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Tourist Guiding Profession in Iceland

What are the perspectives of tourist guides in Iceland regarding the legal protection of the tourist guide profession, and what factors influence these perspectives?

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This masterpiece is dedicated to my beloved aunt, Hulda. She always believed in me, cheered me on and encouraged me to follow my dreams. Although she is no longer with us physically, her spirit continues to inspire every step I take toward fulfilling my dreams.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the perspectives of tourist guides in Iceland regarding the legal protection of their profession and the factors influencing these views. The research addresses a primary question: *What are the perspectives of tourist guides in Iceland regarding the legal protection of the tourist guide profession, and what factors influence these perspectives?* And then the Sub-question: *What strategies can be implemented to address the concerns and preferences raised by the tourist guides in this study?* To explore these questions, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative survey and semi structured informal interview. The methodology included the application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to understand the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that influence tourist guides' job satisfaction and professional behavior. Data were collected from a diverse group of tourist guides across Iceland, focusing on their demographics, educational backgrounds, job satisfaction levels, and views on regulation.

The results indicate that over 70% of participants support legal protection for the tourist guiding profession. Key motivations include the potential for higher salaries, improved quality standards, prevention of unqualified individuals from practicing, and the standardization of education and training. The study also found that concerns over job security, unregulated competition, and the need for professional recognition significantly influence these perspectives.

The study provides suggestions for future research, emphasizing the complexity of this wicked problem and the need for more comprehensive studies to understand the underlying reasons and dynamics fully. Additionally the study suggests implementing a voluntary certification program to provide professional recognition without imposing mandatory barriers, improving the availability and quality of educational resources.

This research contributes to the existing literature by providing an analysis of the tourist guiding profession in Iceland, highlighting the necessity of regulatory frameworks to ensure high-quality and safe tourism experiences. The study underscores the importance of ongoing research to develop effective strategies to address the multifaceted challenges facing the profession in Iceland and beyond.

Keywords: Tourist guides, tourism policy, regulated profession, license, tourism education,

Explanation of terminology

In this study, several terms are used to describe key concepts and phenomena relevant to the research topic. To ensure clarity and understanding, the following brief explanations are provided for some of the terminology used:

Tourist Guide: is defined as a person who leads visitors in their preferred language and provides an interpretation of the cultural and natural heritage of a particular area. Typically, tourist guides possess a specific qualification relevant to the area they operate in, which is usually issued or recognized by the appropriate authority (The Global Tourist Guide Associations, (n.d).

Tour Manager/Tour Director or Escort: is responsible for managing the itinerary on behalf of the tour operator. Their role involves ensuring that the tour program matches what was described in the tour operator's literature and is sold to travelers. Additionally, tour managers may provide local practical information to enhance the traveler's experience.

It's important to note that while tour managers may also work as tourist guides, they may not necessarily possess the same qualifications or licenses required for guiding in specific areas. Their eligibility to work in particular regions depends on meeting the necessary requirements or legal obligations, which may vary depending on the location (The Global Tourist Guide Associations, (n.d).

Tourism policy: Tourism policy comprises a collection of discussions, choices, and actions initiated by governments, occasionally in partnership with private or societal entities, aimed at attaining various objectives associated with tourism (Velasco, 2016).

Regulated Profession: A profession becomes regulated when the laws of the country in which it operates dictate certain criteria must be fulfilled to practice it. In regulated professions, obtaining a license or certification from a governing authority is necessary to practice and use the designated job title within that field (Government of Iceland, n.d).

Wicked problem: is a complex challenge that defies clear solutions or boundaries. They are distinctive in nature, lacking a traditional formulation, and their potential solutions are not easily enumerable (Rittel and Webber, 1973).

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1. Introduction

Tourism has been a growing force behind Iceland's economy over the last few decades (International Trade Administration, 2024). In 2023, tourism accounted for 8.8% of the country's GDP, the highest proportion ever recorded. Preliminary figures indicate that approximately 22.5 thousand people were employed in the tourism sector in Iceland in 2023. It is estimated that 9.7% of the total working hours were directly related to the production of goods and services for tourism final consumption (Statistics Iceland, 2024). Among these workers are tourist guides, whose multifaceted and complex roles have been extensively researched and confirmed as crucial to the tour and destination experience (Cohen, 1985; Cohen et al., 2002; Weiler and Black, 2014).

Despite their significant contributions, the tourist guiding profession in Iceland stands at a crossroads. For decades, tourist guides have advocated for legal protection of their profession (Kristjánsdóttir, 2011). They have highlighted the lack of recognition for their roles, the need for accredited tourist guide education, poor professional standards, and their frustration that anyone can call themselves a tourist guide. These issues have sparked intense debates, underscoring the need for clarity and direction.

In this introduction chapter, the research background will be discussed, exploring what it means to be a tour guide in Iceland. The struggles encountered within tourist guide education will be addressed, shedding light on the obstacles hindering the development of a skilled and empowered guiding workforce. Additionally, the ongoing debate about the legal protection of the profession will be shown. The motivation for the research topic will be discussed, followed by the research questions, and finally, the structure of the thesis will be introduced.

1.1. Research Background

The process of becoming a tourist guide in Iceland is characterized by its simplicity and lack of formal regulation. Unlike in some countries where stringent certifications or licenses are required, Iceland adopts a more open approach to the tourist guiding profession (Athingi, 2017). As a result, individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences have the opportunity to enter the field without any formal requirements. This absence of rigid regulation offers flexibility within the industry, allowing for greater accessibility to the profession.

However, this lack of regulation raises questions about the consistency and standardization of knowledge and skills among tourist guides in Iceland. With no formal qualification in place, there may be variations in the level of expertise and professionalism across the tourist guiding sector. This aspect becomes particularly significant when considering the sustainability of guided tourism experiences, as it impacts the quality of services provided and the preservation of Iceland's natural and cultural heritage.

1.1.1. Being A Tourist Guide In Iceland

Being a tourist guide in Iceland requires skills as they must be prepared for a myriad of various situations. The Icelandic weather is notoriously unpredictable, requiring guides to be adaptable and ready to alter their tours on the route. For instance, sudden road closures due to snow, strong winds, or accidents necessitate quick thinking and alternative routes. Many tourist guides in Iceland are hired on a project basis, which means they do not fall under the umbrella of specific travel agencies as employees. Consequently, they are often excluded from gatherings and employee education initiatives organized by these agencies. This lack of inclusion can hinder their ability to access valuable resources and training opportunities that could enhance their skills and professionalism (Editorial board, 2020).

The Iceland Tourist Guide Union serves as a platform and trade union for tourist guides in Iceland, advocating for their interests and supporting educational initiatives. It brings together various types of tourist guides, tour managers and tour escorts. The union works to improve working conditions, uphold legal rights, and enhance the quality of guiding services through education and skills development. Recognizing the importance of guides in communication, conservation, and safety, it promotes the profession, fosters cooperation among guides, and represents their interests domestically and internationally. Additionally, it aims to establish ethical guidelines and quality standards to uphold professionalism and excellence in guiding practices nationwide (Leiðsögn, n.d).

However, by looking at digital news and blogs, it reveals a mixed reception towards the Iceland Tourist Guide Union, highlighting some discontent among its members. While the association positions itself as a champion of tourist guides' interests, promoting educational initiatives and striving to improve working conditions, not all guides feel adequately represented. Some members have expressed concerns that the union does not adequately advocate for competitive salaries and seems to differentiate among members based on their

educational backgrounds in tourist guiding. These issues came to a head last year when the chairman resigned amidst considerable internal drama. This turmoil raises significant questions about the effectiveness of the union. How can tourist guides fully trust an organization that is supposed to safeguard their interests but is mired in controversy and perceived inequities? Such a scenario underscores the challenges and uncertainties faced by tourist guides in Iceland, particularly when the body meant to unify and support them appears to struggle with internal cohesion and trustworthiness (Jensson, 2006; Sveinbjörnsson, 2016; Pálsson, 2024; Jónasson, 2018; Editorial board, 2020).

As any tourism worker in Iceland the tourist guides have a standard Collective Wage Agreements, theirs is based on the Tourist Guide Union terms. The agreement expired in January 31st 2024 nevertheless that is the one they still work according to. The salary structure for tourist guides in Iceland is stratified based on seniority brackets, which are determined by the individual's work experience in guiding and period of employment. The salary grades range from entry-level wages to those with five years of experience, with corresponding basic salary rates. The basic salary for tour managers and tourist guides varies across different salary grades, with adjustments based on the level of experience. Moreover, guides often undertake driver-guide roles, where they both drive and guide tour groups. For driving guidance, a surcharge of 50% is applied, particularly when there are four or more passengers (Tourist Guide Union, n.d). In terms of working hours, the standard daytime period for temporary or permanent employees is from 07:00 to 19:00 on weekdays. Overtime pay is provided for work conducted outside this period or exceeding 7.5 hours per day. The working hours count of 1,650 hours is considered equivalent to one year of experience. However, regarding trip cancellations, travel agencies are obligated to compensate guides if a day trip is canceled within 24 hours of the scheduled departure time, except in cases of force majeure. Similarly, for long-distance trips, guides must be compensated if the trip is canceled without sufficient notice. However, travel agencies have the option to offer alternative trips to guides, and negotiations regarding trip priority can occur, especially during peak seasons. In terms of sickness rights, employees are entitled to sick pay based on the number of working hours accrued over specific periods. This entitlement varies depending on the type of employment and the duration of service with the employer.

1.1.2. Tourist Guide Education In Iceland

That brings us to the tourist guide education in Iceland, where the discourse surrounding it has veered off course in recent years, prompting a need for redirection (Jónsson, 2023). There's been a debate about what qualifies as accredited tourist guide education. Currently, there are four institutions offering education in tourist guiding, some at the secondary school level and others at university standards. This disparity in educational offerings suggests a lack of standardized training and raises questions about the quality and effectiveness of different educational pathways for aspiring guides (Tourist Guide Union, 2011; Personal communication, Harðarson, 2024).

Table 1- Schools that offer Tourist Guiding Education

School	Length	Credits	Curriculum
Iceland Tourist Guide School (MK)	1 year	The program is 37 high school credits.	The program is based on the curriculum for guidance courses published by the Ministry of Education in 2004.
Continuing Education University of Iceland	10 months	0 credits	ÍST EN 15565:2008
Iceland School of Tourism	8 months	0 credits	Curriculum may change according to market requirements
Continuing Education University of Akureyri	9 months	0 credits	ÍST EN 15565:2008
Keilir – Adventure tourism guide training (closed down)	8 months	60 credits at the undergraduate university level.	Thompson Rivers University in Canada offered guide courses in adventure tourism in Iceland (Adventure Sport Certificate)

The Continuing Education University of Iceland and the Continuing Education University of Akureyri, provide tourist guide education however they operate outside the formal school system, although both institutions cite adherence to the IST EN 15565:2008 standard (Harðarson, Personal communication, April 2024). Courses and programs offered by Continuing Education Institutes do not provide ECTS credits and do not lead to a university degrees as their activities are not covered under any of the recognized academic fields of the

Universities, they do also not require an accreditation by the government like regular university (Guðjónsson, Personal communication, May 2024).

