler and Ham (2002) who coined and used this concept in their research about tour guide training in the context of ecotourism. They regarded interpretative guiding as a key strategy to achieve the lofty ideals of ecotourism—environmentally and culturally responsible development without ecologically and economically undesirable outcomes over time. This approach stresses the power of interpretation to facilitate sustainable development, which, however, is not limited to ecotourism but also applicable to mass tourism (Weiler & Ham, 2001a, b).

Interpretation is considered by many researchers as well as industry practitioners as the principal component of the guiding process. Such a view is already evident in the internationally accepted definition of tour guides given by FEG (see section 2.2.6) which reveals that interpretation, in an inspiring and entertaining manner, is the key area of a tour guide’s job. Indeed, no matter where the visitor is taken, how long the tour lasts and what activities are undertaken, interpretation is indispensable from the beginning to the end. In the context of tourism,

interpretation is about communication and education as well as entertainment (Tilden, 1967; Uzzell, 1989; Urry, 1990; Light, 1995; Moscardo, 2003). It is how people convey the meanings of cultural and natural resources; it aims to instill understanding and appreciation of the interpreted environment and to help to develop a strong sense of place; it presents an array of informed choices about how to experience resources, and nurtures caring attitudes and appropriate behaviours towards conservation; and, finally, it adds enjoyment and satisfaction to the visitor experience (Hall, Mitchell, Springett & Springett, 1991; Society for Interpreting Britain's Heritage, 1998; Stewart, Glen, Daly & O'Sullivan, 2001). In this sense, interpretation is not merely one of the responsibilities that tour guides bear, it lies at the heart of what tour guides can and should be doing to facilitate sustainable development (Weiler & Ham, 2001b). However, it does not mean that other roles of tour guides are worthless. Interpretative guiding does not ignore other responsibilities of tour guides, but it emphasizes the application of the principles of sustainable development and interpretation 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.

Tour guides can contribute to sustainable development through interpretative guiding. The rationale for the process is conveyed in the following statement: "what messages a guide imparts to a group of tourists relative to the natural and cultural values of a place may in large part determine what they will think, feel and do both in the short (on-site) and possibly even in the long term (once they have returned home)" (Weiler & Ham, 2001a, p.260). Therefore, the kernel of interpretative guiding is the delivery of persuasive interpretative information, by which tour guides 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 behaviours. Thus, the unofficial motto of interpretation says: "Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection" (Tilden, 1967, p.37).

There are three types of persuasive interpretative information: directional, behavioural and educational. Directional information includes all basic information about the tour and destinations,

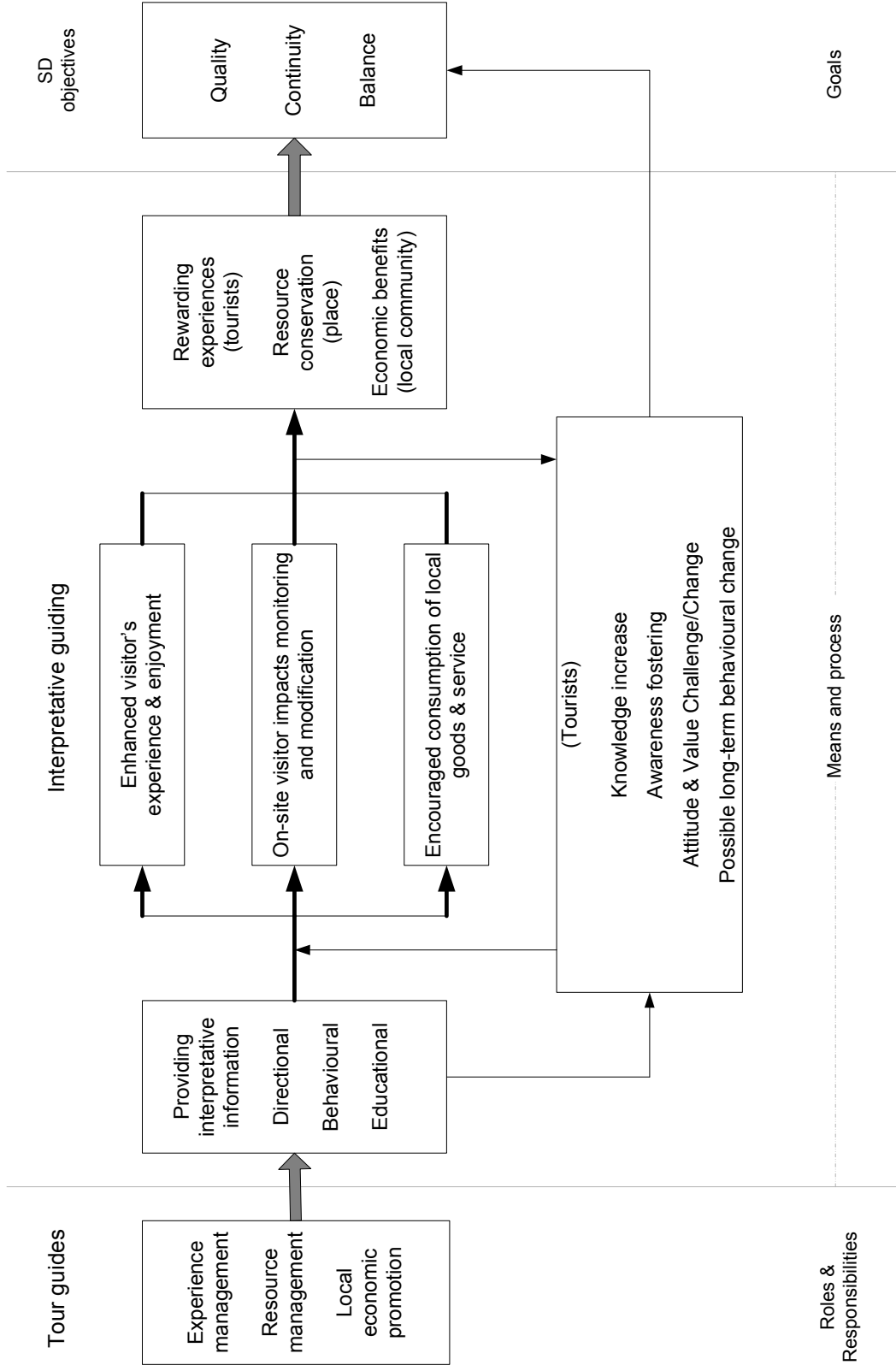
ranging from direction, distance and approximate time for travel, tourist attractions, local facilities, services and specialities, safety messages and so on. This basic information helps to create a feeling of relaxation and security in visitors. In addition, information about alternative attractions, spots and routes can draw visitors away from heavily used areas so as to reduce pressure on these places. Behavioural information is introduced to modify visitors' on-site behaviour and is mainly in the form of socio-cultural and environmental guidelines relating to desired visitor conduct, guidelines which the local society expects visitors to obey. The visitor code is an important form of such guidelines. In many countries and cities such as Australia, Thailand, and Heidelberg in Germany, as well as some special tourist regions like the Himalaya and Antarctica (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 1995), the local authorities draw up their own specific codes of conduct for tourists and use them as a main management tool. Educational information contains details of the historical, geographical, cultural and human features of places visited which help visitors to obtain an in-depth understanding of destinations (Kuo, 2002). If this information can be communicated effectively, not only will tourists have an enjoyable and rewarding experience, it will also benefit destination places by maintaining and enhancing environmental quality, ensuring socio-cultural continuity and integrity, and assisting in economic development (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Moscardo, 1996, 1999, 2003) (Figure 2.8).

Effective communication requires firstly and vitally that the communicator should organize and deliver information in ways that raise the audience's attention. Drawn from relevant communication and learning theories, Tilden (1967), Moscardo (1999) and Ham (1992, cited in Weiler & Ham 2001) suggested several rules for presenting effective interpretation.

First, interpretation is not teaching or 'instruction' in the academic sense, but provocation. Therefore, bare information interpretation rarely is able to touch visitors. Visitors will be attracted easily and stimulated to think by interpretation interwoven with worries, beliefs, the sense of humour, concerns, and other affective factors common to humankind. Second, interpretation must be enjoyable for visitors because after all, visitors are traveling for seeking pleasure. Third, it must be relevant for visitors: "(interpretation) that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile. The

visitor is unlikely to respond unless what you have to tell or to show touches his personal experience, thoughts, hopes, way of life, social position, or whatever else” (Tilden, 1967, p.11). Fourth, interpretation must be well organized so that visitors can follow it easily. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. A combination of many arts should be employed to give life to materials, telling a ‘story’ rather than reciting an inventory requiring less effort to follow. Last, interpretation should have a theme rather than just a topic. Themes are specific messages, “factual but compelling statements about a place and a thing” (Weiler & Ham, 2001, p.556). “Topics are merely the subject matter of presentation” (p.556). Research indicates that visitors will forget isolated facts from a guided tour, but they will remember and even internalize the big idea, the theme. “Themes are tantamount to ‘belief’ which social psychologists have demonstrated to be the building blocks of attitudes and related behaviours, including those about conservation” (p.556). Thus, guides who are imparting strong themes do far more towards sustainable development’s aims than those who are simply saying interesting things about separated topics (Weiler & Ham, 2001).

Figure 2.8: Tour guides promote tourism development towards sustainability through interpretative guiding



2.3.4 From words to action: principles for interpretative guiding

Through a thorough understanding of the concept of sustainable development and the relationship between tourism and sustainable development as well as the significance of tour guides in the tourism system, the opportunities for tour guides to contribute to sustainable development have been identified and the means by which they can do so were suggested. In order to further provide clear and concrete guidance to encourage tour guides to offer high quality services in a safe, culturally sensitive and environmentally friendly manner, as well as the standards against which tour guides' performance can be examined, a set of principles will be developed based on the previous discussion and, at the same time, by consulting the existing industry experience around the world. They include the 'Code of Guiding Practice' which was put forward by the World Federation of Tourist Guide Lecturers Associations, 'Ethics and Standards' by the National Federation of Tourist Guide Associations – USA, 'Code Ethics of Tour Guiding' of Legends of Puerto Rico's Inc., 'A Professional Guide's Code of Ethics' by the Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington, DC, 'the Code of Guiding Practice' by the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations, 'Code of Conduct for Tourist Guides' by the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong, 'Regulations on the Management of Tour guides' by China's National Tourism Administration and 'Code of Ethics' in the Ecoguide Program by the Ecotourism Association Australia.

The principles are composed of five aspects:

1. Providing a professional service:

- 1.1 Accepting each tour as a serious commitment. The itinerary should not be altered without the consent of the visitors and the approval of the travel agent concerned;
- 1.2 Conducting the tour in a courteous and polite manner; being enthusiastic, friendly and helpful to the clients;
- 1.3 Taking responsibility for the smooth and safe running of a tour; taking responsibilities for the comfort and satisfaction of tourists;
- 1.4 Providing skilled presentation of information and knowledge to tourists, highlighting and

interpreting the surroundings.

2. Abiding by the law/rules/regulations

- 2.1 Knowing and following the relevant legislation and regulations of destination countries;
- 2.2 Knowing and following local rules or guidelines of the host communities (if any), expressed or implied;
- 2.3 Knowing and following the rules and regulations at all sites and facilities (if any) where he/she takes visitors;
- 2.4 Informing and helping visitors to understand and abide by the above law/rules/regulations.

3. Implementing minimal impact principles and practices

- 3.1 Does not knowingly give out misinformation;
- 3.2 Being objective, presenting factual information to tourists and making a clear distinction between what is true and what are stories, traditions, legends and opinions;
- 3.3 Demonstrating an understanding of and respect towards local environments and cultures; conveying to visitors the value of local environments and culture, promoting appreciation among clients for local traditions and environments;
- 3.4 Explaining what constitute acceptable behaviour in the places being visited; leading by example, using positive reinforcement and taking corrective actions where necessary, to gain visitor compliance with suggested practices;
- 3.5 Playing their part in reducing energy, resource use and waste - causing less pollution and contributing to more environmentally sustainable practices.

4. Principles on gratuities and shopping activities

- 4.1 Do not solicit gratuities;
- 4.2 Encouraging appropriate purchase of local consumables, equipment and services from the community in which the tour is operated;
- 4.3 Does not initiate patronization of souvenir shops and other places that practice 'kick-back'

payments to the guide;

4.4 Shall not coerce or mislead tourists into purchasing any goods;

4.5 Shall not allow their service attitude to be affected nor shall they refuse to perform their duties because of visitors' unwillingness to purchase or the value of their purchases.

5. Promoting a spirit of cooperation

Maintaining a good and uncorruptible working relationship with colleagues (like tour escorts and tour drivers) and the staff of all service providers such as attractions, hotels, restaurants, to ensure that the services and promises specified in contracts are provided and fulfilled.

2.3.5 Potential factors influencing tour guides' efforts to promote sustainability

The key for tour guides to contribute to sustainable development is their ability to practice interpretative guiding. However, both internal and external factors exist which may limit tour guides' competence and ability to do so.

2.3.5.1 Internal factors

Much of the research and many of the theories associated with communication and learning indicate that for interpretative guiding to be successful, tour guides should organize and then deliver persuasive interpretative information in ways that are capable of promoting in the tourist audience greater knowledge, positive attitudes and suitable behaviour towards destination resources. Ultimately, this will bring benefits in the form of the realization of sustainable development objectives. For this to occur, four aspects of personal qualifications are essential in the tour guides, including knowledge, communication skills, professional personalities and professional ethics.

Tour guides should be knowledgeable (Quiroga, 1990; Hounnaklang, 2004), especially about the sites to which they direct visitors and which they interpret to them. Knowledge required ranges from attributes of the natural environmental such as flora and fauna, geographic location, weather conditions and climate, habitats and ecosystems to local socio-cultural features like

government structure, population, traditions and customs, values and prohibitions, languages, folklore, aboriginal people, architectural styles, historical events of significance and so on (ATEC, 1992, 1993). In intercultural settings, guides should possess competencies that are relevant to each culture, on both the cognitive and affective levels (Bochner, 1981; Taft, 1981). In particular tour guides should be clear about conservation legislation, regulations and guidelines, applied to both natural and cultural resources (ATEC, 1993; Weiler & Davis, 1993).

The guide's personality is vital in making tours successful. Warm, enthusiastic, outgoing, honest, patient, humorous, self-confident, open-minded, friendly and inspiring are all desirable traits expected by tourists from their guides (ATEC, 1992, 1993; Weiler & Davis, 1993; Hounnaklang, 2004).

Presentation skills are necessary if guides are to give clear and interesting commentaries (Quiroga, 1990; Hughes, 1991). For example, changing speaking pace or style can help to keep visitors' attention; using analogies and metaphors can immediately build links between the interpretation and visitors' personal experiences, thus facilitating an easy understanding among the listeners (Howard *et al.*, 2001); employing humour will stimulate the audience's interest; asking questions or letting tourists ask questions can encourage their participation (Moscardo, 2003). Other tips include using local, colourful language in an appropriate manner; involving all senses (e.g. to note temperature, colours, scents) when describing or experiencing sights; balancing and varying their commentary by telling jokes, describing history, portraying legends, presenting statistics, asking questions, and so on; and allowing for quiet time (ATEC, 1992; 1993).

Professional ethics are particularly important for sustainable development. Tour guides should be objective, respectful and sensitive. To be objective means to present one culture to another faithfully and to represent issues fairly (ATEC, 1993). Stereotypes should be avoided and rectified (Fox, 1991). Guides should respect people's lifestyles, especially the indigenous values of the society they are operating in (Bochner, 1981). They should be cultural relativists, realizing that culture is learned behaviour and therefore relative rather than absolute. In the course of the tour such messages should be imparted to their clients: "Other people's customs are different, not

strange. If I had been raised in another culture, I would act as those people do” (McLeod, 1981, p.51); “Ours may be the dominant culture, (but) this is not synonymous with the best” (Fox, 1991, p.128). Tour guides should be sensitive; sensitive to potential environmental damage and cultural taboos in order to maintain physical and cultural integrity of resources. They should follow guidelines for protecting resources and should also promote these attitudes among visitors (Weiler & Davis, 1993). For example, they should remind visitors not to disturb certain animals or remove heritage artefacts, to look for and follow established tour routes, and to refrain from buying products made from endangered plants or animals (ATEC, 1992, 1993). In addition, a humanitarian concern is necessary for the well-being of both the visitor and the visited (Weiler & Davis, 1993). Efforts should be made to contribute to mutual understanding and thus to benefit the culture involved (Bochner, 1981).

It can thus be seen that insufficient knowledge, lack of communication skills, an unsuitable personality and lack of professional ethics are all internal factors constraining tour guides in supporting sustainability.

2.3.5.2 External factors

Since tour guides are not working in isolation, their ability to promote sustainability can be hampered for certain external reasons.

Economic rewards may be the most important factor. In general, an individual’s needs and expectations at work can be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motives (Mullins, 2002). Intrinsic motives are the psychological rewards such as appreciation, recognition and a sense of challenge and achievement. Extrinsic motives depend on tangible rewards like salary, fringe benefits, promotion, security and the work environment. By applying Mullins’s theory to his research on profiles and roles of tour guides in Thailand and the UK, Hounnaklang (2004) found that in both countries direct economic rewards are the key motivating factor in the tour-guiding situation, although for a number of tour guides, the rewards come from some intrinsic elements (e.g. the opportunity to meet foreigners and brush up their languages). Investigations conducted in some Asian countries and places like Indonesia (Bras, 2000b), Taiwan (Wang, Hsieh & Huan,

2000) and Hong Kong (Ap & Wong, 2001; Wong, 2001) indicate that low or unstable income is a major reason for tour guides' unhealthy industrial practices, which results in degradation of the entire guiding service as well as in complaints from tourists.

Power relations affect whether or not tour guides can provide faithful and objective interpretation of destination areas, particularly in socio-cultural aspects, in line with their professional ethics. This can be explained by the following reasons. First, culture, history and landscape are, in essence, evolving expressions and open to interpretation (McCabe, 1998). Their material representations and practices are not fixed or static, but are continually remade and the attached meanings are socially produced (Hall, 1995) and may be displayed and explained in various ways by different groups from different perspectives. Second, the history or culture is, by default or design, a political issue. It is invariably politicized in order to articulate the economic, social and environmental claims which are attached to it (Robinson, 1999). Hence, its interpretation necessarily occurs within a milieu which has been repeatedly called the 'politics of representation' (Hall, 1997). Questions on the 'what?' and 'how?' of presentation are determined by power-related concepts of rights, ownership and consent. Interpretation of culture or heritage, particularly that relating to ethnic or indigenous communities' traditions, customs and beliefs, is open to political manipulation by the state for both economic and nationalistic reasons (Robinson, 1999). Third, tourism does not work in isolation from the broader sociopolitical context of the destination (Mckercher & du Cros, 2002), nor is it a politically neutral arena. Richter (1995, p.81) observed: "How we choose to remember and commemorate events is a very political act." Tourism landscapes are usually worked out through contestation, deliberate decisions and struggle, and the resulting images and narratives "reflect(s) the inability or failure of certain groups to have their interests revealed in heritage conservation and representation" (Hall, 1997, p.91). In this sense, tourism has become one of the primary influences on the representation and interpretation of culture, functioning as "a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature" (MacCannell, 1992, p.1), or, we might add, to reinforce identity and history. In this way, tourism has been recognized as a channel for ruling elites to transmit their interpretation of a country's past, contemporary conditions and future aspirations in accordance with the hegemonic agenda.

Studies have already shown that tourism is often used strategically by state authorities in order to address issues of national significance such as national unity and multiculturalism (e.g. Dahles, 2002; Henderson, 2003). Lastly, guided tours are usually well established and standardized procedures in which the art of storytelling is systemically curtailed. Acting as interpreters or communicators, tour guides are extremely susceptible to outside intervention and manipulation. Decisions regarding the 'true' story or the 'most appropriate' interpretation are subject to relations of power and dependence. This is exemplified by Dahles's (2002) research in Indonesia, which illustrated how the government under Suharto's New Order regime made use of tour guides to propagandize its political will and to present a designed political image to both domestic and international tourists. It did this by controlling tour guides' performance through direct government intervention which regulated tour guiding in terms of licensing, certification, training, pay and remuneration, and even the content of tour guides' narratives.

In addition, the research done by Weiler and Ham (2001) in Australia, Ap and Wong (2001) in Hong Kong and Chang (2004) in Taiwan demonstrates that issues such as the lack of industry incentives, lack of occupational standards, inadequate training programs and ineffective monitoring systems are all elements contributing to tour guides' unwillingness or inability to upgrade their qualifications and interpretative skills, thus impeding sound tourism development.

It should be noted that although classified as internal and external reasons, these factors are actually interrelated. For example, training influences tour guides' capacity to obtain knowledge and abide by professional ethics; political issues may cause changes in standards of professional morality; a guide's personal qualifications may determine their economic income. In addition, it is likely that tour guides' performance is affected by several factors simultaneously.

2.3.6 Tour guide management

Appropriate management is very important for tour guides to be able to provide quality tourist experience without compromising the viability and sustainability of host cultures and environments. A plethora of management mechanisms have been developed to guide, regulate, monitor or even control tour guides and their guiding performance, but there are great variations

across the world in strategies employed as well as standards and qualifications required. For example, qualifications and acknowledged standards are not commonly required in North America. In most cities or regions of the United States, virtually anyone can be a guide. A license is not commonly required except in Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, New York City and Gettysburg Battlefield. Only four jurisdictions including Gettysburg Battlefield; San Antonio, Texas; Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina have training requirements and structured training programs (World Federation of Tourist Guide Association (WFTGA), 2005). In some cities, training or certification programs offered by businesses or associations have become so highly regarded by guides and hiring agencies that they serve as tacit regulations. One example is the San Francisco Tour Guide Guild's certification. Only experienced guides can apply (Pond, 1993). In Canada, only in Montreal and Quebec City is training necessary in order to become a tour guide and only in these two cities is a license required for conducting local sightseeing tours (Canadian Tour Guide Association of British Columbia (CTGA of BC), 2005). Uniform standards at the national level do not exist. The Alberta Tourism Education Council has developed a province-wide standards and certification process for tour guides (ATEC, 1992). Other organizations that are actively working towards elevating standards among Canadian guides are the Pacific Rim Institute of Tourism and the Canadian Tour Guide Association of British Columbia (Pond, 1993; CTGA of BC, 2005). By contrast, educational and professional standards in Europe are generally acknowledged to be much higher. In the U.K, tour guides are legally required to wear the highly respected 'Blue Badge', indicating they are officially authorized to conduct tours. Obtaining the Blue Badge requires extensive coursework which, for instance, lasts 1 year in London. Guides must successfully fulfill the academic work and pass both written and oral examinations. In Greece, the course takes 2 to 5 years, delivering knowledge ranging from history and cultural subjects, tourism laws, psychology of tourists, voice training to first aid. It is free of charge and run by the Ministry of Tourism. Before even getting onto the course, candidates must pass oral and written exams in at least 1 foreign language, then take further exams in Greek history and geography, and attend an interview. Many Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have set up a strict certification and licensing system with much government

involvement (Bras, 2000; Henderson, 2002). In Australia, each state has its own tourism training body that conducts all accredited courses according to the guidelines set down in the curricula. Government-funded institutions such as the Technical and Further Education colleges and some universities have largely carried out formal training for guides. But they do not have a badge or licensing system for guides (WFTGA, 2005).

Scarcely any research has been done to date to evaluate the existing tour guide management strategies in terms of their relative benefits, values, or levels of effectiveness in influencing tour guides' performance. One exception is that provided by Black and Weiler (2005) who conducted a systematic review of a number of tour guide management mechanisms that are frequently mentioned or employed. These mechanisms are codes/ethics of conduct, professional associations, awards of excellence, training, certification and licensing. Each of them was assessed in relation to its usefulness in delivering outcomes that may help guides to perform their various roles, such as interpreter, tour organizer, conservation motivator and public representative, together with an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of implementing that mechanism (Table 2.1). Specifically, codes of conduct can be used as a tool for awareness raising rather than quality control; professional associations have the greatest potential to facilitate guides fulfilling their various roles by providing professional support and a number of benefits that can assist in improving guiding standards, but their influence is generally limited to their members and it is largely non-enforceable so that it often depends on the enthusiasm and interest of its members; awards of excellence recognize and reward outstanding individuals, presenting role models for the industry and benchmarks for 'best practice'. Yet, in contrast to the application of minimum standards to all guides, rewards merely focus on a few people for excellence. In addition, the application process may be lengthy and time consuming which may limit the number of applicants and exclude some guides; training and certification may be effective mechanisms for enhancing a wide range of guide roles and achieving at least minimum standards of performance, but this cannot be guaranteed and the costs can be prohibitive for both the industry and the guide; licensing enforces through law or regulation that minimum standards must be met by all tour guides but it does not necessarily encourage or provide incentives for guides to strive for

excellence. In conclusion, the various mechanisms differ in what they can and cannot achieve as well as in the resources required to implement them. Hence, the authors suggested that a combination of them would be most appropriate and beneficial to all stakeholders in destination places. Black and Weiler's analysis provides a valuable reference for both theory and practice, and also suggests avenues for future research on tour guides and guiding activities. However, their discussion mainly focuses on the attributes of the mechanisms themselves but without a consideration of the contexts in which these mechanisms may operate. The researchers elucidated that each of these strategies can be effective, to certain extent, in elevating tour guides' personal qualifications whereby guides' performance may be improved, but their capacity to address those external factors which influence tour guides' conduct remains unsure. Therefore, empirical investigation is needed and the implementation of any kinds of mechanisms should be examined on the ground by taking into account the destination's economic, social, cultural and political circumstances. In addition, it is noticed that in Black and Weiler's review, the functions or values of these strategies in ensuring tour guides' benefits are largely ignored. It is also observed that in general, academic research and industry practices lay particular stress on how to regulate, supervise and monitor tour guides' performance to fulfill other various stakeholders' expectations, while being stingy with ink and energy on how to protect tour guides' personal benefits from being invaded. However, it is argued that to meet guides own expectations is a most important prerequisite for them to conduct tours in a sound manner. More attention should be paid to this aspect in research on guides.

Table 2.1
Comparison of Mechanisms to Potentially Improve Guiding Performance

Characteristics and Outcomes	<u>Mechanisms to improve guiding performance</u>					
	Codes of Conduct	Professional Associations	Awards of Excellence	Training	Professional Certification	Licensing
1. Compulsory	No	Possibly	No	Possibly	No	Yes
2. Achieves minimum standards	No	Possibly	No	Yes	Possibly	Yes
3. Rewards excellence	No	Possibly	Yes	Possibly	Possibly	Possibly
4. Raises awareness of high standards among guides	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Increases credibility of guiding in industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Advantages and disadvantages</u>						
6. Benefits the consumer	Yes	Yes	Possibly	Yes	Yes	Yes
7. High set up costs (money & time)	Possibly	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8. High operational costs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9. Formal assessment of guide required	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
10. Requires a formal application process	No	Possibly	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11. Financial costs to the guide	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Potentials to improve guiding performance in various roles</u>						
Interpreter/educator	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information giver		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leader		✓		✓	✓	✓
Motivator of conservation, values/role model	*	✓	*	✓	*	*
Social role/catalyst	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Cultural broker/mediator	*	✓	*	✓	✓	
Navigator/protector	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Tour & group manager/organizer		✓		✓	✓	✓

Public relations/company representatives		✓	✓	✓	
Facilitator of access to non-public areas	✓	✓			*

Source: adapted from Black and Weiler, 2005. *i indicates that the roles may be included as the programs targeted at specialist guides like ecotour guides.

2.4 Summary

Sustainable development, as a form of alternative development, aims to improve all people's long-term material and spiritual well-being without undesirable ecological and socio-cultural outcomes. Tourism, as one of the development options, should be consistent with the tenets of the general sustainability principles, making endeavours to contribute to a broader sustainability rather than seeking for its own perpetuation at the costs of others. Tourism is an industry with many facets and its operation involves the collective efforts of various players. This means that each of the players bears their own roles and responsibilities for a sound tourism movement. As a central agent between the visitor and the visited, tour guides act in a wide range of roles when conducting guided tours. Both theoretical analysis and practical observation suggest that tour guides are in a strong position, with tremendous opportunities, to exert their influence on experience management, resources management and local economy promotion so as to facilitate tourism development along a sustainable direction. They can bring their functions into play by transforming every guiding process into interpretative guiding. A variety of management mechanisms have been worked out to improve guides' performance, but how these mechanisms are to be used should be decided by considering the specific conditions of destination places and, also, tour guides own expectations and interests should not be ignored.

Tour guides have attracted little attention from researchers although they are one of the key groups of participants in the tourism system and the offering of guiding services to tourists is a pervasive phenomenon worldwide. In the rare studies where tour guides have been studied or even talked about, their roles and responsibilities in connection with the notion of sustainable development is virtually non-existent. Are guides the lowly persons carrying fiddling weight to a sound tourism industry and the achievement of sustainable targets of destination areas? Through a literature research, this thesis has explored the roles of tour guides—what they 'should' do and how they 'can' do—to help tourism move towards sustainability. However, the question as to whether and to what extent in practice they can realize their potentials to encourage the operation of a sound tourism industry remains to be answered. Empirical investigation is needed both for

bettering understanding tour guides' performance and thereby to assist in the achievement of sustainable objectives of destination areas and for contributing to the theory on tour guide management and sustainable development.

Chapter 3

Methodology

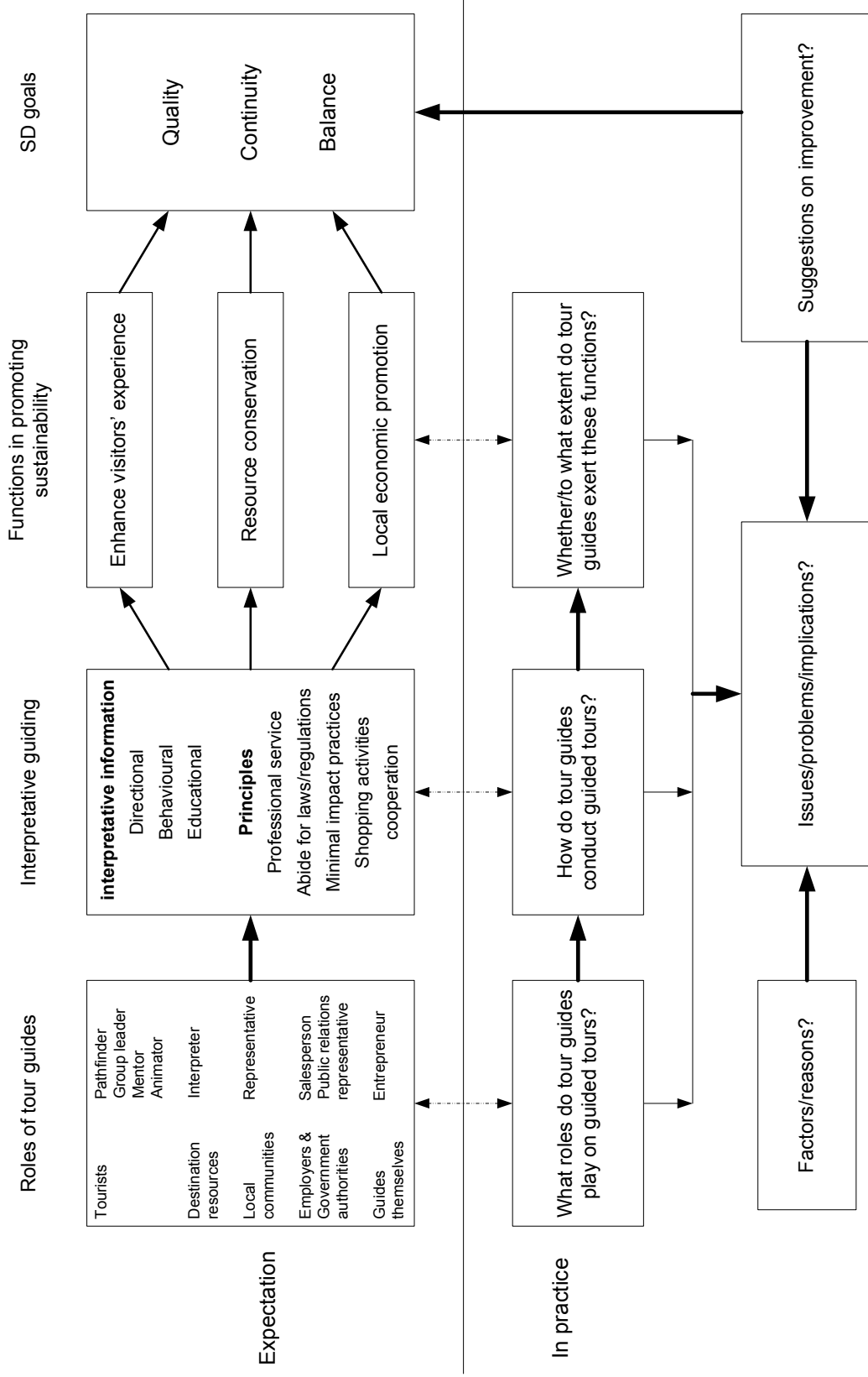
This chapter details the methodology employed in this research. First, the research framework guiding the whole process of the fieldwork and the subsequent analysis is distilled and outlined (3.1). This is followed by the description and justification of the study site as well as a discussion of the connection of this research to the Eco-plan China Project (3.2). Then the entire course of data collection is elaborated from the preparatory work done before the actual field investigation (3.3) to the information gathering process together with the methods employed (3.4). After that, the approaches to data analysis are explained (3.5) and, finally, advantages and disadvantages of the research design are discussed (3.6).

3.1 Research framework

Figure 3.1 illustrates the train of thought underpinning this research. According to the literature review discussed in the previous chapter, tour guides have a variety of duties on guided tours in response to the requirements of the various stakeholders. Being positioned at a central link in the tourism system, guides are expected to have great opportunities to contribute to the realization of sustainability goals by actively managing the tourists' experiences, supporting resource conservation and promoting the local economy through implementation of interpretative guiding practices. Then an examination of tour guides' performance in terms of the roles that they actually perform during tours and how they conduct tours against principles of interpretative guiding will be conducted. In this way, the study aims to investigate whether and to what extent in practice tour guides can make use of their powers to facilitate sound tourism operation. It is also to explore if there are issues and what these issues might be that block their enthusiasm or impede their efforts to promote sustainability. After finding out the cause and effect of these problems, suggestions will be generated in terms of improving tour guide management to promote the operation of tourism along a sustainable direction.

