



Turist Rehberlerinin Yorumlama Performansının Hatırlanır Tur Deneyimleri ve Davranıřsal Niyetler Üzerindeki Etkisi

The Effect of Interpretation Performance of Tour Guides on Memorable Tour Experiences and Behavioural Intentions

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ÖZ

Turizm ve turist rehberlięi hizmetlerinde yorumlama konusunda kayda deęer arařtırmalar yapılmıř olsa da, bu arařtırmaların odaęında çoęunlukla yorumlamanın veya sonuçlarının deęerlendirilmesi yer almaktadır. Bu çalıřma ise EROT teorik modeli çerçevesinde yorumlama tekniklerine odaklanarak turist rehberlerinin yorumlama performansını incelemek üzere tasarlanmıřtır. Bu çerçevede amaç, turist rehberlerinin yorumlama performansının hatırlanır tur deneyimleri ve davranıřsal niyetler üzerindeki etkisini test etmektir. Arařtırmanın verileri Türkiye'de rehberli miras turlarına katılan 227 turistten toplanmıřtır. Elde edilen bulgular, turist rehberlięi bağlamında yorumlama hizmetinin organize ve baęıntılı/ilgili yorumlama olarak iki boyutlu bir yapı gösterdięini ortaya koymuřtur. Yapısal eřitlik modellemesi, organize yorumlama performansının davranıřsal niyetlerin iyi bir yordayıcısı; baęıntılı yorumlama performansının ise hatırlanır tur deneyimlerinin iyi bir yordayıcısı olduęunu göstermiřtir. Ayrıca baęıntılı yorumlama performansının, duygusal hisler aracılıęıyla davranıřsal niyetleri etkiledięi ortaya çıkmıřtır. Önerilen model ve elde edilen bulgular, arařtırmacılar ve uygulayıcılar için yorumlama performansını ve bunun hatırlanır tur deneyimleri ve davranıřsal niyetlerle iliřkisini anlamalarına yardımcı olabilmesi açısından önem arz etmektedir.

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ABSTRACT

Although considerable research has been conducted on interpretation in tourism and tour guiding services, it has mainly focused on evaluating the interpretation or outcomes of it. This study was designed to examine tour guides' interpretation performance, focusing on interpretation techniques within the frame of the EROT theoretical model. In this framework, the aim is to test the effect of the interpretation performance of tour guides on memorable tour experiences and behavioural intentions. The data were collected from 227 tourists participating in guided heritage tours in Turkey. The empirical findings proposed the theory within the tour-guiding context of two dimensions as organized and relevant interpretation. Structural equation modelling showed that organized interpretation performance was a good predictor of behavioural intentions, and relevant interpretation performance of memorable tour experiences. Relevant interpretation performance affects behavioural intentions through affective emotions. The proposed model and findings can help researchers and practitioners understand interpretation performance and its relationships with memorable tour experiences and behavioural intentions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Interpretation contributes to the visitor experience in places such as museums, heritage or historic sites, national parks, and organized tours (Dierking & Falk, 1992; Ham & Weiler, 2007). According to the Encyclopedia of Tourism, interpretation is “any activity which seeks to explain to people the significance of

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an object, a culture or a place” (Jafari, 2007: 327). As important service providers in organized tours, tour guides enable tourists to make sense of the visited areas and turn their travels into interesting experiences through narratives and interpretations. Tour guides have been accepted as interpreters since the 1900s (Pond, 1993). According to Ham (1992), an interpretation should have four principles: pleasurable/enjoyable, relevant to the visitor, well organized, and thematic. When these principles are applied to the tour, interpretive performance is thus performed (Ham, 1992). Tour guides directly impact tourists’ travel experiences as they are in direct communication with tourists and allow them to create their personal impressions about the destination (Alshatnawi, 2014). The experiences stored in the tourist’s memory constitute significant sources for decision-making (Hoch & Deighton, 1989; Ballantyne, Packer, & Sutherland, 2011). Today’s tourists are looking for memorable experiences that evoke different emotions, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds positively in the destinations they travel to (Song et al., 2015). Therefore, memorable tourism experiences have emerged as a concept at the heart of tourism today since they positively affect both the supply and demand sides of the industry (Hurombo, 2016).

According to Larsen (2007), tourism experiences consist of activities related to past personal trips that are strong enough to enter the long-term memory. A memorable tourism experience is described by Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2012) as one *“that is positively remembered and recalled after the event has occurred”*. In this sense, the tour guide becomes a very important element of the tourist experience. Today, it is very difficult to consider tours separately from the guiding service offered by tour guides. Guided group tours offer information, entertainment, and socialization opportunities, leading individuals to prefer these tours (Rabotić, 2008). Guides not only create a positive/negative perception towards the destination or the host society but also act as mediators in enhancing the quality of the tourist’s experience (Weiler & Black, 2014). The places visited are engraved in the memory of tourists through themes, stories, and fiction that guides use while narrating (Dewar, 2000). Positive experiences lead to revisits and positive recommendations, which is the most significant and reliable information source for potential tourists (Chen & Tsai 2007). In addition, recommendations are a necessary type of information for travellers (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Therefore, the tour guide, who is effective in the experience of the tourist (Ap & Wong, 2001; McGrath, 2005; Haynes, 2015), will ensure that the experiences are remembered (Roberts, Mearns, & Edwards, 2014), and will also affect the intention of tourists to participate in guided tours (Ap & Wong, 2001), and revisit the destination in the future (Tung & Ritchie 2011; Haynes, 2015). In this manner, this study aimed to reveal the effect of tour guide interpretation performances on tourists’ memorable tour experiences and behavioural intentions.