In regards to the schools on secondary level, the Ministry of Education and Children's Affairs is responsible for publishing the primary curricula for secondary schools in accordance with the relevant laws. This main curricula serves as regulatory document, offering detailed guidance on the implementation of laws and regulations within the educational system. It covers various aspects such as the goals and organization of school activities, the structure of teaching, and criteria for assessing learning requirements and progress (Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture, 2011). There was an accredited curriculum for tourist guide education up until 2011. That year the ministry introduced a new curriculum certified by the government. The government made an update and introduced The Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Upper Secondary Schools. Consequently, the older main curriculum of secondary school no. 138/2004 was repealed. With this change, it is understood that all course descriptions that were based on the main curriculum from 2004 have also lapsed from the same time. Therefore, it has now been 13 years since the older curriculum expired, and since then, no education provider conducting guidance courses in Iceland has taught according to a valid curriculum confirmed by the educational authorities (Tourist Guide Union, 2023; Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture, 2011).

In response to lack of updating efforts from the Ministry, the Ministry of Tourism convened a working group in 2020-21, comprising representatives from key stakeholders including the Tourist Guide Union, the Tourist Board, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Education and Culture, Hæfnsetur - The Competence Center, and The Icelandic Travel Industry Association (SAF) (Jónsson, 2023). The working group suggested that general guidance studies be integrated into secondary school education, with entry requirements mandating completion of a matriculation certificate or equivalent education, or substantial work experience in tourism coupled with a minimum age requirement of 21 and in accordance to IST EN 15565:2008 standards (Personal Communication, Harðarson, 2024; Tourist Guide Union, 2021).

According to the Tourist Guide Union (2018), the previous mentioned working groups says that the challenges for the tourist guiding education stem primarily from the high costs associated with program operation and student fees, coupled with limited enrollment and a high dropout rate. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding the relevance of regional guidance

studies and the lack of conferred rights upon completion. There is a pressing need for formal recognition and rights post-study completion to facilitate continued education and access to full tourist guiding privileges (Tourist Guide Union, 2018).

Furthermore, it seems that there is a lack of comprehensive statistics available regarding the number of educated tourist guides in Iceland. After quite a lot of investigation, emailing front and back to the schools as well as numerous tourism institutions, the author found out that a total of 1668 tourist guides have graduated from tourist guiding schools between 1995 and 2022 (Statistic Iceland, 2022). However, this total number is not divided among specific schools. In an effort to obtain more detailed information, various schools were contacted via email. Data from the Continuing Education - University of Iceland (personal communication, Hauksdóttir, 2024) indicates that 318 tourist guides have graduated since 2008. Additionally, the Iceland School of Tourism (personal communication, Þráinsdóttir, 2024) reports that approximately 80-90 guides have graduated from their program however they did not divide it by year so an average number was placed in the table here below. As for the program at Continuing Education - University of Akureyri (personal communication, Freyja, 2024), no graduates have been recorded in the past three years due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, 11 guides are expected to graduate under the new format in the current academic year. Keilir – Adventure tourism guide training has ceased operations following changes in ownership (personal communication, Harðarsson, 2024). It is however worth mentioning that the numbers provided by the schools do not align with the statistics from Statistic Iceland.

Table 2 - Summary of the number of graduates from various schools in recent years:

School	2021	2022	2023
Iceland Tourist Guide School (MK)	27	18	28
Continuing Education - University of Iceland	16	14	20
Iceland School of Tourism	20	20	20
Continuing Education - University of Akureyri	0	0	0
Keilir – Adventure tourism guide training (closed down)	0	0	0

In addition to the previous mentioned schools, other institutions and programs also offer various tourist guide courses. For instance, the Association of Icelandic Mountain Guides

provides training programs that include courses in hard ice glacier guiding, alpine guiding, and ski guiding (Association of Icelandic Mountain Guides, n.d.). Additionally, several schools in rural areas, such as Farskólinn á Norðurlandi vestra and Fræðslumiðstöð Vestfjarða, offer relevant courses (Tourist Guide Union, 2018).

1.1.3. The Ongoing Debate on Regulating Tourist Guides in Iceland

The regulatory framework governing the profession of tourist guides in Iceland has been a topic of discussion and concern for several decades. Bryndís Kristjánsdóttir, a representative on the board of the Association of Guides in 2011, highlighted the ongoing issue regarding the validation of the tourist guide job title. She emphasized that this matter has been under consideration since the establishment of the association, nearly 40 years ago (Fréttabréf Leiðsögumanna, 2011), that is over 50 years now. Here below the most recent government discussions regarding the tourist guide regulation and whether the profession should be protected by laws, will be brought to light.

In 2015, Ásmundur Friðriksson, a member of parliament at that time, collaborated with fellow parliamentarians and the Tourist Guide Union to introduce a parliamentary bill aimed at legally protecting the job title of a "tourist guide". He emphasized that this bill aimed to ensure that individuals holding the title of guide possessed a minimum level of knowledge and skills necessary to uphold the quality of travel services, ensure tourist safety, and foster positive interactions with Iceland's natural environment (Morgunblaðið, 2015). Their proposal advocated that only individuals who had completed a state-recognized course or had worked as guides in Iceland for a full-time duration of three years and successfully passed a qualification test would be eligible to use the title of "tourist guide". Additionally, they suggested that the Icelandic Tourist Board should maintain a registry of individuals granted permits, with the authority to levy a fee for such permits (Althingi, 2015).

In 2016, the Icelandic Tourist Board responded to the bill proposed by Ásmundur Friðriksson. For those unfamiliar, the Icelandic Tourist Board operates under the Ministry of Culture and Business Affairs, advocating for sustainable tourism growth in line with government policies. It oversees licensing for travel agencies and day tour providers, aiming to enhance professionalism and consumer protection by requiring license holders to prominently display the board's logo. Additionally, the board actively contributes to shaping the regulatory framework for Icelandic tourism through legislative engagement and collaboration with

governmental agencies (Icelandic Tourist Board, n.d.). Therefore, since the bill's sole purpose was to legally protect the job title "tourist guide" without restricting others' freedom to guide tourists, the Icelandic Tourist Board supported it. Furthermore, the board affirmed its capability to oversee the licensing process (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2016). The bill did however not go through (Althingi, 2017).

In 2017, the Minister of Tourism at that time, Þórdís Kolbrúnar Reykjörð, voiced reservations about legalizing the job title "guide" at that time. This concern stemmed from the possibility that individuals lacking sufficient skills could obtain licenses to work as guides, despite lacking adequate qualifications. The Minister questioned whether the benefits of legal protection would outweigh the potential social costs associated with such a move. She suggested that alternative methods to achieve the goals of legal protection should be explored, such as leveraging Vakinn Iceland's Official Quality And Environmental System. Vakinn was supposed to be a tool to help with establishing contracts with tourism companies to employ professional guides and promoting their use through advertisements (Althingi, 2017).

For those unfamiliar, Vakinn is a certification program for quality and environmental standards in Icelandic tourism and is controlled by the Icelandic Tourist Board. The overarching goal of Vakinn is to enhance quality, safety, and environmental consciousness within Icelandic tourism. It achieves this through guidance, support, and fostering social responsibility among tourist service providers. Vakinn serves as a valuable resource for its members, offering a range of supplementary materials, guidelines, data, and checklists to aid in improving operational procedures and ensuring quality and safety standards are met. Significant efforts have been invested in adapting the Qualmark system to suit Icelandic conditions, involving collaboration with various stakeholders in the tourism industry and specialists from diverse fields (The Icelandic Tourist Board, n.d and Vakinn, n.d)..

Additionally the minister suggested that individuals who have been guiding tourists in Iceland as their primary job for a certain period could earn their rights through a qualification test, demonstrating the necessary knowledge and skills acquired through experience, that is in regards if the certification was build on education. Thus, alternative avenues were explored to achieve the objectives of legalization (Althingi, 2017). She noted that matters concerning national parks are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources. However, the Minister emphasized the importance of imposing additional

requirements on guides operating within national parks. This could involve enhancing their competence and knowledge, particularly regarding the significance, activities, and ecology of the national parks, extending beyond the scope typically expected of guides in other settings (Althingi, 2017).

The debate resurfaced at the Althing in May 2020, initiated by Member of Parliament Bjarkey Olsen Gunnarsdóttir, who posed two crucial questions. Firstly, she inquired whether the Minister contemplated legalizing the job title "guide." Secondly, she raised concerns about environmental and safety issues, coupled with the substantial increase in tourist numbers in recent years, prompting a query on whether the minister considered mandating guides working in Iceland to possess local knowledge of the environment and biosphere, in addition to other relevant expertise (Althingi, 2020).

In response, Þórdís Kolbrún R. Gylfadóttir, then Minister of Tourism (now under the Ministry of Culture and Business Affairs), Industry, and Innovation, reiterated her stance, referencing the strategic direction outlined in the Vision and guiding light of Icelandic tourism until the year 2030. This initiative convened a steering group consisting of prominent stakeholders, such as the Tourism Association and the Association of Icelandic Municipalities. Their collective collaboration resulted in the development of a comprehensive blueprint known as the Vision and guiding light of Icelandic tourism until 2030, outlining the industry's trajectory (The Icelandic Tourist Board, n.d).

Central to this vision is a commitment to aligning tourism's growth with Iceland's values and aspirations. Emphasizing profitability and competitiveness in harmony with the nation and its people, the Vision prioritizes sustainability as a guiding principle. It envisions Iceland as a global leader in sustainable development, where the pursuit of profitability transcends mere visitor numbers (The Icelandic Tourist Board, 2020). The Minister stressed that achieving improved quality, safety, and environmental protection does not necessarily depend on legally protecting the professional title of guides. She highlighted the collaborative efforts behind the establishment of the Hæfnisetur - The Competence Center in 2017, involving the labor market, education providers, and the government.

For those unknown, the Competence Center for the Tourism Industry, also known as Hæfnisetur Ferðapjónustunnar, is a government-owned entity dedicated to enhancing

competence and quality within the tourism sector. Their services are provided free of charge to companies and employees operating in the industry. The center collaborates with economic partners to develop educational and support materials tailored to managers and staff in the tourism industry. They offer guidance and support to companies in implementing education and training initiatives. Additionally, the center works in partnership with businesses, educational institutions, secondary schools, and universities to develop a comprehensive study program for tourism. Their core values of Professionalism, Collaboration, and Solutions guide their activities (Hæfnisetur, n.d). Their primary role is to promote skills and professionalism among managers and staff in the tourism sector, ultimately contributing to enhanced quality, a positive industry image, and increased profitability. They identify educational needs, devise solutions, foster relationships, and promote cooperation in education and training. The center aims to facilitate effective education aligned with industry requirements, emphasizing the tangible benefits it brings. Their vision is to cultivate competence within the tourism industry to align with industry and societal needs, making tourism a desirable career path with ample opportunities for advancement (Hæfnisetur, n.d).

Furthermore, the Minister underscored recent legislative advancements, including a new law concerning The Icelandic Tourist Board enacted on January 1, 2019. This law mandates all trip organizers within Icelandic territory, both domestic and foreign, to develop and regularly update safety plans. These plans encompass risk assessments, procedures, response plans, and incident reports, with a specific focus on employee selection, including guides. The Minister emphasized that these measures aim to bolster consumer protection, tourist safety, and professionalism within the travel industry. Consequently, the Minister advocated for tour operators to assume the responsibility of selecting suitable guides for each excursion (Althingi, 2020).

