

**Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management**  
**Report for the 2020 Mid-year Meeting**  
**Submitted by Prof Marianna Sigala Editor-in-Chief**

**PAPER SUBMISSIONS – PUBLICATIONS**

Paper submissions have continued to grow during the first half of 2020. This growth reflects the increasing recognition and importance of the journal in our field. In fact, there has been an exponential growth of submissions from (545 in total in 2019 to 392 submissions received until June 2020, i.e. half year). The source of submissions and the distribution amongst them remain the same countries as in 2019 (i.e. Asia, Europe and North-Central America) with a small increase of submissions from the Asian countries.

The desk rejection rate is somewhat similar to 2019, but slightly increased. The increased rejection rate has specifically appeared after March 2020 and continues during the international lockdown. Based on discussions with other journal editors and publishers, this is not a unique to JHTM, but has been faced by almost all journals during the last months.

I have been made aware of general concerns about the quality and number of submissions that journals may also receive during the remaining of 2020 and for the next year, because of the research disadvantages created by COVID-19, i.e. no possibilities or difficulties in collecting primary data, increased workloads and stress by scholars, institutional funding deficits, redundancies and reduced research budgets. I will be monitoring this issue during the next months, but I believe that JHTM should try to do something proactively to address this potential issue and ensure the attraction of a sufficient number of good quality of submissions. Increased presence and promotion of the journal as well as support to authors (e.g. extension of deadlines etc.) should be definitely be taken into consideration.

The journal migrated to the EM platform on 18 February 2020. The transition was smooth and well supported by the Elsevier staff (e.g. training, online support etc.). Some system bugs have been identified but corrected by Elsevier. The platform is more powerful and stable. There is still an issue of finding and allocating reviewers, but Elsevier is made aware and hopefully this issue will be solved soon.

The JHTM re-investment plan featuring three activities (JHTM Research Symposium; JHTM Best PhD Award; and JHTM Paper Hackathons) and approved by CAUTHE in 2019, has been affected due to COVID-19. The following actions are also scheduled to rectify this situation and implement activities as initially planned. It is important to implement this plan in order to maintain continuity and do not disadvantage the growth of the journal during this critical situation.

- 2020 JHTM Research Symposium. The symposium will not happen face-to-face but an online virtual symposium will be scheduled to take place in

December 2020. Plans will be advertised soon to allow people to prepare presentations. The online symposium will also aim to attract international audience and speakers, which was more difficult to achieve when organized face-to-face. This can give a greater visibility and international accessibility as well as promotion to the journal. It is hoped that Elsevier can sponsor and support this online event. The online platform that will be used for the 2020 CAUTHE conference will be used to ensure good technology functionality to deliver the online event.

- JHTM Best PhD Award. Four papers have been submitted by PhD students so far. This is good but it will be great if we can attract more submissions. A promotional campaign for this award is running, but please share the information with your Phd students and motivate them to submit and participate
- JHTM Paper Hackathon. As almost all international conferences are canceled this year, it is difficult to find a conference to host the JHTM Paper Hackathons. The 2020 EuroCHRIE conference where the hackathon was planned to take place has also been canceled. The plan is to try to co-host the hackathon during the 2020 JHTM Research Symposium or the 2020 online CAUTHE conference. More news will be announced soon depending on platform availability and functionality. JHTM Paper Hackathons were run in 2018 and 2019 with great success, there is a need to continue this momentum and promotion of the journal.

### **CITATION STRATEGY**

The JHTM has shown a significant increase in its SciMago 2019 (4.0), which brings JHTM close to the same index of competing journals. JHTM is also placed in the Q1 category of journals in tourism, hospitality and leisure journals (SciMago). The JHTM is performing well in the [SciMago statistics](#), which also show continued growth.

JHTM expects its new SSCI impact factor in late June 2020 and it is hoped that we can have some good news. Paper downloads continue to increase for 2020.

Special issues represent papers with high citations. This reflects that special issues can significantly influence the usage, readership and so, citation of the journal. The JHTM continues to have a strategy for developing topical and contemporary special issues to continue attracting interest, readership, downloads and citations (see below comments in terms of special issues).

The COVID-19 situation (during lockdown but also the post COVID-19 period) is creating new challenges for researchers and journals alike. As JHTM cannot be currently promoted in the traditional channels (e.g. conferences, meetings, etc.), an increased online promotion and presence of the journal is conducted and should continue to be implemented (e.g. social media, virtual conferences and events, social networks of everyone).

### **REVIEW PROCESS PERFORMANCE**

Metrics reflecting the management of the review process of papers are encouraging. Despite the increasing number of submissions, the time taken for the first decision, desk-review and until publication is somewhat to the previous year. This is mainly

attributed to the fact that the JHTM has promoted and secured the recruitment of one more associate editor (see comments below), who started work in March 2020.