Tour guides are the focus of this research. Their perspectives of their own occupation, their behaviours displayed in guiding practice as well as their awareness of a healthy tourism industry and sustainable development are the main subjects of the investigation. However, these topics are not enough. In order to catch all of the ‘ins and outs’ behind guides’ conducts and to obtain an accurate and thorough understanding about tour guides actual guiding performance, tour guide management measures on training, licensing, supervision and, as the same important as well, on protection of guides’ benefit will also be examined. Therefore the fieldwork will involve other tourism players who either influence or are influenced by the guides’ activities. These other participants include tourists, tour guides’ employers, government authorities responsible for tourist affairs, and local businesses. Tour guides have strong relationships with these actors. Without these other players, tour guides would not need to exist and without consideration of their interactions with other stakeholders in tourism, the research itself will be provincial and biased, and lacking in rigour. As it is not possible to investigate all tour guides throughout the world, the research objectives will be achieved through a case study.

Figure 3.1 Research framework



3.2 Study site location and justification

Hainan Province, China, one of the fast developing tourist destinations with guided tours as the dominant travel form and one of the designated study areas of Eco-plan China project (see introduction in 3.2.4), was selected as the investigation site.

3.2.1 Tourism development, tour guiding and tour guides in China

Although the first Chinese travel agent was established as early as in 1923 in Shanghai by the famous banker Chen Guangfu, tourism in China did not sprout at that time nor for a long period afterwards owing to the social turbulence resulting from the Warlord Governance and Democratic Revolution (1912-1936), the Japanese invasion (1937-1945) and the Civil War (1945-1948). Even after the foundation of new China in 1949, initial tourism activities were merely limited to overseas Chinese and sporadic invitations to foreigners with special permission to enter China. Few citizens traveled for pleasure within the country because, first, the strict household registration system restricted migration of people (Wu, Zhu & Xu, 2000); second, leisure travel was considered to be a component of a bourgeois lifestyle, contrary to communist ethics, and socially and politically taboo for the Chinese people (Zhang, 1995); and third, even if the first two constraints had been eliminated, the poor household income of the day meant that most people were not able to afford such 'luxurious enjoyment' and struggled to acquire basic needs like food and clothing. For about three decades prior to 1978, tourism in China mainly served as a political strategy to promote the country's socialist achievements, to expand her political influence and to build understanding and friendship with the outside world (Zhang Qiu, Chong & Ap, 1999).

The year 1978 is of epoch-making significance for China, politically, economically and ideologically. The adoption of the 'open-door' policy and economic reform advocated by Deng Xiaoping in this year marked a sharp shift in the state's focus from political struggles to economic development. Full-scale economic rehabilitation began along with the emancipation of people's liberties. However, following the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), China faced a backward economic condition and a serious shortage of capital. Recognizing the importance of tourism as a convenient means for accumulating foreign exchange to finance economic construction activities,

the central government actively encouraged the development of this industry by providing substantial policy support. Since these early days, the nature of tourism has changed gradually from being a political instrument into an economic strategy. Priority was given to inbound tourism which took off first and has experienced rapid growth during the last quarter of a century. In 2002, international tourist arrivals amounted to 37 million, 21 times that of 1978; international tourism receipts reached US\$20.4 billion, 78 times that of 1978 (World Tourism Organization (WTO), 2006; Sun, 2005). Suffering from the SARS in 2003, tourism business in that year decreased sharply by 10.4% in the number of incoming visitors and 14.6%, in foreign exchange earnings (WTO, 2006). However, in 2004, China fully recovered from the setbacks of the disaster and posted a spectacular 27% increase in tourist arrivals, achieving an all-time record of 42 million inbound tourists and climbing from the 5th to the 4th position in global ranking. International tourism receipts totaled US\$26 billion, occupying the 7th position in the world (WTO, 2005). In 2005, China's tourism experienced another year of growth. There were 47 million foreign tourists and US\$29 billion in international tourism revenues, jumping over the previous year by 12.1% and 13.8% respectively (China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), 2006). This growth momentum is expected to continue so that China is projected to become the leading recipient country of inbound tourists by 2020 according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2001).

Domestic tourism began in late 1980s when the first prosperous people appeared in the big cities and coastal areas as a result of the economic reform and they were able to afford the expenses for a holiday. The earliest records of domestic tourism date back to 1985 when there were 240 million tourist arrivals and RMB 8 billion (US\$960 million) of revenue. In 1988 the figures became 300 million tourists and RMB 18.7 billion (US\$2.25 billion) in income (Zhang, 1997). Realizing that domestic tourism is an important means of stimulating economic activities and the great potential of the demand in the market, the government started to adjust its policies from favoring the attraction of international tourists to the simultaneous development of both international and domestic tourism. Meanwhile, the ongoing investment in tourism infrastructure and the improvements made in transportation, telecommunications, commerce and urban development, made to meet the needs of international tourists, laid a solid foundation for the

growth of domestic tourism. In this favorable political climate accompanied by the continued notable economic progress, domestic tourism developed at an unprecedented speed in the 1990s and has continued to expand rapidly at the beginning of the new century. From 1992 to 2002, the average annual domestic tourist arrivals increased by 11% and the average annual receipts by 41% (National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBSC), 2004). In 2005, in total, 1.21 billion Chinese residents traveled within the country, spending RMB 528.5 billion (US\$63.6 billion) (CNTA, 2006). China's domestic tourism will likely continue to flourish due to the people's continually enhanced purchasing power (the average income per capita reached US\$1290 in 2005, World Bank statistics 2006), the increase in their leisure time (employees have at least 114 days annual holiday), the huge population number, as well as the rich and colorful tourism resources of the country. Therefore, the *10th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development* forecasts that in 2020 domestic tourism will generate 2.9 billion tourists, resulting in RMB 2040 billion (US\$ 245.8 billion) in revenue (Liu, 2005).

The evolution of the tour guiding profession in China is consistent with the particular patterns of the country's tourism development. As the western market was the focus of the government in the early stages of the reform, tour guides were mainly composed of foreign language guides who, born out of foreign affairs translators, offered service to international visitors (Liu, 2005). The importance of their position was augmented by China's policy of advising foreign tourists to join a group tour rather than to travel independently (Cai & Woods, 1993). The influx of overseas Chinese was also welcomed. However, they required minimal guiding services because they were familiar with the language, history and culture of their homeland. Only when the domestic market expanded in the late 1980s were Mandarin- or Cantonese-speaking guides needed. More people took up this occupation in the 1990s when group domestic tourists increased rapidly and, then, the number of Chinese-speaking tour guides exceeded those with foreign languages. This was a response to the demand from the enlarged domestic market which has become the foundation of China's tourism. For instance, in 1993, only 8.2 million domestic tourists participated in package tours while, two years later in 1995, the number jumped to 34.65 million, representing an annual average growth of 106% (Zhang, 1997).

At present, guided group tours are a major form of travel to or within China. According to the latest International Tourism Sample Survey (unpublished National Tourism Administration statistics, 2004), inbound tourists who took guided tours in 2004 were 39.7% of the total. Figures on the share of domestic group tourists are not readily available but it has been observed that at least half of Chinese residents join guided groups when traveling.

Early tour guides, in most cases, came from university or college students who majored in foreign languages or tourism and who were assigned to travel agents upon graduation. They automatically became authorized to be guides after being trained by their work units. The situation changed in 1989 when *the Provisional Rules of Tour Guides Management* was implemented, which specified that from that year on, any Chinese citizen who completed at least high/secondary school education, who is in good physical condition and who commands the basic knowledge and possesses certain oral expression ability required for tour guides could work as tour guides on condition that they succeeded in passing the official certification examination for guides and applied for the Guide I.D. Card (work licence). Otherwise, any of guiding activities were deemed to be illegal and were prohibited. This regulation, on the one hand, lowered the entry requirements of the occupation and extended the scope of candidates who want to join this career so as to satisfy the increased need for guiding services resulting from the speedy growth of tourism. On the other hand, it set for the first time official procedures and standards for guiding conduct in order to enhance the management of tour guides and their guiding activities. In 1999, it was revised to be the *Tour Guide Management Regulations* and promulgated as one of the most important rules for the tourism industry. In 2001, a set of further detailed regulations called *Tour Guide Management Measures* was publicized and carried into execution as a complementary rule to the one of 1999. Since the first year's standardized qualification examination held in 1989 until the end of 2002, approximately 250,000 tour guides were certificated throughout the country (Chen & Yu, 2003), with a ratio of Chinese-speaking tour guides to foreign-language guides of 5:1. Most of them were young: more than 70% were under 30 years old. Generally their educational levels were not high: about 42% had only finished high/secondary school, 40% had completed a college education and just 18% had received a bachelor's degree. Almost all (96.3%) were in the

junior level of the professional rank, with only 3.6% in the semi-senior, senior and specialist levels (CNTA, 2003). However, the actual number of working tour guides was much smaller. The government registered tour guides who passed the certification examination rather than those who had obtained the Tour Guide I.D. Card, but not all of the certificated tour guides owned a license to work. It was estimated that about 67% of them actually served in their positions (CNTA, 2003). There are approximately 20,680 tour guides working in the tourism industry and the personnel structure has not changed much since 2002 (unpublished National Tourism Administration statistics, 2005).

3.2.2 Tourism development, guided tours and tour guides in Hainan

Hainan province, founded in 1988, is located at the southern periphery of China and is separated by the Qiongzhou Strait from Guangdong Province on the mainland. It has about 34,000 square kilometers of land area including Hainan Island, Xisha Archipelago, Zhongsha Archipelago and Nansha Archipelago, and 2 million square kilometers of marine space. Therefore, it is the smallest land province and the largest sea province in China. It neighbors on the Philippines towards the east, Malaysia and Brunei towards the south, Indonesia towards the southwest, and Vietnam towards the west. Hainan Island, the main land body, is the second largest Chinese island after Taiwan. It consists of about three-quarters mountains and highlands, which occupy the central regions, with coastal plains making up the rest of the island. The province now has a population of 8 million, among which about one million are ethnic minorities. The capital city, Haikou, is situated in the north of the island and is the political, economic, cultural and transportation centre for the whole province (Figure 3.2). The second largest city, Sanya, lies at the southern tip of the island and is famous for its beautiful tropical landscapes. It has received more world-wide recognition in recent years for successfully holding a series of large tourism events such as the International Wedding Festival, the Festival of the 100th China's Movie Anniversary and the 2003 as well as the 2004 Miss World Pageant.

Figure 3.2: Location of Hainan Province



Source: <http://www.cnhomestay.com/map/hainan>

With a latitude of 18°10-20°10 North and a longitude of 108°37-111°05 East, Hainan enjoys a marine tropical monsoon climate. The average temperature is between 23°C and 26°C, making it an ideal place for people to be away from the cold northern winter. Hainan Island is not heavily industrialized, therefore it has a high quality environment. It is listed as one of only a few largely uncontaminated areas in the world. Historically, Hainan was called Fine Jade Land, which gave rise to the province's abbreviation 'Qiong' (fine jade), referring to the green vegetation cover on the island. Today the forested area is still 54.9 % of the entire island (Hainan Provincial Department of Land, Environment and Resources (HLER), 2004). Air quality in Hainan is the best in the country and even among the best in the world. The surrounding coastline extends for 1,528 kilometers, with coral reefs around the seashore. The island has a large stretch of sub-tropical and tropical primeval forests, mountain ranges and rivers where over 560 species of animals and 4,600 types of plants live and multiply (HLER, 2004). Hainan is a healthy island. When SARS broke out throughout China in 2003, Hainan was one of the few provinces without even one case of such an epidemic disease. The mild climate and favorable environment make

Hainan an attractive tourist destination. The diverse natural resources and unique cultural attributes of the minority populations provide advantageous conditions for undertaking colorful tourism activities, including adventuring in the primeval forests, drifting in the rivers, diving into the ocean, entertaining with water sports, having a healthy spa bath in the hot springs, making a visit to the folk villages to experience the minority people’s distinctive customs, learning more about the island through its historic and religious sites, exploring the mystery and power of nature in the volcanic caves, enjoying the tranquility in the botanic and tropical gardens, tasting the authentic local dishes, or just lying on the beaches, in addition to sightseeing the beautiful scenery found throughout the island.

Figure 3.3: Sketch tourism map of Hainan



Source: http://www.cnhomestay.com/map/hainan_maps.html

Tourism was proposed by the provincial government as a major industry at the very start of Hainan’s development. Since the establishment of the province in 1988, a great deal of effort has been made to improve the infrastructure and tourism facilities in order to create advantages to

draw tourists. The island is now accessible through both ferry and railway links with Guangdong Province, as well as air links with most big cities on the mainland, Hong Kong and Macao. Within the island, three highways connect the north with the south along the east coast, the west coast and through the middle of the island. So far there are 223 hotels ranging from five to one star levels, 158 travel agents, more than 80 tourism attractions, 15 golf courses, and various restaurants and shopping centres in the province (Hainan Provincial Tourism Bureau (HPTB), 2006; Hainan Provincial Statistics Bureau (HPSB), 2006). Statistics show that tourism has grown rapidly in Hainan. From 1988 to 2002, tourism arrivals increased at an average speed of 18.3% annually and tourism income went up at a rate of 28.4% per annum. In 2005, the province welcomed 15.16 million visitors from outside of the island, with the total receipts amounting to RMB 12.5 billion (US\$1.51 billion). This represented an 8.1% and 12.6% rise over the previous year respectively. Hainan aspires to be an internationally popular tourist destination. In an effort to allure foreign visitors, the provincial government issued several preferential policies. For instance, Hainan initiated a visa-upon-arrival policy for foreigners soon after its establishment in 1988. It began to grant a visa exemption in 2001 to group tourists holding private passports from 21 countries making tours in Hainan with a duration of 15 days or less. However, tourism currently relies very much on the domestic market from the mainland which generates about 95% of the total incoming tourists and above 90% of the total revenue (HPSB, 2006). Nevertheless, tourism has become a 'pillar' industry in the province's economy. It contributed 13.7% to the province's GDP in 2005 (HPSB, 2006).

In recent years, Hainan has been looking to change its image from that of a sightseeing destination to a tropic vacationland. As automobiles enter more and more into ordinary Chinese people's daily lives, independent family tourists driving to Hainan on holidays may increase gradually although its island status will not facilitate this. Thus, the majority of the visitors are group participants who buy a packaged plan, join a circular tour and spend 3, 4 or 5 days on the island. The latest information from the four most-visited tourist attractions (i.e. Tianya Haijiao, Nanshan, Dongtian Park and Xidao) in the province suggests that, on average, 80% of the received guests are accompanied by tour guides. Because of the isolated location with respect to

the mainland, the long distance from many cities, especially those in the northern part of China, the low average incomes of most Chinese families and the comparative cheapness of the tour packages, group travel will continue to be the main travel form for most Chinese people who visit the island in the near future. Under such circumstances, it is evident that tour guides are and will continue to be very important to the prosperity of Hainan's tourism industry. Hainan now has more than 6,000 registered tour guides, of which 96% are Mandarin- or Cantonese-speaking guides (interviews with Provincial Tourism Bureau officials, 2005).

3.2.3 Significance of tour guides and problems existing in tour guiding in China

A review of tourism development in China indicates that guides are of great significance to the country's tourism industry as group tours are a prominent form of travel for both international and domestic markets. Guiding is needed by many foreign guests due to language and cultural barriers. This was especially the case in the industry's early development stage when inbound tourism was emphasized. It is now more crucial for domestic tourists because they form a larger part of the market. For both groups, the quality of service rendered by their guide is a factor that either catalyzes or destroys their enjoyment of their tours. It is a major determinant of their perception of the industry's overall service quality. Moreover, information disseminated by tour guides also affects tourists' views about the destination's environment, culture and people. In this sense, they are not only important economically for a successful tourism business, they also have environmental, cultural and political significance.

Research on tour guides and guiding is scarce in China. The few relevant articles and commentaries that could be obtained suggest that the tour guides' performances have left much to be desired. Cai and Woods (1993) ascribed the slower growth in arrivals that occurred in the late 1980s from the overseas market, such as the United States and Japan, to the poor service offered by employees working in the tourism industry and especially: "...the quality of tour guides particularly must be improved significantly before the industry could be fully revived" (p.31). According to their study, the most frequent complaints from tourists were the guides' lack of enthusiasm towards their job, their unwillingness to provide help, their unresponsiveness to

reasonable requests and their failure to meet basic job requirements such as being punctual. Typical examples were that while tourists were visiting attractions, the tour guides either took a nap on the bus or waited in the gift shop to collect the commission on guests' purchases. A similar unhealthy phenomenon also occurred in domestic tourism in the 1990s and has become more severe concern among this segment of the market (Gao & Wu, 2003). The most frequent condemnation of tour guides is the way that they enticing or beguiling tourists into shopping in order to obtain a high kick-back from shop owners (Gao & Wu, 2003; Wu, Jiao, Xie, Zong & Zhai, 2003; Liu, 2005; Cao, 2005). Qualified and talented tour guides have been recognized as being among the five types of personnel most in short supply in China's tourism industry (the other four are talented teachers, professional managers, experts in tourism planning, convention and exhibition design, souvenir development, etc., and competent people for work in the western region of the country)(Chen, 2001). The urgent need to improve the performance of tour guides was also identified by the national tourism authority as one of the principal tasks that should be addressed in tourism personnel development during the 10th five-year (2001-2005) period (CNTA, 2000; Chen & Yu, 2002). The problems exist but little serious academic effort has been invested to address the essence of the problems and to provide rational advice for practical management purposes.

As discussed above, tourism in Hainan relies very much on outside markets and guided group tours dominate the travel mode on the island. In this situation, tour guides are especially influential to the operation of the travel business. As the one actor maintaining the closest contacts with tourists throughout their entire three, four or five days' journey in Hainan and as the most direct middle person constantly mediating between the hosts and the guests, what they say and do should have instant as well as profound effects on both the visitor and the visited. Unfortunately, tour guides in Hainan do not seem to have a positive public image or social reputation. 'Exorbitant kick-backs' and 'black (illegal) guiding' are the common words that appear frequently in relevant articles that discuss tour guides or guiding in local newspapers such as the *Hainan Daily*, the *Haikou Evening Paper*, the *Nanguo Urban Daily*, and on websites like *Tianya Forum*. These concerns have also been stressed in some government officials' speeches (e.g. 'How to

formulate new characteristics for Hainan's Tourism' by the Vice-governor. Mr. Chen Cheng, 2006). When examples of unhealthy conduct were exposed through one of CCTV's (China Central Television) popular programs 'Jiao Dian Fang Tan (focus investigation)' (on November 12, 2001) and other news reports on its financial and travel channels, the undesirable impression of Hainan tour guides was spread to the whole country. To be fair, Hainan is not the only tourist destination with some guides that operate tours inappropriately but, apparently, it is the one where the situation is the most sensitive. In this researcher's interviews conducted in 2005, numerous comments were made suggesting that tourism in Hainan displays many kinds of unhealthy phenomena associated with guiding. Such comments may well contain an element of exaggeration. However, they reveal the necessity of serious investigation on the issues and problems as well as the causes and associated consequences. Moreover, both lessons and experiences drawn from the research in Hainan may provide valuable reference or implications that merit attention in other tourism destinations both in China and around the world where tour guiding is undertaken.

3.2.4 Sustainable development targets of Hainan and the Eco-plan China project

The provincial government set the desired goal for Hainan's economic and social development 'to build a harmonious society'. This ideal encompasses several dimensions, referring to a developed economy, a pleasant ecological environment, a stable and united society and a rich livelihood. It stresses the need to establish harmony both between human beings and nature and also among the people. It pursues advancement of local residents in both material and spiritual dimensions (People's Government of Hainan Province, 2005). While the government commits itself to leading common efforts to realize the ideal, tourism is considered a paramount strategy to achieve these targets by making economic contributions through the rational use of the environmental resources in the province, distilling significance of Hainan in tourism product development, advocating the experience of local culture when undertaking tourism activities and facilitating social order and progress by promoting honesty and credibility in the operation of tourism business (HLER, 1999; HPTB, 2002; Chen, 2006).

The Eco-plan China Project, a collaborative activity between Canadian institutions and

Chinese partners, aims at promoting China's sustainable development by assisting study areas, including Hainan, to explore means that are economically efficient, environmentally friendly, socially acceptable and culturally sensitive to local circumstances. Given the importance of tourism to Hainan's economy, facilitating a healthy tourism industry is also part of the efforts of this project. For this sector to function well in all of the above dimensions identified by the authorities, all tourism participants will need to work towards these objectives. This research, funded as a component of the Eco-plan China project, will examine how tour guides, one of the players, can affect the operation of tourism so that it might better contribute to the realization of the sustainability objectives of Hainan.

3.3 Research preparation

3.3.1 Pre-departure

The research topic was chosen based on the researcher's general interest in and knowledge of tourism as well as a careful consideration of the particular situation of the study site. It was further refined in a process of continual examination of relevant studies, adjustment of the research focus as well as objectives, and exchanges of ideas and opinions with the author's advisor and other committee members. An extensive literature review was conducted in order to ground the research on a strong conceptual base as well as to prepare for the comprehensive examination. Both theoretical and empirical literature concerning such topics as sustainable development, tourism and sustainability, the tourism system, tourism management, guided tours, tour guides, interpretation, travel industry practices and tourism development in China was examined. The comprehensive examination, comprising a written paper and an oral defense, was undertaken between April and May of 2005 and passed successfully.

Before visiting the study site, a research proposal entitled 'Promoting Tourism Development towards Sustainability: the Roles of Tour Guides' was drafted and sent to all the committee members. Discussions were arranged and revisions were made according to the feedback that was received. This document explained the study purpose, listed the research

questions, identified interview subjects and specified data needs and collection methods. It provided clear guidance for what should be done in the field. However, details about how to carry out the field investigation, like sampling respondents and the format of interviews for instance, were not programmed in detail at that time. Both the researcher and the committee agreed that such work could be left until the researcher arrived at the study site and that detailed procedures could then be determined according to the specific research conditions and environment. It was acknowledged that the original plan might need to be modified in the light of local circumstances. Thus, although clear objectives were formulated and a plan of action was prepared, principles of flexibility and adaptation were followed during the research. The proposal was also submitted as a successful application for research funding from the Eco-plan China Project.

3.3.2 Arrival and orientation

The author flew to Hainan in late June, 2005 and started research in July after a short recess. The proposal was revised as more literature was searched and referenced to see if something complementary needed to be added into the scheme. Then the questionnaires and interview questions were designed. Considering that the study was to involve several target groups who varied in the position, perspective and activity in relation to guiding, questions were tailored to different respondents in different formats and with different foci of enquiry. The drafted questions were first sent back to the committee members. Comments, suggestions and successive feedback were communicated through emails and the instruments were revised accordingly.

As the questions were being prepared, other preparations were also made for carrying out the investigation. This began with learning about the research environment to find out factors that could aid and, more important, hinder data collection activities. Hainan Provincial Department of Land, Environment and Resources, the Chinese partner of Eco-plan China Project in Hainan, and Hainan Provincial Environmental Science Academy, the subordinate of the partner and the main undertaker of project initiatives, were contacted to inform the people there about the research intention so as to obtain their assistance when needed. In fact, they were highly supportive. An official recommendation letter was provided by the Academy to be used as an introduction when

researcher visited other government departments, corporations or non-for-profit organizations. Moreover, the staff extended generous help in making contacts with persons valuable to the research, by utilizing their own personal social networks. To return their favours and to make further contributions to the Eco-plan China Project, the researcher responded positively whenever asked for assistance. For instance, when Dr. Murry Height, a professor from the University of Waterloo, and Dr. Peter Van Straaten from Guelph University, did research in Hainan in July and November of 2005, the author worked for them as a translator and assistant for one week on each occasion.

The author had previously resided in Hainan and had conducted research there before. Old friends were still in Hainan and new acquaintances were made. After knowing about my study, they presented many interesting and practical suggestions, as well as opinions and information. Of these, the most relevant 'news' concerned the demonstration by tour guides in Hainan that took place on December 1st, 2004. Roughly 2000 tour guides, together with 800 tour bus drivers marched to and sat down at the entrance to the provincial government building. They protested that travel agents gave them all the burden, responsibilities and risks of making profits in the operation of group tour businesses. They suggested that the government was asleep in their duties and ineffective in its management. The demonstration lasted for three hours until about 100 protestors were arrested by the local police. It was said that on the same day in Sanya city, around 50 tour guides held a similar rally in front of the municipal government offices. These incidents were never officially reported by the media. Therefore, the public did not know the exact details or have access to accurate figures on participation. Although they did not have definite information, it made the topic a sensitive subject. The result was that whenever the researcher tried to contact tour guides and travel companies to try to undertake interviews, she was repeatedly asked what the research was for and whether she was from certain media or government organizations. Under such a situation, it was a challenge to decide how to reach potential respondents. It was necessary to determine where potential respondents could be found - especially the tour guides and the bosses or managers of travel agencies - and how to persuade them to accept interviews? These became the main challenges for the research.

Figure 3.4: '12.1' tour guides strike in Hainan



Source: <http://www.xici.net/b364789/d24239426.htm>

Basic knowledge concerning the travel industry in Hainan indicated that the majority of the province's tour guides live in Haikou, most of the travel agents have their offices in Haikou and a large proportion of tourists enter and depart from this city. Therefore, it was determined that Haikou would be the main place where fieldwork would be undertaken. It turned out that middlemen were always needed in order to approach interviewees and 'snowballing' was a very practical method to find both the facilitators and respondents. At the same time, tour guides and travel agents were promised anonymity in order to encourage candour.

The sensitive research environment also required that questions had to be phrased more carefully. In order to examine both the effectiveness and the sensitivity of the questions, pre-testing was conducted among eight tour guides, two bosses of travel agents and ten people who had had recent group tour experiences through face-to-face communication. In these

experiments, efforts were made to detect potential problems of question specification and format. Respondents were asked if the questions were clear enough to be understood and if there were questions and/or wording that were too sensitive for people to be unwilling to answer. It was considered whether the responses to open questions would be too diverse to be readily analyzed and if the choice options for closed questions were exhaustive and exclusive to each other. It was also determined how long it would take to complete a questionnaire or an interview. The questions for interviewing government officials were not pre-tested but tour guides, travel agent managers, government staff as well as tourism entrepreneurs were widely consulted for their opinions. Then second round of amendments were made to the questions in accordance with the pre-test findings. Following that, the revised instruments were sent again to the committee and, after more opinions were exchanged, the questions were finalized.

3.4 Data collection

Data collection started in September and was completed by the end of December 2005. Considering the limited research time and budget, the different investigations were carried out simultaneously. For example, interviews with travel agent managers and government officials were arranged in the same period as those with tour guides as long as the respondents could be contacted and confirmed. At the end of each interview, all the respondents including the tour guides, the travel agent bosses and managers and the government officials were encouraged to talk about whatever they wanted, related to local guiding businesses, but not necessarily covered by the interview questions. At the same time, secondary data were often hunted for at down times between interviewing and surveys.

3.4.1 Interviews with tour guides

Interviews with tour guides were an essential part of the fieldwork. Questions were all open-ended. A face-to-face question-and-answer format was adopted and, on average, each interviewing took about 50 minutes. The researcher wrote down the guides' responds verbatim. Tour guides were asked about their motives for and expectations from taking the guiding occupation, their own

ideas about their roles and duties on tours, their evaluations of the job, including both satisfactory and unsatisfactory aspects, their views about the relationships between tourism and destination places' sustainable development and, as a tour guide, their functions in supporting a sound tourism operation which is beneficial to the realization of sustainability objectives. They were also asked about their own experiences with training, self-improvement and the ways tour guides are managed. These questions were designed to ascertain the local guides' cognition of the guiding profession and its connection with a destinations' broad sustainability, as well as to probe factors that determine or influence their perspectives. It was hoped that such information could be used to provide clues or explanations for the guides' conduct observed in their guiding practices.

Tour guides do not work on fixed sites at fixed times and they could only be interviewed when they were not working and wherever they could be found. Hence, there were no particular interviewing times and places. Usually it was the introducer or middleman who tried to make appointments with tour guides. Then the researcher was taken to meet them at tea shops, restaurants or the offices of travel agents. Chatting with them was a happy and relaxing thing to do and it was only after trust was built that they would accept to be interviewed. Contacting tour guides is time-consuming. Also, the topic is sensitive. As a result, when the investigation started, it was difficult to estimate how many of the guides would be willing to share their thoughts and how many interviews would be possible. As a result, every opportunity was taken to find as many respondents as possible.

In the end, 112 tour guides, including 37 females and 75 males, were interviewed (Table 3.1). The ratio was not arranged deliberately and it may not represent the true sex distribution of tour guides in Hainan. It reflects the fact that the author encountered more men than women guides. Generally the respondents were fairly young: the majority (74%) were under 31 years of age; 24% were between 31 to 40; and only 2 (2%) persons were older than 40. In terms of the educational level, a small proportion (21%) held a bachelor's degree, about half (48%) had received college education and the rest (31%) had only completed high school studies, satisfying the minimum official educational requirement for the occupation. Not surprisingly, Chinese-speaking tour guides (96%) dominated the respondents but, in fact, the foreign-language

guides also lead Chinese groups when foreign guests are not received. About one fifth were in their entry stage of being a guide. A large proportion (66%) had 2 to 5 years guiding experience. Although a few people had served for 10, 18 or even 20 years, not many (merely 13%) had stayed in this career longer than 5 years. No respondent was found at the special grade or senior professional level. Except for two persons (2%) who had passed the examination and been upgraded to the intermediate class, the overwhelming majority (98%) were of junior status.

Table 3.1
Characteristic of interviewed tour guides
(N=112)

Characteristic category	n	Pct
Sex		
Female	37	33
Male	75	67
Age		
18 to 20 years	1	1
21 to 30 years	82	73
31 to 40 years	27	24
41 and older	2	2
Educational level		
High/secondary school	34	31
College	54	48
Undergraduate	24	21
Graduate and above	0	0
Language		
Chinese	107	96
Foreign language(s)	5	4
Length of working time		
Less than 1 year	25	21
2-5 years	74	66
6 and above 6 years	15	13
Professional level		
Junior	110	98
Intermediate	2	2
Senior	0	
Special grade	0	

3.4.2 Participant observation on a guided tour

Participant observation was applied to observe and record ways that tour guides conduct tours and to compare these with the principles of interpretative guiding. Lofland and Lofland (1995) listed several elements of social life that it is appropriate to observe. To enumerate a few of them, they

include (1) practices: various kinds of behaviour; (2) encounters: two or more people meeting and interacting; and (3) roles: analysis of the positions people occupy and the behaviour associated with those positions. The main strength of this method is that by going directly to the social phenomenon under study and observing it as completely as possible, the researcher can develop a deeper and fuller understanding of it. It is especially appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviours that are best understood within their natural settings, as opposed to the somewhat artificial settings of experiments and surveys (Babbie, 2001), and it is particularly useful when the field worker is looking at frequent or repeated events. In fact, it has already been commonly employed in studies related to tour guides or guided tours (e.g. Schmidt, 1979; Holloway, 1981; Howard *et al.*, 2001; Dahles, 2002).

Given the specific situation in Hainan, it was unrealistic to ask for permission from travel agents to join their tours as a researcher. Most tour guides that the author met also expressed that they would not be happy or comfortable to know that somebody is ‘spying’ on them. In this case, the author had no choice but to pay to join a tour to make observations. A typical three-day-round-the-island tour package was purchased from a travel agent selected at convenience. In order to let the guiding proceed in its usually way, the author avoided initiating any discussion about the guiding itself either with the tour guide or among tourists from standpoint of a researcher. Extensive notes were kept day by day with regard to the following aspects of the tour, including: Where the guide led the tour to? What information was provided to the clients? How activities were arranged for tourists? How the destination place was explained and interpreted? How cooperation occurred with local businesses such as souvenir shops and entertainment entities? At the same time, interaction between the guide and the group members was also observed. The guide was not photographed on the tour to avoid creating problems. According to the conversation with a number of tour guide friends, travel agent managers and people who had recent group travel experiences in Hainan both before and after the tour, the author corroborated that the main facts that she observed were not unique to that specific trip, rather they were common happenings in most guided tours. This led to the decision that no additional participant observation tours were needed.

3.4.3 Questionnaire surveys among tourists

One of the tour guides' missions is to enhance visitors' travel experiences, contributing not only to the success of local tour businesses but also to the realization of sustainability objectives of destination tourism development. Therefore, tourists' satisfaction levels with the guiding service they were offered can be a measure of the extent to which their tour guides were helpful in assisting them to obtain rewarding experiences. Besides, their input can also be meaningful in pointing out where problems may exist in the guiding process.

Questionnaire surveys were employed because they are probably the best method available to look at people's attitudes and orientations by gathering qualitative and quantitative information through both closed and open-ended questions (Babbie, 2001). Questions were designed by referencing the Geva & Goldman (1991)'s survey instrument used to measure tourists' satisfaction with various service items, including the guiding on guided tours in Europe as well as the United State, and that of McDonnell (2001) employed to investigate, in particular, tourists' evaluations of guides' performance in Australia. After pre-testing, following approval by the hotel management, the 5-point Likert-type scale questionnaires were distributed in the lobby of a three-star hotel located in downtown Haikou. They were provided to group guests who had just come back from their circular tours and were about to leave next day. Based on a voluntary principle, a self-administrated format was adopted. The respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire themselves. However, the author or one of two research assistants was almost always present and available to introduce the research and to answer questions from respondents. The completed questionnaires were left with front desk employees in cases when neither the researcher nor her assistants were there because interviewees had taken the questionnaire to their rooms. The surveys were carried out from November 1st to the end of December, 2005.

In total, 600 questionnaires were distributed of which 492 were returned and 348 had been completed. Thus, the return rate was 82% and the response rate was 58%. As shown in Table 3.2, slightly more females (51.7%) than males (48.3%) responded but the difference is not significant. Most respondents were quite young with 67.2% under 30 years old and 25.9% were between 31 and 40. Only small number of the middle-aged and the aged (6.9% were above 40) filled in the

questionnaires. Their educational attainment was concentrated at the high/secondary school level (45.7%) and college level (47.4%). Only 6.9% had an undergraduate background.

Table 3.2
Characteristic of the surveyed tourists
(N=348)

Characteristic category	n	Pct
Sex		
Females	180	51.7
Males	168	48.3
Age group		
18 to 20 years	15	4.3
21 to 30 years	219	62.9
31 to 40 years	90	25.9
41 and older	24	6.9
Educational level		
Primary school	0	.0
High/secondary school	159	45.7
College	165	47.4
Undergraduate	24	6.9

3.4.4 Qualitative interviewing with tour guides' employers – travel agents

Travel agents are the bosses of most tour guides. They assign tour guides with guiding tasks and pay them as representatives to fulfill their commitments to tourists. At the same time, they rely on them to actualize their goals of making profits. For the sake of business benefits, they regulate or control tour guides through contracts and routine management. Consequently, what travel agents expect from tour guides and how travel agents manage guides and guiding has a direct influence on the guides' activities while on duty. Thus, when exploring the 'why' question about the guide behaviour, the influence of the travel agents should not be ignored.

Six travel agent bosses or managers accepted the invitation to be interviewed. These travel agents range from large scale corporations who posse hundreds of tour guides and rent a whole floor of office space to the tiny ones who hire less than ten guides and occupy a small room as the operation base. As requested, they explained their expectations of tour guides, their management

strategies with respect to taking on tour guides and guiding, their views about tourism and sustainable development, and about the functions of tour guides in promoting sustainable tourism. Their responses were transcribed exactly and they were also sent back to the participants for checking.