Taking the discussions back to National Parks. In Iceland's national parks, numerous companies operate tours that includes tourist guides who offer services such as mountain guiding, glacier tours, ice cave exploration, and diving, among other activities (Government of Iceland, 2024). As stated by the minister in 2017, the national parks are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources. However she emphasized the importance of imposing additional requirements on guides operating within national parks (Government of Iceland, 2017), these suggestions came further in light with the ministry steering committee in regards to the new government plan of being leading in sustainable

tourism until 2030. In the first action draft of this new policy it was suggested an educational requirements for tourist guides working in national parks. However after reading the draft, it is not clear whether this only applies to the employees of the national parks or all tourist guides that visit the parks with tourists.

Today there is one national park that has made a policy in those regards. Vatnajökull National Park established a Private Business Policy in 2019. It outlines guidelines for private businesses wishing to operate within the park for example guided tours on the glaciers. The policy ensures that services and accessibility are appropriately arranged, with maximum activity limits defined for each location. It also emphasizes fair outcomes for existing service providers within the park. They have specific policy regarding tourist guides in the area for the businesses that are operating in the park. The tourist guides need to meet specific qualifications according to Harðardóttir, the park manager (Personal communication, 2023 May 23). She says that the criteria is mainly build on the Vakinn in regards to education and training.

1.2. Motivation and Problem Formulation

Having spent over a decade working within the tourism sector, the author observed firsthand the dissatisfaction among tourist guides and the effects of deregulation. As someone who has collaborated with tourist guides, crafted their tour itinerary and navigating crises with them caused by adverse weather conditions or accidents, the author became intrigued by the underlying reasons behind the discontent and the increasing deregulation within this profession. It struck her that despite the remarkable talent and amiability of tourist guides, many were experiencing frustration and dissatisfaction.

Given the absence of regulation and legal protection for the tourist guiding profession in Iceland, this thesis addresses a central problem: to investigate the implications of deregulation on the tourist guide profession in Iceland. The study aims to delve into the challenges stemming from the lack of a structured framework for guiding practices, encompassing issues such as professionalism, quality assurance, and lack of recognition. Furthermore, the research seeks to identify potential strategies for addressing these regulatory gaps and promoting sustainable tourism practices, all while ensuring the delivery of exceptional guided experiences in Iceland.

1.3. Research Questions

In this research, the following research questions will be answered:

1. What are the perspectives of tourist guides in Iceland regarding the legal protection of the tourist guide profession, and what factors influence these perspectives?
 - 1.1. Sub-question : What strategies can be implemented to address the concerns and preferences raised by the tourist guides in this study?

1.4. Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured into six key chapters. The introduction chapter outlines the research background, detailing the current state of the tourist guiding profession in Iceland and presenting the motivation and research questions for the study. The literature review explores the roles and importance of tourist guides, the profession's regulatory environment, particularly in Europe, and identifies gaps in existing research, especially concerning the impacts of regulation and the effectiveness of different forms of regulation such as licensing and certification. The methodology chapter details the research design, describing the pragmatic mixed-methods approach, including data collection and analysis methods, ethical considerations, and issues of data validity and reliability. It also introduces Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to understand the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that influence tourist guides. The analysis chapter interprets the collected data, examining the demographics, educational backgrounds, job satisfaction, and perspectives on regulation among tourist guides. The discussion chapter evaluates the main findings from the analysis. It also provides suggestions for future research. Finally, the conclusion consolidates the findings, addresses the research questions, and offers practical recommendations and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review

This literature review aims to explore the tourist guide profession, what has been said about the role, their known challenges and why they are important to tourism. Additionally, it will investigate existing literature on professional certifications or licenses for tourist guides, shedding light on the importance and implications of such certifications in ensuring quality and professionalism within the industry. Furthermore, this review will provide insights into examples of countries where the tourist guide profession is regulated or where professional certification is required in Europe. By incorporate this literature, it is aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the regulatory landscape surrounding tourist guiding and its implications for the tourism industry.

2.1. The Roles and Importance of Tourist Guides

Being a tourist guide is a multifaceted and complex role, as they serve as frontline ambassadors of a locale, significantly influencing tourists' experiences and perceptions (Weiler & Black, 2014). Tourist guiding is a strategic factor in representing a destination and enhancing the quality of the tourist experience, thus extending the length of stay and generating economic benefits for local communities (Dahles, 2002).

Holloway, the first to methodically study tourist guides, defined their role as information givers, fountains of knowledge, teachers, motivators, ambassadors, entertainers, confidants, shepherds, and group leaders (Holloway, 1981, as cited in Prakash & Chowdhary, 2010). Pearce (1984) further emphasized their roles in navigating geographic terrain and facilitating tourist interactions. Subsequent researchers such as Cohen (1985) and Ap & Wong (2001) describe tourist guides as pathfinders, cultural interpreters, and mediators between tourists and local environments. Recent studies, like those by Weiler & Black (2014), highlight guides' roles in sustainable tourism by promoting conservation and cultural respect.

In Iceland, the Directorate of Education (2023) stipulates that tourist guides must meet stringent qualification requirements to ensure tourists' safety and satisfaction. These requirements include knowledge of travel-related risks, safety precautions, natural and cultural heritage protection, and relevant laws and regulations. Guides are expected to promote sustainability, provide accurate information, and maintain professionalism, honesty, and exemplary customer

service. They must be adaptable, making informed decisions to avoid endangering themselves or others, and accommodating diverse cultural backgrounds and special needs.

Tourist guides are essential components of the tourist experience, helping create memorable and enriching journeys. According to Zhang and Chow (2004), they provide the 'moment of truth' for tourists, capable of making or breaking a trip. Even if a destination's infrastructure is lacking, an adept tourist guide can moderate the experience and create a positive impression. Conversely, a poorly trained or unprofessional guide can diminish the experience.

Effective interpretation by tourist guides enhances visitor satisfaction and contributes to the commercial viability of tourism operations (Ham, 1992; Moscardo, 1998). The performance of tourist guides influences repeat and new business and shapes the image of their tour companies and destinations (Geva & Goldman, 1991; Mossberg, 1995; Pearce, 1982; Schmidt, 1979; Whipple & Thach, 1988; Wong, Ap & Sandiford, 1998). Moscardo (1996) further notes that tourist guiding aims to produce mindful visitors who are active, questioning, and capable of reassessing their worldviews. This is achieved through providing information, ensuring safety and comfort, and creating actual experiences through guided activities.

The profession, however, is not without its challenges. These include job insecurity, irregular hours, lack of a formal regulatory framework, and lack of professional standards (Editorial board, 2020; Pond, 1993). Mak, Wong, and Chang (2009) highlight high turnover rates among tourist guides in Macau due to the demanding nature of the job and relatively low remuneration. Wang (2017) found similar issues in China, with the profession marked by high intensity and low job satisfaction, primarily due to inadequate compensation and lack of professional recognition.

2.2. The Profession Regulatory Environment

The practice of professional licensing has become a common regulatory approach in many countries to govern the tourist guiding profession (Mak, Wong, & Chang, 2011; Black, 2002; Black & Ham, 2005; Pond, 1993). However, in Iceland, the profession remains largely unregulated. According to the Government of Iceland (n.d.), legal protection can take various forms, including restrictions on who can engage in certain business activities or how they can present themselves professionally. There are 124 job titles licensed for regulated professions

in Iceland, highlighting the complexity of the regulatory landscape and its economic implications (Island.is, n.d.).

Legal protection of a specific job involves exclusive rights to perform certain tasks commercially, typically requiring an official license issued by ministers or magistrates. The law stipulates that only individuals who meet specific legal, regulatory, or other requirements can obtain such licenses. This form of legal protection ensures that only those with the appropriate credentials can perform certain jobs (Government of Iceland, n.d.).

Legal protection of a job title, on the other hand, means that only individuals with official permission or recognition can use a specific title, without necessarily having exclusive rights to perform the associated job. This type of protection is less comprehensive than job protection but still provides an exclusive right to the job title in business activities. Often, job protection and title protection are combined to regulate who can perform certain tasks and who can use certain titles (Government of Iceland, n.d.).

Shani (2017) critically examines occupational licensing, arguing that it may not effectively ensure quality and can restrict market entry, limiting job opportunities. Jurisdictions with strict licensing requirements, like many European countries, often have higher standards of professionalism and consumer protection in the tourist guiding sector. However, Shani's study, "Reassessing Occupational Licensing of Tour Guides," suggests that stringent licensing requirements may not effectively guarantee quality assurance and can stifle diversity and innovation in the tourism industry.

Kleiner and Krueger (2013) extensive research on job licensing highlights its significant impact. Licensed individuals typically earn higher salaries, enjoy better job opportunities, and have greater access to retirement and pension plans (Kleiner & Krueger, 2013). However, licensing can also restrict labor supply, leading to higher service prices and presenting barriers for lower-income individuals who may struggle to afford the costs associated with licensing (Kleiner & Krueger, 2013).

Historical critiques of occupational licensing, such as those by Adam Smith in "The Wealth of Nations" (1937) and Milton Friedman in "Capitalism and Freedom" (1962), argue that licensing restricts individuals' freedom to pursue their occupations, disproportionately affecting the poor

and less educated. Recognizing the right to work as a fundamental human right, major intergovernmental organizations like the UN and the European Union emphasize its importance. Article 75, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution of Iceland safeguards individuals' employment rights (Alþingi, 1994).

Cox and Foster (1990) argue that licensing does not necessarily improve service quality. They highlight that the factors influencing service quality, such as practical training and education, are not fully addressed by licensing alone. Additionally, restrictions like advertising regulations imposed by licensing may not correlate with service quality improvements. Studies have shown that increased prices due to licensing can lead consumers to forgo services (Farronato et al., 2020; The White House, 2015; Carpenter & Sweetland, 2022; Norris et al., 2024).

Angela C. Erickson's (2016) research, "Putting Licensing to the Test: How Licenses for Tour Guides Fail Consumers and Guides," examines the efficacy of tourist guide licensing in the U.S. Erickson's analysis of 15,000 TripAdvisor reviews from Washington, D.C., found that licensing had minimal impact on tour quality. Even after the cessation of licensing, consumer ratings remained high, indicating that licensing primarily served as a barrier for aspiring guides rather than enhancing tour quality.

2.2.1. Tourist Guide Profession in Europe

To gain insight into the regulatory landscape of tourist guiding across Europe, it will be turned to information provided by the European Commission. In June 2015, the European Commission conducted an overview of the regulatory framework in the tourism sector pertaining to tourist guides. According to their findings, tourist guiding is regulated in 13 Member States of the European Commission, which include Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain. Additionally, 14 other Member States submitted reports indicating that the tourist guiding profession is not regulated within their respective countries. These countries are Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland. Notably, no reports were received from Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, and Liechtenstein (European Commission, 2016).

However, upon authors further investigation, it has come to light that licensing is now required in Bulgaria (CEDEFOP, 2016), the Czech Republic, and certain cities in Latvia (FEG, nd). It

is also worth mentioning that in some countries, licensing is necessary for specific roles, such as Ski and/or mountain/canyon guides or mountain leaders, which is regulated in Switzerland, Poland, and Sweden. Therefore, when considering all these factors, the total count of countries requiring licensing stands at 19. According to the European Commission's Regulated Professions Database, the breakdown of regulated guide professions across countries is as follows: National park guide in three countries, Potholing guide in one country, Rafting guide in four countries, Ski and/or mountain/canyon guide/mountain leader in eighteen countries, and tourist guide in fourteen countries (European Commission, n.d).