Since traveling with a tour guide is especially popular at cultural attractions, there are many studies on the interpretation performance of the tour guide and its impact on the tourist experience (Armstrong & Weiler, 2003; Lugosi & Bray, 2008; Mathisen, 2012; Weiler & Walker, 2014; Ababneh, 2018). There are also studies focussing on the interpretive performance of tour guides (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Rabotic, 2010; Abulhajja, Magabli, & Saleh 2011; Wong, 2013, Quinn & Ryan, 2016). Some studies examine perceptions of guides about their interpretation roles (Makopo, Geldenhuys, & Sime, 2018), the effectiveness of the interpretation experience (Armstrong & Weiler, 2003; Poudel & Nyaupane, 2013), as well as the effect of interpretation on perceived heritage value (Weng, Liang & Bao, 2020), on tourist satisfaction, and on behavioural intention (Io & Hallo, 2011; Kuo, Chang, Cheng & Lin, 2016; Huang, Weiler & Assaker, 2015). Finally, there is some research investigating the effect of the guide’s narration methods and communication skills on the tourist experience (Lugosi & Bray, 2008) and examining the effect of their interpretations on the tourist experience through interviews with tourists and guides (Ababneh, 2018). However, these studies on interpretation have mainly focused on the outcomes, principles, or evaluation of the interpretation in terms of tour guiding. Thus, the present study aims to be the first to measure tour guide interpretation performances in terms of the techniques suggested by the EROT model. In this context, there is no research at the time of examining the tour guide’s interpretation performance by utilizing the EROT framework and the effect of the interpretation performance on memorable experiences and behavioural intentions. Moreover, this study constitutes a new insight into the interpretation of tour guiding, and therefore tourism literature, by operationalizing the concept in the EROT theoretical framework.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Interpretation in Tour Guiding

The concept of interpretation was first introduced and defined in the field of communication by Freeman Tilden (1957). According to Tilden (1957: 8), *“interpretation is an educational activity that aims to reveal the meanings and relationships of the places people visit and the things they see, which are based on personal experiences, through using explanatory communication tools, rather than simply conveying factual information”*. After Tilden (1957), Ham (1992) developed his own principles of interpretation which stated that interpretation should be fun, relevant to

the visitor, organized and present a theme. In recent years, researchers have started to examine these principles to identify the most effective interpretation techniques (Jurow, 2016).

Many studies show that tourists interpret destinations based on the explanations of guides (Schmidt, 1979; Pond, 1993; Dahles, 2002; McGrath, 2015). Weiler and Ham (2001) state that interpretation is at the heart and soul of any tour guide's work, and that the guide's interpretation skill can enhance the experience quality of tourists. The guide fulfills the role of "*interpreter*", translating the culture and values of the host destination to tourists (Holloway, 1981; Ryan and Dewar, 1995), and functions as a "mediator" between the host destination and visitors (Weiler and Davis, 1993). Guides perform a type of educational service in assisting tourists to find out the heritage they are experiencing (Kong, 2014). While interpretation is basically a message delivery service that is informative and entertaining and provides a contextual background for the tourist's experience, it also serves to increase the tourist's interest in the destination (Tsang et al., 2011). Interpretation in tour guiding, albeit directly or indirectly, aims to facilitate and encourage people to understand a place, and thus enables them to develop empathy towards heritage, conservation, culture, and nature (Stewart et al., 1998). Several studies have emerged to explain and understand the effectiveness of interpretation, from communication to museum and heritage studies, and more fundamentally, cognitive and behavioural psychology research (Ham & Weiler, 2003).

2.2. The EROT Theoretical Model

It is widely known that interpretation is a communication tool that makes it easier to connect with the visited place. In the EROT model, four principles are presented as key factors in effective interpretation (Ham, 1992). These are as follows: (Armstrong & Weiler, 2003).

1. Enjoyable - engaging (E): Interpretation should be enjoyable for visitors.
2. Relevant - meaningful (R): Interpretation should relate to what visitors already know and want to learn.
3. Organized (O): Interpretation should be well organized and so easy to follow.
4. Thematic (T): Interpretation should be able to convey messages rather than just topics.