3.4.5 Key informant interviews with governmental officials

Government authorities implement their management duties on guiding activities through making rules and regulations that express their economic, socio-cultural or political expectations or wills. Then, according to these policies, they train, certificate and license tour guides, and standardize as well as monitor guiding practices. Their powerful intervention and, sometimes, lack of intervention has marked impacts on how tour guides conduct tours, both directly and indirectly. Hence, for this research to be thorough, the roles of these authorities should also be considered in trying to find causes for certain doings of the guides.

The provincial government officials were purposefully selected for interview. Except for the Director, the other three respondents were those most responsible for or closely involved in the management of tour guides or guiding affairs in the provincial tourism department (Table 3.3). Their understanding about sustainable development, tourism's connection with sustainability and roles of tour guides in promoting forms of tourism that would be sustainable were explored. They were asked for their opinions about the current status and existing problems (if any) of Hainan's guiding practices as well as possible solutions. Besides, information about the general situation of Hainan tour guides and the guiding business, and government rules, regulations and management strategies were also sought. Transcripts were prepared for all interviews and checked by the interviewee.

Table 3.3
Interviewed government officials

Date	Interviewee	Position
October 11	Mrs. Li Youwu	Chief of Personnel and Education Division, Hainan Provincial Tourism Bureau
October 20	Mr. Li Xiaoshan	Inspector of Hainan Provincial Tourism Service Quality Monitoring Station
October 27	Mrs. Yang Luyi	Chief of Hainan Provincial Tour Guide Management Centre
December 6	Mr. Wu Wenxue	Director of Hainan Provincial Tourism Bureau

3.4.6 Collection of secondary data

In addition to the surveys and interviews, as supplements to the first-hand information, the author also tried to gather secondary data concerning tour guides and guiding in Hainan from various sources. These include media reports in the major local newspapers such as the *Hainan Daily*, the *Haikou Evening Paper* and the *Nangou (south regions) Urban Daily*; tourism statistics from the official websites of China National Tourism Administration and Hainan Provincial Tourism Bureau; official training materials, government codification and work reports; comments, complaints and discussions by local tour guides publicized through Bulletin Board System (BBS) on some civil internet forums like the most well-known *Tianya (the end of the sky) Forum*, and one local travel agent's internal website. Academic articles as well as opinion pieces in Chinese tourism journals were also collected.

3.5 Quantitative and qualitative data analysis

This research involves both qualitative and quantitative data analyses approaches because the investigation resulted in the gathering of a variety of types of information. To be more specific, quantitative data obtained through surveys among tourists were coded and entered into a computer for analysis by applying the SPSS program. The observation notes on tours and the transcripts for interviews with travel agent bosses or managers and government officials were printed with a margin on the left on the side of each page which was used as the space for coding. In this process,

parts of the data were categorized over and over again based on various themes and questions. Then each data category was described and links between different categories were looked for. After these things had been done, an overall perspective was sought. The responses of tour guides generated both quantitative and qualitative data. Correspondingly, the former was dealt with by using the SPSS program and the latter was reviewed and interpreted in the same way as was employed to analyze the observation notes and interview transcripts. A content analysis method was applied to analyze the secondary data, starting with coding, then categorizing and finally quantifying to allow patterns to be identified.

3.6 Summary: strengths and weaknesses of the research design

In order to answer the research questions, this study employed various methods to gather information from several target groups, namely interviews with tour guides, surveys among tourists, qualitative interviewing with travel agents representatives, key informant interviews with government officials, participant observation and secondary data collection. Although the planned fieldwork was completed successfully and the data that were gathered are thought to be factual, objective and worthy of analysis, it is important to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of the investigation not only to sum up the experience and place the data in context but also to provide a reference for future research.

A perfect research design does not exist for working with human subjects. Blemishes may be caused by at least two factors. One is the flaws inherent in each of the research approaches themselves (Singleton & Straits, 1999) and the other comes from limitations related to the research environment in the study site. For example, face-to-face interviews may result in the tendency of respondents to give socially desirable answers to sensitive questions; standardized questionnaire items may "...result in the fitting of round pegs into square holes... (they) often represent the least common denominator in assessing people's attitudes, orientations, circumstances, and experience" (Babbie, 2004, p.274). In this sense, surveys often appear to be superficial. Practically, the nature of the guiding occupation (no fixed working time or location) and the absence of a basic database (e.g. the number of working tour guides, the ratio between

males and females) made contact with the potential respondents difficult and an ideal sampling frame impossible to devise and implement. Moreover, the obvious sensitivity of the research theme in Hainan rendered the guides hesitant about cooperating with the researcher. Besides, ordinary Chinese people generally lack experience with social investigations. A common feeling in China is that opinions from the grass roots are not paid high attention. This, in turn, leads to suspicious attitudes towards the meaning or influence of such academic research. Such a mood existed to a certain degree among my target groups, especially the tour guide and tourists. This was manifested by the fact that some showed indifference to the study and some, although willing to answer questions, appeared to give perfunctory answers to the inquiry. In the case of the former, efforts were required to look for other respondents; in the latter, the validity of the data had to be considered. Both of them increased the barriers in undertaking the research. Last but not least, constraints of limited time and financial resources also put strains on the quality of the research.

Previous research experiences in China had foretold that these disadvantages were likely to be present. Therefore, a combination of multiple data collection techniques was identified in the research proposal. The later field work also showed that the triangulation introduced by such a research design was necessary and beneficial in overcoming the drawbacks. Triangulation, in this case, means investigating the same phenomenon using more than one method and source of data. The essence of triangulation is the use of dissimilar methods or measures, which do not share the same methodological weaknesses, so that personal and methodological biases can be limited and a study's generalisability enhanced (Decrop, 1999). There are basically four kinds of triangulation that contribute to verification and validation of data and analysis. They include methods triangulation, using different data-collection methods to measure a single concept; data or sources triangulation, using a variety of data sources in a study; analyst or investigator triangulation, using several researchers to review the same body of data; and theory triangulation, using multiple perspectives or theories to interpret a single set of data findings (Patton, 1990; Decrop, 1999). In this study, data triangulation and methods triangulation are involved. Interviews, participant observation, survey and secondary data collection were used to complement each other; information from primary sources -interviews, observation and surveys supplement those from the

secondary sources - literature, government documents, newspaper articles, website comments and discussion. To be more specific, surveying tourists' evaluation on the guiding performance could serve as a complementary way to investigate the guiding conduct outside the participant observation; contrariwise, facts or phenomena observed on the tour could provide additional evidence concerning the information obtained through interviews with tour guides and surveys among tourists while the latter could also indicate whether the former is unique or common; government documents and newspaper reports could be used to cross-check what the officials claimed in interviews; tour guides' comments and discussions on websites, covering what they were mostly concerned and expressed without being prompted by others could be used to help the researcher to get closer to the core of the situation. In addition, opinions coming from the different perspectives of the different groups - tour guides, tourists, travel agents and government officials – were used to corroborate, elaborate and illuminate the research problem.

These purposely designed methods were of course the device for data gathering. However, the research itself is a continuing process during which any activity undertaken may benefit the information assembling more or less. Therefore, besides conducting the formal and serious interviews and surveys, the author also adverted to every causal chat with all of the targeted groups including both respondents and non-respondents, heeding their wording and sensing their attitudes. This helps to verify accuracy of the obtained information.

Chapter 4

The case study: tour guides and tour guiding in Hainan, China

This chapter describes what has been found out about tour guides and tour guiding in relation to the research questions in Hainan, laying a solid factual base for the in-depth interpretation and discussion in the next chapter. For reading convenience, the diverse information obtained in the study site is collated and presented under several logically connected sub-topics. They include the general information about tour guides and tour guiding in Hainan (4.1); local perspectives about the guiding occupation (4.2); local understanding of sustainable development as well as the relationship between tourism and sustainable development, and local views about roles of tour guides in promoting tourism development towards sustainability (4.3); observation of the tour guiding practice in Hainan (4.4); local tour guides' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their work environment (4.5); tour guide management in Hainan (4.6); and a concluding summary (4.7).

4.1 Profiles of the tour guides in Hainan

According to Hainan Provincial Tourism Bureau, by the end of 2004 there were 6,813 registered tour guides throughout the province (Table 4.1). Registered guides, also called certificated guides, are persons who have successfully passed the official standard examination for guides and, thereby, are authorized by the government as being qualified to lead tours. They are not necessarily active tour guides because in China certificated guides can not conduct guiding until they have an approved work license (Tour Guide I.D. Card) and not all of them apply for it. The bureau officials indicated that they do not undertake a census of the number of licensed tour guides and, therefore, they have no idea of how many guides in Hainan are active in their positions (interviews with the government officials, 2005).

Of the 6,813 recorded guides, 52% were female and 48% male. They were a young social group: half of them (50.5%) were under 31 years old; about another half (45.8%) were between ages of 31 to 40 and only 3.7 were 41 or older. Statistics show that guides with a high educational background were in the minority, merely 14.4% holding a university degree. Almost half (48.7%)

had graduated from college and just over a third (36.9%) had not pursued any formal education after completing their high/secondary school life. Almost all (96.3%) were Chinese-speaking guides. Most guides (88.9%) were at the junior professional level; roughly one tenth were in the intermediate class; 0.1% had achieved senior status and none of them had become a special grade tour guide (interviews with the government officials, 2005).

Comparable figures for the tour guides in Hainan who were actually working were not available and even may not exist. However, it was observed, through field observation at various tourist places such as attractions, souvenir shops, hotels on the tour, and at offices of travel companies, through interviews or discussions with tour guides as well as other respondents, that the active tour guides in Hainan have similar characteristics to those of certificated guides in general. Three points are important: first, guiding positions are commonly occupied by young people; second, Chinese speaking tour guides are overwhelmingly dominant in both the supply and market demand; and third, by and large the educational background of this group is not high and the professional level is low.

Table 4.1
Basic statistics of registered tour guides in Hainan, 2004
(N=6813)

Characteristic category	n	Pct
Sex		
Female	3555	52.1
Male	3258	47.9
Age		
18 to 20 years	66	1.0
21 to 30 years	3375	49.5
31 to 40 years	3119	45.8
41 and older	247	3.7
Educational level		
High/secondary school	2513	36.9
College	3320	48.7
Undergraduate	958	14.1
Graduate and above	22	.3
Language		
Chinese	6564	96.3
Foreign language	249	3.7
Professional level		
Junior	6055	88.9
Intermediate	749	11.0
Senior	9	0.1
Special grade	0	

4.2 Local perspectives about tour guides and tour guiding

Thoughts may direct actions. The purpose of understanding tour guides' own views about the guiding occupation is to examine (in later analysis) if certain relationships can be established between what they 'think' about their job and what they are 'doing' in the guiding process. Such an understanding consists of the answers to three questions: first, what do guides think of their roles and responsibilities on tours? Second, what do they expect from taking this career? And third, what do they think are the attributes of a good guide? The guides' own standpoints are fundamental to the research, but similar questions were also presented to the local travel agent

managers and governmental officials to find out their opinions about the functions that tour guides have, their expectations from tour guides and their criteria for being a good tour guide. This information was elicited to see if and how the perspectives of the employer and the power and policy authority influence both the guides' attitudes towards their duties and their conduct in guiding practices.

4.2.1 Roles and responsibilities of tour guides

4.2.1.1 Views of the tour guides themselves

Tour guides considered that they had a variety of roles to play on tours, including, in descending order of response frequency, the civil ambassador ($n_1=102$), '*Jiangjie Yuan* (interpreter)' ($n_1=92$), the sales representative ($n_1=75$), the pathfinder ($n_1=49$), the friend ($n_1=1$) and even the 'baby-sitter' ($n_1=1$). The first three types, mentioned by at least over half of the respondents, are regarded as being the main roles. When asked to compare the importance between these roles, 54% ($n_2=61$) of the interviewees selected 'civil ambassador' as the primary role and 29% ($n_2=32$) referred to 'interpreter'. This is followed by 'sales representative' ($n_2=11$, 10%) and 'pathfinder' ($n_2=6$, 5%). These figures (Table 4.2) indicate that the role of ambassador particularly goes deep into the minds of the tour guides. As was often said during the interviews, "I am supposed to be a representative, representing the image of my travel agent, representing that of Hainan tourism"; "I am functioning like a window. People come to learn more about Hainan through my service". They also emphasized information presentation and interpretation to their clients: "...that's the very basic thing I need to do on tours. I always have to talk, talk everything about Hainan – food, attractions, ethnic cultures, tell them stories, jokes etc."; "interpretation helps them to get more feelings, more impression". Sales promoter is another fundamental role. Here 'promotion', according the guides' standpoints, has meanings at two levels. One refers to facilitation of the prosperity of tourism business for Hainan by offering excellent guiding service which contributes to generating revisits of their clients or alluring new guests through the clients' 'word-of-mouth effect'. The other one, a more concrete and direct way, is to encourage tourists' purchasing of

local goods and services on tours. The role of pathfinder, leading both geographically and socially, is considered to be less important than the other roles because in Hainan all the visiting spots included in group tour packages are mature attractions.

Tour guides deemed that they shouldered responsibilities for several masters, including tourists ($n_1=106$) – the ‘clients’, ‘guests’ or the ‘buyers of the service’; travel agents ($n_1=99$) – the ‘boss’; and themselves ($n_1=82$) – they have to make a living. It was noticed that they also talked about their duties to local resources and people ($n_1=89$). Basically, they praised the beautiful and healthy natural environment in Hainan as well as the honest and hospitable local people. They held that they did not shirk their responsibility to propagandize the attractiveness of this land to outsiders and the importance of maintaining its beauty, “for the sake of doing business, at least”. In the case of conflicts occurring among these varied stakeholders, half of them (51%) insisted that priority should be given to satisfying the needs of tourists; a quarter of opinions (25%) suggested that they would set the boss’s requests above others because “no travel agents, no tour guides... the latter’s benefit is bound with that of the former and only if the boss makes good business can the employee get what they expect”. A small number of them (19%) weighed local people and resources over others. Only a few of the guides (5%) stressed that their personal interests should be their first concern (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2
Tour guides' views about their roles
(N=112)

Questions	Responses	n ₁	The primary (n ₂)	The primary (Pct)
What do you think of your roles on tours?	Pathfinder	49	6	5
	Interpreter	92	32	29
	Civil ambassador	102	61	54
	Sales representative	75	11	10
	'Baby-sit'	1		
	Friend	1		
Who do you think you should be responsible for on tours?	Tourists	106	57	51
	Travel agents	99	28	25
	Local resources/ people	89	21	19
	My self	82	6	5

4.2.1.2 Views of the employer – travel agents

The travel agents thought that tour guides mainly carried roles and responsibilities in two aspects. For tourists, they are service providers, performing various duties: for instance, leading tours to various attractions, looking after their needs in eating, shopping, entertainment, etc. and, essentially, delivering information and interpretation. “They present information, introducing everything about Hainan”; “They do interpretation, otherwise, tourists can only have a shallow understanding about Hainan”; “Talk, talk, talking is their main job”. For employers, they are representatives, representing the benefits and image of their employers: “They offer service to tourists on behalf of the company... on tours, they are not only themselves... their every action and words reflect the service quality of the company... their behaviours influence our (the travel agent’s) image”; “...through their service to us (the travel agent), they carry out our (the travel agent) contracts with guests... to fulfill our (the company’s) promises to clients (through which) to make money”.

4.2.1.3 Government views

Government officials viewed tour guides as service providers, propagandists and civil

ambassadors. They specified a series basic task of tour guides such as leading tours along set itineraries, introducing local history and cultures, physical attractions, geographical attributes, development progress and the like, coordinating other service providers to arrange transportation, accommodation and entertainment activities for tourists, and protecting tourists' personal and property safety. They particularly emphasized the duties of guides in interpretation and propagandizing: "... through interpretation, tour guides enlarge tourists' knowledge and improve their enjoyment of strange customs... interpretation enlivens mountains and rivers, endows historic sites with renewed spirit... it 'touch(es) the stone and turns it into gold' (makes everything interesting)" (Li & Li, 2004, p.2). "They (guides) should make full use of interpretation to promote Hainan... to tell about Hainan positively such as its healthy natural environment, a harmonious migration province, unique local cultures and great social achievements since after being founded as a province" (interviews with the officials, 2005). Beside, they also accentuated guides' representative functions: "guides represent (local people or reception units) to carry out friendship and culture exchanges... for foreign guides, their every words and action reflect the image of Hainan as well as that of our country" (Li & Li, 2004, p.2).

4.2.2 Expectations about tour guides and guiding

4.2.2.1 Expectations of the tour guides

The guides entered the guiding career for diversified motives. Freedom and flexibility in working time drew most of them ($n_1=87$), and they said things like "I like to be free. To be a tour guide, you don't need to be hurry to punch your work card every morning; you don't need to sit in the office for a full eight hours"; "I thought a guide could go to conduct tours when he/she wants to work, or else he/she could just stay home or do some other things – a fantastic feeling!" To obtain a better income ($n_1=54$) was another important incentive. In fact, all of the guides were aware that, compared with many other occupations in Hainan, guides makes more money. Other advantageous factors included chances of making friends ($n_1=43$) and free travel ($n_1=37$). In addition, two motivations that were mentioned but less frequently were to improve social abilities

($n_1=4$) and difficulty in finding another job ($n_1=3$). After working as a tour guide for some time, long or short, the guides' expectations from the job became centered on increasing knowledge and social abilities ($n_1=102$, 60%), obtaining better incomes ($n_1=68$, 35%) and making friends ($n_1=55$). The numbers in Table 4.3 indicate that economic gain is always a substantial factor for the guides although the guides did not identify it as of the most concern in the list of expectations. It is also noticed that the guides' desires to improve their social abilities became much stronger after they had been in this vocation for a time. As an answer, 'making friends' was mentioned twice but the same expression contained different connotations each time. Before started their guiding careers, the guides imaged how it would be exciting to be able to make friends with tourists coming from all parts of the world. After they experienced what guiding involved, the term 'friends' did not necessarily refer to incoming guests but more to the people having various connections with tourism or other industries. Most of the respondents suggested that they would not be working as a tour guide for too long – three to five years at most. They are eager to make use of the job to make acquaintance with as many people as possible to establish their social networks and to better their socialization skills for the purpose of developing their own businesses or finding other promising careers in the very near future.

Table 4.3
Tour guides' expectation from the guiding occupation
(N=112)

Questions	Responses	n_1	The primary (n_2)	The primary (Pct)
What made you choose this profession?	Better economic income	54	38	34
	Free travels	37	11	10
	Chances of making friends	43	10	9
	Free/flexible working time	87	52	46
	To improve social abilities	4		
	By chance	1	1	1
	Difficult to find other jobs	3		
What are you expecting by taking this profession?	Better economic income	68	39	35
	Making friends	55	6	5
	Increasing knowledge and social abilities	102	67	60

4.2.2.2 Expectations of the travel agents

Interviews with the bosses or managers of the travel agencies show that, as the employer, they definitely expect the guides to ‘help’ them to realize their economic targets. They spoke without reservation that ‘revenue’ and ‘profits’ are their biggest concern although they also pursued ‘good company images’ and ‘repeat guests’. In fact, travel agents in Hainan depend substantially on tour guides to make profits in almost all group tour businesses. As revealed before, tourism in Hainan relies very much on domestic markets that originate from outside of the island and so does the survival of local travel agents. They do business by serving arriving groups coming from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan but they are not able to command the sources of tourists. In other words, they only serve as ground travel agents in Hainan. It is the outside travel operator who recruits and organizes visitor groups and then sells them to Hainan’s local travel agents. Having little control or influence on the demand side, the local travel business is in a very passive position in bargaining with outside travel operators for the price of receiving tour groups. Furthermore, numerous local travel agents exist in Hainan. The provincial government publicized 117 registered travel agents (HPTB, 2005). However, most of these companies are made up of several sections. In order to enlarge the company’s total volume of groups received, each of them is arranged to operate independently, like a small travel agent. In addition, many of these companies also maintain a number of small ‘*guakao* (nominally)’ subsidiary companies who make use of their reputations to participate in the travel trade, (perhaps) paying certain fees to them but having no assets or management relationship with them. Therefore, the actual number of travel agents in Hainan is likely to be three to five times that of the official statistic. This makes the local competition for guests extremely fierce. Moreover, tour packages in Hainan are all composed of similar attractions and itineraries, weak in complementarity and easily substituted. Hence, lowering the quote price is the main (or only) strategy by which local bosses or managers compete for clients. They receive groups with low fees and fees that are lower than operating costs are not uncommon. Sometimes, they get no money or even have to pay outside tour operators to buy ‘visitors’. These are called ‘zero-fare’ or ‘minus-fare’ groups. In either case, local travel agents already have a deficit even before the trip has begun. Under such situation, the bosses or managers

can only hope to obtain enough commissions through tourists' on-tour expenditures firstly to cover deficits and secondly to make profits. Then, the task falls on the shoulders of the tour guides of encouraging tourists to consume as many local products and services as possible.

4.2.2.3 Government expectations

The officials considered that tour guides are one of the most important links in the entire tourism service chain. Their linkage function is especially significant in Hainan because the business of guided group tours occupies a major market share in the island. For the tourism enterprises such as travel agents, hotels, restaurants, attractions and shopping centres on the island, almost all of their products or services are presented to tourists by or through tour guides. Given such a situation, the provincial government mainly has two closely connected expectations from tours, i.e. to provide a quality guiding service and, through this, to strive for economic benefits. In one officials' own words: "guides should be ambassadors of spiritual and material civilization" (interviews with the officials, 2005) by which it is understood that, through the conduct of guides, guests obtain spiritual enjoyment while stimulating the material fortune for destination places.

4.2.3 The characteristics of a good guide

4.2.3.1 Opinions of the tour guides

What are the attributes of a good guide? The tour guides gave varied responses which can be classified into three categories (Table 4.4). A major part of their opinions suggests that guides could be evaluated through seeing the outcomes of the guiding. Under such a perspective, their competence in bringing about economic advantages was the most frequently expressed indicator (n=61). The guides considered that a good tour guide should be able to 'create' or 'maximize' monetary returns to their travel agent and themselves. Besides, they should be good at facilitating clients obtaining satisfactory experiences (n=29). A good guide "... make(s) guests feel happy... let them come in high spirits and depart well contented". Then they would be willing to spend more money on tours – "let them consume here in Hainan"; "let them be happy to spend here". In

this way, “both the boss and the guides themselves will be happy too”. At the same time, a good guide ought to receive no or few complaints (n=16) because complaints will result in administrative punishment or economic fines both by the government and the travel agents. “It is very important to make money while avoiding complaints... especially when unsatisfactory moods are found among tour members then a guide should be able to comfort them and to clear up a messy situation”.

Appropriate attitudes and certain qualifications as well as skills are also regarded as being indispensable criteria for being a good guide. First of all, a good guide is supposed to have a strong sense of responsibility (n=25), “(being) responsible to the boss, the tourist”, “take(ing) good care of every matter on tours” and “consider(ing) the safety and comfort of the guest”. They should be knowledgeable (n=18) – “be familiar with local culture and customs” and “be clear about various kinds of information about Hainan such as attractions, taxi prices, local dishes and so on”. Essentially, “(they) know many stories... and (are) good at telling stories”. “(They) have strong oral expression ability” in order to provide excellent interpretation (n=10). They are also expected to be humorous (n=4), and friendly and enthusiastic (n=3). In addition, when conflicts arise between various parties, they should be capable of mediating the disputes (n=4).

A few guides (n=9) spoke generally about the roles that a good guide should perform well, namely being a good civil ambassador, representing people in Hainan as extending hospitality to tourists; a good sales promoter, providing quality service in order to strive to attract more incoming guests; a cultural propagator, “speak(ing) about the good but not the bad of local culture and people” and “let(ing) outsiders know Hainan and like Hainan”; and being an environmental facilitator, assisting in maintaining Hainan’s natural environment.

Table 4.4
Tour guide's view about the attributes of a good guide
(N=112)

Questions	Responses	N
What should a good tour guide be?	Outcomes	106
	Create economic benefits	61
	Satisfaction of guests	29
	Minimize or no complaints	16
	Attitudes, qualifications and skills	64
	Be responsible	25
	Be knowledgeable	18
	Good interpretation	10
	Be humorous	4
	Good ability in coordinating and mediating	4
	Friendly and enthusiastic	3
	Roles and responsibilities	9
	Good civil ambassador, sales promoter, cultural propagator, facilitator of environmental conservation	

4.2.3.2 Opinions of the travel agents

The travel agent representatives acknowledged that, for them, a good tour guide simply is one who creates economic benefits for the company but avoids causing trouble, referring to government punishments and guest complaints. Of course a guide possessing qualified professional capabilities such as ‘good oral expression’ and ‘skillful interpretation’ is very welcome and a guide with a strong sense of professional ethics and responsibilities, for example, ‘leading tours through trips safely and smoothly’ and ‘taking good care of the visitors... not to abandon the group’, is also greatly encouraged. However, as a business, the travel agent ultimately pursues economic effects. Given the specific situation in Hainan (travel agents highly rely on tourists’ on-tour expenditures to gain revenues), earning profits after serving each tour group and not losing money are the essential expectations of the employers from their guides. Therefore, “Good guides come back with profits and without being complained about”; “Good guides are attentive to clients... active in promotion – to promote Hainan, to promote travel

agents and to encourage tourists to consume... (they) can arouse the guest's purchasing desires" (interviews with travel agent bosses and managers, 2005).

4.2.3.3 Government opinions

The government officials claimed that good tour guides possess three types of qualifications. They should be a person of considerable culture, commanding a variety of knowledge on such things as history, architecture and nature. In short, they should be a "*zajia*" (eclectic). Besides, full physical strength and vigour is a pre-requisite because guiding is energy-consuming work. Moreover, a good guide loves their job, and is sufficiently cautious and conscientious in their duties to be able to provide quality service to tourists and help Hainan to attract more clients.

4.2.4 Section summary

The interviewed tour guides in Hainan recognized that they themselves have diverse roles with various responsibilities to play when leading tours. Among these, the civil ambassador, the interpreter, and the sales representative or promoter are three main ones mentioned. They believe that they reflect the image of Hainan tourism, show hospitality to tourists on behalf of local people, assist clients to obtain a full understanding of Hainan, encourage guests' on-tour consumption, and promote travel agents' businesses so as to stimulate the Hainan tourism industry. They generally consider tourists' benefits to be the most important on tours and which should be ensured first if conflicts arise between service suppliers and guests. They also assert that they will take care of the benefits of travel agents before their own needs. Noticeably, a large number of them discussed their duties to local resources and people. This is understandable considering that the role of ambassador appears to go very deep into the guides' mind: being a "*Minjian Dashi* (civil ambassador)" are the usually the first words uttered by the guides when asked about their roles. The travel agent bosses/managers thought that tour guides are responsible to two masters: the clients—tourists, and the boss—travel agents. For the former, guides are service providers with interpretation as their most important duty; for the latter, they are representatives, providing and selling services for travel agents so that the latter can achieve their economic targets. The

government officials basically also saw tour guides as service providers and emphasized their function on presentation of information and interpretation. Besides, they looked at tour guides as propagandists, ‘broadcasting’ everything positive about Hainan, and being civil ambassadors, facilitating outsiders’ understanding and good impressions of Hainan. Therefore, other than themselves, tourists and local tourism resources as well as local people are the most important stakeholders that tour guides should be accountable to.

High economic rewards were both a pull factor tempting the interviewed tour guides to enter the guiding occupation and are a preoccupation when pursuing this career. Other alluring reasons for them to enter the profession lie in the nature of this job, including flexible work time, opportunities to make friends from a wide variety of places, and the possibility of enjoying extensive travel experiences. All of these reasons cater to the young people’s romantic aspirations, such as their desire for freedom and their eagerness to get to know other people. After being in this field for a period of time, their outlooks often changed as they used this job to look for something better, i.e. to improve their ability to adapt themselves to the society and to accumulate more resources to get a better career and life. The highest expectation of the employers, the travel agents, from tour guides were maximized revenue but without guest complaints and government punishment. Governmental authorities expected tour guides to provide quality service to tourists and, at the same time, to bring about economic benefits to Hainan.

For the tour guides, the foremost indicator of a good guide was the ability to make profits for their employers and themselves. Other standards include success in fulfilling tourists’ satisfaction and avoiding complaints and punishment. In order to achieve these effects, guides should be responsible in their duties, friendly and enthusiastic towards guests, knowledgeable, skillful (good interpretation, use of humor, mediating disputes etc.) and act well in their various roles (as a good civil ambassador, a good sales promoter, a cultural propagator and an environmental conservation facilitator). Not surprisingly, in the eyes of the employer, a guide who can generate profits without causing any trouble is good enough and specific qualifications were not stressed. The governmental authorities puts forward three general criteria for being a good tour guide, namely, a command of appropriate knowledge, a good physical condition, and

enthusiasm and sense of responsibility.

4.3 Local understanding of the tour guides' function in promoting sustainable development

Hainan Provincial Government promises to lead Hainan's development in a sustainable way.

Being one of the three "pillar" industries there, tourism serves as a paramount means to realize economic and social goals. Furthermore, sound operational practices are required to ensure that

progress is achieved without causing undesired outcomes that conflict with moving in a

sustainable direction. For this industry work well towards these objectives, all of the players

involved in its various sectors must perform their duties in accordance with sustainable principles.

Tour guides and guiding have such connections. However, before an examination of the tour

guides' actual performance against the principles for preferred guiding practices is undertaken, it

is necessary to ascertain how the guides understand sustainable development as well as the

relationship between tourism and sustainable development. More critically, their thoughts

concerning their roles in relation to sustainable development will be explored for it is assumed

that their thinking will be reflected in their actions. Opinions of the travel agent bosses or

managers and the governmental officials were also ascertained because their awareness of

sustainability affects the making and implementation of tour guide management measures so as to

influence guiding conduct.

4.3.1 Local understanding of sustainable development

Sustainable development is a phrase that is beyond the most tour guides' vocabulary. This was

founded out early in the research as, when the questionnaire was pre-tested, the author's enquiry was invariably kicked back with the question "What do you mean by sustainable development?"

Despite the fact that this term often appears in serious newspaper articles or official reports or in

comments announced in TV programs, for the guides, it is more like an academic or political

catchword that is far away from their daily concerns. Hence, even having heard of it on some

occasions, few of them had been sufficiently curious to figure out exactly what the word might

imply. Knowing that the tour guides were not familiar with the concept of sustainable

development, the term was not used directly in the survey for fear that the tour guides would feel

that their time was being wasted or that their lack of knowledge would embarrass them. Instead, the author adopted another approach and asked them, following completion of the more formal question-and-answer process, in an even more relaxed and casual manner, their ideas about ideal social development or advancement. Although still a big topic, at least they were able to share some aspects of their knowledge, views and imagination. The phrase “maximized material and spiritual satisfaction” was most commonly used to convey their expectations, reflecting their personal style of thinking. Rooted in an individual perspective, personal creature comforts were always the principle pursuit. Besides, mental enjoyment and freedom were also what they longed for: “I can do whatever I want and whatever makes me happy; for example, I (may) also travel out, but it will be for my own pleasure instead of for that of others... not for the sake of making a living.”

Five out of the six interviewed travel agent bosses or managers spoke frankly that they felt uncomfortable or strange when asked about the concept of sustainable development: “I have no idea about it”; “I have heard of it, but I have only heard of it”. Only one commented that he understood sustainable development as sustaining progress made in people’s living conditions including the increase of their fortunes, maintenance of the quality of the natural environment and the betterment of relations among people. Even then, he admitted his indifferent attitude to this issue, just like other travel business persons: “I do not think about it too much. It is too abstract.” In their opinions, the issue of sustainable development goes beyond their scope of thinking. It should be a concern of the government: “They make policies, they make plans so they should figure out how to be ‘sustainable’, or whatever you called it”. Or a question was posed to the researchers. “Don’t ask me, it’s your (the author’s) job”. For a tourism enterprise, there are many practical problems more deserving of their attention. The very basic ones are how to survive in the market and how to make profits in the increasingly competitive environment. Thus, sustainable development is not given much consideration.

The government officials interpreted sustainable development to be a form of development that possesses four attributes including “a lasting well-maintained ecological environment”, “sustaining resources (including both material and intellectual resources) for use”,

“continuously evolving rather than static culture” and “sustained prosperous industries (an economic dimension)”. They believed that such development will result in “maximized economic, social as well as industrial effects (referring to increased productivity and advances in scientific techniques)”. It will also foster the “improvement of common self-cultivation” and “public morals”. Eventually, it will lead to the “fulfillment of people’s material and cultural requirements to the greatest extent”.

Thus, it is apparent that, with the exception of the government officials, little thought had been given to sustainable development and little understanding existed of what it might entail.

4.3.2 Local perspectives about tourism’s connection with sustainable development

Given the situation that the tour guides felt uncomfortable with the use of the term sustainable development, they were not asked directly about their thoughts concerning the relationships between tourism and sustainable development. Instead, they were requested to provide comments on the impacts of tourism on destination areas in term of its environment, culture, economy and people. A series of impacts were enumerated. The positive influences included economic benefits: “tourism stimulates local economic activities, providing various employment opportunities, both directly and indirectly”, “the tourism industry turns in more government revenue”; environmental significance: “... to develop tourism needs resources. Tourism makes use of the environmental features such as mountains, sea, sunshine etc.—that’s good! Otherwise, they are just left there. It is a kind of waste... through tourism development, their value is manifested”; cultural results: “tourists come and they get to know local culture(s), when they go back, they talk to others, so the culture(s) gets to be spread”, “In this way (through tourism development), local culture(s) obtains more attention by the government. This is good because something can be handed down rather than fade away”; and those on local people: “economic advantages – needless to say, besides, people’s living environment will be improved along with the reconstruction of the infrastructure and facilities”, in addition, “as a tourism destination, local citizens are more educated in their public behaviours, therefore, they become more civilized...”. On the other hand, negative phenomena were also identified among which environmental problems caused by tourists’

inappropriate behaviours were particularly stressed. Even so, almost two thirds of the respondents (n=70, 63%) believed that the positive effects of tourism generally exceed the disadvantage and less of them (n=33, 29%) held opposite opinions, with only a few (n=9, 8%) wavering between the two (Table 4.5). However, observation by the observer and her interactions with the guides suggest that actually the tour guides with the affirmative attitudes actually agree completely with those who answered negatively and talked about the side-effects of the tourism industry. The essence of the difference is that they care more about the economic benefits brought by the tourism industry which is of great practical significance to their desire to making their fortune and to realize personal material comforts and then spiritual enjoyment.