It is worth noting that even in countries where the profession of a tourist guide is not regulated or requires any license, many of them have official Tourist Guide Union where qualified guides are members. According to the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations, or FEG (n.d.), 29 countries in Europe (72.5%) are members but Iceland is not a member. The Tourist Guide Union was a member before Covid, however due to their bad financial situation they discontinued (Personal Communication, Sigurðsson, May 28). Tourist guides undergo rigorous training to qualify, and they enhance their education by attending Continuous Professional Development courses on a variety of new themes and markets, as well as specialized tours. Additionally, tourist guides receive specialized training in disabilities.

Figure 1 – Map of Member Countries of the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (n.d.)



On their page, you can see information about all the members and how “qualified” guides are recognised. They state that their tourist guide members possess in-depth knowledge of their

areas and are trained to prioritize visitor safety and adhere to destination regulations. They are regularly updated on changes in access and regulations. Acting as ambassadors of their cities, regions, and countries, tourist guides play a crucial role in making visitors feel welcome and interpreting the area's specific heritage. FEG emphasizes the importance of area-specific tourist guides by supporting the European Definition EN:13809:2003, which defines a tourist guide as "a person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the cultural and natural heritage of an area. This person normally possesses an area-specific qualification, usually issued and/or recognized by the appropriate authority (FEG, n.d.).

2.3. Literature gap

The literature review highlights several gaps in the existing research, particularly concerning the impacts of regulation and the effectiveness of different regulation forms (licensing/certifications), which was confirmed by Ap & Wong (2001) as well. Future research could focus on comparative studies that evaluate the outcomes of regulated versus unregulated tourist guiding environments, or longitudinal studies that track the career progression and job satisfaction of guides in various regulatory contexts.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Approach

For this study, an abductive research approach was adopted to navigate the complexities of the research questions. Unlike the traditional linear progression found in deduction or induction methods, abduction offers a more dynamic and interactive approach. It involves a continuous interplay between deduction and induction, allowing for the exploration of theories and data in tandem (Suddaby, 2006). By embracing this abductive approach, the research aimed to uncover nuanced insights into the regulation of the tourist guide profession and its implications for the tourism industry in Iceland.

3.1.1. Philosophy of Science

The adoption of pragmatism as the philosophical framework for this study is driven by its flexible and inclusive approach, which aligns well with the dynamic and complex nature of researching the tourist guide profession in Iceland. Pragmatism effectively bridges the often rigid dichotomy between positivism and interpretivism, a division that Tashakkori and Teddlie

(2010) critique for oversimplifying the realities of research environments and constraining the adaptability required for practical investigation.

Pragmatism posits that research methodologies exist along a continuum, with positivism and interpretivism at opposite ends (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This perspective empowers researchers to tailor their methodological choices to the specific demands of the research question, the context of the study, and the practical outcomes they aim to achieve (Nastasi et al., 2010, as cited in Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). Such an approach is particularly pertinent in studies like this one, where the regulatory frameworks of tourist guiding necessitate a nuanced understanding of both empirical data and interpretative insights. Central to pragmatism is the value placed on the practical implications of research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This philosophy prioritizes the utility and actionable outcomes of research findings, allowing for the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods depending on what is most effective for addressing the research needs at hand. In the specific context of examining tourist guide regulations in Iceland, pragmatism's epistemological stance offers significant advantages. It allows for a flexible, adaptive approach to knowledge that rejects overly rigid frameworks in favor of a more fluid, context-dependent understanding (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

Furthermore, pragmatism encourages the use of abductive reasoning, which supports an iterative process of theory and data interaction. This methodological approach facilitates the exploration of new ideas and the generation of insights through continual cycles of inquiry, making it ideal for the exploratory nature of this research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). It underscores the importance of experiential learning and the practical engagement with real-world conditions, rather than relying solely on theoretical constructs or isolated observations. Lastly, pragmatism recognizes the fallibility of human knowledge and the provisional nature of truth claims, advocating for a stance of intellectual humility and openness (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This is particularly valuable in a field as complex and mutable as tourist guide regulation, where new evidence and perspectives must continually be integrated to refine understanding and guide effective policy. By embracing pragmatism, this research acknowledges the complexity of its subject matter and seeks to produce findings that are not only theoretically robust but also practically relevant and adaptable to the needs of the tourist guiding industry in Iceland.

3.1.2. Theoretical Framework and Theory

Understanding the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that influence tourist guides in Iceland requires an exploration of both their basic and higher-level needs. This chapter presents the theoretical underpinnings that guide the study, focusing on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Findings from Idrus et al. (2022) on the impact of employee motivation factors on job satisfaction will also be integrated to provide a more robust analysis. These frameworks help analyze the emotional and psychological aspects of being a tourist guide, providing insights into their job satisfaction, commitment, and professional behavior.

3.1.2.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, introduced by Abraham Maslow in 1943, is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. He organized individual needs into three main categories: physiological, psychological, and self-fulfillment. Basic physiological needs like food, water, warmth, and rest, along with safety needs, are considered extrinsic motivations. Psychological needs, which include the need for affection, love, belongingness, and esteem, as well as self-fulfillment needs like self-actualization, are seen as intrinsic motivations. The theory suggests that human needs are endless and arranged in a specific order. Once one need is satisfied, another appears. Each need is connected to others, influencing our feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and unmet needs are also a strong source of motivation (Maslow, 1943, 1948).

This study employs Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to explore the various needs of tourist guides, from the basic to the more complex, and evaluates if the tourist guides are reaching their full potential from a business perspective (Maslow, 1954). Idrus et al. (2022) provide additional insights by examining the relationship between motivation factors and job satisfaction, further enriching this analysis. This pragmatic approach aims to identify actionable strategies that can be implemented to enhance the well-being and effectiveness of tourist guides.

Basic Needs: Physiological and Safety

The first two levels of Maslow's pyramid are physiological and safety needs, which include food, water, warmth, and rest, along with safety needs (1943). That is confirmed by Idrus et al. (2022). They found that physiological needs, such as air, food, water, shelter, health, sleep, and transportation, are the most necessary. They also found that employees cannot move to higher-level needs if their basic physiological needs are unmet. Better salaries and compensation help

satisfy these needs, as employees work to earn money to sustain their lives (Nurul & Mosammod, 2011, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). When basic needs are unmet, it leads to dissatisfaction and poor performance. Employees may even decide to quit their jobs if these needs are not met (Udechukwu, 2009; Norazmi, 2020, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022).

Safety and security needs become important once physiological needs are fulfilled. These include job security, safe working conditions, and physical safety (Maslow, 1943). Idrus et al. (2022) found that meeting these needs is crucial for job satisfaction. Safety needs can be categorized into personal and collective safety, such as protection of property and personal rights (Azizi, 2010; Guzel & Barakazi, 2018; Genkova, 2021, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). Safety can be interpreted as protection from harm, while security refers to stability and low levels of worry (Martin & Joomis, 2007, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022).

Psychological Needs: Belongingness, Esteem, and Love

At the mid-tier of the pyramid, belongingness and esteem needs involve relationships with peers, feelings of accomplishment, and the respect of others. Once physiological and safety needs are met, individuals focus on love and belongingness needs. Rewards can provide a positive feeling of relief, pleasure, and satisfaction, enhancing relationships (Permana et al., 2021, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). To increase employees' sense of belonging, organizations need to clarify employees' roles, align mutual goals and values, and improve social interactions among employees and with outsiders (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). Idrus et al. (2022) found that there is a significant relationship between belongingness needs and job satisfaction, indicating that social acceptance and supportive relationships are crucial for job satisfaction.

Esteem needs involve the desire for respect, recognition, and appreciation from others (Gouws, 1995, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). These needs are a measure of psychological well-being and emerge after lower-level needs are met (Adawiyah, 2021, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). Esteem needs can be divided into two categories: the need for self-respect, including power, proficiency, maturity, self-reliance, and sovereignty; and the need for respect from others, such as rank, popularity, leverage, acceptability, importance, and compliments (Altymurat et al., 2021, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). High self-esteem motivates employees and positively impacts job satisfaction. People with high self-esteem view difficult tasks as opportunities to learn, while those with low self-esteem see them as problems likely to cause failure (Locke et

al., 1996, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). Idrus et al. (2022) found that meeting esteem needs significantly enhances job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of recognition and respect in the workplace.

Self-fulfillment Needs: Self-Actualization

Self-actualization needs are located at the top of Maslow's pyramid and involve the passion to use one's potential, abilities, and capabilities (Oladayo, 2021, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). When individuals achieve all the other needs in the lower stages of Maslow's hierarchy, they can strive for self-actualization (Dwivedi, 2021, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). According to Maslow, even after meeting lower-level needs, self-actualization is a continuous process and cannot be fully achieved (Heylighen, 1992, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022).

Idrus et al. (2022) found that self-actualization involves reaching one's maximum potential and capabilities as an individual. The success of an organization often depends on employees who exhibit high levels of self-actualization (Gopinath, 2020, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). These employees are crucial for exchanging knowledge within the organization, especially in management practices (Gopinath, 2019, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). Additionally, self-actualization involves becoming a healthy individual, both physically and mentally, which aids in personal growth and career advancement (Chopra, 2021, as cited in Idrus et al. 2022).

3.2. Research Design

For this study, a mixed-methods research design was employed to comprehensively investigate the complexities surrounding the role of tourist guides in Icelandic tourism and their adherence to sustainability practices. This approach combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Lewis, Saunders and Thornhill, 2012).

A survey was distributed to tourist guides across Iceland to gather quantitative and qualitative data regarding their backgrounds, experiences, and their perceptions of regulation of the tourist guide profession. The survey was designed to capture relevant information that aligns with the research objectives. A semi-structured informal interview was conducted with the chairman of Leiðsögn, the Tourist Guide Union in Iceland. The interview provided valuable insights into the perspectives of industry leaders regarding guiding practices, education, and the situation

in the profession. Contact was made with schools offering tourism education, the Icelandic Tourism Board, Vakinn (a government-owned tourism sustainability certification company), Statistics Iceland, and the Minister of Tourism in Iceland. Data requests were made to these entities in order to obtain relevant statistics and information related to tourism education, industry practices, and government policies

3.2.1. Data Collection Methods

3.2.1.1. Primary data

The first step in this research involved reaching out to pertinent organizations via email. These included educational institutions providing tourist guide education, the Tourist Guide Union, Vakinn, The Tourist Board Association, Hæfnissetur, and the Ministry of Education and Children. Additionally, email interviews were utilized as a method of data collection, allowing for efficient communication and information gathering from key stakeholders.

A semi-structured informal interview, known for its flexible format that combines predetermined questions with opportunities for open-ended discussion (Saundres et al, 2012), was conducted with Snorri Steinn Sigurðsson, the chairman of Leiðsögn, the Tourist Guide Union in Iceland at the time the interview was taken, few weeks later they changed roles. Through the semi-structured informal interview, valuable insights were gained into the nuanced perspectives and experiences of tourist guide professionals in Iceland. The interactive nature of this approach facilitated a comprehensive examination of various topics, including industry challenges, opportunities, and the issues that the association is experiencing due to inadequate government policies and the lack of regulation in the tourist guide profession. This was however informal and not used for references, therefore not transcribed.