Proactive and supportive measures have been undertaken by the journal to address the disadvantaged situation in which authors and reviewers find themselves during the COVID-19. Extended deadlines were given for revising and/or reviewing papers, while a promotional campaign (e-mails and journal website updates) was run to inform everyone that JHTM is up and running normally despite the unprecedented circumstances.

I would like to thank all my Associate Editors for their continuous support and dedication to the journal, despite their own COVID-19 difficulties and workloads and the increased rate of submissions that we have to manage.

### **SPECIAL ISSUES**

Two special issues were finalised in 2020: the special issue from CAUTHE 2019 and a special issue on Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in Tourism, by Prof Harald Pechlaner, Monika Bachinger and Ingrid Kofle.

A special issue on crises and recovery has been developed and is currently open by the chairs of CAUTHE SIG on Crisis, disaster and recovery. This special issue has been specifically sourced and developed to address the current situation and research topics generated by COVID-19. However, a more general theme and topic was selected (rather than a sole focus on COVID-19) in order to avoid the COVID-19 buzz and maintain the long-term readership and topicality of the published papers.

A special issue from the online 2020 CAUTHE conference will take place. The JHTM is always open to discuss other good ideas for special issues. Please contact me for more information and/or discussion.

### **JOURNAL AWARDS**

The three annual JHTM awards (best paper, highly commended papers, and best reviewers) have been selected and implemented. Winners were identified based on suggestions and consultation with the Associate Editors and the Advisory Board of the JHTM. The winners were announced during the CAUTHE 2020 conference and a subsequent online campaign and press releases were conducted to create wider awareness and promotion.

***Please promote the 2020 JHTM Best PhD Paper Awards.*** It would be great to receive more paper submissions and nominations. The award winning papers will receive cash prizes, a certificate and opportunities of public recognition (e.g. award presentation at the CAUTHE conference, social media and other promotion).

Best PhD Paper Award:

- 500 AUD
- Certificate
- CAUTHE Associate membership for one year (valued at 110 AUD)
- Presentation of the award at the CAUTHE conference
- Publicity

Highly recommended PhD paper:

- 300 AUD
- Certificate
- Presentation of the award at the CAUTHE conference
- Publicity

### **JOURNAL MARKETING ACTIVITIES**

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, there has been no conference whereby JHTM could be promoted, while there are no conferences until end of 2020 to achieve this. This situation is predicted that will continue at least for the first half of 2021, and so, a more intense and aggressive online promotion of JHTM should and is being carried out. JHTM will be promoted in the virtual CAUTHE events, while other virtual conferences will be identified to promote the journal. The JHTM re-investment plan continues but it is amended due to COVID-19 (see above comments).

*Please promote JHTM at any online conferences and other events* that you attend, as well as through your social media and networks.

### **EDITORIAL TEAM**

The editorial team for the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* (JHTM) has been expanded by one more associate editor. JHTM received nine nominations for the advertised position of the associate editor, all coming from well-established and reputed international scholars. This is encouraging as it demonstrates that international scholars appreciate JHTM and wish to engage and work with it. A panel consisting of three CAUTHE executive members and chaired by Prof Marianna Sigala convened to evaluate the nominations and select the third associate editor. Nominations were ranked and the decision was taken to recognize and appreciate people's willingness to support the journal. To that end, apart from the appointment of the third associate editor, good candidates were also offered the opportunity to join the editorial board of JHTM and/or to propose and develop special issues. Many of the candidate responded positive to the latter.

The current composition of the editorial team is:

- Professor Marianna Sigala, Editor-in-Chief
- Associate Professor Leonie Lockstone-Binney, Associate Editor (Tourism and Events)
- Dr Emily Ma, Associate Editor Hospitality
- Prof Seyyed Mostafa Rasoolimanesh, Associate Editor (Tourism Destination)
- Dr Roya Rahimi – Books review editor

I would like to welcome Prof Seyyed Mostafa Rasoolimanesh in the JHTM editorial team, who, since he joined, has been supporting the journal with his great work and dedication.

There has been very good cooperation amongst all the members of the editorial team of the journal as well as the publisher's presentative from Elsevier. The team has regular skype meetings and online discussions for taking decisions, actions and developing a strategy for the journal.

The international editorial review board of the journal was last updated in 2019 and the next revision is due in two years, i.e. 2021. In the meantime, we are monitoring and evaluating the performance of existing board members, as well as identifying other scholars to help with paper review, in preparation for editorial board restructuring, based on previous reviewers' performance, in early 2021. The quality and commitment of the reviewers and editorial board are considered as one of the key success factors of the journal.

Thank you all for all your support! Nothing would have been achieved without the help of everyone of you – every little that anyone does helps!

**Prof Marianna Sigala**  
**Editor in Chief**  
**17 June 2020**