Table 4.5
Tour guides' views about the relationship between tourism and sustainable development
(N=112)

Questions	Response	n	Pct
What do you think of the relationship between tourism development and the local environment, culture, economy and residents?	Positive impacts > negative impacts	70	63
	Positive impacts < negative impacts	33	29
	Hard to say	9	8

On discussing tourism's connection to sustainable development, the basic point made by the travel agent bosses or managers was that everything can be divided into two. They acknowledged tourism's economic contributions, usually in the form of "revenues" and "jobs". However, they also noticed that there are businesses "eager for quick success and instant benefits" at the cost of long-term interests. They recognized that tourism development, if well planned and managed, can help to conserve the environment: "Nanshan is a good example (referring to Nanshan Cultural Tourism Park, a welcomed human-made tourist attraction, located to the west of Sanya city, Hainan, China. It is famous for its environmental rehabilitation achievements and Buddhist cultural features) (Hu & Wall, 2003; 2005a, b)!". "More and more, tourists prefer to visit destinations and places with a superior and beautiful ecological environment. This stimulates

developers and managers to enhance their environmental management measures”. However, there are also contrary experiences: “Bad cases are too numerous to mention one by one. Not to speak of those far away, there is one right before your eyes – Yalong Bay (the most beautiful bay in China. It is situated in Sanya, Hainan. It is said that the construction and operation of about fifteen hotels along the seashore as well as the undertaking of aquatic sports or entertainment activities damage the water quality resulting in the death of coral and decrease of fish stocks)”. They also talked about social-cultural implications. Tourism facilitates cultural exchanges between the guest and the host, and between different ethnic groups, increase mutual appreciation. Especially for the minority people, tourism provides them with opportunities to showcase their lifestyle – “They are encouraged to stand on the stage, performing dances or making artifacts”, “Not only do they try to win understanding and respect, but also learn to do business with ‘outsiders’”. In addition, “Through dealing with all kinds of tourists, local residents will become more open-minded; this is good for them and beneficial to local development”. But, at the same time, a tourism destination usually draws all sorts of people who come to seek a livelihood. This may cause harm to public order or safety in the host society.

For all levels of the Chinese government, tourism is considered to be a great strategy for stimulating development. It is particularly the case in Hainan, a small island “being developed late, lacking an industrial base, without high-tech advantages but unique in tropical natural and cultural features”. Linking with their own experience in Hainan, the interviewed provincial officials stressed the significance of tourism to the destination’s economic growth as well as other development goals in environmental and socio-cultural dimensions: “Tourism is not only the mainstay of Hainan’s economy, but also an impetus to the development of other industries such as transportation, real estate, commerce, insurance, agriculture, education and so on... A superior ecological condition is the prerequisite for tourism development and properly handling the relationship between tourism development and environmental conservation is the key for the tourism industry to be successful and sustainable. In this sense, tourism benefits the construction of an eco-province... Tourism needs good physical surroundings and it also requires a comfortable socio-cultural atmosphere. Therefore, developing tourism supports the advancement

of spiritual civilization in destination areas... Improved intellectual and moral qualities, in return, will facilitate the progress of material civilization..." (also see HPTB, 2002). In short, it "favours the establishment of a harmonious society". However, respondents were also aware that any economic activity may result in undesired outcomes, both environmentally and social-culturally, and even economically. Therefore, they are now working towards answering the question of "how" tourism can contribute to sustainable development rather than wondering "if" tourism can contribute to sustainable development. In efforts to make this happen, they require that any tourism development and operational initiative should be carried out in line with the basic principles of "rational use of tourism resources, development coordination with conservation, and giving equal attention to social, economic and environmental effects." (also see Hainan Province Tourism Regulations, 2002). These principles also serve as the start point for the making of local tourism rules and regulations as well as being the foundation for implementing administrative monitoring measures.

4.3.3 Opinions about the roles of tour guides in promoting tourism towards sustainability

The interviewed tour guides have no concept of sustainable development but most of them (n=104, 93%) thought that they, as guides, could do something beneficial to the development of destination places (Table 4.6). They believe they are making a positive contribution just by leading tours as well as by offering quality service. To be more specific, they should/could be the "civil ambassador" or "image ambassador" (n=84, 75%), "performing propaganda—introducing and interpreting local natural attributes, history, culture(s) and customs including cuisine, local political and economic situations etc.", "speaking about positive things to bring a healthy image to tourists" and "functioning as a bridge through which outsiders gain a positive understanding of Hainan". Meanwhile, they also regard themselves as "salespersons" (n=79, 66%), "marketing everything consumable to guests concerning eating, accommodation, entertainment and shopping". Therefore, they encourage themselves to "sharpen their salesmanship" and try to "guide" tourists to "spend as much money as possible" on tours so as to "increase their personal income" as well as "stimulate Hainan's economy". Some of them (n=19, 17%) identified their role in

environmental conservation: “Guides should remind tourists to respect and protect the natural environment while enjoying the beauty of nature”; “(guides) should correct tourists’ inappropriate behaviours when, for instance, tourists litter or make graffiti”; and “guides themselves should be environmentally friendly... to set good examples for tourists... to use their own actions to influence or educate tourists”. At the same time, the significance of interpretation was emphasized again: “Interpretation is the key. How you operate interpretation determines how you will be successful in fulfilling these roles”. The respondents indicated that they were doing their best to act in these roles; however, there were 85 people (76%) who confirmed that they usually racked their brains on how to promote sales while they seldom thought about or undertook the other duties: “You ask and I tell you this, but it is hard to do so”; “rather, in terms of culture, tourists may often be misled about some parts of the minority culture or customs”; “I’ve never thought of such big questions – does the guide’s job have something to do with local environment, economy, culture or people? ... but we do contribute too much to Hainan’s economy”; “I am only concerned with my income; we need to make money for the travel agent; we are bearing great economic pressure, so we don’t have extra energy to take care of other things”.

Table 4.6
Tour guides’ views about their roles in promoting sustainability
(N=112)

Questions	Response	n	Pct.
As a tour guide, what do you think of your roles in promoting local economic development, environmental conservation, cultural understanding and appreciation as well as respecting local residents?	Civil ambassador, propagandist	84	75
	Sales promoter	79	66
	Environmental conservation facilitator	19	17
	No very helpful	8	7
	Not really take much action	85	76

The interviewees from travel agents talked lightly about the roles of tour guides in promoting sustainable development. Issues of sustainable development seemed meaningless to them and thus the question itself did not draw much of their interest. They briefly stated that tour guides constitute an indispensable part of the tourism service chain. Their activities are economic

in nature, influencing business outcomes such as revenue and profit. In this sense, they are one of the promoters of the destinations' economic growth. Besides, as 'speaking' forms the main way that they work, they have great room to conduct "*Xuanchuan* (propaganda)", providing information and interpretation, helping outsiders to obtain a good impression of local places.

The government officials view tour guides as "a contributor to local economic development, a 'priest' of local culture and a facilitator for environmental conservation". They thought that guides should/could exert these roles by "simply taking their job seriously and fully fulfilling their own duties", i.e. obeying relevant laws and regulations, being responsible to travel agents, and cooperating with other suppliers to offer tourists satisfactory services and, at the same time, improving their understanding and appreciation of local culture as well as fostering their environmental awareness through civilized and friendly conduct.

4.3.4 Section summary

Sustainable development is not a notion commonly acknowledged among the tour guides. For them, the ideal state of economic and social development is to be able to satisfy their own needs for personal creature comforts and spiritual enjoyment. The travel agent operators provided some pieces of thinking about sustainable development (sustaining improved living conditions for people including economic, environmental and social aspects) but, in general, they showed unfamiliarity with the term and, at the same time, indifferent attitudes towards this 'too abstract' concept. They gave more consideration to issues of market competition (how to survive, how to realize profits). The government officials understood sustainable development to be a form of development seeking sustainability of the society from both environmental (lasting, well-maintained ecological environment and sustaining resources for use) and economic (industrial effects, maximized material satisfaction) perspectives as well as social-cultural (continuous cultural evolution, improvement of common peoples' self-cultivation and public morals, maximized spiritual enjoyments) dimensions.

Without having a comprehension of sustainable development, the tour guides perceived various positive and negative impacts of tourism initiatives on destination areas' environmental,

economic and socio-cultural characteristics. After weighing the influences, most of them agreed that tourism bring about more positive outcomes than the opposite and, in particular, they attached great significance to its economic meaning to local development. The travel agent bosses/managers assessed the roles of tourism to sustainability from a dichotomous perspective, and stressed that good planning and management are prerequisites for tourism to be a facilitator rather than a destroyer of sound development. For the government officials, the capability of tourism to promote sustainable development is beyond doubt. Their focus has already been transferred to the question of how to make this happen to achieve harmonious development combining environmental, economic and socio-cultural considerations.

Both the tour guides and government officials look on guides' roles in supporting sustainable development as being civil ambassadors or propagandists with missions to help tourist to obtain a full understanding of destination places and to help the local tourism industry to establish a good image; as being sales promoters to strive to enhance local incomes; and as assistants in environmental education. According to some of the guides, in practice they may not be able to fulfill all of the above responsibilities except those for marketing. The travel agent interviewees pointed out guides' economic and cultural significance to destination development.

4.4 Tour guiding in Hainan

'Listen to what a person says and watch he does'. After an inquiry into the views of the local tour guides on their own occupation and their opinions about the issues of sustainable development, tourism's connection with sustainable development as well as the roles of tour guides in promoting sustainability, the research conducted observations on how and how well the tour guides conducted group tours in practice. The investigation was made through undertaking a tour as a participant observation, incorporating surveys on tourists' evaluations of the guiding performance they received in Hainan.

4.4.1 The observed tour

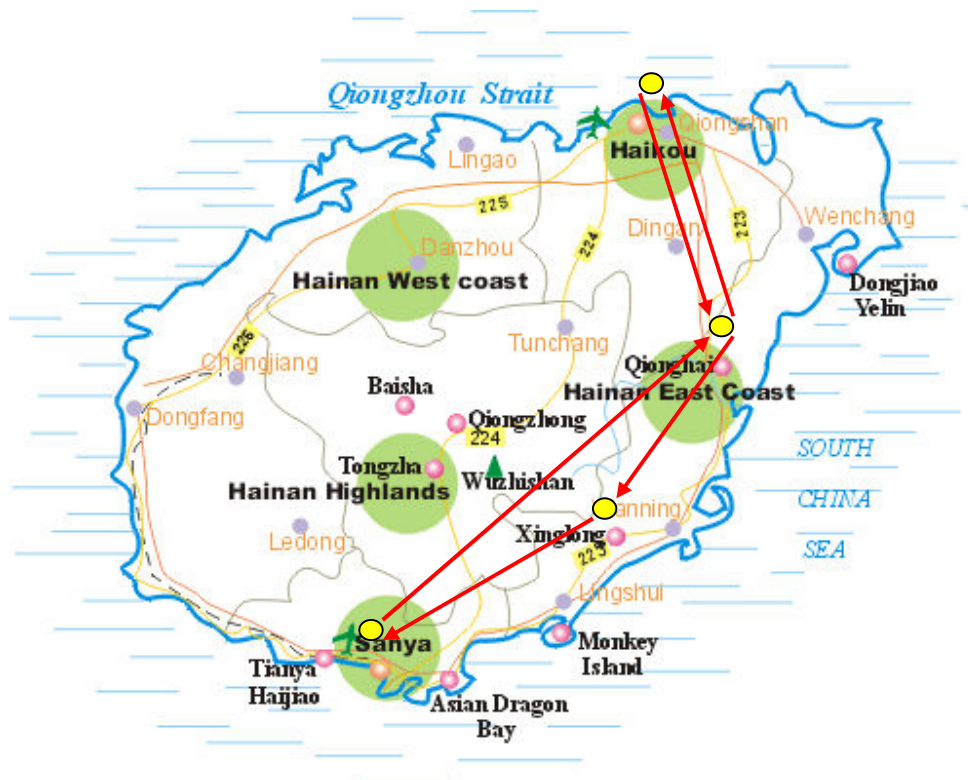
As explained in the previous chapter, a typical three-day, round-the-island tour package was

bought from a local travel agent selected for convenience. Tourism attractions are spread throughout Hainan island. They are usually classified into three distinguishing clusters based on their different attributes and geographical distribution, namely, the eastern itinerary—seashore sightseeing and leisure tour; the middle itinerary—Li (ethnic group) and Miao (ethnic group) cultural tour; and the west itinerary—primary forest adventure tour. However, owing to the unbalanced development of the province in economy and transportation, mass tourism activities are mainly carried on following the eastern itinerary. Haikou and Sanya are the province's two most important political, economic, cultural and transportation centres. The former is the capital city, located in the north of the island. The latter, in the most southern part, is the second largest city in the province. The areas along the east coast are relatively well developed and those in the middle and west part of the land, are relatively backward. Almost all the ethnic cultural parks that once existed in the middle of the island have closed down and most tourists have been taken to the newly-constructed down the eastern highway to experience the local culture. Therefore, although called '*Huandao*' (round-the-island) tours, in most cases the travel does not involve making a circular trip throughout the island but a return journey between Haikou and Sanya with the visitors' footprints left within the east coastal belt. The author participated in such a tour.

Lasting 'three days, two nights', the observed tour started from Haikou, went south along the eastern highway, passed through Qionghai city (one of the administrative areas of Hainan, 86 kilometers away from Haikou. It is where the brilliant history of the Red Women's Army was written down, where the famous Wanquan River, one of the main rivers in Hainan, enters into the sea. Boao Town, under its jurisdiction, is where the Asia Forum located) and Wanning city (one of the administrative area of Hainan, 112 kilometers away from Sanya). Xinglong town, within the jurisdiction of Wanning, is well-known for coffee production and is where the returning overseas Chinese from Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries in 1950s and 1960s have lived in compact communities. In this way, Sanya was reached and then the return journey was made to Haikou. Extensive notes were written down by the author at the end of each day. The following account will give a detailed impression of how the guided trip was carried out. After this, the main facts about the tour guide's guiding conduct throughout the entire journey will be reviewed and

outlined in order to facilitate further analysis. It is important to understand that the great majority of tours follow a similar schedule, visit the same places and have a common format.

Figure 4.1: Sketch map of the itinerary of the observed tour



4.4.1.1 On tour diary

Day 1: December 9th, 2005

Early in the morning, at about 7:30 a.m., I hurried to North Mansion, a small hotel located near downtown Haikou, waiting to be picked up. A few guests were checking out at the front counter. It seems that they knew each other. Half an hour later, a ‘*Lvyou Daba* (travel coach)’ stopped in front of the entrance and a young lady came down. After confirming the name, I, together with the four check-out people, were asked to get on the coach. The coach was almost full. I found a middle seat and at beside a young lady. After we, the last group of guests sat down, there was no vacancy. The lady got down and five minutes later a man got on the coach. He walked along the

aisle to check the number of passengers and to try to match each name with a face. Then I knew that he was the tour guide because he was wearing a tour guide I.D. card. As soon as he had finished, the driver closed the door and started the engine. So we set out on the journey. It was about 8:00 a.m..

Except for the driver and the guide, in total there were 33 passengers. They seemed to be a little bit excited. “We get going, we get going”. Some people raised their speaking volume due to the noise from the engine and from outside. In particular, a quite young couple, aged about 20, sat one row right behind me, talking and laughing. They sounded like they were from northeast China. Our tour guide then stood up in the front of the coach to face the guests, holding a microphone and leaning against an arm pulled out from the back of the driver’s seat to keep balance. All the guests stopped talking when the guide began to speak: “Hello, everyone. Welcome to Hainan! I am your tour guides. My surname is Wang. I am from Shaanxi (a northwest province on the mainland, famous for its historical relics, for example, the Qin Terra-cotta Soldiers and Horses, with Xi’an as the capital city. The guide spoke in Shaanxi-Mandarin—with an obvious accent). Our driver, Mr. Fu is very experienced so you don’t have to worry about your safety. I also have a colleague sitting on the last row (he is giving a hint with the eyes. I turned to look backwards but was not able to know who his colleague was because nobody expressed that they were the colleague). We will provide services together... As you know, this is a three days with two nights trip. We are departing from Haikou, going to Qionghai, then to Xinglong where we will stay overnight. Tomorrow we will make it to Sanya and stay there for another night. The day after tomorrow we are going back to Haikou.” Without any break, he went on to commentate: “Now we drive along Longkun Avenue. Longkun Avenue is one of the main roads in Haikou city with a north-south direction. Haikou city is also called ‘*Yecheng* (coconut city)’. This is easy to understand. You can see that coconut trees grow everywhere...” “It’s too warm”; “It’s fuggy” – two or three voices came out from among the passengers for all the coach windows were closed and the air conditioner was not turned on. Perhaps not hearing them, the guide concentrated on his speech: “Now we are out of the urban district of Haikou and are getting on to the eastern highway, moving towards Qionghai...” He then began to introduce the history of Hainan—when it was

founded as a province and before that which province it belonged to; spoke about the history of Haikou, starting from the period of the Republic of China (1912). He also provided comments on its present development status: “Since Hainan was founded as a province, Haikou, as its capital city, has been developed rapidly. However, it is not well planned. You may notice those buildings on both sides of the street, the tall stands incongruously with the short...” It became much warmer in the coach. The nearby young couple took off their coats, as did several others. Without caring much about the situation, Mr. Wang kept talking at an invariable speed with a flat tone, taking a look outside of the window sometimes and, more often, setting his eyesight down on the floor in front of him or somewhere straight forward in the air. The tourists were quite quiet. Most of them were looking out of the window and occasionally exchanging a few words with their neighbours.

Finishing the commentary on Haikou, the guide switched to the next topic: “Qionghai is...” However, before he had completed even one word he was interrupted by a loud voice: “It’s too warm, too fuggy...the windows cannot be opened, turn on the air conditioner”. “Yes, turn on the air conditioner”, many others echoed. Mr. Wang turned to ask the driver to do so. In a little while, the guests breathed sighs with comfort. Mr. Wang continued to give basic information about Qionghai, such as its distance from Haikou, when it changed from being a county to a city and so on. The audience did not react much to his explanation. Nobody asked questions or even looked at the guide. Nor did they talk to each other. A few started napping. About an hour had passed since we had departed from Haikou. To be fair, Mr. Wang was really toilsome. He has not stopped to drink any water till then. Nevertheless, he finally noticed the lacking vitality in the coach and decided inject some energy. He raised his voice: “Heihei, refresh, refresh, please! Don’t look listless... You did not sleep well last night? Well, let’s do something to animate the atmosphere... a question for you. Who can tell me who our Mr. driver looks like... anybody? ” The snoozing guests are woken up and those enjoying the scenery relinquish their attention to the outside. People seemed to try to figure out an answer to the question: “Liu Dehua (a famous Hong Kong actor)”, a man sitting in the last row shouted deliberately, making others laugh. Yet no extra opinions were provided simply because people could not make suggestions for they could only see the back of the driver’s head. Then Mr. Wang publicized his answer: “Zhang Manyu (a famous

Hong Kong actress)". More laughter followed with some guests shaking their heads. Then the second question was delivered: "It's been quite along time that we have been riding on the highway, so have you noticed something special in Hainan?" "There are not too many cars"; "trees, good vegetation..." The guests became much more interested. They discussed a variety of possibilities. "...think about something relevant to the highway and that is different from other provinces", Mr. Wang gave further encouragement to his clients. "Tollbooths, we have not paid any such tax", one of the guests suggested. "Bingo!" The guide looked very happy and then explained why there was no tax.

After a while the coach stopped at a gas station. The guests got off to have some fresh air and use the facilities. By this time that the guests had begun to say "hello" to each other, with an intention of getting to knowing other tour members. The group was made up of 20 females and 13 males. There were 7 older people (about 60 years old), 10 young (between 20 and 30) and the remainders were estimated to be between 30 and 50. Most had come with two to three family members or friends from various parts of the mainland, including the northeast, Shaanxi Province and Xinjiang Province (the northwest), Henan Province (the north), Guangxi Province (the south) and Szichuan (the southwest). Most of them had purchased the package through travel agents on the mainland and arrived in Haikou the previous day. All the guests were picked up from different hotels in Haikou earlier in the morning to form this larger group. Most men were making use of the pause in travel to smoke a cigarette as smoking was not allowed in the coach, leaving the ash and stubs on the ground freely.

After a short break, the group moved forward towards Qionghai. The guide started to introduce Hairui Grave, a historic attraction which is actually located in Haikou city (Hairui, 1514-1587, was a well-known ancient government official, who lived in the Ming Dynasty. He has been respected by the Chinese people for generations for his lack of corruption. He was born and grew up in Hainan but spent his official career outside of the island and only was returned to his hometown after he died). Mr. Wang merely recited a legend about Hairui—how the exact location of his grave was determined. Again, the audience did not make any comments. People might have already been familiar with this story. For example, I had heard of it from my history

teacher as early as in the middle school.

Then the guide reminded us that we would soon arrive in Qionghai. He briefly introduced the travel plan in Qionghai and at that time conflicts were involved. He said that according to the package bought by every member, there was only one attraction to be visited in Qionghai, i.e. the statue of the Women's Red Army. However, the statue itself, not very magnificent and standing alone, would not take much time to see. Moreover, owing to the extended construction of the city, the statue now was located in the centre of a triangle-shaped traffic intersection. Therefore, it was impossible for either the vehicle or people to stop there for sightseeing. "How can you see to admire it in the middle of a road with cars and motors passing just next to you?" Hence, in the itinerary plan document, it is written "To view the Women's Red Army Statue in the coach while driving". The guide further expressed that in order to increase the enjoyment for guests, he would add into the itinerary three other spots and activities in Qionghai. They were drifting on Wanquan River, sightseeing on Boao Island and visiting a Li and Miao folk village. However, the guests needed to pay extra money. Meanwhile, the coach was moving directly towards the Wanquan River attraction. Hardly had Mr. Wang finished speaking when the tourists made a fuss: "How come? We paid everything in advance"; "The contract says it's all-inclusive"; "Who knew the attraction is located in the centre of the road (nobody told them in advance)..." The guide responded calmly: "The three spots are not included in your package. You can check your contract... the spots I recommend are really worth going to... Drifting on the water is a very exciting activity, isn't it? Boao is where the Asia Forum is located so you'd better take a look at it. Li people are the natives on Hainan Island and you cannot experience their culture in any other part of China. It is unique. Everyone coming to Hainan will visit a Li and Miao folk village. Otherwise it will be a pity. Furthermore, we won't have chances to visit such a village in the next two days. So don't lose this opportunity..." A few tourists took out the contract to read. Most others murmured to each other but this did not last very long.

The group arrived at the entrance of the Wanquan River attraction at about 10:00 a.m.. All guests were asked to get out of the coach. Mr. Wang went to get the tickets by himself and came back to distribute them among tourists. My neighbour lady asked opinions from her friends about

whether they would participate in this activity. The answer was: “Yes, since we came (to Hainan).” In the end, every one had a ticket. A young person stood out to guide the group into the attraction. He wore a tour guide I.D. card, too. I realized that he was the colleague of Mr. Wang. He said that his surname was Zhang. Once Mr. Zhang took over the group, Mr. Wang disappeared until we were back from the drifting. The guests were separated into several small groups and invited to get onto the narrow bamboo rafts. On each raft there was an attraction employee standing at the end and holding a long pole to make the raft move. The river had very flat water. Nobody told the guests anything about the famous river. Mr. Zhang was on a raft but he did not provide any interpretation. The raftsmen appeared to be almost wordless. He only spoke to the guests when asked. An old guest began to sing a revolutionary song to entertain himself, which caused a lot of ladies to join him. Some young people played a water fighting game between rafts. We were taken to a small islet on which there was nothing to see and 10 minutes later we were shipped back to the bank. The ‘exciting’ drifting took about one hour.

Mr. Wang was waiting beside the coach. He announced that the next spot would be Yudai Tan (Jade belt shoal, it is said to be listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the world’s narrowest shoal between a sea and a river) in Boao town. On the way we happened to pass the statue of the Women’s Red Army. The guide reminded everyone to take a look at it. It was true that the statue was indeed at the centre of a traffic intersection. Twenty minutes later, the coach stopped in a park. Again each person got a ticket. Mr. Wang disappeared and Mr. Zhang took over the group. This time we were led to board a pleasure boat. An attraction interpreter presented interpretation on the boat. When arriving at the shoal, we were advised to sightsee freely. The guests, especially those from the inner mainland, were very excited to see the sea. They played with the waves and took pictures with a background of the sea melting into the sky and left cheering and laughing. Another half hour later, the sightseeing was over.

Then the group went to have lunch. After a 10-minute drive, we arrived at an open-air restaurant. Mr. Wang routinely informed a waitress of the basic information about his group and helped her to arrange tables for the guests. He asked the waitress to serve dishes as soon as possible and then went away with Mr. Zhang. The service was extremely slow and inconsistent.

More often than not, we finished one dish and then had to put down our chopsticks to wait for the next one for a long time, even until the rice became cold. Complaints were made by several tables. The two guides finished their lunch and came to take a look at the situation of their clients. The guests were not happy with them, saying: “You have finished your lunch already, but we have not seen where our next dishes are...” Mr. Wang turned to one waitress and asked her, in a loud voice, to speed up the service and then left. When the guests got back to the bus one after another, they were found smoking cigarettes in the parking lot. One lady jeered: “You guys are really fast!”

We were then told to visit a nearby Li and Miao folk village. Mr. Wang introduced the activities to be undertaken in the village, such as watching a dance performance, experiencing ethnic wedding customs, enjoying the unique architecture, wax-printing crafts, etc. The entrance procedure was exactly the same as that in other attractions. However, on this occasion, a village interpreter came out to take the group into the park although Mr. Zhang still accompanied the group throughout. We followed the interpreter and listened to her interpretation, looked at whatever she pointed out for use to see, undertook what she recommended us to do, walked around the village and finished the visit.

It was the first time for all the other group members to travel to Hainan Island. They have come with a heart full of gladness and on the tour they endeavored to make themselves happy travelers. As the tour went on, the members became much closer with each other and therefore more willing to share anything interesting or funny. Back in their seats, several men told of their experience of being a Miao groom in the village, resulting in much banter and great laughter from others. Mr. Zhang also laughed with the guests. However, Mr. Wang seemed not to be affected. He was busy reorganizing his personal things. As the coach started again, Mr. Wang took up the microphone. First of all, he reminded us that the three visited spots were not included in the package. Each person should make extra payment for them. In addition, on the next day’s tour, there would be another added attraction called ‘Daxiao Dongtian (the big and small fairylands)’. The reason for adding this spot is that the original plan only said to visit Tianya Haijiao (the end of the sky and the corner of the sea, a nationally-known tourist attraction in Sanya) which however, has nothing significant to see except a few big stones at the edge of the sea. ‘Daxiao Dongtian’ is

such a place deserving visiting so that it will be the ‘spotlight’ for the entire trip. He further explained that it would be the last site added. Therefore, in total, the guests needed to pay an extra RMB ¥318 (Can \$47) in cash and he would collect the extra fee in the evening after hotel check-in. The guests seemed to be greatly dispirited by the message. They stopped laughing and reduced their talking. The guide announced that the trip was going on towards Xinglong, a town in Wanning city. He then provided some information about Xinglong, from its settlement by the returning overseas Chinese to its coffee production. But it was a dull description! The guests became tired. Lots of them closed eyes. The guide noticed the situation and said: “Well, you guys look so sleepy and constant speaking makes me tired, too. Let’s all of us take a rest.”

About forty minutes later, the guide awakened everyone because the coach was going to arrive in Xinglong. Mr. Wang reported that the first stop would be a coffee-making workshop operated by the returned overseas Chinese. Following that, there will be an optional activity after dinner—a transvestite show. Then, before we got to the coffee-making shop, he spent most of the time introducing the transvestite show and tried hard to persuade people to watch it: “They are all from Thailand, really! I am not lying... their performance is so amazing. It really deserves watching... and think of it, you don’t need to fly to Thailand...” Some guests smiled knowingly to their friends, some shook their heads, but nobody expressed a willingness to go to the show. At the coffee-making workshop, the group was received by a member of the workshop staff. As usually, Mr. Wang left. The staff member delivered simple knowledge about coffee planting, guided the guests to pass along the show windows to watch the instant coffee-making process, invited us to taste lots of coffee products, showed the people into a big shopping area and left. After forty minutes, the guests came out with their purchases.

Then we were taken to have dinner. On the way to the restaurant, Mr. Wang did not forget to market the transvestite show and indicated to the group that we would not go to the hotel until after the show. The dinner was finished quickly. The people stood outside of the restaurant in twos and threes, waiting for the driver to open the door. Mr. Zhang moved among us, continuing with great patience his promotion of the show. The driver came back. We set out again and, finally, a decisive moment came when the coach stopped in front of a big building. There were already

many coaches. Mr. Wang asked and urged those who wanted to see the show to report to him so that tickets could be bought. The guests looked at each other and nobody responded. Five minutes passed and Mr. Wang made a last inquiry. The guests now lost their patience too. Many of them answered “No!”

On the way to the hotel, Mr. Wang explained that there would be no arranged activities at night because Xinglong does not have other entertainment except for the show. Guests were allowed to go out by themselves to take a look at the town but were required to be responsible for their own safety. Guests were told to get up at 5:00 a.m. the next morning because the coach would have to take the old road to Sanya owing to the maintenance that was occurring on part of the eastern highway. Therefore the group would depart at 6:00 a.m.. In the hotel lobby, Mr. Wang assigned rooms for everyone but without explaining the hotel facilities or services. I am asked to share with an old lady and a young girl.

Soon after we entered the room, Mr. Wang and Mr. Zhang came to collect the money. I paid for all the items including both those listed in the paper work and those not indicated upon purchasing the package, following the suggestion of several friends from travel agencies. Then they went to talk with my roommates. The old lady, from Henan province (the north China), had bought the tour in Guangzhou and had paid RMB ¥500 (Can \$74) to a travel agent there. She asked the guides to talk with one of her companions who was in charge of finance. The young girl, coming from Xinjiang alone, spent RMB ¥1400 (Can \$206) for this package. She said that she needed to check the whole matter with the person who sold her the travel plan. The guides left and the girl discussed things with someone through the phone. After one hour and a half, the two gentlemen came back, saying that all the others had paid the money. The girl indicated that she did not have enough cash and therefore could not give it to them until the next day. The guides agreed and left. It had been a really long day. Everyone felt very tired and went to bed quickly.

Day 2: December 10th, 2005

The morning call rang on time at 5:00 a.m.. The guests came to check out in the lobby one after another. They greeted each other and exchanged their experiences of the preceding night. Some

mentioned that they dared not walk too long in this strange town. It was still dark. After a quick breakfast, the group set out for Sanya. Mr. Wang explained that the journey would take two and a half hours and he suggested that we should catch up on our sleep. Nobody raised an objection. It was quiet until the sunlight shone into the coach. Then, many of the guests woke up and viewed the beautiful morning rural scenery through the window. Mr. Wang woke up when it was close to Sanya. He “hawked” and began to talk about the beach in Sanya. He praised the good quality of the sea water in Sanya and, at the same time, pointed out the pollution problems at Haikou’s beaches. One man asked whether swimming would be possible since it was already December. The guide answers affirmatively, indicating that swimming is a year-around activity in Sanya. The people become excited, longing to swim in the sea. However, the guide told us that arrangements had been made to go shopping first: “The water is too cold right now, so we will go shopping first and let it get warm enough”.

At about 8:30 a.m., we arrived at a big shopping outlet on the outskirts of Sanya. It sold fish oil products. Each of us was given a tag marked with our coach number and then led into a class-like room. A young man provided a presentation about the fish oil product. Then the group was guided into a spacious sales mall. People were asked to return the tag upon leaving. We found Mr. Zhang waiting at the cashier’s desk but did not know where Mr. Wang had gone since he had got off the coach. After leaving the store, everyone thought that the group was going to the beach but soon realized how wrong they were as the coach stopped at a jewelry store. “The water is still cold. Moreover, we will go to this store anyway, sooner or later” explained Mr. Wang. The same shopping procedure took place. This time the guests toured the store quickly and stayed inside for only twenty minutes. The sun has risen to almost overhead and the temperature was going up fast. Most people had already changed to wear only T-shirts and tried to stand into the shadow of the coach. After the driver came back, the group finally moved on to the beach.

The group members became stimulated, talking around the topic of swimming in the sea, and laughing. However, their high spirits were interrupted by a small incident on the way. When we approached the inner city of Sanya, my roommate, the young girl from Xinjiang, was ‘reminded’ by Mr. Wang that there would be a bank on the road. The girl got off to get cash and

the others had to wait. Five minutes passed and then ten minutes. Some guests became impatient: “Why not to deal with it later”; “waste everyone’s time”; “should go to get her back soon”. Also, others expressed the need for care: “Should someone go with her, a single young girl...” As Mr. Wang finally decided to go to the bank, the girl came back.

Passing through a few urban districts, by hotels and rounding a hill, we arrived at a flat beach in the bay of the East Great Sea. Already dozens of coaches had stopped in the park. The travelers gathered under an entrance shelter. It was a diving company. Assisting people to dive into the sea and leading them to see the coral reef and fish was the only service provided. They rented diving equipment to guests, taught them how to dive and accompanied them to go into the sea for about fifteen minutes. There was no entrance fee but guests needed to pay RMB ¥300 (Can \$44) by themselves. The guests indicated to Mr. Wang that they should not have to pay for this spot was included in the prepaid itinerary. Mr. Wang stressed that it was the entrance fee to all the attractions that they had paid for but any extra costs had to be borne by themselves: “It is very clearly stated in the contract... the fact is there is no entrance fee here. Only when you dive will fees occur, so you need to pay for yourself.” “Well, I am going to swim. I don’t need anyone to teach me how to swim and I don’t need special facilities”, said some guests. “Swimming is not appropriate here because this piece of sea is full of reef close to the surface... Don’t worry, you will have chances to swim. We will swim tomorrow”, explained Mr. Wang. The guests felt disappointed: “... cannot swim here, why didn’t you tell us earlier?” Finally, about half of the group went to dive; the others, including all the older members, waited on shore. It was hot. After one hour and a half, the hungry people headed for lunch. Those who went to dive showed off about what they saw under the water and how they felt about diving, while those who did not complained about the high temperature, the crowded shelter and the long wait.

After lunch, we were taken shopping to a crystal store for an hour. We had risen so early in the morning that most of the group fell asleep soon after boarding the coach. At about 4:10 p.m., the group arrived at Tianya Haijiao (the end of the sky and the corner of the sea). One attraction interpreter took over the group to tour the whole park and provide interpretation. An hour later, we drove to Daxiao Dongtian (the big and small fairylands). On the way, a guest asked whether there

would be a Buddhist temple in this attraction. He had been told that the Buddha in this area is powerful and if a vow was made the god there, then wishes would soon come true. Mr. Wang pointed out that the guest had made a mistake. The temple is in another nearby attraction and actually these two places are located back to back on each of the two sides of a same mountain. Then some guests asked if we could go to visit the place with the temple. The request was denied with the excuse that the itinerary was pre-arranged and fixed. On arrival, as before, the group was received by an attraction staff member. The dinner was arranged within Daoxiao Dongtian. Sitting facing the sea and enjoying the food in the cool evening breeze was a very good experience. It was quite late when we departed. On the way to the hotel, Mr. Wang asked about the guests' feelings about the tour so far. He mentioned again that Tianya Haijiao is a dull attraction. He quoted a comment from some unknown person, saying that "It will be a pity in your life if you do not visit Tianya Haijiao, but you will regret for all of your life after paying a visit." This made the guest laugh loudly; however, they generally left without a bad impression of Tianya Haijiao or Daoxiao Dongtian. They praised the beautiful scenery and found some stories about the areas to be quite interesting.