Following the interview, surveys were disseminated among tourist guides across Iceland to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on various aspects. These surveys aimed to gather insights into the guides' backgrounds, professional experiences, opinions on regulating the tourist guide profession, and utilization of government resources for employees in the tourism industry. The choice of a mixed-methods approach is justified by the complexity of the research questions and the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon being investigated. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, this approach allows for a more nuanced exploration of the interplay between various factors influencing tourist guiding practices and sustainability in Icelandic tourism. Quantitative and qualitative data gathered through the survey provided

numerical insights into the demographics, experiences, and education levels of tourist guides, as well as their perception about the tourist guide profession in relation to regulation.

A Likert Scale is a psychometric scale commonly used in surveys to measure participants' attitudes, opinions, or behaviors. It presents a statement and asks participants to indicate their level of agreement or frequency on a fixed scale, typically ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (Edmondson, 2005; Likert, 1932; Sudman et al, 1982; Vísindavefurinn, 2015). The surveys mainly used a 5-point Likert Scale format, consisting of 49 questions. Of these, 20 were standard questions, 23 were Likert scale questions, and 5 were open-ended.

The Likert Scale questions were categorized as follows:

17 questions had response options from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

3 questions offered options from "always" to "never."

3 questions presented response choices from "strongly in favor" to "strongly opposed."

Additionally, one question included an option for participants to leave their email address for further communication or clarification.

By combining data from various sources, this mixed-methods approach strengthens the accuracy and dependability of the findings, providing a deeper understanding of the research subject. Additionally, it allows for investigating differences or agreements among different information sources, leading to a more nuanced interpretation of the outcomes. Overall, the mixed-methods approach is effective in tackling the complex research questions related to Icelandic tourism and offers valuable insights for guiding policy and practice.

3.2.2. Secondary Data

The secondary data collection process began by conducting an extensive examination of government-owned, operated, or supported websites and resources. These sources provided valuable information on policies, laws, and initiatives pertaining to tourism and guiding practices in Iceland. Additionally, existing reports, research studies and legal frameworks from both Iceland and other countries were inspected to gain a better understanding of the subject matter.

Various types of documents were reviewed, including working and salary agreements, laws, parliamentary bills, news articles, and regulations specific to the profession of tour guiding.

Furthermore, data pertaining to job certifications, licenses, and educational curriculum were also analyzed to provide comprehensive insights into the regulatory and educational aspects of the tour guiding profession.

The collected secondary data served as a important foundation for contextualizing the findings of the research and identifying any existing gaps or trends in the literature. By synthesizing information from diverse sources, this chapter aims to provide a robust understanding of the regulatory, educational, and operational aspects of tour guiding in Iceland.

3.2.3. Data Analysis

This section outlines the methods used to analyze the data collected for this research on the tourist guiding profession in Iceland. Given the mixed-methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

The thematic analysis began with a thorough reading and familiarization with the survey to gain an overall understanding of the participant's narratives. During this initial review, significant statements, ideas, and concepts were highlighted and noted as potential themes. A systematic approach was employed to categorize and organize these identified statements into distinct themes. This process involved grouping similar concepts and ideas that addressed specific aspects of the research topic. An overview of the themes can be seen in Appendix 8.3 The identification of themes was an iterative and reflexive process. As the analysis progressed, new themes emerged, and existing themes were refined or merged to capture the complexity and richness of the participant's responses. This iterative approach ensured that no significant insights or perspectives were overlooked, providing a robust foundation for analyzing and interpreting the data. The responses were reviewed, translated from Icelandic to English, coded, and organized into themes that aligned with the research objectives. The participants were given roman numbers so they could be traced from the research text to the appendix.

The quantitative data, collected through closed-ended survey questions, was analyzed using descriptive statistics. This analysis provided a summary of the demographic characteristics and general trends within the sample population. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the responses to the closed-ended questions. The findings from the quantitative

analysis were then integrated with the qualitative insights derived from the thematic analysis of the open-ended questions and interview. This mixed-methods approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic, with quantitative data providing a broad overview and qualitative data offering deeper insights into specific issues. By combining these methods, the analysis was able to draw on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, leading to a richer and more nuanced understanding of the tourist guiding profession in Iceland.

3.2.4. Sampling Strategy

For the selection of tourist guides, a non-probability sampling method was employed, by using convenience and purposive sampling, with the aim of reaching both educated and uneducated tourist guides. The convenience sampling involves selecting individuals or items that are easily accessible or convenient to the researcher and purposive sampling involves selecting individuals that meet specific criteria or have particular characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying (Hassan, 2024). This approach was chosen as the author had prior knowledge of these places, making them the most accessible way to reach the desired sample group.

The Tourist Guide Union in Iceland, Leiðsögn, played an important role in the distribution process of the survey. The association was approached and requested to disseminate the survey among its extensive network of affiliated guides. This direct engagement with Leiðsögn facilitated access to a diverse pool of tourist guides representing different regions, specialties, and experience levels.

Two prominent Facebook groups were identified as valuable platforms for engaging with tourist guides and expanding the survey's reach. The survey was posted on the "Leiðsögumenn, hópstjórar og fararstjórar" (Tourist guides, tour leaders, and tour directors) group, a public forum with a membership of 1.0K individuals. Additionally, it was shared on the "Lærðir Leiðsögumenn á Íslandi" (Educated tourist guides in Iceland) private group, comprising 973 members. These groups served as effective channels for reaching out to a broad spectrum of tourist guides associated with various travel agencies, tour operators, and educational institutions.

By employing this sampling method, the study aimed to achieve diversity in the sample, encompassing tourist guides with varying levels of expertise, specialization, and affiliations within the tourism industry. This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives, experiences, and practices prevalent among tourist guides operating in Iceland.

3.2.5. Ethical Considerations

The author's position within the tourism industry significantly informs this research. Having worked in tourism for over a decade, she has extensive experience hiring tourist guides, providing them with necessary tour information, and supporting them through various complications such as accidents or adverse weather conditions. Over the years, she has closely followed their professional struggles, participated in their Facebook group, and built relationships with many of them. Although she is not a tourist guide herself, her deep connections and understanding of their experiences add a valuable insider perspective to this research. The author is aware that many tourist guides are eagerly awaiting the results of this study, which underscores the importance of conducting it ethically and responsibly.

As for the participants, before participating in the survey, interview or email exchange, they were provided with comprehensive information regarding the purpose of the study, their role, and the intended use of their data. In the case of surveys, participants were directed to an information section outlining these details, and their participation was contingent upon their explicit acceptance. For interview and emails exchange, written consent was obtained from the participant. Additionally, all participants were assured that any data collected would be anonymized to ensure the protection of their identity. Preserving privacy is paramount to fostering trust and upholding the integrity of the research process.

3.2.6. Data Validity and Reliability

Ensuring the validity and reliability of data is essential for credible research findings. This chapter outlines the measures taken to enhance the validity and reliability of the data collected for this study on the tourist guiding profession in Iceland.

The survey questions were designed to align closely with the research objectives. Questions were reviewed and refined to ensure they were clear, relevant, and capable of capturing the necessary information. The survey was pilot tested to identify any issues with question clarity or survey flow. Feedback from the pilot test was used to make necessary adjustments,

enhancing the survey's overall validity. Multiple data sources were used to validate the findings. This included cross-referencing survey data with secondary data from existing reports, policy documents, and statistical data from reliable sources such as Statistics Iceland and the Icelandic Tourist Board.

As for reliability a standardized approach was employed for data collection, ensuring that all participants received the same instructions and survey questions. This consistency helps to minimize variations that could affect the reliability of the data. The survey was distributed through multiple channels, including the Tourist Guide Union - Leiðsögn and Facebook groups, to ensure a broad and diverse sample. This approach helps to mitigate the risk of bias from any single source.

3.2.7. Limitations

The use of convenience and purposive sampling methods may introduce bias, as the sample might not fully represent the broader population of tourist guides in Iceland. This approach, while practical, limits the generalizability of the findings. This study provides a snapshot of the current state of the tourist guiding profession in Iceland. Longitudinal data would be necessary to assess changes over time and better understand the impact of regulatory changes or industry developments. While secondary data was used to supplement the survey findings, there are gaps in the available data, particularly regarding the changes or effects, before and after regulation of tourist guide profession in other countries.

The author highlights that the ministries have undergone several changes over the years, not only in leadership but also in their names and roles. The author has made efforts to track these changes as accurately as possible.

4. Analysis

The previous chapters have shed light on the complex regulatory framework governing the profession of tourist guides in Iceland and that it has been a longstanding subject of discussion and concern, stretching across several decades. Central to this ongoing discourse is the official recognition of the tourist guide job profession and tourist guides find themselves frustrated by the lack of recognition and support. Adding to these challenges is the lack of accredited education for guides and the absence of industry quality standards. This regulatory gap creates uncertainty for them and allows anyone to call themselves a tourist guide and take visitors around the country. As a result, they believe there are many "pirate" tourist guides working in Iceland, who often don't pay taxes and lack a thorough understanding of the country.

In this analysis chapter, the different perspectives and experiences of the tourist guides who participated in the survey will be explored. The aim is to investigate and answer the following research question:

What are the perspectives of tourist guides in Iceland regarding the legal protection of the tourist guide profession, and what factors influence these perspectives?

This starts by looking at their years in the profession and educational background to understand the demographic profile of tourist guides in Iceland. Then their satisfaction with salaries and workload will be investigated, as well as their preferences for tour frequency. The analysis also addresses the lack of official statistics on guided tours in Iceland and the impact of this missing data. Further the regulation of the tourist guide profession will be analyzed, comparing the participants' views with existing literature on the effectiveness of regulatory measures. The analysis extends to the perceptions of tourist guides regarding competency standards, including debates on the qualifications necessary for effective guiding, licensing requirements for operating in protected areas, and other relevant considerations. Finally, the utilization of government-endorsed tools and resources by tourist guides will be analyzed.

4.1. Tourist Guide Profile

The analysis chapter begins by examining the demographic composition of the survey participants, unveiling concerning insights into the tourist guide profession in Iceland. Out of 160 participants, the data highlights a significant prevalence of older individuals, with 86.2% belonging to the 50 years or older age bracket. Within this group, 16.2% were aged 70 or above,

showcasing a substantial representation of experienced guides in the senior age category. Furthermore, 42.5% fell within the 60-69 age range, underscoring the predominance of older individuals within the profession.