Ham (1992) emphasizes that by presenting all four principles together, successful communication can almost be guaranteed. What is meant by successful communication is to draw the attention of the visitors to what is being told and to make them understand the main idea (theme). This will lead to visitor satisfaction, word of mouth (WOM), revisit intention, and more time spent in the visited area (Amin et al., 2013). Ham (2013) defined this model as thematic interpretation and introduced the TORE theoretical model. Presenting the theme (T) in the framework of (ERO) will influence the visitors' thoughts, feelings, and possible behaviour towards what is being interpreted (Amin et al., 2013). The interpretation principles are interrelated steps (Ham, 1992). Although the order of these principles may vary in practice (EROT-TORE), they all serve the purpose of a successful interpretation, regardless of their order.

According to this theoretical model, if the interpreter's theme (main idea) is strong and relevant enough to grab the audience's attention, and the interpreter uses interesting methods to convey it, the theme will be presented in a way that motivates the listener to focus on it. This will make the listener think and try to establish a semantic link with what is being told. Depending on the beliefs of individuals, these meanings will lead to the consolidation and change of existing beliefs or result in the formation of new ones. The new situation will affect the attitudes of individuals (what they like, dislike, or care about, etc.) in connection with the presented theme/main idea. If these attitudes are strong enough, the expectation is that individuals will behave in a consistent manner. Attitudes that result from intense provocation will also make future behaviours stronger, longer-lasting, and more predictable (Ham, 2007). When the interpreter presents strongly relevant themes, listeners are encouraged to think in ways related to the theme. Thinking about the theme affects the interpreter's beliefs about the subject/topic, which in turn affects attitudes and behaviours about the belief. This theoretical view has guided the thematic interpretation of the TORE (thematic-organized-relevant-enjoyable) model and the development of its predecessor, the EROT (enjoyable-relevant-organized-thematic) model (Ham, 2007). Conducting tours using ERO can allow tour guides a good opportunity to create purposeful change in the thoughts, feelings, and behavioural intentions of the visitors about the interpreted theme (Ham, 2007). In short, with ERO, tour guides will be able to make a difference in their narratives (Amin et al., 2013). Based on this model, this study was designed on the premise that tourist guides, as interpreters, encourage the audience to think about the theme (main subject) with their interpretations using the EROT method, and this thought will affect individuals' attitudes towards the tour experience, and therefore behavioural intentions.

2.3. Memorable tourism experience

Memorable tourism experiences are at the heart of tourism today, and the concept that tourists place more value on (Hurombo, 2016). Many studies in the literature investigated the memorable tourism experience (Arnould & Price, 1993; Kim et al., 2012; Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Coelho et al., 2018; Chandralal et al., 2015a; Chandralal et al., 2015b; Oh et al., 2007; Morgan & Xu, 2009; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Williams et al., 2019; Ritchie & Hudson,

2009; Uriely, 2005; Zhou et al., 2022a; Zhou et al., 2022b; Sthapit et al., 2022; Jiang et al., 2022). Kim et al. (2012: 7) defined the memorable tourism experience as “*an experience that is positively remembered and recalled after the event*” and explained it in seven dimensions. In the following years, Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015a) stated that existing studies were carried out only through student samples (Larsen & Jenssen, 2004; Kim, 2009; Morgan & Xu, 2009; Kim et al., 2012; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). According to the researchers, due to the fact that students do not have full-time income like those with regular jobs and salaries, a student sample cannot provide solid data in the tourism experience. In addition, students do not travel frequently, which is a necessity for answering questions related to memorable tourism experiences. In this context, researchers developed a new measurement tool in the sample of frequent travellers and explained it in ten.

2.4. Hypotheses development

The ability of the tour guide to make the tour experience meaningful has an impact on the thoughts of the tourist about the tour as a whole (Hughes, 1991). A guide is also a performer and interpreter who is at the centre of the experience (Overend, 2012). According to Schmidt, (1979), Holloway (1981), and Ap and Wong (2001), a tour guide is a person with whom tourists interact during the tour and who has a significant impact on the tourist experience (Blyablina, 2015). Guides are interpreters (Holloway, 1981; Cohen, 1984; Katz, 1985; Almagor, 1985; Cohen, 1985; Ryan and Dewar, 1995) and cultural mediators (De Kadt, 1979; Holloway, 1981; Cohen, 1985; Katz, 1985). The tour guide’s communication affects the morale and interaction of the whole group and their assessment of the tour experience (Cohen, 1979; Holloway, 1981). Moscardo (1998) and Beaumont (2001) mention that attempts to measure interpretation effectiveness can be divided into two groups: those that measure visitor intentions to acquire information and their attitudes and behaviours and those that aim to measure current outputs. Knowing how visitors feel is important as it demonstrates their satisfaction and quality of experience (Roberts et al., 2014). There are studies indicating that personal/individual interpretation increases the quality of visitor experience and its effect on visitor experience (Hughes, 1991; Ababneh, 2018). Some studies point out that the communication skills of tour guides have an effect on the tour experience of the tourist (Cohen, 1979; Holloway, 1981; Hughes, 1991; Ababneh, 2018). As a result, the tourist’s enjoyment of an area and being a part of the experience are affected by the performance of the tour guide (Hansen & Mossberg, 2017).