We arrived in the inner city of Sanya at approximately 8:40 p.m. and, even so, were driven to two adjoining supermarkets in the downtown to shop. We checked into the hotel at about 10:00 p.m.. Even the young members felt exhausted.

Day 3: December 11th, 2005

We got up at 8:00 a.m., ate breakfast in the hotel and then checked out. At about 9:30 a.m., we set out to Yalong Bay. Mr. Wang released a good news – a period of time would be arranged for the guests to swim in the sea. "Yuh..."- lots of the young people cheered. Mr. Wang reminded everyone to take sun protection. He then made an introduction about Yalong Bay, talking about when the development began, how many hotels were being operated there, its superior water quality and so on. The guests were more likely to enjoy the outside scenery. It took only half an hour to drive from the inner city of Sanya to Yalong Bay Square. Mr. Wang bought the tickets. Mr. Zhang guided the group going into the entrance. No attraction staff gave interpretation. The way

led first to a big underground souvenir store and only by passing through the store could guests get to the open area of the square. Then the guests stopped in the square for a little while, mainly taking pictures. There were a few structures, for example, a group of totem poles. The attraction did not provide interpretation services. Mr. Zhang only said that they were totem pillars but without making any detailed explanation. Some tourists got close to see the sculptured pillars while most of them took a look at them and then just stepped away. Then the group was led to the beach. Some could not wait to jump into the sea. People swam, walked with bare feet along the beach, chased waves and took pictures, cheering and laughing. Mr. Zhang stood under a shelter, watching. The group stayed at this attraction half an hour longer than at other attractions. Obviously, they had a good time. They kept on talking about their feelings and the funny things that had happened on the beach on the way back to the inner city of Sanya. Mr. Zhang joined in the chatting.

After having lunch in Sanya, the group began to go back to Haikou. Mr. Wang reported that the last attraction, 'Nanbatian's Manor' is in again Qionghai (Nanbatian, an epithet for a created role in the revolutionary film called 'Women's Red Army'. In the film he was a landlord in Hainan, living before China's liberation. He tyrannized the poor peasants and therefore was the enemy of the people). According to Mr. Wang, the attraction was built to display how the landlord's house looked like. Naturally he mentioned the film 'Women's Red Army'. The young passengers (around 20 years old) asked about the story in the film. As part of a younger generation, they seldom had had opportunities to see such old revolutionary films and, therefore, they were a little curious about it. Mr. Wang simply explained that the film talked about the class struggle in the old China. Then some of the older guests answered the questioners in much more detail. The topic was discussed for a while. Mr. Wang then introduced briefly the four special local food dishes (Wenchang Chicken, Dongshan Mutton, Hele Crab and Jiaji Duck, each of the first word referring to a specific place in Hainan). After that no more interpretation was given. People began to feel sleepy. After running for about two hours, the coach stopped in front of the attraction entrance. We toured the 'Manor' under the guidance of an attraction interpreter and departed in an hour. Actually the 'Manor' is only a part of an attraction called 'Women's Red

Army Memorial Park'. It merely occupies a corner of the park, composed of a small *siheyuan* (a compound with traditional Chinese houses of grey bricks and tiles built around a rectangular courtyard on four sides). The guests felt cheated: "What a 'big' manor!" Mr. Wang argued that the 'Manor' is the best spot in the whole attraction. We got back in Haikou at about 5:30 p.m. and had one more shopping stop to do. All of the guests were already tired of shopping: "This is really a shopping tour", they said. The store sold the local specialties of Hainan. After that, the guests were sent back to their respective hotels and the guided tour was over.

4.4.1.2 Main facts about the guided tour

In order to provide a more systematic picture of the guiding activities, the above record is recompiled under the following headings: the guiding setting, places visited, the activities arranged for tourists, the time spent en route, the guides' activities, and the interaction between the guides and other participants, including the incidents and conflicts that occurred during the journey.

The guiding setting

The term 'setting' is used here to describe the locale of an event and the situation that occurs when actors encounter one another. "In the setting, actors participate in a form of collective ritual with commonly understood or taken for granted aims." (Holloway, 1981: 381). In this case, tourists took part in a guided tour with the intention to observe the destination places by experiencing a series of tourist attractions and undertaking a variety of activities. The entire trip lasted three days and two nights. Thirty-two guests came from different parts of mainland China and, before joining the group, they had not known each other. The guiding conduct was supposed to take place in the various environments including the travel coach, tourist attractions, shopping stores, restaurants and hotels. Interactions occurred between all of the participants, meaning the tour guides, tourists, the driver and incidentally contacted employees of various service facilities.

The stops on the tour

For the readers' reference, a schedule and route itinerary for the tour is provided below (Figure 4.1). As shown in the timetable, the tourists were taken to 8 tourist attractions among which 4 of them were non pre-paid ones and need to pay the entrance fees on-site, 6 shopping centres and 1 entertainment facility (although none entered). Except for the two supermarkets in downtown Sanya, all the other places were tourist spots. In other words, the guests were not taken to any places commonly used by local people, for example, a farmers' market or a popular open-air tea shop. During the entire journey, the guests had only one opportunity to walk close to a local town (Xinglong). However, without the company of the tour guides, they were hesitant to go much into it, considering the problem of safety. Two or three attractions were visited each day while shopping was concentrated on the second day of the trip (4 stores).

Figure 4.2: Three days-two nights round-the-island itinerary

2005/12/9 (day 1)	
Haikou Qionghai	8:00 departing 10:00-11:00 drifting on the Wanquan River 11:20-12:20 sightseeing Yudai Tan (jade belt shoal) 12:30-13:30 lunch 14:00-15:00 visiting the Li & Miao folk village
Wanning (Xinglong)	16:30-17:30 shopping (coffee-making workshop) 17:50-18:50 dinner 19:00-19:15 transvestite show (failed) 19:30 hotel checking in
2005/12/10 (day 2)	
Sanya	5:00 getting up 5:30-6:00 breakfast 8:30-9:30 shopping (fish oil product) 9:40-10:20 shopping (jewelry) 11:10-13:00 diving in the Great East Sea 13:15-14:15 lunch 14:45-15:45 shopping (crystal product) 16:10-17:10 visiting Tianya Haijiao 17:40-19:40 visiting Daxiao Dongtian and dinner 20:40-21:40 shopping (downtown supermarkets) 22:00 hotel checking in
2005/12/11 (day 3)	
Qionghai Haikou	8:00 getting up 8:30-9:30 breakfast 10:00-11:30 visiting Yalong Bay Square and swimming 12:00-13:00 lunch 15:00-16:00 visiting Nanbatian's Manor 17:30-18:30 shopping (local specialty)

The activities arranged for tourists

The tourists were the audience in the coach, listening to the guide's speeches all the way and answering a few questions occasionally. When there was no speech, they took to napping or just viewing the scenery through the coach windows. There was no own time. At each of the attractions and shopping centres, the group was taken over by an employee working in the spot, sightseeing occurred by following him/her, listening to his/her introduction, undertaking various

activities he/she suggested or pre-arranged, such as playing water fighting on the river, acting as grooms in the ethnic wedding ceremony, dancing an ethnic dance and, of course, shopping.

The time spent en route

The tourists stopped for about one hour in each of the tourist spots except for one shopping place and one attraction. The former was the jewelry store in which the guests stayed for only twenty minutes. Before this they just had visited another shopping business and, at that time, they were eager to go to the beach. The guests played in Yalong Bay Square half an hour longer than in other attractions partially because swimming takes time and partially because there were no more spots arranged for visits on that morning. Transferring between spots took no more than thirty minutes and the long driving times occurred as the coach moved between cities. Specifically, it took 2 hours from Haikou to Qionghai, 1.5 hours from Qionghai to Xinglong, 2 hours from Xinglong to Sanya and, on the returning journey, 2 hours from Sanya to Qionghai and 1 hour from Qionghai back to Haikou.

The guides' activities

There were two tour guides in this case but obviously Mr. Wang was the primary one designated by the travel agent. He took over the guests from the lady coordinator from the travel agency. He provided information and presented interpretation to the guests in the coach. However, whenever the group arrived at a tourist attraction or shopping centres, he disappeared until everyone got back to the coach. He led the group to the restaurants, helped the waiter or waitress to assign tables to guest, but never ate with his clients in the same space and even seldom asked the guests' for their comments on the dishes. He assisted the guests to check in and pick up keys in the hotels but never gave basic introduction about the hotels' facilities and services. In particular, after the check-in in Xinglong, he left the guests by themselves. When guests went out to take a look at the local town, he did not intend to accompany them. Mr. Zhang, the other guide, seemed to be an assistant of Mr. Wang on this trip. He took care of or, more accurately, accompanied the group at each tourist spot as Mr. Wang was not with them. He did not provide interpretation and only

chatted with the guests some of the time. He was always with Mr. Wang in the restaurants and hotels. Neither of them paid attention to the guests' personal behaviours. When the guests left cigarette ash and stubs on the ground freely or spat, they just ignored it. Sometimes they themselves had exactly the same behaviours.

'Jiangjie (interpretation)' by the guide

Mr. Wang only gave interpretation in the coach en route. In most cases he forecasted the next stop on the travel plan but without much introduction about the services, facilities and activities there. He described the very recent history of Hainan Province, Haikou city, Qionghai city and Yalong Bay, mainly pointing out a few specific years. He talked about, very briefly, some local attributes including the byname of Haikou city (*Yecheng*), Xinglong (the settling place for the returning overseas Chinese, the good quality of the beach and sea water in Sanya, and the four special local dishes. He told the story about the Hairui Grave (how the location of the grave was determined) and the film of the 'Women's Red Army'. He expressed his opinions about Haikou's city planning (disorderly) and the attraction of Tianya Haijiao (nothing to see except a few big stones, and cited one comments from unknown source) and Daxiao Dongtian ('spotlight'). On every subject he talked about, he talked very little. A variety of interesting topics and a large amount of knowledge about Hainan such as its geographical features, history, local customs, ethnic culture, legends and stories as well as its tourism development were not presented. In addition, the narration, reciting all along with an unvaried talking speed and tone, was bland, being neither humorous nor vivid. Generally, more interpretation was presented on the first day of the tour and it was reduced progressively day by day as the trip proceeded.

Interactions between the participants on the tour

Several kinds of interactions occurred between the participants during the trip. The participants in this tour mainly refer to the two guides, the tourists and the driver. The driver, Mr. Fu, was like an outlier, concentrating on driving and without talk at all with either the tourists or the guides. To the tourists, Mr. Zhang, the assistant guide, was like an accompanying stranger on the coach and a

good tempered shepherd at the tourist spots, always calling the sheep to go home on time. He seldom talked to or discussed with Mr. Wang in front of the guests but cooperated very well with Mr. Wang in terms of looking after the group when Mr. Wang was absent. The tourists came from various part of the mainland China. Except their immediate companions, they had not known others before the excursion. In other words, there was no already established contact between the strangers. Moreover, all the strange guests were did not meet each other until the group departed Haikou on the first morning. Since Mr. Wang never made introductions among them, they themselves found some occasions to greet and chat with each other and, in these ways, they gradually became familiar with each other a little bit. However, such contacts were quite superficial. In addition, the travel lasted for only three days with two nights, which was not long enough for them to make strong links and it was not expected that friendships would be able to be established before the tour was over.

The interaction between the guide, Mr. Wang, and the tourists was the main one on the tour and was also the focus for observation. It was exhibited in various ways through a series of incidents or conflicts that happened during the excursion.

Generally, Mr. Wang's interpretation was dull. In most cases, he was simply providing or 'reciting' figures and facts with a flat tone at an invariable speed. He did not often make eye contact with his audience but set his eye sight down on the floor in front of him or somewhere straight forward in the air. Sometimes he looked out of the window. Under such circumstances, the tourists were not engaged. They did not appear to be excited, interested or drawn to his presentations. Rather, for most of the time in the coach, they enjoyed the scenery outside, chatted with friends or neighbours in a low voice or napped. In fact, as the group departed from Haikou on the first morning, Mr. Wang soon recognized the situation. He also tried to animate the atmosphere in the coach by reminding the guests to refresh themselves, by making a joke about the driver and by asking a question (about tollbooths). This worked to some extent. However, as the guests went back to their former status, Mr. Wang chose to ignore the situation.

As the excursion began, seemingly Mr. Wang did not recognize the gradually warming and fuggy environment in the coach resulting from the facts that all the windows were closed and the

air conditioner was not turned on. At first, the guests only reminded Mr. Wang. When the problem was not attended to immediately, they remained calm. When it got warmer, they took off their coats to try to reduce the discomfort by themselves. However, when the situation became worse and the guide did not address the situation, the tourists spoke out about the problem and expressed their discontent by directly interrupting his speech.

Before the visit to the first tourist attraction, Mr. Wang informed the guests that they had to pay extra fees for the added attractions. This caused great dissatisfaction among the tourists and their direct questioning. However, when Mr. Wang cited the contract as the means and pointed out that it was against their perspective, they became weak immediately in the confrontation, murmured to each other and, in the end, all of the guests accepted the added schedule and costs (“Yes, since we have come”).

The guides never ate dinner together with the tourists. At lunch on the first day of the trip, the service was extremely slow but no guides were there to negotiate with the restaurant. The guests complained severely to the waitress but no improvement resulted. Discontented with the service of the restaurant, they were also dissatisfied with Mr. Wang. Therefore, on seeing him again, they complained at his leaving them without care (“You finished your lunch already, but we have not seen where our next dishes are...”; “You guys are really fast!”).

When Mr. Wang came with Mr. Zhang to collect extra fees from my roommates, the old lady treated them with a cool attitude, sending them away to her companions in a few words. The young girl first tried to protect her interests. She dismissed the guides on the excuse that she needed to confirm the whole travel plan. She made a phone call but evidently got no supportive suggestions. Then the guides came again and left only when she promised to pay the money the next day as she had not enough cash on her at that time. On the way to the beach on the second day, the girl was suddenly asked by Mr. Wang to leave the bus to withdraw cash from a bank. This delayed the guests going to the beach, which resulted in some criticism from other tourists. Mr. Wang did not escort the girl to the bank. This also caused concerns among the tourists.

The transvestite show in Xinglong was the only entertainment activity that was strongly recommended by Mr. Wang. He started to introduce the show even before the group arrived in

Xinglong. Then he continued to try to persuade the guests to watch it on the way to have dinner after shopping at the coffee-making workshop, and he kept doing this immediately after dinner until the guests were taken to the entrance of the show building. The tourists always responded by smiling. Nobody expressed the willingness to go to the show. When the coach stopped in front of the building and the guide urged the guests again and again and waited there, the atmosphere was very embarrassing. The situation finally ended when the guests confirmed that they were unwilling to participate.

On the second morning, although the tourists were excited to go to the beach in Sanya, which had been praised by Mr. Wang, and were eager to go swimming in the sea, the group had to go shopping first. Mr. Wang explained the water was too cold to swim at that time. The tourists did not express objection. However, when they were led to a second store immediately after coming out from the first one and were given the same excuse, they deliberately shortened their stay time in the second store. Finally the tourists got to a beach at the Great East Sea but were told that the particular area was not suitable for swimming except for diving and, moreover, according to the contract, they had to make an additional payment if they dived. They felt disappointed and cheated. They complained that the guide did not explain the situation clearly in advance. They only had two options: to dive or to wait. On the last day, when Mr. Wang told the guests that they finally had an opportunity to swim in Yalong Bay, they appeared to be very happy.

There were some other concerns. On the way to Daxiao Dongtian Park, some tourists asked to change the schedule to visit another attraction. Mr. Wang denied the request straightforwardly by saying that the planned itinerary could not be changed. Then the guests gave up. Mr. Wang told the guests that the last attraction to be visited was Nanbatian Manor. However, after touring the attraction, the guests found it was only a small part of the Women's Red Army Memorial Park. Mr. Wang purposely gave them the wrong name, trying to make the place sound more attractive. The guests felt that they had been cheated again. The words "What a 'big' manor!" indicated their strong dissatisfaction. When they returned to Haikou and were taken to yet another store, the tourists reported their dislike of too many shopping activities with an ironic comment: "This is really a shopping tour". Mr. Wang gave no feedback.

After the tour, the author shared her observations with a number of tour guides, travel agent managers and friends in Hainan who had experienced the round-the-island tour. None of them were surprised about what had happened on my trip.

4.4.2 Tourists' evaluation of the guides' performance

The experience of attending a typical package tour provided a detailed impression of how a group tour is usually guided in Hainan. It reveals some facts about and problems of the guiding conduct on the tour which, when shared with some industrial personnel and friends who had been tourists, appeared to be common in most guiding practices in Hainan. Even if the observed phenomena only occur in a few excursions and do not exist broadly in Hainan's guiding practices, they would still be a cause for concern. In order to have a more objective understanding of the broader situation of guiding performance in Hainan, surveys were also conducted among tourists to collect their opinions about the guiding services that they had experienced because they are the ultimate receivers of the services and the most direct witnesses of the actions of the tour guides. At the same time, the survey results can be used to verify whether the observational outcomes are representative.

Tourists were asked to evaluate several aspects of the guiding performance in Hainan. First of all, they were required to indicate the degree of importance of the guiding service to the success of their tours. Then they were questioned about the nature of the influence of the guiding service on their actual experiences. After that, they were asked to indicate their satisfaction level with the guiding service measured through a number of components including: the guide's adherence to the contracted itinerary and reception plan, the guide's interpretation and the arrangement of shopping activities. Finally they were asked to provide general comments on the tour guide's performance in term of their service attitude, their knowledge level and their professional skills. As explained in the previous chapter, the questionnaire was distributed on the lobby of Minghang Hotel, a three-star hotel in the downtown Haikou (see section 3.4.3).

Table 4.7
Tourists' evaluations of the guiding performance in Hainan
(N=348, f=180, m=168)

Questions	Response	n	Pct.	Mean
What do you think of the importance of a tour guide to your tour?	not important at all	3	0.9	3.47
	not too important	36	10.3	
	important	165	47.4	
	very important	81	23.3	
	extremely important	63	18.1	
Overall, how did the tour guide of the tour you just attended influence your experience?	very negative/bad influence	6	1.7	3.26
	negative/bad influence	39	11.2	
	no influence	165	47.4	
	positive/good influence	135	38.8	
	very positive/good influence	3	0.9	
Satisfaction level on the tour guide obeying the contracted itinerary and travel plan	very unsatisfied	3	0.9	3.06
	unsatisfied	45	12.9	
	satisfied	228	65.5	
	very satisfied	72	20.7	
Satisfaction level with the tour guide's information provision/interpretation in relation to natural environment	very unsatisfied	0	.0	3.37
	unsatisfied	15	4.3	
	so so	207	59.5	
	satisfied	108	31.0	
	very satisfied	18	5.2	
history	very unsatisfied	3	0.9	2.97
	unsatisfied	72	20.7	
	so so	207	59.5	
	satisfied	63	18.1	
	very satisfied	3	0.9	
local customs and taboo	very unsatisfied	3	0.9	3.01
	unsatisfied	51	14.7	
	so so	237	68.1	
	satisfied	54	15.5	
	very satisfied	3	0.9	
ethnic culture	very unsatisfied	3	0.9	3.18
	unsatisfied	48	13.8	
	so so	192	55.2	
	satisfied	93	26.7	
	very satisfied	12	3.4	

latest event	very unsatisfied	0	.0	3.15
	unsatisfied	42	12.1	
	so so	216	62.1	
	satisfied	87	25.0	
	very satisfied	3	0.9	
legend and story	very unsatisfied	3	0.9	3.15
	unsatisfied	33	9.5	
	so so	225	64.7	
	satisfied	84	24.1	
	very satisfied	3	0.9	
entertainment facilities	very unsatisfied	0	.0	2.96
	unsatisfied	39	11.2	
	so so	285	81.9	
	satisfied	24	6.9	
	very satisfied	0	.0	
Satisfaction level on shopping arrangements and activities	very unsatisfied	9	2.6	2.28
	unsatisfied	237	68.1	
	so so	96	27.6	
	satisfied	6	1.7	
	very satisfied	0	.0	
Satisfaction level on the tour guide's service attitudes	very unsatisfied	0	.0	3.36
	unsatisfied	51	14.7	
	its'ok	138	39.7	
	yes, satisfied	141	40.5	
	very satisfied	18	5.2	
Comments on the tour guide's knowledge level	very insufficient	0	.0	2.99
	insufficient	51	14.7	
	so so	252	72.4	
	wide	42	12.1	
	very wide	3	0.9	
Comments on the tour guide's service skills such as sense of humor and ability to animate atmosphere	very unsatisfied	18	5.2	3.21
	unsatisfied	24	6.9	
	so so	183	52.6	
	satisfied	114	32.8	
	very satisfied	9	2.6	

4.4.2.1 Importance of the tour guide to the tour

Among the 348 respondents, only 39 (11.2%) respondents thought that the tour guide is not important. Nearly half of them (n=165, 47.4%) considered that a tour guide to be important to a

group tour. In addition, there were 144 (41.4%) answers in the 'very important' or 'extremely important' categories. In other words, 88.8% of the opinions indicated that a tour guide is significant to their tours. The mean value accounted is 3.47 (Table 4.7).

4.4.2.2 Influence of the tour guide on the tourism experience

Nearly half of the respondents (n=165, 47.4%) expressed that the tour guide on their respective tours had neither positive nor negative impacts on their tourism experience. There were 138 (39.7%) respondents who asserted that the guiding service increased their pleasure on their excursions and 45 (12.9%) indicated that their experiences were affected negatively. In general, it appears that the tours were not badly affected nor ruined by the guiding service but the service did not often create added value to the guests' experiences either (mean=3.26) (Table 4.7).

4.4.2.3 Satisfaction level with the guiding service

A small proportion of the interviewees (n=48, 13.8%) were not satisfied with their guides who changed the planned itinerary without consulting (adequately) with them. However, most of them (n=228, 65.5%) agreed that their guides were able to lead the tours by adhering to the contracted itinerary and travel plan. Moreover, there were 72 (20.7%) guests who felt very satisfied in this respect (Table 4.7). However, it should be borne in mind that the respondents made these judgments only based on the contracts in their hands - the paper documents on which each of the tourist spots and activities were listed. As long as they were led to visit all the contracted sites, they believed that the guides had followed the commitment on behalf of the travel agents, no matter whether extra sites were added by the guides into the package on tours. In other words, even for those chose to say that they were satisfied or very satisfied with this point, it does not mean that they were content with the design of the journey and the arrangement of their tours.

Tourists were particularly asked for their feedback about their guide's interpretation because interpretation is not only a principle component of guiding services but it is a key area of a tour guide's job that is vital in the promotion of sustainable development. As discussed in the literature review, interpretation is the means by which tour guides can deliver persuasive

information to tourists to help them to obtain rewarding experience in destination places, to foster their respect and appreciation for and affect their behaviours with respect to the local environment, culture and people. It may also assist in and encourage the consumption of local service and products so as to contribute to the achievement of sustainable objectives in destination areas. Therefore, tourists' responses to the content of the information and the way that it was presented can indicate to what extent the above outcomes might be reached. The knowledge transfer was assessed in relation to Hainan's natural environment, history, local customs and taboos, ethnic culture, recent events, legends and stories, and entertainment facilities. Distinctly, for each of the seven items, the majority of the tourists selected the option 'so so' as their most common answers. To be more specific, among the 348 respondents, 207 (59.5%) guests ticked 'so so' as their assessment of the guide's interpretation in the aspect of the natural environment, 207 (59.5%) for local history, 237 (68.1%) for local customs and taboos, 192 (55.2%) for local ethnic culture, 216 (62.1%) for the latest events, 225 (64.7%) for legends and stories, and 285 (81.9%) for the entertainment facilities in Hainan (Table 4.7). An explanation should be made here about the meaning of 'so so'. Originally, the questionnaire was designed to provide four answering options for each question: 'very unsatisfied', 'unsatisfied', 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied'. However, during the pre-test, many respondents were found to hesitate when selecting from one of the middle two options. On the one hand, they felt it was not appropriate to choose the item 'unsatisfied'; while on the other hand, they did not want to select 'satisfied'. Their opinions were "mama huhu" or "cha bu duo" (not bad, not good). Therefore, the 'so so' was added into the answering options, with a meaning of 'not bad, not good'. It is difficult to describe clearly how much disappointment might be contained in this phrase but at least it is perceived as being an expression that does not convey full satisfaction. This action is supported by considering the mean values for the responses to each question. As shown in Table 4.3, for all the seven interpretation items, none of the mean values achieves 4 points. Rather, all of them are much below this. In particular, those for history and entertainment facilities are below 3 points. The specific opinions made by the respondents reflect that first, generally not much information or knowledge was provided by their tour guides and second, the way that the interpretation was presented was dull

and dry. Taking some of their comments as examples: “(the guide) seems not clear about the historical incident”; “the guide may be a tyro, I feel he dose not know much about Hainan”; “the narration was not exciting” and “reciting, always reciting”.

Shopping is an important feature of much travel. Good shopping arrangements not only increase the pleasure of the tourists but also benefit the economic development of destination places. To the contrary, inappropriate arrangements will raise the antipathy of the tourists or even leave them with bad images concerning the local commerce. In this case, most interviewed tourists (n=237, 68.1%) were not satisfied with the shopping activities on tour and 9 (2.6%) persons expressed that they were very unsatisfied. Only 6 (1.7%) respondents asserted that they felt good about the shopping activities and 96 (27.6%) indicated their shopping experience were ‘so so’. The mean value is quite low (mean=2.28), even much less than 3 points (Table 4.7). The complaints from the tourists mainly were that, first of all, the tours went to too many stores: “(I) strongly request to reduce the shopping spots”, “I am not here for a shopping tour”, “shopping is part of my interest but not all”; secondly, the shopping time was too long: “the time spent on shopping was even longer than that on sightseeing”; thirdly, the items were expensive in the tourist shopping centres: “the product does not deserve that amount of money”, “even much more expensive than the downtown supermarkets”; and, fourthly, the shopping places were not close to the tourist attractions therefore time was wasted in transferring between them.

4.4.2.4 General comments on the qualifications of the tour guides

Evaluation of the qualifications of the tour guides encompasses three elements: service attitudes, knowledge level and professional skills.

More than one third (138, 39.7%) of respondents considered that the service attitudes of the guides they had on tours were acceptable. Nearly the same amount of the interviewees (n=141, 40.5%) felt satisfied with the guides’ attitudes. Those who were not content (n=51, 14.7%) and those were very content (n=18, 5.2%) occupy a small proportion of the opinions. Generally, tour guides were not criticized for being bad in their service attitudes (mean=3.36) (Table 4.7); however, it was pointed out that there was great room for improvement. As indicated in some

typical comments: “(the guide was) not enthusiastic enough”, “(the guide) concentrated on his own speech but did not notice much about our guests’ reactions”, “(the guide was) not so considerate” and “if he could treat us as his friends or family members, we would feel better”.

Merely 13% (n=45) of the respondents thought that their guides were good or very good in their command of relevant knowledge. A great majority (n=252, 72.4%) regarded the knowledge level of their guides to be ‘so so’ and 14.7% (n=51) suggested that their guides were weak in this aspect. The mean value for this item is only 2.99 (Table 4.7). The situation is not good: “(their) knowledge needs to be enriched, it is very important”; “there is some problem with his knowledge structure”; “the guide could not explain much of the ins and outs about local cultural or geographical attributes”; “there were not much historical knowledge provided. Is it because Hainan itself is isolated from the mainland and therefore has no profound history? ”

A small group of interviewees (n=42, 12.1%) were not satisfied (very much) with their guides’ service skills. More than half of them (n=183, 52.6%) indicated that this was “so so”. About one third (n=123, 35.4%) felt content or very content with their guides’ professional skills. The mean value for this item is 3.21 (Table 4.7). Some typical problems were pointed out as “(the guide) lacked a sense of humor”, “(the guide) did not tune in to our guests’ expectations and reactions”, “(the guide) was not good at animating the atmosphere” or “(there was) not much interaction with guests”.

4.4.3 Section summary

The investigation of the tour guiding performance in Hainan was conducted in two ways. The first one was to observe directly a tour guide’s entire guiding process by joining a typical round-the-island package tour. The second was to survey tourists’ evaluations of the guiding service that they were offered in Hainan.

The report of the participant tour provides a detailed expression of what the guiding setting was, where the group was led to, how the tourists were arranged to do what, how long the tour stayed in the destination spots, what the tour guide said to the guests, what the interaction was between the guides and other participants on the way and what incidents or conflicts happened

during the journey. The tour lasted three days and two nights. Thirty three group members coming from various provinces outside of Hainan island. A 35-seat travel coach transferred them between tourist spots including tourist attractions, shopping centres, restaurants and hotels. The group had a driver and a tour guide. The guide also had an assistant to work with him. In total, the tour visited 8 attractions and went shopping in 6 stores. In most cases, the tourists stopped in each of the attractions for about 1 hour and the same length of time in each of the shopping centers. The tour guide only provided interpretation in the coach. Whenever the group arrived at an attraction or a souvenir shop, the guide disappeared. The group members were left to be accompanied by his assistant or a guide arranged by the attraction or the store staff. The tour guide also helped the restaurants and hotels to welcome the guests but never ate with his clients or introduced his guests to the hotel services and facilities. The tour guide always forecasted to the group the name of next stop, as a busman usually does. The guide delivered pieces of information about Hainan with regards to its history (Hainan province, Haikou city, Qionghai city, Yalong Bay), natural attributes (beach, sea water in Sanya) and local culture (the four well-known dishes) and a few other aspects (tax-free highway). He made comments on the city planning (the buildings in Haikou) and an attraction (Tianya Haijiao). He told stories (Hairui Grave) occasionally. However, the interpretation was given in a dull and dry way. Every topic was talked about superficially and without describing many interesting details. The guide did not take much notice care of the guests' reactions (except once in the beginning of the tour on the first day). He did not often make eye contact with the guests. He always recited with an invariable speed and tone. There was not much humour (except for the joke about the driver) to animate the atmosphere. The interaction between the guide and the tourists, as indicated in various incidents or conflicts, reflects some problems with the guiding performance (this will be analyzed further in the next chapter), as well as the weak situation of the tourists on the tour.

A questionnaire was completed by 348 tourists in Hainan. The absolute majority of the respondents considered the tour guides to be important (at least) to the success of tours. Based on their experience, although some of them commented that the tour guide added value to their trips, most indicated that the tour guide neither increased nor destroyed their pleasure on their tours.

About two thirds of the people agreed that their guides were able to lead the tour as indicated in the contracted itinerary and travel plan, with reference to the paper documents on hand. Most of the tourists gave the comment of ‘so so’ on the guide’s interpretation of Hainan’s natural environment, history, local customs and taboos, ethnic culture, recent events, legends and stories and entertainment facilities. ‘So so’ means ‘not bad and not good’. More often than not, this subtle phrase is used in an embarrassing situation with equivocal attitudes. It does not convey a purely affirmative meaning. The tourists were particularly unsatisfied with the information or knowledge provision on local history and entertainment facilities. In general, the guide was criticized as presenting little information or knowledge. Even what was given was too superficial to be interesting. In addition, interpretation methods were dull. The tourists were generally unsatisfied with the shopping arrangement on their tours. They complained that there were too many shopping activities, too long time was spent in stores, the items were expensive and the shops were far from attractions and, therefore, much time was wasted on the way. Basically, the tourists thought the guides’ service attitudes were acceptable, although improvement was still necessary. For example, they could be more enthusiastic, considerate and care more about the guests. The tourists were not confident with the guides’ knowledge level. Most of the comments suggested that they needed to learn more about Hainan. The guides were not commonly assessed to be very weak in service skills; however they were not praised much either. The guests’ evaluations again concentrated between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ and the guides could enhance their skills in animating the guests by employing more humour and interacting with the guests.

4.5 Tour guides’ satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their current work conditions

The nature of an occupation and the work environment influence the employee’s service attitudes and behaviours. In turn, to investigate the employee’s like and dislike with their occupation is a direct way to learn about the employment situation. Tour guides provide guiding services. Their satisfactions and dissatisfactions with their existing work conditions will help in the understanding of their conduct. Moreover, it can reveal problems that need to be addressed to enhance the guiding service.

Among the interviewed tour guides in Hainan, the attributes of occupation that they were fond of were, in the order of frequency, free/flexible working time ($n_1=95$, 85%), chances of increasing social ability ($n_1=94$, 84%), high income ($n_1=52$, 46%), chances of making friends ($n_1=50$, 45%) and free travel ($n_1=31$, 28%) (Table 4.8). To recall the previously presented statistics, it is found that the first three factors are particularly consistent with their motivations for entering guiding and their expectations on taking this job.

Their dislike of the job consisted in the following aspects: the high work load/pressure ($n=101$, 90%), no protection/guarantee of personal benefits ($n=99$, 88%), low income ($n=25$, 22%) and low social status (not be respected or recognized) ($n=9$, 8%) (Table 4.8). The complaints concentrated most on the first two points, as also revealed in the interviews: “Tour guiding is toilsome mental as well as labour work...think about it, you are one person looking after dozens of people for three, four or five days. You need to consider everything. You need to handle well all the unexpected situations”; “the job consumes lots and lots of energy in a relatively quite short time of period... yes, it’s true that you don’t need to work everyday, but on the other hand, it means you can not live a regular life... no fixed time to sleep, to do exercise. This is not good. So I always feel I am doing this job at the cost of my health and youth”; “a guide has to make both of their guests and boss satisfied, but the conflict of interest often occurs on tour then we tour guides are sandwiched between them. Sometimes the situation is really difficult to handle”; “As a guide, you are often not home therefore you are not able to take good care of your family”. There are more concerns: “No organization protects guides’ benefits from being impinged. We don’t enjoy social welfare, we don’t enjoy the public health service, we don’t enjoy accumulation of funds for housing, so we often feel perplexed about the future”; “I will lead a tour today if there is one, but I am not sure about tomorrow. I am not clear if there are some better self-development opportunities for me and where they are”; “the big tourism environment (passive status in marketing) is not good in Hainan. In order to make money, unhealthy industrial practices are inevitable. When I have to tell guests something or suggest them to do something which are not my own ideas, (for example, persuade or even cheat guests to add stops or to say some good things about bad situations), I feel uncomfortable.”