Table 3 - Survey question regarding age span

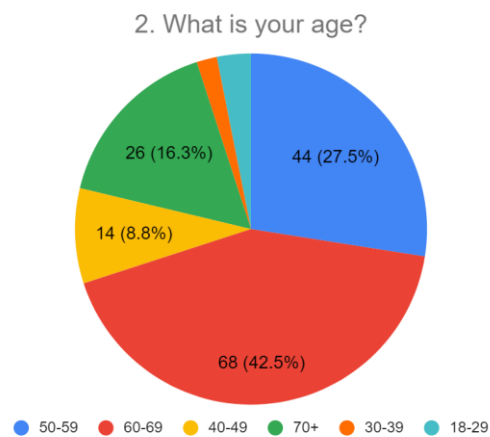
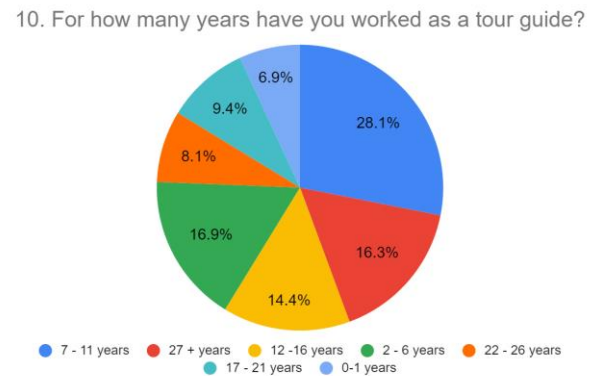


Table 4 - Survey question regarding work experience



The high number of older individuals in the tourist guide profession in Iceland is concerning and raises questions about why that is happening. This lack of young talent makes the author wonder if being a tourist guide is seen as an unattractive career choice for the younger generation. The survey data as well indicates a concerning trend of limited recruitment of new tourist guides. Only 6.9% of participants reported having worked as tourist guides for 0-1 years, suggesting a scarcity of newcomers entering the profession. This finding raises questions about the factors contributing to the low recruitment rates and the potential implications for the sustainability of the profession. Despite the diverse opportunities available in the tourism industry, the data reveals a reluctance among the youth to pursue tourist guiding professions. According to online articles and news, several factors contribute to the lack of interest. The profession is often seen as physically demanding, financially unstable, and affected by seasonal changes, making it less appealing. Additionally, the romanticized image of the job as glamorous and adventurous often contrasts with its reality, leading to disappointment among those considering it as a career. Further insights from current guides who participated in the survey highlight the lack of recognition as a tourist guide and the differentiation between educated and uneducated guides within the industry. This issue is exacerbated by the absence of a specific accredited education program for tourist guides, which will be discussed further

in this research. The discrepancy extends to salary and other aspects of the profession, indicating a need for greater professionalization and standardization. This can all be seen by looking at online articles and news, they show that tourist guides are very vocal about the challenges of their profession, which may discourage many from pursuing this career path (Jensson, 2006; Sveinbjörnsson, 2016; Visir, 2024; Jónasson, 2018; Editorial board, 2020).

As a young tourism professional, the author can confirm that the challenges of the tourist guide profession do not appeal to her. Although she would love to travel around and show travelers the beautiful country, these struggles, combined with the negative articles and blogs by tourist guides themselves, make her believe that this is not an attractive profession.

4.2. Legal Protections for Tourist Guide Professions

In this section, the enduring challenges surrounding the regulatory framework governing the profession of tourist guides in Iceland will be addressed. Over several decades, this framework has been a subject of ongoing discussion and concern, particularly concerning the validation of the tourist guide job title, which has lacked official recognition. This absence of validation has created a challenging environment for practitioners, they believe it is impacting professionalism and they need quality assurance. Frustration at the lack of recognition and support has been expressed by tourist guides.

The participants were asked two closed ended questions regarding the legal protections for the tourist guiding profession:

"Are you in favor or against the job of guide being protected by law?"

"Are you in favor or against the job title being legally protected?"

The majority of participants expressed support for both the job of guide and the job title being protected by law. Specifically, 71.3% of participants strongly favored legal protection for the job of guide, while 75.6% expressed strong support for legally protecting the job title. These findings suggest a clear inclination towards regulatory measures within the tourist guide community.

Table 5 - Survey question regarding regulation

Question	1) strongly in favor	2) somewhat in favor	3) moderate	4) somewhat opposed	5) strongly opposed
21. Are you in favor or against the job of guide being protected by law?	71.3%	10.6%	11.3%	1.3%	5.6%
22. Are you in favor or against the job title being legally protected?	75.6%	8.1%	10.0%	1.3%	5.0%

While a significant proportion of participants expressed strong support for legal protections, a minority held contrasting views. Approximately 5.6% of participants were strongly opposed to legal protection for the job of guide, and 5.0% expressed similar opposition towards legally protecting the job title. These conflicting opinions underscore the complexity of the issue and the need for nuanced policy considerations.

Additionally, participants were given the opportunity to share their thoughts and speculations on the legal protection of the tourist guiding profession through an optional open-answer question to deepen our understanding of their choice whether they are in favor or not in favor of the profession being protected by laws. Of the participants, 48 chose to provide insights through this avenue, offering valuable qualitative perspectives on the matter. The answers can be seen in whole in the 8.3, however 2 answers were taken out due to privacy reasons. Several participants expressed concerns about the prevalence of unqualified individuals entering the tourist guiding profession, citing instances where low wages and tax regulations enabled inexperienced guides to compete with trained professionals. Safety of tourists, the provision of accurate information about Iceland's culture and environment, and the preservation of the country's natural heritage were addressed. The perceived lack of recognition and respect for educated guides was a recurring theme, with participants lamenting the dilution of the profession's standards and prestige. Interestingly, some participants drew comparisons with other European countries that have implemented regulations for the tourist guiding profession, suggesting that Iceland should follow suit.

“I think if other nations can control who gets on the bus and guides, so should we. This is not a question of whether it is possible, but whether there is a will for it. It is time to do this properly, because nature feels for the current arrangement and it cannot be luck if Iceland's reputation is good.” (Participant XXXV)

The survey also explored tourist guides' opinions on whether tourist guides should hold a concession or license to operate in nature reserves and locations listed as World Heritage Sites. This question aimed to assess whether limiting licenses to specific locations would be sufficient.

Table 6 - Survey question regarding concession/licenses in specific sites

Question	1) strongly disagree	2) rather disagree	3) neither agree nor disagree	4) rather agree	5) strongly agree
32. Guides should hold a concession/license to operate in nature reserves and locations listed as World Heritage Sites	10.0%	11.3%	30.0%	20.6%	28.1%

The responses revealed a range of perspectives among the participants. A significant portion (30.0%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, indicating uncertainty or a lack of strong opinion. However, a sizable percentage of participants (28.1%) expressed agreement with the proposal, suggesting support for regulating guiding activities in these protected areas through licensing or concessions. Conversely, a smaller percentage of participants (21.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, reflecting reservations or opposition to imposing such requirements on guides.

This was also expressed in open-ended answers:

*“Would be enough to just have legal protection within national parks in the beginning”
(Participant XXXVI)*

This discussion has been addressed earlier in the background chapter, particularly in the context of the government plan "Leading in Sustainable Tourism in Iceland, 2030." Vatnajökull National Park has begun to establish qualifications and skills requirements for tourist guides working for companies within the park. However, the author questions why these requirements are limited to national parks and do not extend to all nature reserve sites. The legality of the parks' authority to enforce such regulations and impose fines for non-compliance is unclear. Additionally, it is uncertain whether independent tourist guides, not affiliated with companies within the park, are subject to these requirements or if they can operate without any permissions. This regulatory ambiguity raises concerns about the overall effectiveness and enforcement of these measures in ensuring sustainable tourism practices across all protected areas in Iceland.

The tourist guides were also asked whether there should be a standardized script or handbook provided to guides outlining appropriate information and protocols for visits to nature reserves and World Heritage Sites.

Table 7 - Survey question regarding scripts or handbooks

Question	1) strongly disagree	2) rather disagree	3) neither agree nor disagree	4) rather agree	5) strongly agree
33. There should be a standardized script or handbook provided to guides outlining appropriate information and protocols for visits to nature reserves and World Heritage Sites	7.5%	5.0%	28.7%	25.6%	33.1%

The responses once again reflect a diversity of opinions. A considerable proportion of participants (33.1%) expressed agreement with the proposal, signaling their support for standardizing guiding practices and ensuring consistency in the information provided to visitors. In contrast, a smaller percentage of participants (12.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, suggesting reservations or skepticism about the necessity or effectiveness of such standardized guidelines. Moreover, a significant portion of participants (28.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, indicating a degree of uncertainty or ambivalence on the issue.

It could be argued whether this is something that the tourist guides want or need, no one expressed their thoughts about this in the open-ended questions. However if this information is missing and they desire more comprehensive guidance, it suggests a potential need for standardized scripts or handbooks outlining appropriate information and protocols for visits to nature reserves and World Heritage Sites. The question is though, who is the one that should prepare those scripts and should they be available for all? That might be beneficial for all in regards that everyone would be following the same information.

4.3. Tourist Guide Education in Iceland

As mentioned in the background chapter, recent discussions have highlighted changes in tourist guide education, suggesting a need for reevaluation (Jónsson, 2023). The standards for accredited tourist guide education are still being debated. Currently, four institutions offer

tourist guiding education at different levels, from secondary school to university (Personal communication, Harðarson, 2024). However, in 2011, the Ministry of Education and Children's Affairs introduced a new government-accredited curriculum, leading to the revocation of the previous main curriculum of secondary school no. 138/2004. Consequently, all course descriptions based on the old curriculum became outdated, representing a gap of 13 years since its expiration. Since then, no educational provider offering guidance courses in Iceland has adhered to a valid curriculum approved by educational authorities (The Tourist Guide Union, 2023). However, after investigation, the education at the University Continuing learning is a valid education even though it is not “accredited” by the government as according to laws, individual courses do not need the government's approval (Guðjónsson, Personal communication, May 2024). Those are taught in accordance to the ÍST EN 15565:2008 standards, however, it looks like they do not give one any credits after graduation.

This disparity in educational offerings not only highlights a lack of standardized training but also raises concerns about the effectiveness and consistency of various educational pathways for aspiring guides. Additionally, it contributes to misinformation within the industry. For example, a representative from Hæfnissetur provided inaccurate information when he was questioned for this research, suggesting that only one institution, the Iceland Tourist Guide School (MK), offers formal secondary-level education (Personal communication, Harðarson, 2024). However, upon verification with the Government of Education and Children, it was confirmed that this school lacks accredited tourist guide education, therefore it was confirmed that there is no tourist guide education accredited by the government (Personal Communication, Þóra Þórðardóttir, 2024).

Continue looking into the backgrounds of the tourist guides who participated in the survey, an overwhelming majority, comprising 90.6% of participants, reported having received tourist guide education, highlighting a dedication to professional development within the industry as education is not mandatory to be a tourist guide nevertheless they decided to obtain one. Additionally, a notable proportion of participants possessed educational qualifications beyond tourist guiding, with 38.8% holding bachelor's degrees and 35.6% having master's degrees. Remarkably, two participants even held doctoral degrees, indicating a diverse array of academic achievements within the tourist guide community.