Much research (Armstrong & Weiler, 2003; Ham & Weiler, 2007; Weiler & Ham, 2010; Amin et al., 2014; Huang et al., 2015; Cheng et al., 2019) has revealed that the interpretations of tour guides impacted tourist satisfaction, behavioural intentions, WOM, revisit and recommendation intention, and that the interpretation service of the tour guide affected tourist satisfaction and, thus, destination loyalty (Kuo et al., 2016). Haynes (2015) revealed that the guide’s interpretation service influenced the tourist experience and their intention to revisit the area. Spring (2017) determined that in relation to the experience and knowledge they gained, tourists were prompted to think about what they heard and saw on the tour, which affected the tourist experience, whereas Rosli et al. (2014) found that the tour guide’s effective interpretation had an impact on creating high-attention tourists. The performance of the guide has an impact on the overall experience of visitors in the area (McGrath, 2005). Interpreters/guides provide visitors with a more meaningful experience (Barrie, 2001). It was revealed that tour guides, who guide by using theatrical elements, especially in historical places, affected the tourist experience (Blyablina, 2015). Also, Weng et al. (2020) proved that perceived heritage values are higher in guided interpretive tours than in non-guided tours. In particular, cultural heritage values are better interpreted by tour guides. The interpretation styles of tour guides are effective in providing the tourist experience (Ababneh, 2018). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: The interpretation performance of tour guides has a significant effect on memorable tour experiences.

H2: The interpretation performance of tour guides has a significant effect on tourists’ behavioural intentions.

Tourism experiences seem to affect individuals’ behavioural intentions (Kim, 2009; Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013). It has been shown that the memorable tourism experience had a positive effect on tourists’ intention to visit and recommend (Zhang et al., 2018; Kim, 2018; Wang, 2016; Akşit et al., 2019). In addition, the effect of creative tourist experiences on satisfaction, recall, and behavioural intentions was investigated (Ali et al., 2016). According to the results of Tung and Ritchie’s (2011) in-depth interview method, the four dimensions of the memorable experience were found to positively affect satisfaction and revisit intention. Research by Oh et al. (2007) demonstrated that customer experience had an impact on memories, satisfaction, and revisit intentions. In addition, it was observed that the quality of the tourism experience (education, aesthetics, escape, and entertainment) had an effect on the recall of the experience (Ali et al., 2014). On the other hand, Coudounaris and Sthapit (2017) indicated that the dimensions of hedonism, local culture, involvement, and knowledge, which are the memorable tourism experience dimensions of tourists participating in a guided tour, had an effect on behavioural intentions and recall. The last hypothesis is therefore as follows:

H3: Memorable tour experiences have a significant effect on behavioural intentions.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the present study for measuring interpretation performance, items were adopted from the studies of Ham (1992), Ryan and Dewar (1995), Armstrong and Weiler (2003), and Rosli et al., (2014). Employing Ham's (1992) EROT/TORE (enjoyable-relevant-organized-thematic) theoretical model, it is focused on the techniques used by the guide in interpreting the information rather than the outcomes of the performance. 37 items were rewritten and converted to scale items. All items were translated into Turkish and back to English to ensure no loss in meaning. Ethics Committee approval is not required for this study because of it has used research data before 2020 and produced from doctoral studies in accordance with the ethical principles and publication policy of the journal. First data were collected from 191 tourists participating in guided tours and the performance of each item was evaluated by adopting the DeVellis procedure (1991) to determine the appropriate items necessary to form the scale. Thus, a total of 18 items were removed and the desired results were obtained with 19 items. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on 419 data that were obtained in the second field survey. Results revealed that 3 items were cross-loaded and needed to be dropped. Iterations suggested 16 items could be categorized into two dimensions. The two-dimensions solution accounted for 68.20% of the variance. The first dimension consisted of ten items related to thematic and organizing interpretation; therefore, it was termed as organized interpretation performance (OI). The second dimension consisted of six items related to enjoyable and relevant interpretation and was thus termed as relevant interpretation performance (RIP). The factor loadings for all 16 items ranged from 0.66 to 0.83. The Cronbach's alpha (reliability) for overall scale and two dimensions were all above 0.80 indicating the criteria were met (Field, 2009). Also, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used to evaluate the congruity of the factor analysis (KMO 0.951, >0.50; Bartlett's test of sphericity = χ^2 : 5415.760, s.d.:120, $p < 0.01$).

The items for memorable tour experiences were modified from the MTE scale developed and validated by Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015a) and adapted to tour guiding as five dimensions: authentic local experience, affective emotions, social interaction, local hospitality, and self-beneficial experiences. The behavioural intention was operationalized using three items in a dimension by Chen and Tsai (2007), which were then adapted to narratives of tour guides by Weiler and Ham (2010). All items in the present study were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree). With the help of travel agencies arranging heritage group tours in the Eastern Mediterranean region in Turkey, the questionnaire was distributed to Turkish tourists who participated in guided tours. Using the convenience sampling method, the tour agent handed out questionnaires after visiting the heritage sites to those tourists who were willing to participate. In this way, 227 usable questionnaires were obtained. This number was consistent with the sample size requirement for SEM, which states that the general minimum sample size should be at least 5 times the number of indicators used to measure a construct (Bentler & Chou, 1987; Bollen, 1989; Hair et al., 2010). Also, according to Boomsma (1982), a sample size of 200 or more is adequate to conduct SEM.