Similar comments were also found publicized on the internet forum of tour guides in Hainan. For example: “What a life a tour guide lives—gets up earlier than the cock, eats worse than the pig, goes to bed later than the street girl, is busier than the donkey and gains less than the peasant worker...”; “most of the guides don’t have a salary...we don’t have health insurance so we fear getting sick”; “we belong to the disadvantaged social group” (Hainan Golden Tour Website, 2005).

To summarize, the guiding occupation is welcomed by the guides in Hainan owing to its flexible working time, chances of increasing the guides’ social abilities, relatively high income and other advantages. However, it also begets discontent, among which the high work load and pressures on the guides (caused by long work hours, strong work intensity, an environment full of conflicts of interest, unhealthy industry practices) and the lack of protection of personal benefits (salary, social welfare, insurance, etc.) are the two factors raising the most complaints. Without doubt, lack of assured benefits further aggravates work pressure.

Table 4.8
Tour guides’ satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the current work conditions
(N=112)

Questions	Responses	n	Pct.
What aspects of this career are you satisfied with?	High income	52	46
	Free/flexible working time	95	85
	Free travel	31	28
	Chances of making friends	50	45
	Chances of increasing social ability	94	84
What aspects of this career are you not satisfied with?	Low income	25	22
	No protection/guarantee of self benefits	99	88
	High work load/pressure	101	90
	Low social status (not be respected or recognized)	9	8

4.6 Tour guide management in Hainan

The way that tour guides and guiding are managed determines or influences essentially how tour guides conduct guiding. Therefore, understanding the current status of the management practices in Hainan will help to explain why tour guides there perform in the way that they do and, moreover, will lead to suggestions on how to improve the situation. The following aspects were examined: certifying and licensing tour guides, the guides' employment options and benefit distribution, tour guide training, monitoring and protection.

4.6.1 Certifying and licensing

It is not complicated to become a tour guide in Hainan. There are two steps. First, one needs to take and pass the official certification examination for tour guides and second, to apply for a tour guide I.D. card. As stated by the *Tour Guide Management Regulations*, any healthy Chinese citizen who has completed at least high/secondary education and who possesses the basic knowledge and certain oral expression abilities required for a tour guide can sign up to attend the examination. The exam consists of four subjects, namely, elementary knowledge of China and Hainan (in history, geography, cultures and customs etc.), tourism policies and regulations (on tour guide management, dealing with tourists' complains, travel agency management, requirements for tourists to enter and leave China and so on), professional code of conduct (for guiding procedures, professional skills, interpretation ability, dealing with accidents and others) and simulating guiding. The first three are taken in the form of written examinations and the last one, orally. There is no regulation at either the national or the provincial level on how often the examinations should take place. In other words, the provincial tourism bureau makes its own decisions according to the guiding industry situation in the province. The officials from Hainan Provincial Tourism Bureau expressed that in principle, they would not like to set a limitation for the numbers of examinees, certificates and tour guides. They thought that chances should be open to a broad public and that the capacity to be employed should be left to be determined by the market.

Candidates pay the provincial tourism bureau RMB ¥600 (Can \$88) for the registration and the examination. They can also buy, on their own will, reference books from the bureau for a price of RMB ¥300 (Can \$44). For each subject, the pass mark is 60 points. Only those who pass every subject can be issued a qualification certificate. Pre-examination training is always offered by the provincial tourism bureau. It lasts for half a month, costing RMB ¥200 (Can \$29). Usually, the trainers are retained from various tourism education institutes in Hainan or are some experienced as well as distinguished tour guides in Hainan. They take the books sold by the bureau as the unique teaching materials. The government encourages but does not force people to attend the training. However, for the purpose of passing the examination, almost all the examinees will join in the official training and buy the books from the authority.

Candidates are not required to have any previous guiding knowledge. They are from a wide variety of social background such as high/secondary school students, layed-off workers, primary/middle school teachers, corporate staff, *Getihu* (small self-employed entrepreneurs) and so on. The examination records so far reflect that generally the examinees in Hainan have a low educational background and knowledge level. For example, in 2004, there were about 7000 people taking the examinations but only 70 of them passing the mark of 60 for every subject. In order to have more tour guides, the provincial tourism bureau had to lower the passing mark from 60 to 45 points in that year (interviews with the provincial tourism bureau officials, 2005).

A certificate is not enough for a person to be a guide for they must obtain a work license – a tour guide I.D. card. After being certificated, one needs to apply to the provincial tourism bureau for the license, holding the contract of employment made with a travel agent employer or the documents from the guiding service corporation they are registered with. Based on the *Tour Guide Management Regulations*, the bureau should make a decision about whether or not a licence should be issued within 15 working days after receiving an application. After obtaining a tour guide I.D. card, one finally becomes a tour guide and can lead tours. The I.D. card has a three-year period of validity. Extension request should be submitted by the holder three months prior to the expiration date of the card.

4.6.2 Employment and benefit distribution

Tour guides in China are not allowed to be self-employed. They have two employment options, being hired by a travel agent or registered in a guiding service company. The officials from the Hainan Provincial Tourism Bureau explained that full-time tour guides work with travel agents and part-time guides are registered in guiding service companies. However, it is not necessarily the case in reality. There are three guiding service companies in Hainan but all of them are subordinate to the government. Hainan Xinglv Tour Guide Management Company Limited, also called Hainan Provincial Tour Guide Management Centre, is under the administration of Hainan Provincial Tourism Bureau. As the largest one in Hainan, it has about 2000 tour guides. The other two, much smaller, are attached to Haikou Municipal Tourism Bureau and Sanya Municipal Tourism Bureau. The management holds that they are not for-profits enterprises. They do not organize or receive group travel businesses; rather, they were set up to register, manage and train part-time guides and to provide them to travel agents or other corporate entities at a small fee.

Item 25, Section 1, Chapter 4 of the *Hainan Province Tourism Regulations* says that “the travel agent, the guiding service company... should make and sign contracts with its hired tour guides... pays them salary and other (monetary) welfare, transacts (for them) social insurance...”. However, few travel agents in Hainan pay their tour guides salaries or arrange any insurance plans for them. None of the interviewed tour guides claimed that they had enjoyed any welfare from their travel agent employers. The guiding service companies do not pay wages to guides either since they are the management organization but not the boss of the guides. They are not responsible for guides’ social welfare or insurance matters. On the contrary, they collect registration and management fees from the guides and charge commissions for guides leading tours for travel agents or other entities. To take the Hainan Xinglv Tour Guide Management Company Limited as an example, each of its registered tour guide needs to hand in RMB ¥300 (Can \$44) annually and RMB ¥10 (Can \$1.5) per day per tour. The question then arises: “Where does the income of the guide come from?”

In order to find out the answer, it is necessary to recall how travel agents in Hainan undertake their group tour businesses. As discussed before (see 4.2.2.2), Hainan is a tourist

receiving destination but not a major generating region. Its tourism completely relies on guests coming from outside of Hainan island. Therefore the local travel agents are in a disadvantageous position in the tourism market, compared with the mainland travel operators who command the source of tourists. Moreover, the uniformity of the group travel product on the island and the extremely strong competition between the huge number of local travel agents further weakens the ability of these travel agents in bargaining with the outside travel operators. For the sake of survival, they have to receive groups with low fees or without any fees or even buy guests from outside travel operators. In all of these cases, they are already in a deficit position before the trip has begun. For example, in the group tour the author attended, the young girl from Xinjiang paid RMB ¥1400 (Can \$206) for the package to a travel agent in Urumchi (the capital city of Xinjiang); the old lady bought the package at a price of RMB ¥500 (Can \$74) in Guangzhou. If all the money had been transferred to the travel agent in Hainan, it might not even have been enough to pay for the round-trip air tickets to Urumchi (normally about RMB ¥1600 (Can \$235)) or Guangzhou (normally about RMB ¥600 (Can \$88)) respectively. Then how can the travel agents in Hainan do their businesses and make profits under such circumstances? The only way for them to make money is to make every effort to get tourists to consume as much as possible in Hainan, initially to cover their deficits and secondly to make money. Tour guides are the ones carrying out the task. Their performance not only determines whether the travel agent's economic targets can be realized, but also whether they themselves can have an income because only when the boss makes money can the employee obtain a share.

The form of the benefits distribution between tour guides and travel agents as well as tour drivers in Hainan has changed several times. Before 2003, when the travel agent received a group, the boss/manager collected the fee (if there was one) from the outside travel operator and put it into his own pocket. Then he assigned the group to a tour guide but without providing any money to the guide as the expense for arranging transportation and accommodation on the tour. Rather, the guide had to pay back to the travel agent the 'head money' in order to lead the tour. The price of the 'head money' varied year from year. It was RMB ¥5 (Can \$0.7) per guest in 1998; RMB ¥10 (Can \$1.5) in 1999; RMB ¥20 (Can \$3) in 2000; RMB ¥60 (Can \$9) in 2001 and RMB ¥80

(Can \$12) in 2002. After 'buying' the group, the guide, together with a driver, led the group on the tour. The guide was responsible for all the costs that occurred during the tour, mainly transportation (coach rental and gas) and accommodation (hotels and restaurants). For the purpose of creating maximal revenue to cover all the expenses and earn money for himself, the guide racked his brain to collect 'kick-backs' through taking tourists to visit tourist attractions, to patronage shopping centres, entertainment facilities (such as tea shops, night clubs, massage and so on) and, sometimes, restaurants as well. At the end of the tour, the guide halved the net income with the driver because the driver did not have a salary either. In this way, the travel agent transferred all the operational risks to the tour guide. This resulted in the guides' continual protests which finally raised the attention of the governmental authority. Therefore, from 2003, the travel agent was forbidden by the provincial tourism bureau to take the group fee paid by the outside travel operator as their own income while not bearing any costs of the tour. The travel agent 'selling' the group to the guide by charging 'head money' was also stopped. Then the group fee was taken out and counted as (part of) the expense of the tour. This meant that the travel agent shared the operation costs and risk with the tour guide and the driver. When the tour was completed, the total net income obtained on the tour was distributed between these three sides. Seemingly such improvements would have been good for the tour guide. However, most of the economic responsibility and pressure still were on the tour guide since ultimately it was the guide who undertook the guiding. Owing to the low group fee or zero-fare or even minus-fare received from the outside travel operator, the tour guide still had to beat his brains to get as much 'kick-back' as possible. Moreover, in order to reduce his own burden, the travel agent boss/manager often gave false information about the group fee to the tour guide. For instance, the mainland travel operator may have paid him RMB ¥300 (Can \$44) per guest for a group but he told the tour guide that he only received RMB ¥100 (Can \$15) per guest. In other cases, the boss/manager told a tour guide that the group had a minus-fare (deficit) of RMB ¥1000 (Can \$147). If the guide did not want to lead the tour, he went to another tour guide indicating that he paid RMB ¥900 (Can \$132) to get the group. If the second guide was not willing to guide the tour, the boss/manager continued to negotiate in the say way, with another guide until one agreed to

lead the tour. As the competition among the local travel agents got worse and the group fee got less and less, more and more tour guides felt hardship and stress. This finally led to the ‘12.1 (December 1st) strike’ in 2004 (see Section 3.3.2, Chapter 3). In that incident, many of the tour drivers also attended because their benefits were bound together with those of the tour guides. Thanks to the strike, the governmental authority implemented a new measure in October 2005 to try to resolve the conflict. By the new regulation, a travel coach and driver control centre was founded under the administration of Hainan Provincial Transportation Department. The centre monopolizes all the travel transportation rental services in Hainan. All the local travel agents can only pay to rent the travel coaches and drivers registered at this centre and, any rental business outside the centre is treated as being illegal. The centre pays a fixed salary to the driver. Therefore the previous binding relationship between the tour guide and the driver is cut out. Then (part of) the driver’s personal benefits obtained protection but the tour guide was left to shoulder the risk and pressure alone. Now the tour guide has to struggle to make money on each tour. In the end, the guide shares profits with the travel agent in a ratio of 3:7. The reform further resulted in changes in the nature of the tour guide’s relationship with the driver. Before October 2005, the guide and the driver were a pair of ‘*nanxiong nandi*’ (friends in adversity), cooperating very well with each other for the common purpose of earning as much ‘kick-back’ as possible so as to be able to share more profits. After October 2005, they were more likely to become enemies. A lot of the tour guides complained that some drivers began to ask for tips from them. Some drivers suggested the tourists should not attend the night entertainment activities suggested by the guide in order that they could go to bed earlier. Some drivers charged them extra fees in the case of flight delays and some drivers even ran down the tour guide to the guests. In short, the implementation of the new measure did not better the guide’s disadvantageous position; rather, their plight got worse.

The situation that the Hainan tour guides rely completely on the ‘kick-backs’ to earn income has not been changed. The amount of the ‘kick-back’ differs from attraction to attraction, shopping centre to shopping centre, and entertainment facility to entertainment facility. Different travel agents may also have different rates. For example, the attraction *Daxiao Dongtian* (big and

small fairylands) asks for RMB ¥36 (Can \$5.3) per person for the group at the counter while tour guides only need to pay RMB ¥26 (Can \$3.8) per guest. Boao *Yudai Tan* (jade belt shoal) publicizes the price for the group as RMB ¥68 (Can \$10) but only charges tour guides RMB ¥20 (Can \$3). Even some *Yeren gu* (savage valley) charge the group RMB ¥148 (Can \$22) per guest and return the tour guide RMB ¥127 (Can \$19) per person. According to the interviewed tour guides and travel agent managers, on average the returning money from the tourist attraction reaches half of the public price. As for the transvestite show in Xinglong, tourists may be charged for RMB ¥300-400 (Can \$44-59): however, the price for the guide is only RMB ¥150 (Can \$22). At shopping stores, the 'kick-back' is usually calculated in two ways. Some pay back the tour guide a fixed amount of money per guest, for instance, RMB ¥20 (Can \$3); some return a certain percentage from the guests purchases, ranging from 15% to 50%; and some use both of the methods i.e. the guide enjoy the fixed head money and when the guest's purchase exceeds a certain amount of money, a specific percentage will be deducted from the additional part and given to the guide as well. All the 'kick-backs' are paid by the facilities in cash on-site. This explains why, where and what did Mr. Wang, the guide of the observed tour, do during the time he disappeared at each visiting spot. In order to earn more income, the guides often persuade to add extra visiting sites or items not included in the planned package into the trip on tours.

4.6.3 Training

Almost all the tour guides had attended the short (half a month) pre-certification exam training offered by the provincial tourism bureau (e.g. among the 112 interviewed tour guides, 108 (96%) had done it). Paid pre-job training is also organized by the provincial tourism bureau. It is required, lasting for one to two months. The on-the-job training programs are of four kinds. First, some big travel agents train their own guides regularly (e.g. once per week). It is free but required. A large number of the small or '*guakao*' (nominally) subsidiary companies provide no education program. Second, the tour guides management centres also organize training for their registered guides. Those are free and voluntary in nature, but for the paid ones, the guides are not allowed to be absent. For example, the provincial management centre, Hainan Xinglv Tour Guide Service

Company Limited, holds a class-style lecture once every year. All of its guides are forced to attend it and have to pay RMB ¥50 (Can \$7) for it. As for the free monthly seminars, the guides can decide by themselves if they are going to show up. Third, according to the '*Tour guide Management Measures*', all tour guides in China have to take part in the paid training programs arranged by the local tourism department either at the provincial or municipal level in order to prepare for the annual assessment of tour guides. These programs have an accumulated time of no less than 56 hours per year. No guide dares to ignore it. Fourth, there are also some training classes offered by a few experienced and well-known tour guides in Hainan. These schemes are essentially businesses and only a small group of guides pays to attend them.

All of these training programs concern knowledge, guiding skills, relevant tourism policies and regulations. However, most of the interviewed tour guides considered that these training activities were not very interesting or effective in improving their guiding abilities. Therefore, they would find other ways to develop or update their knowledge or skills such as to communicate with other tour guides to exchange experiences and to learn from websites, books, newspapers or TV programs (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9
Statistics about training of the tour guides
(N=112)

Questions	Responses	n	Pct
Did you receive any training program before you became a tour guide?	Yes (provided by)	108	96
	Tourism bureau	108	
	No	4	4
Have you received any training program after you became a tour guide?	Yes (provided by)		
	Tourism bureau	112	
	Employers	43	
	The tour guide management centre	22	
	Private mentor (former guides)	10	
If and how do you develop and update your knowledge and skills?	Learn/exchange with other tour guides	31	
	Learn from websites	22	
	Attend training programs	9	
	Learn from books/newspaper/TV	59	

4.6.4 Monitoring

The day-to-day management of tour guides and guiding occurs at two levels. One is the government's supervising and monitoring in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. The other rests with the internal management in the travel agency.

Currently, there are three rules providing the principal legal basis for tour guide and guiding management in Hainan, namely *Tour Guide Management Regulations* (1999), *Tour Guide Management Measures* (2001) and *Hainan Province Tourism Regulations* (2002). *Tour Guide Management Regulations*, enacted by the State Department of China, defines who is a tour guide (definition), who can be a tour guide and how (certificate and license), how to make assessments (the rating system), what a tour guide should and should not do when conducting guiding (concerning wearing the tour guide I.D. card, interpretation, shopping, tips, safety etc.) and what the punishment will be when a guide break the above rules. *Tour Guide Management Measures*,

issued by the National Tourism Administration, makes complementary explanations about tour guides' certificates and licenses and, at the same time and more importantly, details three management systems on tour guides and guiding. They include a points deduction system (every year a tour guide has a initial 10 points recorded. When they do something wrong against the regulations, points will be deducted until the record becomes zero. At the same time, punishments, either monetary or administrative, will be put assessed), an annual assessment system (every year a tour guide will be assessed based on their points deduction and punishment record, tourists' feedback about their services and other indicators. Tour guides failing to pass the assessment will be laid off) and a rating check-up system (tour guides are divided into four professional levels: junior, intermediate, senior and special grade. Junior and intermediate tour guides are rated by provincial or municipal tourism administration organizations; senior and special grade guides are rated by national tourism administration organization. Tour guides can apply to upgrade their professional level by taking upgrading examinations). *Hainan Province Tourism Regulations*, promulgated by Hainan Provincial People's Congress, are rules for the development and operation of the entire tourism industry in Hainan. Its items concerning tour guide and guiding are completely consonant with those included in the above two national regulations. Besides, there are two terms that were particularly brought to the author's notice. One says that the travel agent and tour guiding service company should pay its hired tour guides a salary, take care of their other welfare requirements and arrange social insurance for them (Item 25, Section 1, Chapter 4). The other states that tourism business entities like shopping centres should pay commission (but not kick-backs) to the travel agent through bank settlements rather than handing over the cash to tour guides directly (Item 43, Section 1, Chapter 4). Nevertheless, both of these two regulations are not being followed or enforced.

Under these laws and regulations, the Hainan Provincial Monitoring Centre for Tourism Quality and Hainan Provincial Inspection General, together with the municipal monitoring stations and inspection teams, are the specific executors. They undertake monitoring in two ways. The first is to receive tourists' complaints. The second is to go to the tourist attraction and shopping place to make on-site investigations on whether the spot is listed on the itinerary held by

the guest, whether the interpretation is healthy in the attraction and whether illegal behaviours (e.g. cheating the guests) happen at the shopping centre. On-site investigation is conducted one to three times per month in the off-season and four to five times in the peak season. Each one lasts 5 days on average.

Internal management strategies and measures vary among the travel agents in Hainan. The big companies may have set up a comprehensive rewards and penalties system with detailed explanations and may publicize it on the notice board in the office or on the corporate website. Penalties always exceed rewards and most of the rewards and penalties are carried out in monetary form. The small units may have nothing proclaimed in writing. However, no matter whether big travel agents or small ones, all of them are implementing one common measure i.e. each tour guide has to pay RMB ¥5000 (Can \$735) as a deposit upon being hired by the company. In any case where the guide's conduct damages the company's benefits or breaks the company's regulations, the fine comes from the deposit. When it is used up, they need to pay another RMB ¥5000 (Can \$735) as a new deposit.

4.6.5 Protection

The majority of interviewed tour guides (n=94, 84%) did not think that their personal benefits were being protected by any organization (Table 4.10). The *Hainan Province Tourism Regulations* states clearly that their employer, either the travel agent or the guiding service company, should pay them a fixed salary and arrange social welfare and insurance for them. Unfortunately, they are simply not provided with these benefits in reality. Such a fact is known widely by the government authority (according to the interviews with the government officials), the industry persons and a large part of the public in Hainan. However, it is not being attended by anybody. A few tour guides took by mistake the tour guide management centres as being tour guide associations and claimed that these government organizations should exert their functions to protect them. However, according to the principal of the provincial management center, these centres are only a subsidiary unit of the provincial or municipal tourism bureau. To a great extent, they merely provide a place for the guides to keep their files. They are powerless in speaking for guides

because they are not authorized with the right to do so. What they can do at most for the registered guides is to help them to look for legal consultancy upon receiving their complaints. They themselves have nothing to do with the guides' salary and social welfare. No tour guide association exists in Hainan, nor even in the whole country.

Table 4.10
Statistics about protection of the tour guides' personal benefit
(N=112)

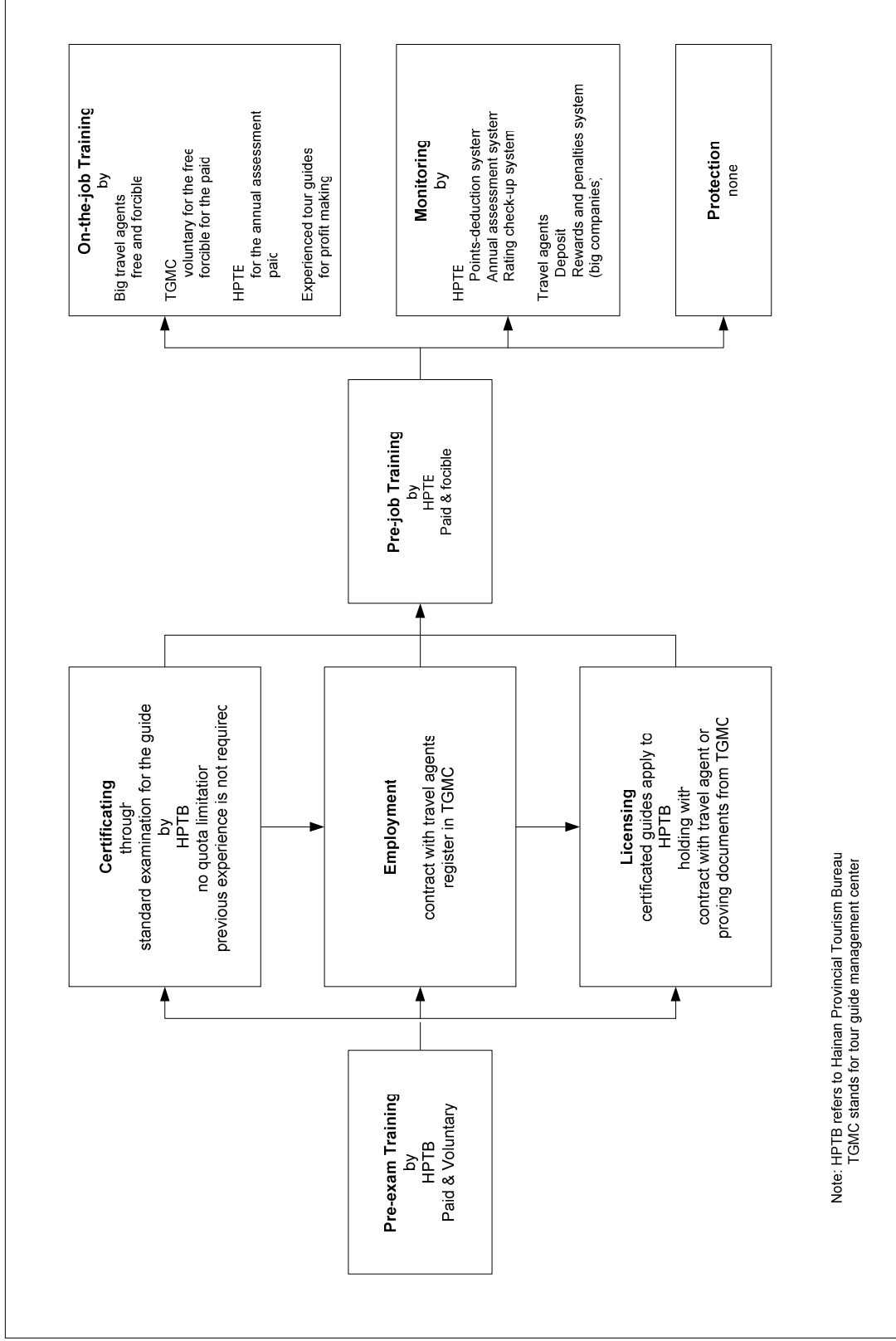
Questions	Response	N	Pct.
Do you feel that you tour guides' personal benefit being protected by any organization?	Yes	13	12
	Employers	9	8
	The tour guide management center	4	4
	No	94	84
	Not clear	5	4

4.6.6 Section summary

Figure 4.3 draws a clear picture of what tour guide and guiding management measures are being implemented in Hainan and how. Any Chinese citizen, without disability, with at least a high/secondary school education certificate and with the basic knowledge and oral expression abilities can apply to take the official standard examination for tour guides. Most of the candidates buy the reference books from Hainan Provincial Tourism Bureau upon registration and take part in the short period of pre-examination training offered by it. After certification, the guides can choose to work with a travel agent or register in a guiding service company but they still can not conduct guiding. Only by holding the contract made with the employer or documents provided by the guiding service company, can the guide apply to the provincial tourism bureau for a tour guide I.D. card. Only on obtaining the card, can they lead tours. Neither the travel agent nor the guiding service company pay the guides a salary, or provide social welfare and insurance. The tour guides earn money through collecting high 'kick-backs' from various tourism facilities and share the profits with the travel agent (and, previously, the tour drivers). Paid pre-job training is required for tour guides, offered by the provincial tourism department and lasting for 1-2 months. On-the-job training is arranged by the travel agent for their hired tour guides, and is free but required; by the

guiding service company for its registered guides (if free it is voluntary and if paid it is required); by the provincial tourism department for all the guides in Hainan to prepare for the official annual assessment of tour guides (paid and required); and by individual experienced and well-known former tour guides for profit-making. Most of the interviewed tour guides considered that these programs were not interesting or effective in help them making improvements. The monitoring of tour guides and their guiding performance is carried out at two levels. The government organizations – Hainan Provincial Monitoring Centre for Tourism Quality and Hainan Provincial Inspection General, together with the municipal monitoring stations and inspection teams, in light of the relevant laws and rules (mainly referring to *Tour Guide Management Regulations*, *Tour Guide Management Measures* and *Hainan Province Tourism Regulations*) through several means (points deduction system, annual assessment system and rating check-up system), undertake monitoring through receiving guests' complaints in the office and making on-site inspections at various tourism spots. Only some big travel agents possess detailed (monetary) reward and penalty regulations. However, both the big and small travel companies collect RMB ¥5000 (Can \$735) from each tour guide as a penalty deposit, a common way to control the tour guide's performance. No organization exists in Hainan to protect the personal benefit of the tour guides.

Figure 4.3: Tour guide and tour guiding management measures in Hainan



4.7 Summary

This chapter has presented comprehensive and detailed information about tour guides and tour guiding in the study site, Hainan island, China. It has profiled the tour guides in Hainan. It provided an account of the local understanding about the tour guiding occupation from not only the guides' perspective but also those of the guides' employer – travel agents, and the local government authority. All of these stakeholders expressed their respective opinions about the roles and responsibilities of a tour guide, their expectations about guiding and what a good tour guide be and do. The chapter reported the comprehension of the tour guides, the travel agent bosses/managers and the government officials about sustainable development, the relationships between tourism and sustainable development, and the roles of tour guides in promoting tourism towards sustainability. It described how tour guiding is conducted in Hainan through a report of an observed guided group tour and an analysis of tourists' evaluations on the guides' services in Hainan. The participant observation recorded the setting and places of the guiding, the tour guide's activities, the guests' activities and the interaction between the guide and the tourists. Tourists' evaluation were reported on the importance of guiding services to their tours, the influence of the guiding service they were offered on their travel experiences, their satisfaction level with various aspects of the guide's service and their general assessment on the guide's qualifications. It depicted the current status of tour guide and tour guiding management in Hainan from the aspects of certificating and licensing, employment options and benefits distribution, training, monitoring and protection related to the local tour guides. The large volume of facts reflects the present situation of the tour guides and tour guiding in Hainan. A number of problems have already emerged during the description. Based on this information, an in-depth analysis will follow in the next chapter to reveal the issues concerning tour guides and tour guiding in Hainan as well as their implications for the destination's sustainable development.

Chapter 5

Tour guides and sustainable development: Issues and problems

On the basis of the large amount of observations about tour guides in Hainan, this chapter provides an in-depth analysis of issues and problems concerning tour guiding there and in relation to implications for the study site's sustainable development. The analysis and writing are presented step by step in accordance with the sequence of the research questions. Therefore, this chapter first reviews the roles and responsibilities that the tour guides in Hainan actually undertake on tours (5.1). It then examines their performance against the interpretative guiding principles (5.2). These first two sections provide a base from which to critique whether or to what extent the tour guides are making efforts to contribute to the realization of the sustainability objectives of Hainan (5.3). Grounded on these discussions, it identifies issues and problems that exist in current tour guiding practice as well as in tour guide management and which require improvement for the sake of promoting sound tourism development in Hainan (5.4). Finally, a summary is provided (5.5).

5.1 Roles and responsibilities of the tour guides *en route*

The literature review of Cohen's (1982, 1985) work and other notable research on tour guiding shows that, in principle, tour guides shoulder a number of responsibilities to their various masters or stakeholders and carry out a variety of roles when conducting tours. They are not likely to wear only one hat at a time, nor may they take all the roles in a single trip. The roles that they prefer to take and the extent to which they operate more dominantly in some roles than in others depends on the nature of the tour group, the nature of the excursion, the circumstances of the destination place and the wishes of their employers as well as themselves.

Prior to the examination of the actual roles the tour guides in Hainan play on tours, their own views about their professional functions are recollected for comparison purposes. During the interviews, the tour guides first stressed their role of being a civil ambassador, followed by being

an interpreter, a sales representative/promoter and a pathfinder. They saw their duties as building and maintaining the image of Hainan tourism, representing the local people to show hospitality to tourists, providing service on behalf of the travel agents that hired them, introducing and propagandizing the attractiveness of the local environment and culture to enhance tourists' impression and appreciation of Hainan, and encouraging guests' consumption in the destination and attracting more and repeat visitors. The role of the civil ambassador can be understood as part of what Cohen (1985) called the 'tour leader'. A tour leader operates as a broker between his/her party and the local population, sites, institutions and tourist facilities. He/she represents the tour group to the visited setting as well as the setting to the group. In other words, the function of a tour leader is bi-directional. However, being a civil ambassador, according to the interviewed tour guides, governmental officials and all of the training materials about guiding, more often refers to the guide representing the setting to the party. The role of interpreter is synonymous to Cohen's 'mentor', passing on and mediating knowledge about the destination to tourists. The guides also expressed that they were accountable on tours for the benefit of tourists first, their employers (travel agents) second, local resources and people third, and themselves last.

Their thoughts, except for their consideration about their duties to themselves, were found highly congruent with the views of the local travel agent bosses/managers and the government authority about tour guides and the guiding occupation. The former considered tour guides to be service providers for tourists and beneficial representatives for the companies that hired them. The latter emphasized the guides' roles in satisfying tourists' needs (service providers) and establishing a good reputation and tourism image for Hainan (propagandists and civil ambassador). At the same time, the significance of interpretation was highlighted by all of them. This suggests that in Hainan the tour guides' awareness of their occupational roles is fostered greatly through the influence of the education and training offered both by the travel agent and the government organizations such as the provincial tourism bureau and the tour guide management centres. It was also discovered that pursuing economic advantages through guiding is, in fact, a powerful motivation and, moreover, an essential practical purpose for the guides as this is their job or career although they did not put it in the first place on their answer lists. This is verified by

their belief that being capable of making monetary return is the most commonly cited indicator of being a good guide. The guides' economic expectations from guiding are fairly consistent with those of the local travel agent bosses and managers who take economic profits as their foremost and ultimate operational aim. The latter, under the disadvantaged situation of the Hainan tourism market, substantially rely on the guides to make money for them. Therefore, they judge a good guide primarily according to whether or not the guide can maximize monetary gains for them without complaints. They are also conscious of the two government expectations from the guides (offering quality service to tourists and striving for economic benefits).

The analysis of the roles that the tour guides in Hainan undertake in practice is mainly based on the findings obtained through the participant observation tour and the surveys among tourists. The three days with two nights tour is typical of the great majority of tours in Hainan which follow a similar schedule, visit the same places and have a common format. For the observed facts, some concrete details may be individual to the specific tour, but most of the phenomena were agreed by the guiding industry persons and previous tourists to be similar to, common and even representative of most of the guided tours in Hainan. A multiple perspective is employed. In other words, the guides' roles are examined from the angles of tourists, destination resources, local communities, the employer, the government authority and the guides themselves (see Figure 2.6 or Figure 3.1 for reference).

5.1.1 For tourists

According to Cohen (1985), the function of tour guides for tourists is made up of four components (Figure 2.5), referring to the instrumental aspect, the pathfinder; the social one, the animator; the interactionary element, the group leader; and the communicative part, the mentor. While the kernel of the role of pathfinder consists of 'leading the way', the tour guide also carries out other tasks including controlling tourists' access to the 'back regions' in destinations and making sure of the safe and efficient conduct of the party. For the guided tours in Hainan, the itinerary is usually set in advance, the visited places are all mature sites and there is always a separate driver serving the group. Therefore, 'leading the way' loses its meaning in Hainan and what most of the tour

guides do is forecast and report each visited stop, just like a busman. Except for a few downtown supermarkets, they take tourists to tourist places all the time, such as attractions, souvenir shops and special entertainment facilities. They rarely arrange for tourists to enter the 'back regions' or the places commonly frequented by the local people. They usually exercise some control over their party. The general route is determined before the tour; however, the guides command the actual schedule on the trip. To be specific, they decide while on the tour when the group goes where to do what. For example, on the second day of the observed tour, the tourists were asked to go shopping first rather than to enjoy the beach on the beautiful morning from 8:30 to 10:20. Besides, they 'shepherd' or 'marshal' the group, preventing members from breaking away, collecting stragglers, generally monitoring the pace of the movement of the tour. That the assistant guide Mr. Zhang took over and accompanied the group at each spot and that the guide Mr. Wang set one hour on average to stay at each stop, no matter whether it was a welcomed attraction or a boring shopping center, are the reality. In addition, they often tried to add extra stops into the itinerary for more 'kick-backs'.