Table 9 - Survey question regarding Tourist Guide Education

4. Do you have tour guide education?

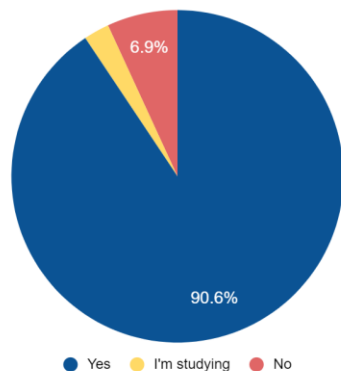
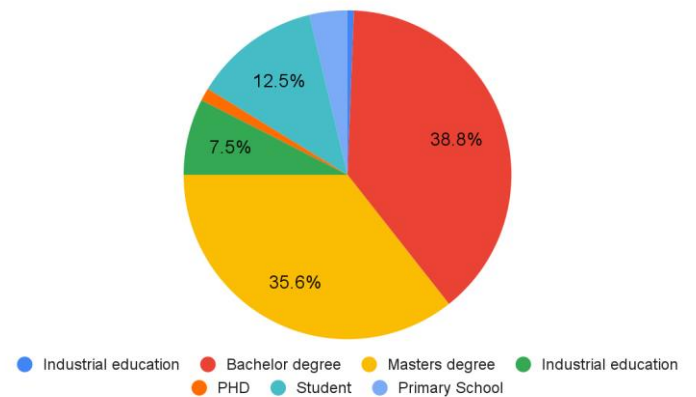


Table 8 - Survey question regarding education

3. What is your highest education (excluding tour guiding)



The prevalence of tourist guide education among participants, coupled with the significant proportion holding higher education qualifications beyond tourist guiding, invites a contemplation of the motivations driving the pursuit of additional education. While tourist guide education signals a commitment to professional growth within the field, the presence of bachelor's, master's, and even doctoral degrees suggests a multifaceted approach to career preparation among tourist guides. This prompts intriguing questions about the underlying motivations for acquiring additional qualifications.

It becomes evident that while there is a willingness to pursue tourist guide education, there are concerns about the recognition of their qualifications by government authorities. Despite investing time and effort into acquiring relevant skills, there is frustration surrounding the acceptance and validation of their education within the broader regulatory framework. This discrepancy between educational attainment and official recognition highlights the need for alignment between educational institutions and government regulations to ensure that tourist guides receive the recognition they deserve.

The study also examined tourist guides' opinions on whether uneducated guides can provide comprehensive knowledge of Iceland, effectively share information, maintain professionalism, and ensure visitor safety during guided tours. This inquiry revealed a diverse range of viewpoints among participants.

Table 10 - Survey question regarding uneducated tourist guides

Question	1) strongly disagree	2) rather disagree	3) neither agree nor disagree	4) rather agree	5) strongly agree
26. Uneducated guide can ensure a comprehensive knowledge of Iceland, effective information sharing, professionalism, and visitor safety during a guided tour around the country	10.6%	11.3%	30.6%	28.1%	19.4%

A notable portion of participants (30.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, indicating a degree of uncertainty or ambivalence regarding the abilities of uneducated guides. This suggests that a significant segment of the population may not hold strong opinions on this matter, possibly due to a lack of familiarity with the qualifications and capabilities of uneducated guides.

However, a sizable proportion of participants (28.1%) expressed agreement with the notion that uneducated guides can ensure comprehensive knowledge, effective information sharing, professionalism, and visitor safety during guided tours in Iceland. This suggests that there is a subset of participants who believe that formal education may not be a prerequisite for delivering high-quality tours, and that uneducated guides may possess the necessary skills and expertise to provide satisfactory experiences to visitors.

Conversely, a smaller percentage of participants (21.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating skepticism or disbelief in the ability of uneducated guides to fulfill the various aspects of guiding effectively. This suggests that there are concerns among some participants regarding the qualifications and preparedness of uneducated guides to deliver tours that meet the standards of knowledge, professionalism, and safety expected by visitors.

The participants express nuanced views regarding the role of formal education in tourist guiding in open ended questions.

“Many of our best guides are not educated tourist guides.” (Participant LXII)

*“The legal protection of the profession must be based on competence, not degrees.”
(Participant LXIII)*

“Education is not everything. And the question is whether the education offered is necessarily the best.” (Participant XXXVIII)

They acknowledge that while education is important, it may not be the sole determinant of a guide's competence. They imply that practical experience, natural aptitude, and other qualities may be more crucial than formal education in determining the quality of a guide's services. This viewpoint challenges the assumption that formal education is always necessary for success in the tourist guiding profession. They also question the quality and effectiveness of existing educational programs, suggesting that they may not adequately prepare guides for the diverse challenges they encounter in the field. This viewpoint emphasizes the need for continuous improvement and evaluation of tourist guide education programs to ensure they meet the evolving needs of the profession.

“Sensitive and often dangerous nature calls for knowledge.” (Participant XXXVII)

Here they are suggesting that the nature of tourist guiding, particularly in Iceland with its diverse and sometimes hazardous landscapes, requires guides to possess a deep understanding and awareness of their surroundings. This might imply that formal education may be important in equipping guides with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate and interpret these environments safely, however, this could also mean that it is enough to have the knowledge, not necessarily education.

Here are few examples from the open-ended questions:

“There is a need for standardized guidelines for training” (Participant XXXIX)

“If the number of trained guides is to increase, the course should be simplified and shortened. People remember very little of what they are sent to learn, after “graduating”” (Participant LXVII)

“It is then necessary to offer a cheap and simple vocational assessment for the uneducated with decades of experience” (Participant LXVIII)

“It can also be based on recognition in relation to defined areas/places and valid not beyond that. It is important to raise the standard and keep the professionals better, special education also needs to be evaluated.” (Participant XLI)

By analysing the open-ended responses it shows a clear call for reforms in the tourist guide training and certification process in Iceland. Key issues include the need for uniform standards, adjustments to training program length and content, recognition of experiential learning, and the introduction of specialized training modules. Addressing these concerns would not only enhance the professional development of tourist guides but also contribute to the sustainability and competitiveness of Iceland's tourism industry.

Further investigation into the perceptions of tourist guides reveals insights regarding the qualification of individuals not educated as guides in Iceland or familiar with Icelandic conditions to guide in the country, as well as the necessity for trained guides from Iceland to accompany them.

Table 11 - Survey question regarding "unqualified" guides.

Question	1) strongly disagree	2) rather disagree	3) neither agree nor disagree	4) rather agree	5) strongly agree
24. A person who is not educated as a guide in Iceland or familiar with Icelandic conditions is qualified to guide in Iceland	39.4%	26.9%	16.9%	11.3%	5.6%
25. A trained guide from Iceland should accompany a person who is not educated as a guide in Iceland or familiar with Icelandic conditions when guiding in Iceland	12.5%	5.6%	13.1%	23.1%	45.6%

Addressing whether individuals not educated as guides in Iceland or familiar with Icelandic conditions are qualified to guide in the country, revealed a mixed response. While a significant portion of participants (39.4%) expressed disagreement with this notion, a sizable percentage (26.9%) also indicated that they rather disagree. This suggests a degree of skepticism or reservation among participants regarding the ability of non-educated guides to effectively conduct tours in Iceland. Additionally, a notable proportion of participants (16.9%) neither agreed nor disagreed, indicating uncertainty or ambivalence on this issue. On the other hand, a minority of participants (17.9%) expressed some level of agreement, with 11.3% rather

agreeing and 5.6% strongly agreeing. This suggests that there is a segment of the population who may believe that individuals without formal tourist guide education or familiarity with Icelandic conditions could still be qualified to guide in the country.

The argument that a person who is not educated as a guide in Iceland or familiar with Icelandic conditions is not qualified to guide in Iceland holds significant weight. It underscores the potential implications of lenient regulation within the tourist guiding profession, where virtually anyone can become a guide without appropriate training or expertise. If the government were to permit this practice, it raises questions about the need for establishing guidelines or providing educational resources to ensure the competence and preparedness of guides. However, implementing such measures could also inadvertently encourage more unqualified individuals to enter the profession, thereby exacerbating the issue. It's a complex dilemma that highlights the delicate balance between promoting accessibility and maintaining standards within the tourism industry.

Exploring the need for trained guides from Iceland to accompany individuals not educated as guides in Iceland or familiar with Icelandic conditions when guiding in the country, reveals a stronger consensus among participants. A significant majority (68.7%) indicated agreement with this proposition, with 45.6% strongly agreeing and 23.1% rather agreeing. This suggests a prevailing sentiment among participants that the presence of trained guides is essential to ensure the quality and safety of guided tours in Iceland, particularly when conducted by individuals lacking formal guide education or local familiarity. Conversely, a minority of participants (18.1%) expressed disagreement with this idea, with 12.5% rather disagreeing and 5.6% strongly disagreeing.

By requiring trained guides from Iceland to accompany individuals who are not educated as guides or familiar with Icelandic conditions during tours offers several benefits. Firstly, it ensures that local guides, who possess in-depth knowledge of the area, have more opportunities for employment, thereby supporting their livelihoods and contributing to the overall economic well-being of the community. Moreover, having trained guides present enhances the quality of the guided experience. Equipped with comprehensive knowledge about attractions, history, culture, and safety protocols of the region, trained guides provide accurate and engaging commentary, enriching the tour experience for guests. Furthermore, trained guides play a crucial role in ensuring the safety of guests during tours. However, there would be two persons

leading the group, which can cause the prices to be increased and there might be an argue between them regarding who is the one who is the leader.

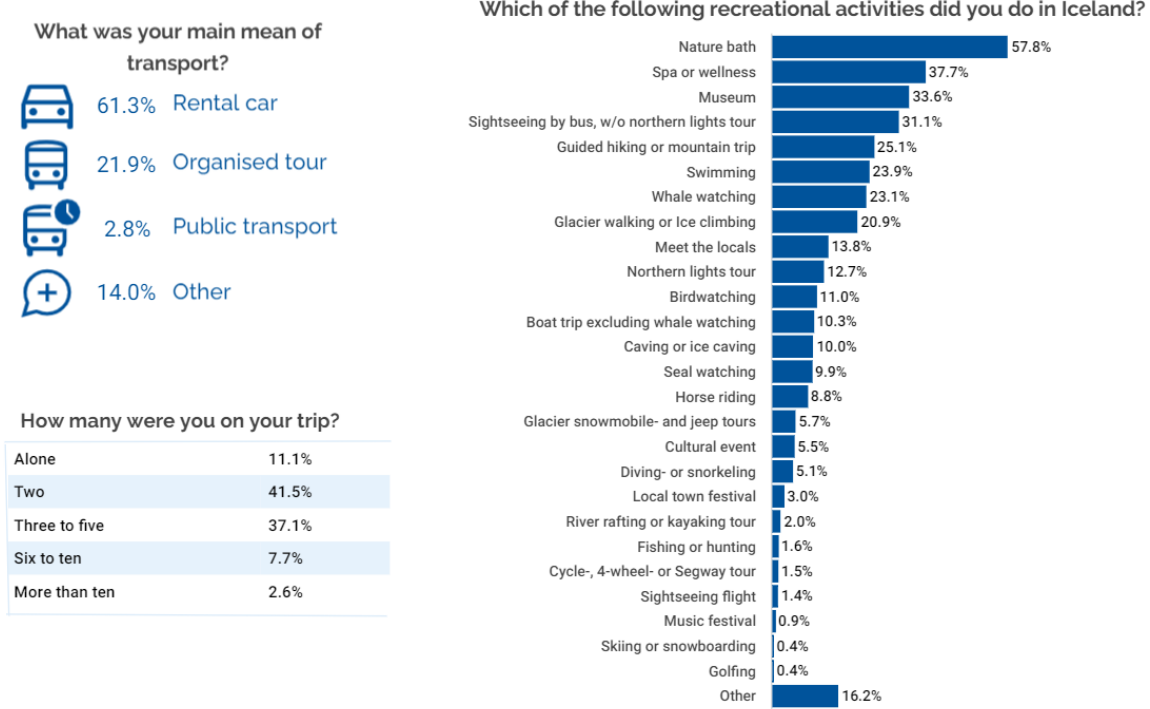
4.4. Tourist Guide Work Load And Salary

In this chapter, the focus shifts to the realm of guided tours in Iceland, after online investigation, the author can acknowledge the absence of official statistics on their prevalence. The aim is therefore to navigate the landscape of guided tours by investigating the available statistics. Further, the analysis delves into whether tourist guides were satisfied with the number of guided tours they conducted, aiming to discern if the issue of "piracy" exists, along with exploring satisfaction levels regarding salaries.