In the study, the descriptive statistics of the sample profile, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and reliability analyses of the scales were performed using the SPSS package program. Then, using Lisrel, the convergent and divergent validity of the scales was examined, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to form the composite reliability (CR). Finally, using Lisrel SEM, the relationships between tour guide interpretation performance, memorable tour experience, and behavioural intentions were tested through path analysis.

4. RESULTS

Table 1. Profile of Respondents (n: 227)

Profile of Respondents		%
Gender	Female	77
	Male	23
Age	15-24	18
	25-44	41
	45-64	33
	65+	8
Education	Primary	5
	Secondary	6
	High School	24
	Associate degree	15
	Bachelor's degree	44
	Postgraduate	6
Visited with	Alone	11
	Spouse (without kids)	25
	Spouse (with kids)	11
	Relatives (without kids)	13
	Relatives (with kids)	5
	Parents	14
	Friends	21

The descriptive data on the sample and travel characteristics of the respondents are given in Table 1. It is seen that the majority of the participants (77%) were women, most were between the ages of 25-44 (41%) with a bachelor's degree (44%), and 25% traveled with their spouses (without children) and 21% with their friends.

4.1. Validity and Reliability of Construct

CFA analysis was performed to test the construct validity of the scales. In CFA analysis, the item loadings in the scale should be greater than 0.50 and if possible, above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010), and in order for relevant items to be meaningful, the condition for t-values to be greater than ±1.96 must be met (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). In the CFA analysis performed, the interpretation performance scale was measured with 16 items, the tour experience scale with 15 items, and behavioural intentions with 3 items. The results indicate acceptable reliability as shown in Table 2, all item loadings exceeded the recommended value (Hair et al., 2010), all Cronbach's α higher than .78; and all CR higher than .74 (Henseler et al., 2009). For all constructs, the values of the average variance extracted (AVE) were higher than .50, which indicates a high level of convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2. Validity and Reliability for Constructs

	Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Relevant interpretation performance of tour guide (RIP)		0.64	0.92	0.914
Using jokes in her/his narratives	0.69			
Using similes or personifications in her/his narratives (e.g. ...the layers of the earth are like onions ... if trees could talk ...)	0.73			
Engaging tourists in her/his narrative (e.g. when was the last time you ... have you ever ...)	0.85			
Giving examples while narrating	0.86			
Making comparisons while narrating	0.89			
Shaping her/his narratives according to the tourist profile	0.83			
Organized interpretation performance of tour guide (OIP)		0.66	0.95	0.946
Telling stories/myths/legends about the place visited	0.69			
Including interesting information about the region during the narration	0.69			
Explaining scientific terms and topics related to archaeology, history, and architecture in a language that the group can understand	0.75			
Giving an introductory briefing at the beginning	0.76			
Paying attention to speech transitions and flow while storytelling	0.79			
Describing the places visited in detail	0.90			
Summarizing what was said about the places visited	0.87			
Supporting her/his narratives with cause-and-effect relationships	0.81			
The ability to use the language	0.82			
Expressing the main features of the places visited	0.88			
Affective emotions (AE)		0.53	0.82	0.787
During the tour, I felt like I was in a different world	0.67			
During the tour, I felt excited	0.77			
During the tour, I felt pleased	0.73			
This tour was a special experience for me personally	0.73			
Self-beneficial experiences (SBE)		0.66	0.85	0.851
This tour helped me to improve my self-confidence	0.82			
This tour helped me to develop my personal identity	0.74			
This tour helped me to learn more about myself	0.88			
Local hospitality (LH)		0.81	0.93	0.925
Local people I encountered were genuinely helpful	0.90			
Local people I encountered were genuinely friendly	0.91			
Local people I encountered were genuinely generous	0.89			
Authentic local experiences (ALE)		0.59	0.74	0.780
During this tour, I visited authentic local restaurants and food outlets	0.66			
During this tour, I had the opportunity to see the real day-to-day life of locals.	0.86			
Social interactions (SI)		0.70	0.87	0.848
I highly enjoyed the comradeship among my travel companions on the trip	0.88			
I enjoyed the trip very much because I was with a wonderful group of travellers	0.91			
This tour allowed me to make new friends	0.70			
Behavioural intentions (BI)		0.64	0.84	0.840
The narratives of the guide made me want to participate in guided tours rather than traveling independently.	0.79			
The narratives of the guide made me want to revisit the destination.	0.77			
(Because of her/his narratives) I would recommend this tour guide to my friends and family	0.84			

The results of CFA showed that the model had an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 813.37$, $df = 499$, $\chi^2 / df = 1.63$) $p < .001$, NFI = 0.97, NNFI= 0.99, IFI = 0.99, CFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.053) (Schermelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003; Hair et al., 2010).