The role of the animator is related to the management of the cohesion and morale within the touring party. On the participant tour, the guide did not introduced the group members to each other to enhance mutual understanding, nor did he make efforts to stimulate the tourists' interaction. Rather, he inadvertently created tension among them. For example, on the second day morning in Sanya on the way to the beach, some of the tourists were unhappy to wait while the young girl got cash. This might be an individual case specific to that trip; however, another conflict occurred on the same day at the diving base when some of the guests waited for a long time on the shore without much care. They had nothing to do in the hot weather and complained to those went diving, which often takes place on similar tours. Besides, in the closed coach setting that created a physical and psychological distancing of passengers from their outside environment, the guide seldom used humour or jocular demeanor to animate the atmosphere. It was commonly pointed out by the surveyed tourists that the tour guides in Hainan lack in the efforts to cheer the mood of their guests.

The tour leader, as discussed before, is a social middleman between his party and the visited setting. For the comfort of his clients and the smooth operation of the excursion, he both integrates the guests into the visited destination as well as insulates them from it; and he both represents his party to the setting as well as the setting to the party. Most group tourists in Hainan are transferred from attraction to attraction, shopping store to shopping store, hotel to hotel, and restaurant to restaurant. They have few opportunities to be away from the travel coach and tourist ‘things’, which limits their contact with the local population. In addition, at each spot, the guide turns over the group to on-site staff and goes to calculate and get the ‘kick-back’; at restaurants, they leave the group to waitresses and waiters with little consideration; and in hotels, they assign rooms for members but rarely introduce the hotel facilities and services. In all of these cases, they neither (fully) undertake the representative role for the party to the destination setting, nor the ‘ambassador’ role for the setting to the group. Thus, they do not perform well their intercessional function to mediate between the two sides. They appear more to be a third party outside of, instead of between, the visitor and the visited.

The mentor or interpreter, frequently considered to be the principal component of the guide’s role, works as a ‘cultural broker’ between the tourist and the site. Through interpretation, he points out objects of interest to tourists and disseminates information and knowledge about the sites on tours. Moreover, he does not merely provide facts or figures, but distills, translates and conveys the significance or values about the local environment, society and culture. The interviewed tour guides acknowledged the interpreter (*Jiangjie Yuan*) as being one of their most basic and vital roles. Both the travel agent bosses/managers and government officials also stressed the importance of the guides’ interpretation in helping tourists to obtain a deep understanding of destination places and propagandizing Hainan to outsiders. The tour guides in Hainan do provide some information, which, however, was not given high evaluation by the tourists accepting surveys. For the investigated seven interpretation items ranging from natural environment, history, local customs and taboos, ethnic culture, recent events, legends and stories, and entertainment facilities, none of the mean values of the guests’ satisfaction level reached 4 points based on a 5-point Likert-type scale and some were even less than 3 points. The interpretation was

commonly commented on as being ‘so so (not bad, not good)’. It was further remarked that there was not much or enough information and, at the same time, it lacked colour, excitement or interest. The performance of the guide on the observed tour exemplified these comments. In this sense, the tour guides in Hainan can only be regarded as being information providers at most, and far from being interpreters or mentors. Interpretation has particular significance to sustainable development. This will be discussed later.

5.1.2 For local resources and communities

As far as destination resources are concerned, tour guides are also interpreters, shouldering the duty of encapsulating the essence of a place. For destination communities, they are the representative, showing hospitality to tourists on behalf of local people and fostering understanding and appreciation of tourists towards local environments and cultures (Pond, 1993). In the words of the interviewed tour guides, they are ‘civil ambassadors’. The above analysis has already indicated that the tour guides in Hainan do not perform well in either interpretation or mediation. With reference of the observed behaviour, it is hard to believe that the role of representative or civil ambassador is embodied (well) in their performance.

5.1.3 For the employer and the government authority

Once the tour starts, tour guides become representatives, representing their employers to offer service and fulfill the commitment to tourists. Their performance influences not only tourists’ satisfaction but also the image and reputation of the employer and ultimately the prosperity of the employer’s business (Pond, 1993; Hounnaklang, 2004). The tour guides in Hainan are particularly counted on to realize economic targets for travel agents through earning high ‘kick-backs’ due to the low-fare, ‘zero-fare’ and/or ‘minus-fare’ groups characteristic of the majority of the group-receiving business in Hainan. As described above, this is a result of the disadvantaged market situation of Hainan tourism in bargaining as well as the severe competition among the local travel agents. Economic outcomes are regarded by the employers in Hainan as their foremost aim while receiving no complaints only is considered to be enough to keep the company’s image

or reputation. In line with the employer's expectations, the guides take sales promotion as their primary duty so that being able to maximize income becomes is the primary indicator of a good tour guide and collecting as much 'kick-back' as possible on tours becomes the work focus. That is why tour groups are always led to tourist facilities, why extra spots are more often recommended or even required by the guides to make a visit, why souvenir stores are patronized so frequently and why shopping activities take up so much time that tourists complain.

In Hainan, the government authority also expects the tour guides to contribute to the local economic and socio-cultural development. The guides there are anticipated and required to promote the prosperity of local tourism business by providing excellent services and to facilitate the establishment of a positive image and reputation of Hainan through their propaganda. In practice, they make much more effort to promote sales. Their energy is mainly concentrated on increasing tourists' on-site consumption rather than on enhancing tourists' long-term good impression about Hainan through exerting the 'public relations representative' function.

5.1.4 For the guides themselves

ter Steege, Stam and Bras (1999) and Bras (2000a,b) particularly pointed out that tour guides have responsibilities to themselves. They do not have a vocation to be totally altruistic mediators between tourists, local communities, tourism facilities, government and other organizations. An important part of their activities is centered on the question of how they themselves derive the greatest benefit from their work. To make this happen, they "...sell images, knowledge, contacts, souvenirs, access, authenticity, ideology... (they) build social networks, monopolize contacts, exploit the commission and tipping system... to make encounters as profitable as possible" for themselves (ter Steege *et al.*, 1999, p.115). In this sense, tour guides are more like entrepreneurs. In Hainan, the tour guides actively conduct sales promotion. In essence, this is not out of their concerns to meeting the expectations of the travel agents. Instead, they are working hard to strive for their own economic gains which are bound up with those of the employer. Only when certain profit is produced after all the costs/deficits for the trip are deducted from the revenue from the tour can the tour guide has income. However, since collecting 'kick-back' is the only way to make

money, and the ‘kick-back’ rate is negotiated between and decided by the site owners and the travel agents, there is little room left for the tour guides to employ their various entrepreneurial skills to exploit other income sources on tours. They can only lead the group to all the pre-paid sites contracted with the tourists and rack their brains to persuade the group to visit added spots that require paid entrance fees (both contracted and added). They can do little themselves other than to adjust the time and order of the visiting (e.g. on the observed tour, the guide took the guests to go shopping first from 8:30 to 10:30 in the beautiful morning without consulting the tourists’ opinions). Hence, in Hainan they are not true entrepreneurs. Rather, they are active sales promoters

5.1.5 Section summary

The tour guides in Hainan claim that the main roles they (should) perform on the guided tours include the civil ambassador, the interpreter, sales representative or promoter and even pathfinder as well. Meanwhile, their economic attitudes towards the career suggest that they put much weight on their marketing functions as the sales representative or promoter. Their viewpoints are found to be highly consistent with both the expectations of their employers – the travel agents – and the government authority. They also expressed that they take care of the benefits of tourists first, that of the employer secondly, followed by that of local resources and people and that of their own last.

Through an analysis of their practical guiding performance, it is concluded that the tour guides in Hainan mainly play the roles of sales representative, the controller of tourists’ activities and the pace of the movement of tours, and information provider. In particular, they centre their tasks on sales promotion, encouraging tourists’ consumption in various tourist sites in Hainan. This was admitted by 76% of the interviewed guides. Other important duties of guiding such as those of the interpreter, the civil ambassador or tour leader, and the animator are not undertaken often or well. Their en-route conduct indicates that they take economic advantage of the employer and their own economic interests as their foremost consideration and target on tours while giving little attention to the local resources and population. This is understood as being determined by the

market situation of Hainan tourism, the wishes and the operating style of the local travel agents and the guides' concerns about their personal gains which are linked to those of their employers.

5.2 The guiding performance compared with the preferred guiding conduct principles

A further assessment will be made on the performance of the tour guides in Hainan against the interpretative guiding principles (see section 2.3.4 for the details). As discussed before, interpretative guiding is the means by which tour guides are able to contribute towards sustainable development. Without ignoring other responsibilities of tour guides, interpretative guiding emphasizes the use of the power of interpretation in the business of leading a tour to facilitate sustainable development. In the context of tourism, interpretation is about communication and education as well as entertainment. The rationale as well as the kernel of interpretative guiding is that by effectively delivering persuasive interpretative information throughout the guiding process, tour guides can 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 conduct and to foster responsible behaviours. This will not only lead to tourists obtaining enjoyable and rewarding experiences, but also benefit destination places by maintaining and enhancing environmental quality, contributing to socio-cultural continuity and integrity, and assisting in economic development. Three types of persuasive interpretative information are referred to. To be specific, directional information encompasses all the basic information about the tour and destinations, ranging from direction, distance and approximate time for travel, tourist attractions, local facilities, services and specialities, safety messages and so on. Behavioural information refers to local socio-cultural and environmental guidelines that are desirable for the visitor to conduct. Educational information contains details of the historical, geographical, cultural and human features of places visited which can help visitors to obtain an in-depth understanding of destinations. Such an assessment will facilitate further the exploration of whether or to what extent the tour guides are supportive to sustainable objectives. It is made up of five aspects.

5.2.1 Professionalism

The survey results of the tourists' opinions suggest that most of the tour guides in Hainan are able to lead tours by adhering to the contracted travel plan. However, they determine the visiting time and sequence to the scheduled sites with little consulting with their clients (e.g. taking guests to go shopping at times that are suitable for more exciting activities); they control the pace of the movement of tours without the consent of the visitors (e.g. setting shopping time at the same length as that for sightseeing). Besides, they show greatly different attitudes towards the facilities with 'kick-backs' and those without. For the former, they do the best that they can to stimulate tourists' interests (e.g. the transvestite show, the guide used 'spotlight' in the introduction of Daxiao Dongtian (the big and small fairylands)) and for the latter, they present few suggestions and even derogatory comments (e.g. the guide on the tour indicated that there was nothing to see except a few big stones in Tianya Haijiao (the end of the sky and the corner of the sea) and cited "It will be a pity in your life if you do not visit Tianya Haijiao, but you will regret for all of your life after paying a visit". Tianya Haijiao is a very famous government-owned tourist attraction. It is even shown on a Chinese currency note. The provincial government designates it as a visiting priority for group tours in Hainan and authorizes it to return no commission to the local travel agents). In addition, they often try to add extra sites to be visited that are outside of the contract and, in cases when tourists show no interest in their suggestions, forcible consumption may happen.

The tour guides usually undertake the responsibility for the smooth running of tours. The problem of safety is not often stressed during the trip. It may be because that tourist sites in Hainan are all mature commercial places but, nevertheless, thoughtful reminding and care are insufficiently observed. For example, on the attended tour, the tourists were never asked if they were allergic to the seafood; they were not accompanied in the evening when they intended to walk to take a look at the strange Xinglong town. Generally, the guides' service attitudes are considered to be acceptable. However, the respondent tourists expected them to be more enthusiastic and friendly.

The tour guides are weak in interpretation. The clients' feedback on the guides' interpretation concentrates on two points. First, insufficient information or knowledge about Hainan was provided. Second, the way of the presentation was dull and dry. For each of the seven investigated knowledge transfer items, the comment 'so so' monopolizes the opinions of the interviewed tourists: 87% of them considered that the guides are not good enough in their command of local knowledge about environmental attributes, ethnic culture, destination customs and taboos, latest events, legends and stories and, especially, about history and entertainment facilities. Their presentation style was particularly criticized as lacking vividness to attract tourists' attention or interest. These points are also manifested by the observation on the attended tour. For most of the time, the guide, Mr. Wang, only presented bare facts or figures about subjects rather than distilled, translated meanings or significance. Presentation skills such as telling stories, asking questions or letting guests ask questions, changing the speaking tone or speed, using comparison or metaphor, making eye contact with the audience, and so on, were seldom employed to give life to the materials. Recitations of inventories formed most of the commentary and, as a result, they did not capture the audience's interest or attention. Put simply, the tour guide was a boring information provider at most, rather than an interpreter.

Considerate service for the comfort and satisfaction of tourists was limited. The guides usually walked away or just disappeared after turning over the group to the staff of sites that were visited, restaurants and hotels. In addition, they appeared not to be sensitive or ignored the interests and needs of the tour groups. The interviewed tourists pointed out that the guides paid little attention to the audience's reaction while conducting interpretation which was humdrum, uninspired or boring. On the observed tour, the guests showed a strong desire to swim in the sea but their wish was tardy in being fulfilled.

5.2.2 Abiding by the tourism laws/rules/regulations

The *Tour Guide Management Regulations* (1999), *Tour Guide Management Measures* (2001) and *Hainan Province Tourism Regulations* (2002) are the legal base for tour guide and guiding management in Hainan. They set up a series of codes of conduct for the guides in Hainan. Also,

the provincial government sometimes issues detailed complementary administrative orders aimed at correcting certain unhealthy guiding practices. Among these regulations, the often stressed ones are those that are very frequently offended. To be specific, there are rules prescribing that *wild* or *black* (illegal) guides are absolutely forbidden to lead tours; ‘kick-backs’ are definitely not allowed; even for commissions, tour guides are not approved to receive cash from other service providers directly; tour guides are not permitted to add on additional spots or items into the planned travel schedule themselves; and they are prohibited to be asked for any extra fees from tourists on tours. However, in reality, cracking down on illegal guides leading tours has been the work focus for the local tourism administrative department every year for a long time. It has become a hot topic of discussion and reported in the local newspaper such as the Haikou Evening, the Hainan Daily and the Sanya Morning, and in the government work report and the local website as well. Both the travel agent and the tour guides in Hainan rely substantially on collecting ‘kick-backs’ to make money and all ‘kick-back’ is paid to the tour guides in cash at each site. It is not uncommon that the tour guides take the tour to visit added spots or to attend extra activities as long as doing such things are not being detected by the government inspector. Naturally, when recommended items are accepted by tourists (no matter how they are convinced), extra money needs to be paid to the guides before the completion of the tour.

5.2.3 Implementation of minimal impact practices

The principles in this part are developed particularly as yardsticks for the examination of whether or to what extent tour guides make use of their advantageous positions to deliver persuasive interpretative information so as to contribute to sustainable development. Through field investigation, it is found that the tour guides in Hainan only conduct interpretation in travel coaches driving between sites. Whenever the tour arrives at tourism sites and attractions, they leave this duty to on-site interpreters. They provide simple directional information and little else. They pass on educational information about local history, custom and culture, geographical features, legends or stories but the tourists, reflecting on the observed tour, regarded this as superficial, unclear or even not accurate and the narration style was dull and dry. Sometimes the

guides even knowingly give out misinformation or personal opinions lacking in objectivity. For example, The Nanbatian's small *siheyuan* (a compound with traditional Chinese houses of grey bricks and tiles built around a rectangular courtyard on four sides) was exaggerated as a manor. It merely occupies a limited corner area of the Women's Red Army Memorial Park, but the name was used for marketing purposes while the exact name of the whole attraction was not even mentioned. The comment that the Tianyao Haijiao attraction has nothing to be seen except for a few big stones is obviously very unfair. The phrase itself (the end of the sky and the corner of the sea) contains special meaning to and greatly arouses the imagination of Chinese people. Even if the attraction possessed only a few stones, the many interesting historical incidents, stories and the legend behind the stones deserve skilled interpretation and attentive listening. Little behavioural information is conveyed among guests. Even when some tourists' behaviours are against public morals (e.g. spitting, leaving the ash and stubs on the ground freely after smoking), corrective actions are not usually taken.

5.2.4 Gratuities and shopping activities

Domestic tourists do not have the habit to tip. Tour guide soliciting gratuities was not found in Hainan for this is illegal. As for the on-tour shopping, much detailed discussion has already been made on it. To put it simply, tourists are always led to souvenir shops or other commercial places that practice 'kick-back' payments to the guide; they are expected to spend as much money as possible in Hainan; coercive purchasing practices do not exist in Hainan, but tourists are often arranged to patronage as many business facilities as possible. Tour guides misleading tourists into purchasing goods rarely happens nowadays because the guides do not provide any suggestion on the quality of the goods – whether they are real or artificial. They merely take tourists into stores and let them make their own judgments and purchasing decisions. However, according to the travel agent managers, a certain number of the tour guides do change their service attitude – becoming less enthusiastic or depressed – if the consumption by tourists remains low.

5.2.5 Cooperation with other colleagues

Before October 2005, the connected economic interest made the tour guides and the coach drivers in Hainan maintain a relationship of comrade in arms. The latter gave full support to the former. After such a connection was broken, conflicts emerged (a lot of the tour guides complained that some drivers began to ask for tips from them; some suggested the tourists should not attend the night entertainment activities suggested by the guide in order that they could go to bed earlier; some charged them extra fees in the case of flight delays and some drivers even ran down the tour guide to the guests). No matter how they treat each other, their doings are underpinned by concerns for their own economic benefit and not for the comfort or satisfaction of tourists. The tour guides do provide cooperation or coordination with the staff of other service providers such as attractions, hotels and restaurants in order to ensure the smooth operation of the tour. However, the cooperation appears, more often than not, to be standardized procedures, handing over and taking over without sufficient consideration or care. Under such circumstances, tourists are treated like a product in a product line.

5.2.6 Section summary

The tour guides in Hainan are able to lead tours along the contracted itinerary. Besides, they also endeavor to add extra tourist spots or activities on tours for more ‘kick-backs’. Safety is not frequently stressed possibly because all the visited sites are mature commercial places. They keep basic courtesy when they conduct guiding, but tourists hope that they could be more enthusiastic, friendly and considerate. They are weak in interpretation and pay insufficient attention to the comfort and satisfaction of tourists. The important regulations for guiding are not being obeyed. Illegal guiding exists; the tour guides collect ‘kick-backs’ in the form of cash at each spot; they ask for extra payments from tourists for added visiting items on tour. Little educational or behavioural persuasive interpretative information is delivered to tourists. The guides did not demonstrate a deep understanding of or respect towards local environment and culture, not to speak of conveying to visitors the value of the local environment and culture. As many shopping activities are arranged as possible, always in commercial facilities that will return money to the

guide. Not much “hard selling” takes place in Hainan. For a number of tour guides, their service attitude will be affected when tourists are not active in purchasing. The characteristics of their economic relationship determine if and how the tour guides and the coach driver cooperate with each other. The guides’ coordination with other facility employees appears to follow basic procedures and insufficient considerate service is offered.

5.3 Influence of the guiding performance on the sustainable development of Hainan

The literature review of both the theoretical and empirical research on tour guides and guiding suggests that tour guides can contribute to the promotion of sustainability in tourism, in three ways, by fulfilling their various roles and responsibilities and implementing interpretative guiding practice. For tourists, they can assist them to have enjoyable and rewarding experiences by igniting their interest and providing new understanding about the destination and fostering positive host-guest encounters (experience management). For destination places, they can be greatly supportive to the conservation of local resources by encapsulating the essence of destination places, nurturing among tourists appreciation and caring attitudes towards the local environment and culture, modifying inappropriate tourist behaviours, managing tourist impacts on-site and encouraging long-term responsible behaviours (resource management). For local communities, they can facilitate the prosperity of the businesses by stimulating consumption and production of local products and services (local economic promotion). With an attempt to ascertain whether or to what extent the tour guides in Hainan realize their potential to contribute to a sound tourism operation that is beneficial to the social advancement of the destination, an analysis of the influences resulting from the tour guides’ guiding conduct in these three aspects is carried out. The previous examination on the roles that the guides actually play on tours and their guiding performance compared against the interpretative guiding principles make the analysis feasible and convenient. However, it should be clarified here that the analysis is not designed to assess whether or not the tourists obtained enjoyable experiences in Hainan, whether the local resources are well protected or whether the local economy is developed. Rather, it is to look at whether or in what degree the guiding service works in enhancing the visitors’ pleasure and local

resource conservation as well as economic prosperity.

Although the majority of the interviewed tourists (88.8%) considered that a guide is important to their tours, only a small number of them (39.7%) thought that the guiding service brought a positive influence to their travel experience. Nearly half of the respondents (47.4%) felt to be affected neither negatively nor positively. Moreover, 12.9% of opinions expressed that the service resulted in bad effects. 'So so' is their most expressed comment either on the guide's knowledge level (on the local history, culture, environment, entertainment facilities etc.), presentation of interpretation (content and style), service attitudes (enthusiastic, friendly, considerate) or professional skills (humour, speaking tones and speed, eye contact, etc.). The colloquial 'So so' means 'not bad, not good'. It can not be concluded that the tourists are completely disappointed with the guide's service but they definitely are not fully satisfied. Although the guiding service in Hainan does not ruin the guests' experiences, it does not enhance their pleasure either. In other words, it does not provide much added value to the tourists' travel experience.

In general, the tour guides in Hainan impart to tourists far from sufficient persuasive interpretive information to help them to obtain in-depth understanding of Hainan. In particular, the educational information (e.g. history, culture) is given out in a superficial, dull and dry way and little behavioural information (guidelines for appropriate tourist conduct) is spread. Through their performance that the guides do not demonstrate a deep understanding of and respect towards the local environment and culture, do not convey to visitors the value of local resources and do not promote among clients appreciation and respect for local traditions and communities. They act minimally as a representative, mediating between the destination settings and visitors. Communication, education and entertainment are interpretation functions that are not (well) realized. It is safe to say that little effort is being made by the guides in Hainan to facilitate the maintenance and protection of local resources.

The main travel form in Hainan consists of group tours. Local travel agents fully count on tour guides to make profits from each guided tour. Local businesses such as tourist attractions, souvenir shops and entertainment places also expect tour guides actively to recommend or lead

tourists to patronize them. The guides, in consideration of their own economic gains, are active in persuading tourists to visit more attractions and to attend more activities outside the contracted ones on the condition that tourists pay extra fees. They are also 'passionate to take group members to go shopping. However, the guides only recommend or lead tours to the commercial facilities that provide considerable monetary returns to them (with the exception of Tianya Haijiao) rather than those that do not. For instance, *Hainan Daily* reported on October 22, 2005 that Wugong Ci (the memorial park for five famous and respected ancient officials in Haikou) was being operated at a great deficit because few tour guides take tourists there because the attraction is not able to pay a high 'kick-back'. In a sense, the guides favour a lot of businesses in Hainan. However, these commercial activities are established with the prerequisite of 'kick-back' promises from the facility owners or management. This may easily cause unhealthy competition among local businessmen. They may not pay attention to the quality of their product or service while relying on the 'trade-off' relationship with tour guides to win clients. An extreme example is the attractions of Yeren Gu (savage tribes). As revealed by *Nanguo (south region) Urban Daily* on October 17, 2005, without any savage tribe existing in Hainan, 9 Yeren Gu have been installed in Hainan as tourist attractions. The *yeren* (the savages) are actually some Burmese and Laotians from areas bordering China that pretend to be savages. To amuse visitors, they dress like barbarians and make 'special' performances, such as eating raw meat, licking burning troches and the like). Due to the inferior quality as well as strong competition between the 9 similar attractions, the management commonly uses 'kick-backs' to lure tour guides to bring in tourists. Usually, the entrance ticket costs RMB ¥148 (Ca\$21.8) while the 'kick-back' amounts to RMB ¥120 (Ca\$17.6) or RMB ¥127 (Ca\$18.7). In contrast, the cultural theme park attraction, Nanshan Culture Tourism Zone (Hu & Wall, 2003 a,b), publicizes the price for group participants at the ticket office and does charge tour guides this amount of money for entrance. This makes all group participants aware of how much they should pay (have paid) and makes it very difficult for tour guides to be able to ask for more money from the guests. The tour guides complained that it was not profitable to arrange visits to Nanshan so that they did not like to recommend it to tourists. Even an instigation notice to not lead tours to Nanshan was posted on a local popular on-line forum for the

tour guides (see <http://www.hainantour.com/bbs030618/writeback.jsp?id=1130734409296>).

Feeling the pressure, the management of Nanshan recently had to make a new agreement with the tour guides, saying that for every 14 group members, 4 of them are exempt from being charged – a disguised ‘kick-back’ in essence. Undoubtedly, these practices will neither bring a good image or reputation of Hainan tourism, nor long-term benefit to the steady and healthy development of Hainan’s economy.

Hainan wishes to move in its development towards a harmonious society characterized by a developed economy, a pleasant ecological environment, a stable and united society, and rich livelihoods. Tourism is incorporated as a paramount strategy to achieve these targets by making economic contributions through the rational use of the environmental resources in the province, distilling the significance of Hainan in tourism product development, advocating the experience of local culture when undertaking tourism activities, and facilitating social order and progress by promoting honesty and credibility in the operation of tourism business. Tour guides, as one of the key players in the tourism system, have great potential to contribute to the realization of the sustainable development objectives of Hainan economically, environmentally and socio-culturally. Their roles are even more important in Hainan because guided group tours are the travel form taken by the majority of incoming tourists. However, the study results indicate that the tour guides in Hainan do not exert (well) their expected functions either in enhancing tourists’ enjoyable experiences, in supporting local resource conservation, or in promoting a healthy development of the local economy. Indeed, for the guides, sustainable development is such a strange and vague concept outside of their concerns that, instead, their own ‘personal material comfort and spiritual enjoyment’ are more practical and important.

5.4 Issues and problems existing in tour guiding practice in Hainan

This section addresses issues and problems that impede the guides’ enthusiasm and efforts to facilitate a sound sustainable tourism operation in Hainan. The visible problems exhibited in the tour guiding practice are summarized first and then the reasons for them are traced. Challenges concerning tour guide and guiding management are also revealed.

5.4.1 Instant money-making-centered guiding

For the packaged group tour, guiding makes up one of the services that are included. It, together with accommodation, transportation and some other items, is paid for by group members prior to the trip. That is to say, in essence, tour guides are one of the service providers on tours. No matter what responsibilities borne, they are fulfilled through delivering services to clients and the focus of the guide's job is to ensure that all the services contracted for are provided and the promises fulfilled. All in all, tour guides are service undertakers. It is not their fault that economic benefit is one of the (most important) motivations as well as a purpose for conducting guiding, but such benefits should be sought through offering a quality service. In other words, during the guiding process, all activities of tour guides should be customer service-oriented.

However, the data analysis suggests that in Hainan, the current guiding practice is purely instant money-making-centered. To earn as much income as possible is the keystone for each of the tour guides there upon leading each tour. To collect as much 'kick-back' as possible becomes the most direct and the core task en route. To bring back from tours as great a profit as possible is looked at the foremost good guide indicator. In this situation, it is not surprising that they take groups only to tourism facilities and other commercial places that implement 'cash back' payments to them. They make use of every opportunity to recommend or persuade group members to visit and attend extra self-paying sites and programmes. They control the pace of the movement of tours and the information provided, serving their own economic purposes. They devote much of their energy acting as salespersons while spending little on their other duties such as the animator, tour leader, civil representative and interpreter. They present interpretation that is superficial and lacking in vividness so that they do not raise much interest or leave much of impression to the audience; even more important is that the educational function of interpretation is not being exerted. Considerate care is not offered enough. This is demonstrated in that they pay only limited attention to the reactions, comfort, needs or interests of guests.

5.4.2 Under-cost group receiving industry practice and unfair remuneration system for the guides

The reasons for the tour guides in Hainan putting on tours with instant profit-making as their

highest priority rest upon two things. First, the disadvantaged market situation of the Hainan group travel business, the weak bargaining position of local travel agents against outside travel organization operators, the severe competition among the numerous local travel companies and the lack of diversity in the local group travel product result in local travel agents striving for tourists by receiving ‘low-fare’, ‘zero-fare’ or ‘minus-fare’ groups. In these cases, the travel agents have already lost money before the trip starts. Then the only way for them to cover the operation cost and to make profits lies in collecting maximized ‘kick-backs’ from various tourism and other commercial facilities in Hainan through encouraging maximized tourist consumption en route. The guides are the people who make this happen on tours.

Second, as the employer, the travel agents in Hainan do not yet pay a salary to the hired guides. Nor do they arrange for them any social welfare or insurance plans. On the contrary, they charge each tour guide RMB ¥5,000 (Ca\$735.3) as a deposit upon hiring. In any case where the guide’s conduct damages the company’s benefits or breaks the company’s regulations, the fine is taken from this deposit. The guides can only source income from the ‘kick-backs’. Only when the value of the ‘kick-back’ is high enough to cover the expenses, can the travel agents make money; and only when the travel agents win profits, can the guides have rewards. In consideration of their personal economic benefits, tour guides have no choice but to exert their full energy to take money back from their tours.

5.4.3 Absence of protection measures to ensure the guides’ interests

The tour guides in Hainan called themselves one of the ‘disadvantaged social groups’ or ‘inferior citizens’. They complain seriously about having to endure a high work load and pressure while getting no protection or guarantee of their own benefits. The travel agents put most of the burden of making profits and operation risk on them, paying them no salary and taking no care of their welfares, knowing that they are breaking the *Hainan Province Tourism Regulation*. They charge them a deposit even though this is not allowed by the government. However, there are no effective measures taken either by the government authority or other organizations to change the situation. To be specific, the big travel agents set internal rewards and penalty systems only for the purpose

of stimulating the guides to make each tour profitable. Few regulations are found in the relevant tourism laws and regulations that protect the guides' benefits from being invaded. Tour guides associations do not exist in Hainan, therefore nobody represents the guides or speaks for them. Besides, there is no channel through which the guides can make their voice heard in public. The government puts the emphasis on investigating and banning 'wild' or 'black' (illegal) guides while ignoring these essential problems. The lack of a protection system to ensuring tour guides' benefits further consolidates the situation that tour guides, once accepting this job, have to obey all the unfair rules of the game.

5.4.4 Opportunism in guiding and lenient certificating requirements

The tour guides in Hainan make profits for both the travel agents and themselves. They tolerate great work load and pressure and they take no guaranteed salary or other social welfare. They worry about how much they can earn from each tour and work hard to earn as much as possible. Therefore, the interviewed guides expressed that guiding in Hainan was such a toilsome job, seriously taxing their mind and body, that they could not undertake it permanently. Most of them change to other careers after being a guide for three to five years. Then question that arises is that since the work conditions are not good, why still there are so many tour guides in Hainan (There were 6,813 certificated tour guides. Suppose that only 50% of them applied for a work license, the active tour guides would amount to more than 3000)? Why do so many people attend the certification examination each time with an intent to enter the guiding career (e.g. in 2004, there were about 7,000 examinees) and why cannot illegal guiding be stopped completely?

The biggest incentive, as well as the public "secret" lies in the economic gains. Previous experience and current examples indicate that guiding in Hainan is an occupation providing great opportunities to make high profits in a short period of time. Usually, the guides only take three to five tours in one month with each tour lasting three to five days. Leading tours is energy-consuming; however, in most cases, it is able to generate a certain amount of revenue. The income varies from tour to tour, month to month and from tour guide to tour guide. Sometimes, they may be out of pocket upon coming back from a trip. During the off-season or at times when

the clients possess low purchasing power, they may earn RMB ¥2000 (Ca\$ 294) for a month. In contrast, in the peak season or at times when they have groups with high purchasing desire and ability, they can earn more than RMB ¥10,000 (Ca\$ 1,471) within a month. The interviewed tour guides admitted that a tour guide, if they are good at 'selling' and work hard at 'selling', can obtain a monthly income around RMB ¥4000-5000 (Ca\$ 588-735) on average. This is considerable and tempting in comparison with normal hotel staff or attraction employees who are only paid with RMB ¥500-1000 (Ca\$ 74-147) monthly. In hotels, tourism attractions and even commercial companies, only those positioned at the middle management level can have a comparable amount of salary. Therefore, the guides take every tour as a profitable chance and they do rack their brains on each tour to make their fortune. Furthermore, the unemployment rate in Hainan is high so the number of remunerative employment opportunities is not high and there are many people to compete for these positions.

The lenient certificating requirement is another factor attracting people to join in this career. Previous guiding experiences are not necessary. Candidates are not required to take many courses (compared with countries such as the UK, Greece and Australia) as a condition for attending the certification examination. Pre-certificate training takes only half a month and the approval of a certificate is determined by a one-time indoor examination. There is no limitation on the number of certificates awarded and the passing grade for the certification examination is not high (60/100 or even 45/100). This results in the existence of a large group of tour guides in Hainan. Although the exact number of active guides is not readily available, the fact is that local travel agents have never been anxious about finding guides for tours. Tour guides are not in short supply.

5.4.5 Problems concerning professionalism and lack of effective training

General problems concerning professionalism of the guiding performance in Hainan are reflected in their insufficient knowledge commanding and delivery (e.g. history of Hainan), their less than appropriate attitudes towards the clients (less considerate care about tourists reactions, comforts, needs and interests) and the way they perform their duties (e.g. weak in interpretation, animation,

representing clients etc.) except for sales promotion, and unskilled service offerings (dull and dry presentations). This is caused greatly by the guides' money-oriented motives towards the job. Besides, the fact that the tour guides have a general low educational level before being a guide is another reason. In addition, as most tour guides switch to other jobs after leading tours for three to five years and new ones keep joining the field, the fast change in personnel presents challenges for the maintenance of the overall quality of the guiding service. Moreover, lack of effective on-the-job training contributes less than it should to helping the guides to accumulate knowledge and skills and in fostering appropriate service attitudes. The programmes provided by the government or the subordinate organization of the government (i.e. tour guide management centres) are all forcibly paid by the guides. They were seldom commented upon by the interviewed guides as being interesting or effective. Rather, they are suspected to have been set up for the purpose of collecting money from the guides. Some big travel agents may provide free and regular training to their own guides; however, all of the interviewed guides expressed that they would prefer to use other ways to make self-improvements (e.g. exchange experiences with other guides, learn from books, website, TV programmes and others).

5.4.6 Lack of effective monitoring measures

The basic laws, *Tour Guide Management Regulations*, *Tour Guide Management Measures* and *Hainan Province Tourism Regulations* make detailed rules on what guides should and should not do when leading tours. However, effective monitoring action is absent. The employers' only concern is the profit from a tour rather than the quality of the guiding service, as long as the guide receives no complaints or punishment from the government administration. Therefore, they hardly implement supervisory measures.

