

The future of tourism: interview with Professor Heike Schänzel about her role as Associate Editor of the *Journal of Tourism Futures*

Ian Seymour Yeoman and Heike A. Schänzel

Abstract

Purpose – As the *Journal of Tourism Futures* celebrates its 10th anniversary, Dr Ian Yeoman (Hotel Management School Leeuwarden) interviews Professor Heike Schänzel (Auckland University of Technology) about her role as the Associate Editor of the journal.

Design/methodology/approach – Personal interview.

Findings – Schänzel provides a guide to the role of the Associate Professors and discusses her own research.

Originality/value – The interview provides insights about the role of Associate Editors in managing the future of tourism and the critical directions of family tourism, lesbian, children's voices and social justice research.

Keywords Future of tourism, Journal of Tourism Futures, Associate Editor, Social justice, Family tourism

Paper type Research paper

Heike Schänzel

I grew up in Germany with a passion for travel and adventures, initially training and working as a travel consultant there. Moving to New Zealand in 1990, touring the country on a motorbike, I fell in love with it and decided to stay. My academic journey took me to Auckland University, Otago University, Victoria University and AUT in 2011. It was at Victoria University of Wellington where I completed a doctoral thesis examining the family holiday experiences for the whole family group from a domestic perspective with Professors Doug Pearce and Karen Smith. This is where I met you, I was your Research Assistant, and we did our first book together, *Family Tourism* (Schänzel et al., 2012). I am now a Professor at Auckland University of Technology.

Ian Yeoman

Why did you do a PhD in tourism rather than something else?

Heike Schänzel

I've always wanted to see the world. I've always wanted to travel. That has always been my passion.

After high school, because I couldn't be bothered, I wasn't even thinking about university. I come from a small village, so university is quite a remote concept. I'm the first generation in my family who

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went to university. After school, I went to San Francisco for a year as a nanny and then came back to Germany. And then I did an apprenticeship as a travel consultant. I then travelled a bit, but eventually ended up in Dunedin at Otago University because I heard about a Postgraduate Diploma in Tourism. That was the beginning of my academic journey in tourism.

Ian Yeoman

And why did you decide to do a PhD?

Heike Schänzel

I wouldn't have done a PhD without a scholarship from Victoria University of Wellington and the help of Professor Karen Smith. It was she who sat me down and asked me, "what I wanted do with my life?". By that stage, I had three children, and the topic of family tourism in New Zealand emerged as a passion of mine. At the time, there was little research into this topic.

Ian Yeoman

You are now the Associate Editor of the *Journal of Tourism Futures*. What does the role mean to you?

Heike Schänzel

To shape the future of tourism; to encourage research and submissions about the future of tourism; to work with reviewers so they have a better understanding of the publication system.

I am an active researcher, but it's also important to be on the other side and to understand how the publication process works.

I am a guide for authors. It's about helping them. I guess, unless we work as editors, we can't necessarily shape, understand or help authors.

I'm a Professor, and as part of the role, I have to mentor and guide others, so it's part of my role as an all-round academic.

Ian Yeoman

But why be Associate Editor of the *Journal of Tourism Futures* rather than another journal?

Heike Schänzel

It was an opportunity. I mean, thanks to your work (Ian Yeoman), because we did the book on *Family Tourism* (Schänzel *et al.*, 2012) together and the research papers (Schänzel and Yeoman, 2014, 2015; Yeoman *et al.*, 2013; Yeoman *et al.*, 2022), I learned so much about the future.

Although I wouldn't call myself a future researcher, I ask all my students in their conclusions to at least consider the future. So, I really like that part of having a future perspective because, with so much academic work, you don't have that discussion.

I really do like the future, and I've learned that through you. You have done some great future research using scenario planning.

Ian Yeoman

What are some of the challenges of being an Associate Editor?

Heike Schänzel

The biggest challenge as an Associate Editor is finding reviewers who are capable and willing to review a manuscript. It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit reviewers as all academics are overloaded, and reviewing is not a job that receives much acknowledgement.

Ian Yeoman

What would you say to a young academic researcher about publishing on the future of tourism.

Heike Schänzel

All research needs to consider a future perspective, as without having relevance to the future, there is little point in research. Academic research is about making a contribution to society and the natural world; this needs to extend into the future.

Ian Yeoman

What is your research about now?

Heike Schänzel

I started off doing family research, then moved onto intergenerational relationships. Now it is about femininities, masculinities and lesbians, gay men and bisexuals (LGBs). I do research about children, social sustainability, and social justice issues. So, I'm really interested in people, the social issues and social dimensions, which has actually changed quite a bit because my Masters was on environmental interpretation.

My PhD was on family holidays, which I am really passionate about. So that's another reason why I really wanted to embark on a PhD, because I felt there was a topic that needed attention, and I was, in many ways, right about that, yeah.

Ian Yeoman

So you've described your field in the terms of social justice of sustainability in the tourism sector. Is that correct?

Heike Schänzel

Yes.

Ian Yeoman

In the field of social justice of sustainability, what do you determine as the critical issues?

Heike Schänzel

It is always changing; I mean, it's changed so much already, i.e. social trust.

When I started off, it was very much Western-based, and of course that's grown. Now, the focus is on Asia. There is now so much research coming out of Asia, especially China. It is a really encouraging thing to see that nowadays, a lot of research includes the voices of children, including China.

I was reviewing an article that originated in China, and it started off saying how annoying children are that hassle tourists. I thought, "I'm not rejecting that article because I believe it's better to work

with the researchers". It's important not to see children as annoying but actually look at the philosophy of children and children's rights and actually turn it around instead of thinking that these children are annoying.

In the end, the authors actually turned it around, and the paper was published in a highly ranked journal. I think that taught me something that we need to encourage a different lens regarding children. They shouldn't be interacting with any tourists, but you know that needs to be legislated as well.

There's a lot more research on families with children who have disabilities and wheelchairs and who have eating disorders. So, research on inclusivity is really important.

Ian Yeoman

Other critical issues?

Heike Schänzel

Lesbian tourism and gender diversity, the LGBTQ movement beyond gay tourism, as this is dominated by men.

Ian Yeoman

Other critical issues?

Heike Schänzel

Critical debates about masculinities in tourism, including paternal masculinities. Research the mind, diversify, be critical and be controversial.

Ian Yeoman

What do you think will be some of the titles of papers that will appear in the *Journal of Tourism Futures* in 10 years time?

Heike Schänzel

Children's rights, lesbian spaces and accessibility issues. The term "gay" really stands more for men, so it shouldn't be that lesbian is subsumed to be labelled gay. It would be nice to see lesbian tourism titles.

More titles on intergenerational relationships in much more diverse countries as well. Hopefully Africa and South America, rather than Western countries and Asia.

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