Discriminant validity tests whether variables which are thought to be related or have a low correlation are actually so (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Discrimination is calculated by comparing the square roots of average variance extracted (AVE) and the correlation coefficients between latent variables. Table 3 shows that all correlation coefficients are smaller than the square roots of AVEs (Fornell & Lacker, 1981) which indicates that discriminant validity was achieved.

Table 3. Testing Discriminant Validity

	BI	OIP	RIP	AE	ALE	SBE	LH	SI
BI	0.80*							
OIP	0.562	0.80*						
RIP	0.518	0.64	0.81*					
AE	0.577	0.211	0.313	0.72*				
ALE	0.448	0.302	0.384	0.476	0.76*			
ABE	0.384	0.230	0.348	0.409	0.504	0.81*		
LH	0.280	0.202	0.230	0.504	0.396	0.336	0.90*	
SI	0.348	0.211	0.280	0.435	0.202	0.260	0.25	0.83*

Notes. * The square roots of AVE; BI: Behavioural Intentions, OIP: Organized Interpretation Performance, RIP: Relevant Interpretation Performance, AE: Affective Emotions, ALE: Authentic Local Experience, SBE: Self-Beneficial Experience, LH: Local Hospitality, SI: Social Interactions

4.2. Structural Model

To evaluate the proposed model, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed and the RML estimation method was used. After the establishment of the model, an examination was made to determine whether the relationships between the variables were significant, and standard error values, the regression coefficient, and the R2 value, which demonstrates the explanatory power of the independent variables in the dependent variable, were investigated.

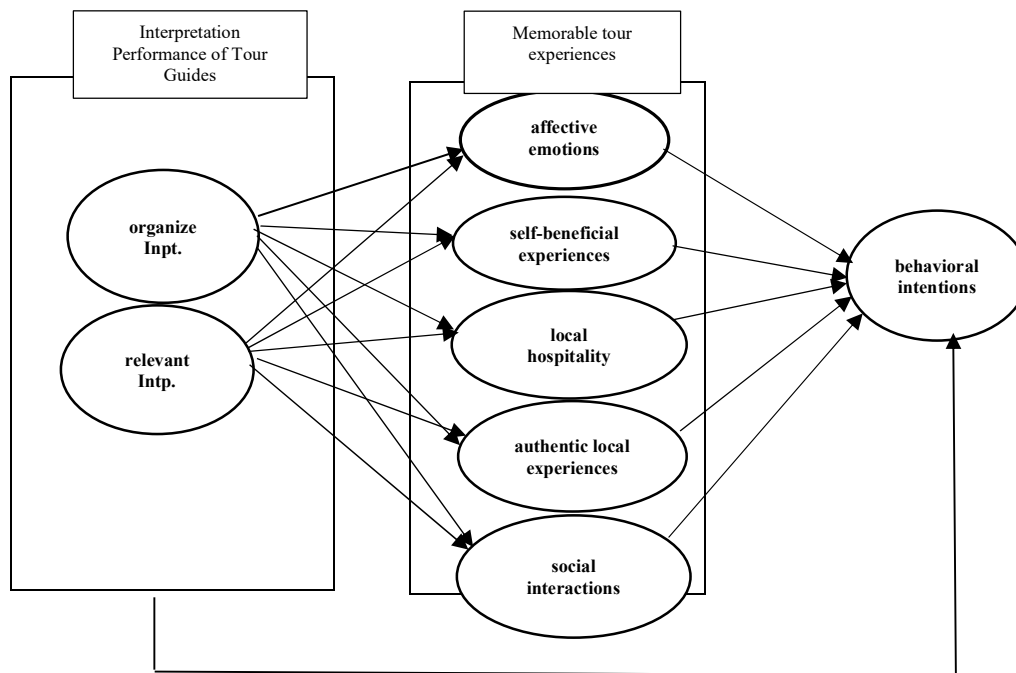


Figure 1. Conceptual model

SEM indicated that the model had an acceptable fit to data ($\chi^2 = 1036.41$, $df = 509$, $\chi^2/df = 2.03$, $p < .001$, $NFI = 0.96$, $NNFI = 0.98$, $IFI = 0.98$, $CFI = 0.98$, $RMSEA = 0.068$) (Schermelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003; Hair et al., 2010). According to the first hypothesis developed, the interpretation performance of tour guides has a significant impact on MTE (H1). The path analysis results showed that OIP had a statistically insignificant impact on all factors of the tour experience, while RIP had a significant impact on all dimensions of MTE. As stated in the second hypothesis (H2), interpretation performance has a significant impact on BI. According to the results of the hypothesis test, it was found that only OIP had a significant impact on BI. The last hypothesis of the study (H3) predicts that MTE has a significant effect on BI and results showed that out of five dimensions (AE, SBE, LH, ALE, SI), only

affective emotions (AE) had a significant effect on BI. This shows RIP has an indirect significant effect on BI through AE