The official administrative departments such as the Hainan Provincial Monitoring Centre for Tourism Quality, Hainan Provincial Inspection General and the monitoring stations and inspection teams at the municipal level are the executors. They carry out the monitoring by two means: hear guests' complaints and send out on-site inspectors. According to the interviewed government officials, there were not many formal complaints lodged. Of those received, too much

shopping in the itinerary was the most common. This, however, does not mean that there are no other problems. Visitors may not bother to complain due to lack of time and information about where to lodge complaints, or because it is too troublesome to lodge a complaint. On-site inspection is carried out at tourist attractions and shopping places to investigate whether the guide is illegal, whether the spot is listed on the contract held by the guest, whether the interpretation is healthy in the attraction and whether illegal behaviours (e.g. cheating the guests) happen at the shopping centre. The field research indicates that most inspection is only aimed at the first two items, which obviously can not assure the overall quality of the guiding service. Also, owing to the limited manpower, these actions are not able to be undertaken often or on a large scale. As a result, the phenomena of illegal guiding and the guides adding extra site visits continues to take place. Besides, the fact that the guides collect the 'cash back' en route has long been a public 'secret'. Although knowing this breaks the relevant laws, the government does not take serious measures to stop it. Moreover, so far all of the monitoring activities are directed only against the guides' illegal behaviours. However, completely legal guiding does not equate with qualified guiding or superior guiding. The quality of the guide service is not only determined by whether or not illegal conduct happens during the trip. There are more important soft indicators, such as the effects of interpretation, the creation of an animated atmosphere and so on, that could be monitored. Unfortunately, no any measures are being taken to address these issues in Hainan.

5.4.7 Lack of the awareness of sustainable development

The issue of sustainable development is not a concern of either the travel agents or the tour guides in Hainan. They are hardly aware of what the notion of sustainable development means. They are able to recognize both the positive and negative impacts of tourism on destination places, but pay major attention to economic outcomes. Correspondingly, to obtain instant maximized economic benefits is their overwhelming target in day-to-day operations. Hence, although, the tour guides, as a result of the official education, consider that they should or can support sustainable development by helping tourist to obtain a full understanding and good impression of destination places, enhancing local incomes and assisting in environmental education, they admit that in

practice they may not be able to fulfill such goals. They do not even think about all of the above responsibilities except for making profits for the employers and ultimately for themselves.

5.4.8 Section summary

The current state of tour guiding in Hainan is that it is an instant money-making activity, instead of being a customer service-oriented activity. This is caused by the unhealthy group tour business operation practices and, in particular, the unfair stipend system for the guides. At the same time, tour guides' personal benefits obtain no protection or assurance either from the government or from any other organizations. The tour guides are able to endure all these disadvantageous work conditions mostly because of their opportunistic thinking about the guiding. Previous experience and current examples indicate that leading a tour is an occupation full of opportunities and with great potential to earn high rewards. This, moreover, attracts new recruits. Besides, the non-strict certificating requirements also contribute to the existence of a large number of tour guides in Hainan. In general, the guiding appears not to be performed at a superior professional level with respect to knowledge delivery, service attitudes and skills. To a great extent, this results from the extremely strong economic motivation and expectations from guiding. Besides, an overall low level of educational background of the guides and lack of effective training, either by the government or the employer, are also influential factors. Ineffective monitoring of the guiding performance provides no rationale to better the situation. In addition, the awareness of sustainable development is commonly absent among the guides and their employers.

5.5 Summary

This chapter, through an in-depth discussion of the implications of the research data, presents an orderly elucidation of each of the research questions. It describes the roles that the tour guides in Hainan actually play when conducting tours, critiques their guiding performance in accordance with the interpretative guiding principles, discusses the impacts of their guiding conduct on the sustainable development of Hainan and finally and more importantly, identifies issues and problems in the guiding practices, and tour guide and guiding management in Hainan. The issues

and problems revealed are unlikely to be unique to Hainan. Some of them may be common to the guiding experience in other parts of China or even elsewhere in the world. Therefore, lessons gained in Hainan can provide valuable implications for the upgrading and improvement of the performance of tour guiding elsewhere. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Implications

Based on a theoretical exploration of the roles that tour guides could have in making tourism more sustainable and an empirical examination of the guiding practice in Hainan, China, research results are summarized in the first section (6.1) of this final chapter. Recommendations for the improvement of the tour guiding performance in the study site are then discussed (6.2). Broader implications for enhancing the management of guiding as well as research into tour guides and guiding are the subject of section 6.3. Finally, the contributions made by this study are emphasized in section 6.4.

6.1 Research results

Sustainable development is designed to enhance the quality of life for all people whilst maintaining the ecological and socio-cultural integrity of the world's human and natural resources. It provides a bright prospect and a sound direction towards which all development efforts should be oriented. Tourism is in no exception. As one development option, all tourism initiatives should aim to contribute to the realization of sustainable development goals and objectives or, at least, tourism development and practice should not contradict or undermine the maintenance of sustainable development principles. Tourism is an open system consisting of a set of interrelated components. Its operation encompasses a wide range of activities of a diversity of players. For this industry to facilitate the achievement of sustainable development objectives, each of the players has their own roles and responsibilities to contribute in the quest for a sound tourism performance. Tour guides are central agents in the entire tourism system, especially in locations where the product is dominated by the sale of packaged guided tours. They have direct contact with both the visitor and the visited and they work across all of the sectors of the tourism industry, for the great majority of the stakeholders. Therefore, how tour guides operate influences not only what experiences tourists will obtain but also how destination resources will be used and interpreted, as well as what economic and socio-cultural impacts will be brought to local

communities. This suggests that tour guides should have important roles to play in promoting sustainability in destination areas.

Guiding is one of the oldest occupations in the world. It is also a common phenomenon at present and it is not expected to disappear in the near future. Nevertheless, to date, little research attention has been given to tour guides and guiding, not to speak of the links that tour guides may have with sustainable development. To researchers, tour guides appear to have been a group that is somewhat hidden, just as they have been within the travel trade. This study takes advantage of the dearth of related research and attempts to address the gap by promoting an understanding of how tour guides can assist in moving tourism in a sustainable direction. In order to fulfill the overall research purpose, three research objectives were identified: to understand sustainable development and the relationships between sustainable development and tourism; to explore the roles and responsibilities of tour guides and their implications for the promotion of sustainability; and to examine whether, to what extent and why (or why not), in practice, tour guides exert their functions to support sound tourism development.

As discussed at the beginning of this document, sustainable development is about integrating the environment (both ecological and socio-cultural) and development (including material and spiritual well-being). It is a form of alternative development, with the key objectives of improving the quality of life for all people without causing undesirable ecological and socio-cultural outcomes. It advocates holism and an appreciation of the interconnectedness of phenomena. It is predominantly considered as a long-term endeavour, and it promises an inter- and intra-generational balanced level of welfare. Tourism is only one development option for destination areas. It may be incorporated as part of the strategy to achieve destination's sustainability but the potential of and opportunities for other sectors to do so are not ignored. This implies that the development of tourism should be made consistent with the general tenets of a broader sustainability rather than seeking for its own perpetuity at the cost of others.

A literature review indicates that tour guides have a variety of roles to play in response to the expectations of the various tourism stakeholders (see Figure 2.6). For tourists, they are the pathfinder, the group leader, the mentor and the animator, responsible for satisfying tourists' needs

and expectations through solving the problems of where to go, how long to stay, what to see, how to see, what to do and how to deal with locals. For destination resources, they are the interpreter, bearing the duties of revealing meanings, values and significance of local environments and cultures. For local communities, they are the representative, showing hospitality to visitors on behalf of the local population and fostering mutual understanding. For employers and governmental authorities, they are the salesperson and the public relations representative, helping them to maximize economic benefits, to project a particular message or image and to realize some other political purposes. For the guides themselves, they are entrepreneurs, seeking as much income as possible for their own and an improvement in their social status. Although categorized according to the perspectives of different stakeholders, in fact these roles are interwoven and interact. Tour guides are not likely to act in only one of the roles, nor may they take all of them on a single tour. What duties they choose to undertake and how much they decide to fulfill them depend on the characteristics of the group, the nature of the excursion, the circumstances of the destination place and the wishes of their employers as well as of themselves.

How tour guides undertake each of these roles will have implications for the achievement of sustainable development objectives. The work of Cohen (1982, 1985) and other notable researchers on tour guides and guiding suggests that tour guides can support sound tourism development leading towards sustainability in three particular aspects (Figure 2.7). First, by actively exerting their functions on experience management they can help tourists to obtain enjoyable and rewarding experiences, igniting their interest, providing new understanding about destinations and fostering positive host-guest encounters. Second, with respect to resources management, they can encapsulate the essence of destination places, foster appreciation and caring attitudes towards destination resources, modify inappropriate tourist behaviours, manage tourist impacts on-site and encourage long-term responsible behaviours. Third, concerning local economic promotion, they can contribute to local economic development by stimulating consumption and the production of local products and services.

Interpretative guiding is the means by which tour guides can realize these above potentials. Interpretative guiding, without ignoring the other responsibilities of tour guides,

emphasizes the application of the principles of sustainable development and interpretation to the business of leading tour groups and managing the visitors' experiences. The rationale for and the kernel of the process is through the delivery of persuasive interpretative information, tour guides can strive to encourage visitors' learning in order to increase their knowledge about the visited sites, to stimulate the development of their empathy and respect towards local environments, cultures and people, to modify any inappropriate conducts and to foster responsible behaviours. Three types of persuasive interpretative information are involved. First, directional information includes all basic information about the tour and destinations, ranging from direction, distance and approximate time for travel, tourist attractions, local facilities, services and specialities, safety messages and so on. Second, behavioural information comes in the form of socio-cultural and environmental guidelines relating to desired visitor conduct and guidelines which the local society expects visitors to obey. Third, educational information contains details of the historical, geographical, cultural and human features of places visited which help visitors to obtain an in-depth understanding of destinations (Kuo, 2002).

A set of interpretative guiding principles are developed through obeying the tenets of sustainable development and effective interpretation as well as learning from world-wide guiding industry experiences. Clear and concrete guidance is available that encourages tour guides to offer high quality services in a safe, culturally sensitive and environmentally friendly manner. Standards exist against which tour guides' performances can be examined. Five components are encompassed, i.e. providing a professional service; abiding by the law/rules/regulations; implementing minimal impact principles and practices; principles on gratuities and shopping activities; and promoting a spirit of cooperation.

The literature review addressed theoretically the questions of what roles tour guides may take on tours, how tour guides are able to contribute to sustainable development, and by what means they can exert their functions. Field examination, then, is necessary in order to know in practice whether and to what extent tour guides can implement interpretative guiding to realize their potentials in facilitating a sound tourism operation that contributes to the achievement of sustainability. Reasons for their actions are also sought. As it is not feasible to investigate all tour

guides throughout the world, a case study approach was adopted. Hainan Province, China was selected as the study site because Hainan is pursuing a sustainable development strategy and it was designated as the first ecoprovince in China. Hainan plans to achieve a developed economy, a pleasant ecological environment, a stable and united society and a rich livelihood. As one of the three mainstay industries in Hainan, tourism is considered to be a paramount strategy to approach these targets by making economic contributions through the rational use of the environmental resources in the province, distilling the significance of Hainan in tourism product development, advocating the experience of local culture when undertaking tourism activities and facilitating social order and progress by promoting honesty and credibility in the operation of tourism business. As the form of tourism in Hainan is dominated by guided group tours, the tour guides are particularly important actors who may be in a position to support the movement of tourism towards the sustainable objectives of the province.

In Hainan, the tour guides' own views about the guiding occupation were collected in terms of roles and responsibilities of a guide, their expectation from guiding and their good guide standards. Their understanding of sustainable development, tourism's connections with sustainable development and the roles of a tour guide in promoting sustainability were also ascertained. Opinions of the guides' employer and the administration authority, local travel agent bosses/managers and government officials were also gathered in these aspects. The guides' guiding practice was investigated through undertaking a typical tour as a participant observation. This enabled the incorporation of tourists' evaluations of the guiding service they received in Hainan. The guides' comments on their current work conditions were ascertained. The existing tour guide and guiding management measures were investigated.

The approach involved multiple perspectives which are presented in a theoretical framework (Figure 2.6 or Figure 3.1). By applying this framework, the various stakeholders' expectations of tour guides were identified. The local situation in Hainan was used to examine the roles that the tour guides in Hainan actually undertake on tours. Their guiding performance was reviewed against principles for good guiding conduct identified in the literature. Implications of their guiding conduct for the sustainable development of Hainan were discussed with respect to

their efforts to enhance tourists' experiences, assist the conservation of local resources and culture, and promote the local economy (Figure 2.7 or Figure 3.1). Finally, issues and problems existing in the guiding practice as well as in tour guide and guiding management were unearthed that impede sustainable tourism development in Hainan.

It was discovered that the tour guides in Hainan recognize that they have a variety of roles that they play en route. Among these, the civil ambassador, the interpreter, the sales representative and the pathfinder are the principal ones. They claim to be responsible to various stakeholders including, in the order of importance, the tourist, the employer, the local population, the local resources and they themselves. However, in practice, they mainly act as sales representatives, the controller of tourist activities and the pace of the movement of tours, and an information provider. In particular, they focus on sales promotion, encouraging tourists' consumption in various tourist and other commercial sites in Hainan. Other important duties, such as those of interpreter, civil ambassador or tour leader, and animator are not (well) undertaken. For the guides, sustainable development is an abstract and vague concept as well as an academic or political term. Their expectation about the ideal state of economic and social development is to be able to satisfy their own needs for personal creature comforts and spiritual enjoyment. They take the economic interests of the employer and themselves as their foremost direct consideration and targets on tours while giving less attention to the benefits of the tourists, local resources and population.

In addition to the activities specified in the contract with tourists, the tour guides in Hainan are passionate to recommend and persuade the guests to visit extra tourist spots and other commercial places for the sake of collecting more 'kick-backs'. Their service attitudes are acceptable, but the tourists hope that they could be more enthusiastic and friendly. Commentary is generally insufficient and lacking in interest. Tourists' comforts, needs, interests, expectations and satisfaction are not given enough attention. Some of the important regulations for guiding are not being obeyed. This is shown in the fact that illegal guiding take place at a certain scale; all the tour guides collect 'kick-backs' in the form of cash at each spot visited; and visiting sites and undertaking activities outside of the contract are often added and tourists are asked for extra payment on the site for them. Little educational or behavioural persuasive interpretative

information is imparted to tourists. The guides do not demonstrate a deep understanding of or respect towards the local resources and population, not to speak of conveying to visitors the value of local environment and culture. Undue shopping activities are arranged in commercial facilities that return money to the guide. The service attitudes of some tour guides will be affected if tourists are not active in purchasing. Whether the work relation between the tour guides and the coach driver is good or bad is determined by the characteristics of their economic relationship. The guides' coordination with other facility employees appears to follow basic procedures and considerate service is largely absent.

The analysis indicates that the tour guides in Hainan do not exert (well) their expected functions either in enhancing enjoyable experience for tourists, in supporting local resource conservation, or in promoting the healthy development of the local economy. Most of the tourists considered that the guiding service that they received in Hainan did not influence, either positively or negatively, their travel experience. 'So so' was their most commonly expressed comment made regarding the guide's knowledge level, presentation of interpretation, service attitudes, or professional skills. The guiding service in Hainan does not ruin the guests' pleasure but it does not enhance their pleasure either. In other words, it does not provide much added value to the tourists' travel experience. In general, the tour guides in Hainan impart to tourists far from sufficient persuasive interpretive information to help them to obtain an in-depth understanding of Hainan. As a result, their appreciation and respect for the local environment, traditions and communities are not fostered adequately. Communication, education and entertainment are interpretation functions that are not (well) realized. The tour guides in Hainan spend most of their energy to encourage on-site tourist consumption in tourist attractions and other commercial facilities that pay 'kick-back' to the guides. Such an unhealthy industry practice will easily lead to unhealthy competition among local businessmen and contribute to the lowering of the quality of local products and services. This will certainly result in damages to the image and reputation of Hainan tourism, as well as to the steady and healthy development of Hainan's economy in the long term. In short, little effort is being made by the guides in facilitating the sustainable development of Hainan. An obvious gap exists between the potentials of the tour guides to

support sustainability of destinations and their current capability to do so.

To summarize, the biggest problem is that the current tour guiding practice in Hainan is an instant money-making-centered activity rather than customer service-oriented conduct. The economic motives and situation determine the way the guiding is operated. For each tour, all the arrangements about where the tour is to go, how long the group is to stay, what the participants are to see and how they will see it, and what they are to do are made to collect maximized 'kick-backs'. In this case, the tour guides mainly serve as sales promoters while spending insufficient energy to undertake their other duties such as, in particular, interpretation. Therefore, although possessing great opportunities to contribute to the sustainable development of Hainan through leading tours, the guides make little effort to exert many of their potential functions. This is primarily caused by the under-cost group receiving industry practice and the unfair remuneration system for the guides. The disadvantaged market situation of the Hainan group travel business, the weak bargaining position of local travel agents against outside travel organization operators, the severe competition among the numerous local travel companies and the similarity of the local group travel product result in local travel agents striving for tourists by receiving groups at extremely low rates and struggling for profits by encouraging maximized tourist consumption in Hainan's various tourism and other commercial facilities to get maximized 'kick-back' in return. The guides are the people that make this happen on tours. At the same time, the travel agents in Hainan do not yet pay wages to the hired guides who, therefore, also have to rely on collecting 'kick-backs' to earn income. It is illegal that the travel agents pay no fixed salary or make no social welfare and insurance payments for their guides. However, the tour guides' personal benefits are not protected or assured either by the government or any other organizations. The tour guides endure all these disadvantaged work conditions mostly because of their opportunistic thinking about guiding. Previous experience and current examples indicate that leading a tour is considered to be an occupation that is full of opportunities and with great potential to earn high rewards quickly. This, moreover, attracts new recruits. However, owing to the high work load and pressure, the guides usually switch to other occupations after being a guide for three to five years. The non-strict certificating requirements also contribute to the

existence of a large number of tour guides in Hainan. Problems concerning professionalism are exhibited in the guides' insufficient knowledge command and delivery, less than considerate service, inappropriate attitudes towards their duties other than sales promotion, and unskilled presentation of interpretation. To a great extent, this results from their extremely strong economic motivation and expectations from guiding. Besides, an overall low level of educational background and knowledge command of the guides and the fast changes in personnel of whole guide group are also influential factors. Moreover, lack of effective training, either by the government or the employer, is another important reason for lack-lustre performances. Meanwhile, ineffective monitoring mechanisms are of no avail in assuring or improving the quality of the guiding performance. Last, but not the least, awareness of sustainable development is commonly absent among both the guides and the employers.

6.2 Discussion and recommendations

The issues and problems identified reflect some unpleasant aspects of the current state and practice of tour guiding in Hainan which, certainly, will not assist the achievement of the sustainable objectives of the province. In tracing the reasons for these phenomena, it is found that internal factors that out of the guides themselves, for instance, the overall low level of educational background and knowledge command, are important. However, external factors also weigh heavily. In terms of the roles played by the tour guides in Hainan, the main issues stem from unhealthy industry practices whereby all the guiding activities are dictated by the financial objectives of the travel agents with the guide's income being largely reliant on 'kick-backs'. The situation is compounded by ineffective management measures in licensing, training, monitoring and lack of protection of the benefits of the tour guides, and the absence of sustainable development education within the industry. Therefore, recommendations for bettering the tour guiding performance in Hainan are formulated as below. As similar situations may exist in other places or countries around the world (for example, elsewhere in mainland China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia, United Kingdom, Spain and Australia), these recommendations also represent the practical application of the study findings to enhancing professional tour guiding practice broadly.

6.2.1 Industry practices

The practice of under-cost pricing and group receiving, the unhealthy competitive business operation pursuing short-term economic profits by sacrificing local resources and the long-term benefits of Hainan, should be outlawed. The government and industry members should meet to establish a protection price for tour group receiving and its implementation should be required. At the same time, great efforts should be invested to improve the attractiveness, quality and diversity of local tourism products such as attractions, souvenirs and entertainment programmes. The government should lead in the cultivation of a more advantageous position for local travel operators in the tourism market. For example, the marketing department of Hainan provincial tourism bureau should make use of various official resources to carry on promotion and propaganda programmes that are directly aimed at the potential tourists in the mainland, rather than relying only on outside tour operators to promote Hainan among the public.

The government and industry members should meet to set reasonable commission rates for the travel agents doing business with other tourism and commercial facilities. The government, industry members and tour guides should meet to work out a rational remuneration system which will provide a reasonable and stable income for the tour guides and reduce the heavy reliance placed on ‘kick-backs’. This will also help to remove of opportunism thinking about the occupation and the foster an appropriate cognition about the career. Only when their undue economic concerns and pressure are eliminated, will the guides be willing and able fully to carry out their multiple responsibilities such as interpretation, animation and representative.

6.2.2 Certificating, training and monitoring

Guide candidates in Hainan are not required to have any previous guiding knowledge. They come from a wide variety of social backgrounds such as high/secondary school students, layed-off workers, primary/middle school teachers, corporate staff, *Getihu* (small self-employed entrepreneurs) and so on. Generally, the examinees in Hainan have a low level of educational background and knowledge command. In this case, much stricter qualifications for certification should be required. For instance, before the examination, candidates should be asked to take

certain courses in history and cultural subjects, tourism laws, psychology of tourists and voice training to improve their knowledge and skills, rather than lowering the passing grade to 'help' them get the certificate. Guiding is a laborious work and, more, it needs mental input. To a great extent, the quality of the guiding service is exhibited through the display of sufficient knowledge and delivering a professional presentation. Although knowledge and professional skills can be learned and accumulated after formally becoming a guide, tourists paying for an inferior guiding service offered by those with insufficient knowledge, skills and experience, may acquire a bad impression of the overall service quality which they may convey to others through word-of-mouth. The requirement to have sufficient knowledge and skills preparation also will benefit newcomers in adapting themselves quickly, enabling them rapidly to become skillful service providers.

More effective training programmes should be planned and offered. Dull classroom teaching may be replaced by vivid, interesting knowledge and skill communication and experience exchanges in a variety of forms. Those provided by the government organizations should not be aimed primarily at making money. More effective monitoring actions should be taken not only for ensuring that legal guiding conduct occurs, but also to improve the quality of the guiding performance. For example, more effective monitoring of the guides' interpretation performances should be undertaken.

6.2.3 Tour guide guild

A guild for tour guides, such as a tour guide association or a similar organization, with a clear mission to further the interests of its members and the guiding profession as a whole, should be established. Such an organization could play an active role in maintaining the standards of the guiding service, promoting professionalism, and encouraging integrity and ethical conduct among the guides. In particular, such an organization in Hainan is in need to have the authority to speak for the tour guides, to represent the interests of the guides to the government, industry and the community, and to protect their personal benefits from being invaded. It should endeavour to raise public, private and governmental awareness of the valuable role of the tour guides could play in Hainan. It can also function as a communication forum among local tour guides, tour operators,

the government and other related organizations. This will need the support of the government and the co-operation of the industry members.

6.2.4 Sustainable development education

Sustainable development should not be used only as a catchword in governments report. Awareness of the importance of sustainability and how it might be achieved should be fostered among the public, especially among the industry practitioners. Hainan has endorsed sustainable development objectives and takes tourism as a paramount strategy to achieve these targets. Thus, the tourism players, such as the travel agents and the tour guides, should be well informed about what these objectives are, how to achieve them and what the implications are for their industry practice and conduct. Tourism operators should be educated particularly on maintaining a balance between short-term profits and long-term benefits, and incorporating environmental, economic and socio-cultural considerations for the sake of, at least, assuring the continuity of the tourism business itself. Healthy industry practices, honesty and credibility should be advocated greatly so that guidelines for minimal impact principles or a code of ethical conduct could be introduced and implemented. Various levels of government organizations are in the leading position to carry out the education. Besides, the tourism guild could make use of their influence to increase the understanding and the awareness of sustainable development among their members.

6.3 Implications

Broad implications for both the management and research of tour guides and guiding are suggested below.

6.3.1 For tour guide and guiding management

Tour guides have a variety of roles to play when leading tours. As a central agent between the visitor and the visited, they are in good position and have great opportunities to make contributions to the sustainable development of destination places by enhancing tourist experiences, assisting in the conservation of local resources and facilitating local economic

progress. However, tour guiding, in practice, is unlikely to be the provision of a simple and straightforward service of leading the way, offering interpretation or mediating contacts between hosts and guests, as recognized in Cohen's (1985) and some other researchers' work. Rather, it is complicated by issues such as the market situation of the tourism destination, the economic survival of the local travel industry that may be characterized by very keen competition and questionable industry practices, the distribution of benefits between the guides and the employers, and some other issues. In this case, the quality of the guiding performance is not only influenced by the tour guide's level of professionalism in terms of their command of knowledge and skills, and the fostering of appropriate service attitudes, it is also affected by external factors that, at times, are even more critical, such as the employer's requirements and the guide's relationship benefits with the employer in terms of the sharing of benefits. In other words, tour guides' capabilities to contribute to sustainable development will be reduced by the limitations in the guide's own guiding competency and impeded by outside constraints that are imposed upon the guide, beyond the control of the guide, but may have major detrimental effects. The case of Hainan as exemplified in this research shows that both internal and external constraints have caused a gap between what tour guides are expected to be able to contribute to sustainable development and what they are actually currently doing in this respect. Therefore, in order to better the guiding performance, to improve the guide's professionalism through enhanced licensing, improved training and monitoring are absolutely necessary. However, this may only alleviate the symptoms but not cure the disease. Tour guides' fate depends very much upon the recognition of the importance of their roles and the co-operation or goodwill of other players in the tourism system, particularly the tour operators and government. The roots of the issues that are beyond the immediate control of the guides should be given high priority and addressed with great effort. Leadership should come from the government, tour operators and other industry members.

From the perspective of the individual tour guide, economic rewards may still be one of the most powerful motivating factors in the tour guiding situation. A steady income based on a rational standardized remuneration system would benefit the guide, fostering appropriate expectations and attitudes towards the occupation. Effective protection of their legitimate personal

interests would enhance their confidence in the career. These are prerequisites for the establishment and retention of qualified guides and a high quality guiding performance. Conversely, non-guaranteed and unstable income that heavily relies on varied commissions or 'kick-backs' result in the creation of attitudes towards the guiding profession that lead to opportunism in guiding conduct. As long as commissions or 'kick-backs' remain as the primary source of earnings, the guiding profession will remain at the mercy of tour operators and, at times, their questionable business practices.

6.3.2 For tour guide and guiding research

Tour guides are important players in the entire tourism system and moreover, they provide important links in the tourism service network. The roles that they play and how well they fulfill these roles bring about numerous consequences for other tourism participants, and vice versa. Therefore, in order to have an accurate and thorough understanding of tour guides and guiding, it is necessary to put guides back into and appreciate the roles in the entire system, rather than seeing them apart from it. This requires examination of their behaviours in the context of their interaction with the other stakeholders and players. In addition, tourism does not work in isolation from the broader economic and socio-political context of the destination, which naturally influences all of the players in the tourism system. Hence, the performance and quality of the guiding service should be judged in the context of the larger operating environment in which the tourism business is embedded.

Besides, through this study, it has also been found that, owing to their linkage position in the tourism system and the fact that guiding activities involve interaction with many different tourism players and numerous facilities such as attractions, shops, souvenir stores, bus companies, hotels and restaurant, entertainment places and other ancillary services, tour guides provide a good entry point for research aimed at identifying issues and problems concerning various aspects of tourism services.

6.3.3 For sustainable development promotion

The study suggests that sustainable development still remains primarily to be an academic and political terminology, a concept that can be found in government papers but is dissociated from and not incorporated within practical industry operation and management. The attention and serious efforts of the government, as well as the co-operation of industry members and the support of local communities are required to raise public understanding and awareness, in particular those of the industry practitioners, of sustainability, and to work on how to respond to the conflicts between business survival and the considerations of long-term environmental, economic and socio-cultural advantages, and how to transfer the idea of sustainable development into feasible and healthy practical procedures.

6.4 Contribution

As a central agent between the visitor and the visited, tour guides influences not only the experiences that tourists will have in destinations but also how destination resources are interpreted and how local products and service are promoted and consumed. Tour guides are also one of the most visible players in the tourism system. However, except for a few studies, such as those by Holloway (1981) which explored the nature and role of tour guiding in the United Kingdom and that by Ap and Wong (2001) that investigated the issues and problems in professionalism in guiding in Hong Kong, little research attention has been paid to tour guides and tour guiding. This study is one of the few to address this research gap. Furthermore, this study, examining the roles of tour guides from a sustainable development perspective, linking, for the first time, research of sustainability with that on tour guides and guiding practice. Therefore, it not only contributes to the literature on tour guides and tour guiding, but also to that on sustainable development.

This study, rooted in Cohen's (1982, 1985) work and other notable research undertaken previously, developed a comprehensive framework (Figure 2.6) for understanding and exploring the roles of tour guides. While different from Cohen's (1985) framework in which all the roles of tour guides are oriented to providing a quality experience from the perspective of the tourists, the framework has been modified to embrace multiple perspective encompassing the different expectations of the various stakeholders from tour guides. The value of this new framework is that

it fully takes into account the position of tour guides in the entire tourism system and their complex relationships with the other players. Thus, it provides a valuable theoretical basis on which clear and thorough examinations of the roles of tour guides in practice can be conducted and their implications assessed. This has been verified by its employment in the case study.

This study, for the first time, explored the functions of tour guides in promoting sustainable development and the ways in which they can exert their influences in support of this direction. Interpretative guiding, a concept borrowed from Weiler and Ham (2002), is identified as the means by which such positive links can be established. A set of interpretative guiding principles are also developed which may serve as concrete guidelines for encouraging tour guides to offer high quality services in a safe, culturally sensitive and environmentally friendly manner so as to facilitate the formation of a sound tourism operation.

This study undertook a comprehensive investigation of the roles that the tour guides in Hainan play on tours, the issues and problems existing in the guiding practices there, and the implications for sustainable development in the province. The study raises many practical issues in guiding. Suggestions have been made to improve the guiding practice that are also meaningful to the achievement of the sustainable objectives of the government of Hainan. Moreover, the documentation of the situation experienced in Hainan provides information that can be shared with other jurisdictions. The lessons drawn for Hainan may be also relevant to and useful for other places.

This research, through a case study conducted in Hainan, China, attempted to promote the understanding of how tour guides can contribute to moving tourism development in a more sustainable direction. It has provided some interesting and revealing insights into the roles of the tour guides, the issues that are faced by the tour guiding profession and their implications for the sustainable development of destination places. As the guided group tour is particularly popular in Asia and some other parts of the developing world, the findings of this research may be most relevant for improving the guiding practice in these areas. A small number of studies undertaken in Southeast Asia and (Ap & Wong, 2001; Bras, 200b; Wong, 2000) and Australia (McDonnell,

2001) has revealed similar issues and problems concerning local tour guiding practices. Nevertheless, more research experience and findings are in need, in particular in other locations, to better the understanding of the roles of tour guides and to support the long-term improvement of their performance. The extent to which similar situations exist in other locations, including parts of the developed world, remains to be determined. In addition, this study focuses only on guiding activities that occur on domestic group tours in one part of China. Future research is needed that extends this type of study to the guiding services for international guiding, either in China or in some other parts of the world.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Tour Guides

1. How long have you been a tour guide?
2. What do you think of your roles and responsibilities on a tour, in order of importance?
3. Who do you think you should be responsible for on a tour? Who do you think is the most important that you should give first priority?
4. What made you choose this profession? What are you expecting by taking this profession?
5. What do you think a good tour guide should be?
6. Based on your experience, what aspects of this career are you satisfied with? What are those you are not satisfied with?
7. What do you think of the relationship between tourism development and the destination environment, culture, economy and people?
8. Being a tour guide, what do you think of your functions and roles to promote a sound tourism development? Or what you should/can do to contribute to the growth of tourism business in destination places, conservation of the local environment, understanding and respect of the local people and culture, and promotion of the destination economy?
9. What training programmes did you receive before you became a tour guide (in what way, how about the content, who provided)? What training programmes have you received after being a tour guide (in what way, how about the content, who provide, how often)? What do you think of these programmes (useful, important)?
10. If and how do you develop and update your knowledge about the destination places?
11. Do you feel you tour guides' personal benefit being protected by any organization? If yes, please specify.
12. What are your opinions about an ideal social development and advancement?

Sex:

Age:

Educational level:

Date:

Appendix B

Survey Questionnaire for Tourists

Sex:

Age:

Date:

1. What do you think of the importance of a tour guide to your tour?

Not important at all	Not important	Important	Much important	Very important
1	2	3	4	5

2. Overall, how did the tour guide of the tour you just attended influence your experience?

Very negatively	Negatively	No influence	Positively	Very positively
1	2	3	4	5

3. What is your satisfaction level with the service provided by the tour guide of the tour you just attended in relation to the following? Please specify your reasons briefly:

3.1 Leading the tour obeying the contracted itinerary and reception plan?

Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4

3.2 Information provision and interpretation, including:

Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	So-so	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

3.2.1 Natural environment

3.2.2 History

3.2.3 Local customs and taboo

3.2.4 Ethnic culture

3.2.5 Current events

3.2.6 Legends and stories

3.2.7 Recreation facilities

3.2.8 Other aspects you want make comments on

3.3 What's your opinion on the shopping activities during your tour?

Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	So-so	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

4. What is your evaluation on the tour guides in relation to the following and please specify your reasons briefly?

4.1 Service attitude/manner (e.g. polite, friendly, enthusiastic, etc.)

Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	So-so	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

4.2 Informative/knowledgeable

Very insufficient	Insufficient	So-so	Wide	Very Wide
1	2	3	4	5

4.3 Professional skills (e.g. such as sense of humor, be able to animate the atmosphere, etc)

Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	So-so	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

4.4 other aspects you want to make comments on:

Appendix C

Interview Questions for Tour Guides' Employers

1. What do you think of the roles and responsibilities of tour guides on tours?
2. From the standpoint of the employer, what are you expecting from tour guides?
3. What do you think a good tour guide should be?
4. What is your understanding of sustainable development?
5. What do you think of the relationship between tourism and sustainable development? What do you think of the relationship between tourism development and the destination environment, culture, economy and people?
6. What do you think of their functions and roles of tour guides in promoting tourism development towards sustainability? In other words, what do you think tour guides should/can do to contribute to the growth of tourism business in destination places, conservation of local environment, understanding and respect of local people and culture, and promotion of the destination economy?
7. What measures are you taking to monitor tour guides performance and to encourage tour guides to improve their performance?
8. As your employees, how do you protect tour guides benefits?
9. Do you provide training programmes to the employed guides? What are they (in what way, the content, How often)?

Appendix D

Interview Questions for Government Officials

1. What do you think of the roles and responsibilities of tour guides on tours?
2. From the standpoint of the government administration, what are you expecting from tour guides?
3. What do you think of a good tour guide should be?
4. What is your understanding of sustainable development?
5. What do you think of the relationship between tourism and sustainable development? What do you think of the relationship between tourism development and the destination environment, culture, economy and people?
6. What do you think of their functions and roles of tour guides in promoting tourism development towards sustainability? In other words, what do you think tour guides should/can do to contribute to the growth of tourism business in destination places, conservation of local environment, understanding and respect of local people and culture, and promotion of the destination economy?
7. What measures are you taking to monitor tour guides performance and to encourage tour guides to improve their performance?
8. Currently what problems or undesired phenomena exist in tour guides' guiding practices in Hainan? What are the reasons for these problems and phenomena? What are the resulted impacts on Hainan's tourism business and its environment, economy, culture and people? How to resolve these problems and improve tour guides performance (who should do what)?