Table 4. Path coefficients and hypothesis result

Relationships	Coefficient	t-Value	Support	R ²
H1a: OIP → AE	-0.25	-1.52	×	
H1b: OIP → SBE	-0.18	-1.36	×	
H1c: OIP → LH	-0.07	-0.49	×	
H1d: OIP → ALE	-0.08	-0.51	×	
H1e: OIP → SI	-0.07	-0.57	×	
H1f: RIP → AE	0.84	5.39**	√	0.43
H1g: RIP → SBE	0.80	6.76**	√	0.45
H1h: RIP → LH	0.63	4.33**	√	0.33
H1i: RIP → ALE	0.78	4.93**	√	0.52
H1j: RIP → SI	0.65	5.55**	√	0.35
H2a: OIP → BI	0.53	4.30**	√	
H2b: RIP → BI	-0.14	-0.53	×	
H3a: AE → BI	0.45	4.17**	√	0.79
H3b: SBE → BI	0.11	1.39	×	
H3c: LH → BI	-0.07	-1.10	×	
H3d: ALE → BI	0.13	1.41	×	
H3e: SI → BI	0.10	1.37	×	

OIP: Organized Interpretation Performance, RIP: Relevant Interpretation Performance, AE: Affective Emotions, ALE: Authentic Local Experience, SBE: Self-Beneficial Experience, LH: Local Hospitality, SI: Social Interactions, BI: Behavioural Intentions **p < 0.01

5. DISCUSSION

This study measured the effect of tour guide interpretation performance on tour experience and behavioural intentions and concluded that interpretation performance had a significant effect on memorable tour experience (MTE). However, it was found that only relevant interpretation performance (RIP) had a significant effect on all dimensions of MTE, while the organized interpretation performance (OIP) did not have a significant effect on MTE. In addition, RIP did not have a direct significant effect on behavioural intention, whereas OIP did. These results support the findings of Armstrong and Weiler (2003), Haynes (2015), Amin et al. (2014), and Huang et al. (2015), which show that interpretation is an important part of the tour operation and is associated with behavioural intentions. RIP was found to affect BI only through affective emotions (AE). This finding is an important contribution to the literature. The fact that no previous empirical studies have been conducted based on this model makes this result quite significant. The EROT (enjoyable-relevant-organized-thematic) model argues that interpretation affects the visitor both intellectually and emotionally (Amin et al., 2013). As the model argues, making relevant (E&R) (meaningful and entertaining) interpretation occupies the mind of the person and draws her/his attention to the thing being narrated, which allows the person to connect with the thing being narrated and have various emotions (Ham, 2013), which primarily affects the emotional experiences s/he has. Since the information given in organized interpretation (O&T) includes being related to the main message or key idea, the interpreted information becomes easier and more understandable for the listener to follow (Ham, 1992), which directly affects the behavioural intentions of the person.

It is noteworthy that relevant interpretation performance significantly affected all dimensions of the tour experience supporting previous research that reveals the effect of interpretation on the memorable experience. The findings of different studies in the literature show that the performance of the tour guide enables tourists to establish emotional and intellectual bonds with the experience and the places visited (Weiler & Walker, 2014; Blyablina, 2015), strengthens their ties with the visited place (Poria et al., 2009), and directly affects the visitor experience. Ababneh (2018) shows that guides make tourists think about what they hear and see on the tour and affect their experience. In the study, it was seen that only affective emotions of MTE significantly affected the behavioural intentions of the tourists. This result supports the study of Servidio and Ruffolo (2016), which emphasized the importance of emotions in experiences. According to Kim et al. (2012), when tourists return to their homes, they tend to remember emotional experiences felt during the tour such as happiness, sadness, excitement, and guilt (Wirtz et al., 2003; Larsen & Jenssen, 2004). Previous studies also showed that emotions have an influence on tourist

satisfaction (del Bosque and San Martin, 2008; Rojas & Camarero, 2008) and behavioural intentions (Bigne et al., 2008).

According to EROT, or its related TORE version, when interpretation with a strong theme is presented in a relevant and enjoyable way, the individual might be motivated and thus provoked to think, enabling the individual to either change or re-form previous thoughts. Beliefs and attitudes of the individual change accordingly and increase the probability of behavioural outcomes (Ham, 2007). Since themes and beliefs are interrelated and similar (Ham and Krumpal, 1996), practical application of strong themes through ERO can provide an opportunity for the tour guide to create purposeful change in the thoughts, feelings, and likely behaviour of the listener regarding what they interpret (Ham, 2007). This present study is the first to empirically test interpretation performance and evaluate it from tourists' perspectives. As not previously available in the literature the results of this study supported two dimensions of the EROT model: the combination of relevant with enjoyable (referred to as relevant interpretation performance) and organized with thematic (referred to as organized interpretation performance). It can be inferred that while guides use practice all four principles of the EROT model for effective interpretation, the tourists' perception of what is being done is somewhat different. The results of this research emphasize that an organized interpretation is perceived by tourists to be thematic at the same time and relevancy comes with an enjoyable interpretation. This finding can be supported by the model in interpretive settings, as the schemas of tourists depend on their thoughts at the time of interpretive performance and backgrounds or personal experiences. During the performance of guides, tourists pay attention to what is relevant, boring, joyful, and notable of their focus, etc. Despite a particular theme developed by the interpreter, whether the tourists take home theme is the exact presented theme is a particular issue (Ham, 2013). This presents the first empirical evidence of the EROT model in the tourism context from the tourists' perspective and the findings have insights into the theory for further research.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study showed that the more relevant the interpretation performance, the more memorable experiences tourists have. Therefore, it will be useful for tour guides to make relevant interpretations on their tours in order to make the tour experience memorable. Tour guides should liaise with tour operators to gather information about the characteristics of the tour group (age, profession, interests, etc.) so that they may shape their interpretations accordingly. This study also revealed that affective emotions were a key element in influencing the behavioural intentions of tourists. In order to make the tour experience more memorable, tour guides should concentrate on relevant interpretation as this enhances all dimensions of the tour experience. However, triggering tourist emotions (i.e., creating affective emotional experiences) results in behavioural intentions. According to Ham (2009), experience is nothing but thought, and the more visitors are prompted to think about creating personal meanings about a place or thing, the deeper their experience will be. In the case of tourism, what pushes the tourist to think most is the relevant interpretation of the tour guide. And the findings of this research demonstrated that organized interpretation performance had a direct effect on behavioural intentions. Therefore, creating an organized interpretation affects the tourist's behavioural intentions without affecting their tour experience. This is such an interesting finding that further research is recommended.

The results obtained from this research highlight the significance of tour guide interpretation performance on memorable tour experiences in guided heritage tours. In this case, memorable tourism experiences in unguided tours or digital/virtual tours can be arguable. Further research can be conducted on unguided or virtual tours for a deeper understanding. This study also reveals the importance of interpretation performance within the EROT framework for tour guides. Based on Tilden (1957), interpretation is not to simply convey information to tourists, but rather to make them think in order to form their own thoughts ("*provocation*" versus "*instruction*"). There is a need for interpretation techniques that can attract the attention of tourists by using enjoyable (E) and relevant (R) narratives without boring them. Relevant and enjoyable interpretations affect emotional experiences and thereby behavioural intentions. According to Hosany and Gilbert (2010), positive emotions create enjoyable and memorable experiences. The inclusion of only information during interpretation, such as in digital/virtual tours, may bore tourists after a time causing them to be quickly distracted, particularly if the information is not satisfying or pleasant. Boring and hard-to-follow information (not organized) pushes the brain to seek more pleasurable/satisfying information, and the individual begins to dream (Ham, 1992). In this case, boredom and distraction may bring about a negative tourist experience and may have a negative effect on behavioural intentions. Ham (2013) stated that a piece of information can be interesting when presented in an entertaining (E), relevant (R) and easy-to-follow/organized manner (O). Moreover, he emphasized tourism as an entertainment industry, and therefore an ERO industry. In this sense, interpretation through ERO is a necessity for all tourism professionals in the industry because a well-structured interpretation is critical to achieving what tourists desire, which is a memorable tourist experience. By utilizing the interpretation principles, tourism professionals may achieve their personal goals by creating differences in their services. In addition, interpretation services can contribute to individualized experiences. For example, by using interpretation, hotel management can offer more effective guest relations and concierge services in order to have a

more positive effect on service quality and vacation experience. Therefore, destination marketers, travel agencies, and tour operators should activate, stimulate, and promote emotional experiences/affective emotions in their advertising campaigns using interpretative guided tours and promotional videos.

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate that as interpretation is critical for tour guiding, further research is needed on the interpretation performance of tour guides within the framework of EROT theory. This research indicated that interpretation performance can be explained in the two dimensions of ER and OT. The results also reveal that more studies need to support the ER-OT model in terms of tourist experience. This study was conducted using domestic tourists visiting domestic historic sites. Future studies should focus on incoming tourists. Finally, this study examined only the immediate experiences of tourists (i.e., short-term results); thus, further research into the effect of interpretation on long-term memorable tour experiences is recommended.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors certify that they have NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; participation in speakers' bureaus; membership, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity interest; and expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements), or non-financial interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

G.Ç.: Conceptualization, Review of Literature, Methodology, Data curation, Analysis and interpretation, Writing- Original draft preparation. Writing- Reviewing and Editing, Funding Project Management, Consulting, Final approval; D.A.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Analysis and interpretation, Writing- Original draft preparation. Writing- Reviewing and Editing, Funding Project Management, Consulting, Final approval.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

Ethics Committee approval is not required for this study in accordance with the **Ethical Principles and Publication Policy** of the *Journal of Eurasia Tourism Research (JETour)* because of it has used research data before 2020 and produced from doctoral studies.

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