4.4.1. Tourist Guide Work Load

A wide array of guided tours is available in Iceland, ranging from bus tours to museum visits and outdoor activities. However, comprehensive information on these tours across the country is lacking, as there is no centralized entity responsible for collecting such data. The Icelandic Tourist Board includes questions about recreational activities in their surveys, accompanied by a list of options. However, they do not always specify whether these activities involve a guide. Activities such as sightseeing by bus, whale watching, glacier walking or ice climbing, northern lights tours, birdwatching tours, boat trips, cave tours, horse riding tours, river rafting, snorkeling tours, and others may or may not include a guide. This ambiguity raises the question of whether guided tours are more prevalent than realized, and whether most visitors participate in some form of guided tour when purchasing activity tours during their visit to Iceland (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2023). In 2014, statistics showed that over 40% of visitors to Iceland opted for car rentals, while 37% chose organized tours, 16% used their own vehicles, and 8% explored on foot (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2014). By 2021, there was a shift in trends, with approximately 66.3% of visitors preferring rental cars, 29% participating in organized tours, and 12.3% utilizing public transportation (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2022). In 2022, the distribution altered slightly, with 61.3% of visitors selecting rental cars, 21.9% opting for organized tours, 2.8% utilizing public transport, and 14% categorized as "other" (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2023).

Figure 2 - Icelandic Tourist Board. (2022). Travel Pattern 2022

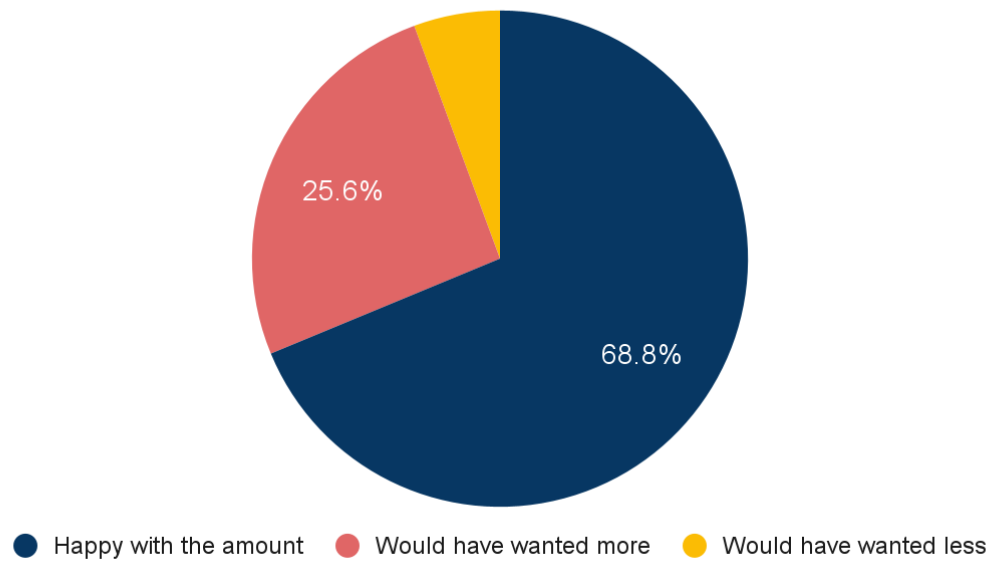


Based on this data, and the 2,223,655 international visitors that arrived at Keflavik airport in 2023 it can be estimated that around 23-29% of visitors chose organized bus tours in recent years(Icelandic Tourist Board, 2023). Assuming these organized tours include a tourist guide, and considering the 31% increase in international visitors arriving at Keflavik airport in 2022, it could be argued that approximately 511,440 to 644,860 guests engaged in organized guided bus tours during that period. Those numbers do not include all the other activities that they might have done with or without a tourist guide, however, it might be a good possibility that the tour visited and Ice cave where there was an ice cave guide or even a ATV tout with a guide, just to mention few.

Returning to the survey to examine the satisfaction levels of tourist guides regarding the quantity of tours they conducted, it was found that the majority of participants, accounting for 68.8% of the sample, expressed contentment with the number of tours they guided. This indicates that a substantial portion of tourist guides are satisfied with their existing workload and do not perceive a necessity for additional tours.

Table 12 - Survey question regarding tour amount

14. Were you happy with the amount of tours you guided or would you have wanted more?



However, a notable proportion of participants, representing 25.6% of the sample, expressed a desire for more tours. This indicates that there is a subset of tourist guides who feel that their workload is insufficient and would welcome the opportunity to guide additional tours.

Conversely, a smaller percentage of participants, comprising 5.6% of the sample, indicated that they would have preferred fewer tours. This suggests that there is also a subset of tourist guides who feel that their workload is excessive and would prefer a lighter schedule. While a significant majority of tourist guides expressed satisfaction with the quantity of guided tours they conducted, there is no clear evidence that suggests that the "piracy" within the industry is affecting the number of tours because tourist guides are saying that they are happy with the number of tours they received. However, it is important to note that the survey did not delve deeper into the reasons why some guides did not receive more tours. Factors such as tour availability, scheduling conflicts, or other operational constraints may have contributed to this disparity. Thus, while the satisfaction levels indicate general contentment among tourist guides, further investigation into tour allocation and guide workload factors is beyond the scope of this study.

4.4.2. Tourist Guide Salaries

The analysis of tourist guide salary satisfaction reveals widespread discontent among guides in Iceland. Over 70% of participants expressed some level of unhappiness with their salary. Around 32,5% reported working overtime to supplement their income, indicating a significant number are seeking extra work hours to boost their earnings.

Table 13 - Survey question regarding salary

Question	1) strongly disagree	2) rather disagree	3) neither agree nor disagree	4) rather agree	5) strongly agree
16. I am satisfied with the Tourist Guide Salary	38.1%	32.5%	20.0%	7.5%	1.9%
17. I work a lot of overtime to get more pay	19.4%	23.1%	25.0%	14.4%	18.1%

According to data from the VR Union, which represents workers in various sectors including tourism, the basic start salary for combined occupations within recreational and tourism companies, without considering education, is reported to be 450,992 ISK. After 1 year in the same sector the salary increases to 464,176 ISK and then after five years in the same sector, this salary increases to 484,860 ISK. Comparatively, tourist guides without formal education in the field of guiding start with a lower basic salary of 444,671 ISK, which increases to 454,605 ISK after one year of work experience. These figures indicate that the VR Union reports higher salaries for combined occupations within recreational and tourism companies than for tourist guides without formal education.

However, when considering tourist guides with job preparation (education or skill assessment), denoted as Salary Grade 3, the basic salary is reported to be 450,618 ISK, aligning closely with the basic salary for combined occupations within recreational and tourism companies. After five years of work experience, the salary for these guides increases to 486,094 ISK, suggesting comparable or slightly higher earning potential than their counterparts in combined occupations.

The analysis highlights a significant increase in salaries for tourist guides with education, particularly those who meet the criteria outlined in IST EN 15565:2008. For guides falling under Salary Grade 4, where job preparation according to this standard is considered, the basic salary starts at 458,920 ISK and reaches 499,868 ISK after five years of experience. Notably, this represents a substantial increase compared to the basic salary for combined occupations

within recreational and tourism companies, indicating the value placed on formal education and skill assessment within the guiding profession (Tourist Guide Union).

Based on data from Statistics Iceland's Icelandic Survey on Wages, Earnings, and Labour Costs (2023), the average regular monthly earnings across all sectors in 2022 were reported to be 668,000 ISK before taxes. Comparing this average with the salaries of tourist guides, it becomes evident that tourist guide salaries typically fall below the average earnings reported for all sectors. This suggests that tourist guides may not be receiving commensurate compensation relative to workers in other occupations. Additionally the Debtors' Ombudsman in Iceland sets out living cost guidelines on their website. A single person without children is estimated to need 213,000 ISK per month for food and drink, clothing, medical expenses, leisure activities, communication, and transportation. This amount does not include rent, electricity, heating, home insurance, and other similar expenses (Umboðsmaður skuldara, 2024). It is therefore questionable whether tour guides can make ends meet after taxes. One potential explanation for this disparity is that travel agencies may opt to adhere strictly to the basic salaries outlined in tourist guides' contracts, without offering additional compensation unless specifically required. This approach allows agencies to minimize costs and maintain consistency in salary structures across their workforce. Drawing from the authors own experience working in the tourism sector for over a decade, it's observed that travel agencies often offer more competitive salaries to their office employees compared to tourist guides. This discrepancy may stem from the perception that tourist guides are not considered "employees" of the company in the traditional sense, resulting in them being remunerated strictly according to their contract terms.

In response to open-ended questions, tourist guides expressed dissatisfaction with their salaries:

"I am concerned that legal protection will not improve tourist guide salaries. Tourism is often regarded as a low-wage industry worldwide, making it easy for tourism companies, particularly in cruise guiding, to replace more experienced guides with individuals lacking knowledge. Passengers' demands are not typically high, which exacerbates this issue." (Participant XLII)

"I'm no longer interested in working in this field due to poor pay, and it seems that anyone can call themselves a guide" (Participant LVI)

"There aren't enough educated guides in the country to meet the current conditions. If the job title is legally protected, salaries must increase, or conditions must change to attract qualified guides or reduce the number of trips" (Participant LXIV)

"Would legal protection of the job or job title lead to higher salaries? It seems unclear" (Participant LXXI)

The statements clearly show that tourist guides feel undervalued, leading to a loss of interest and motivation in their careers. The idea that "anyone can call themselves a guide" suggests a lack of distinction and prestige in the role, adding to their disillusionment. While it's reasonable for tourist guides to request higher salaries, especially if they are paid below the average in Iceland. It can as well be questionable whether higher salaries for tourist guides may attract more experienced and knowledgeable professionals who can offer enhanced and more personalized experiences to visitors. However, this could also lead to an increase in the cost of guided tours, potentially limiting access to tourism experiences for certain demographics.

4.5. Utilization of Government Resources

In this chapter, the utilization of government resources by tourist guides is examined, with a primary focus on Vakinn and Hæfnisetur - The Competence Center. These initiatives were suggested by the Ministries as solutions for regulating the tourist guide profession (Government of Iceland, 2017). The analysis also explores engagement with resources such as goodtoknow.is. The objective is to assess the degree to which tourist guides are leveraging these governmental initiatives in the absence of formal regulation.

Firstly, Vakinn, the official quality and environmental system of the Icelandic tourism industry, is examined. Vakinn aims to establish and uphold high standards of quality and sustainability within the sector (The Icelandic Tourist Board, n.d and Vakinn, n.d). The analysis investigates whether tourist guides are familiar with Vakinn and if travel agencies regularly request information about their education and qualifications. Following this, Hæfnisetur - The Competence Center is investigated. This center serves as a vital hub for enhancing the competence and professionalism of tourism staff in Iceland. Through collaborative efforts between the labor market, education providers, and the government, Hæfnisetur aims to

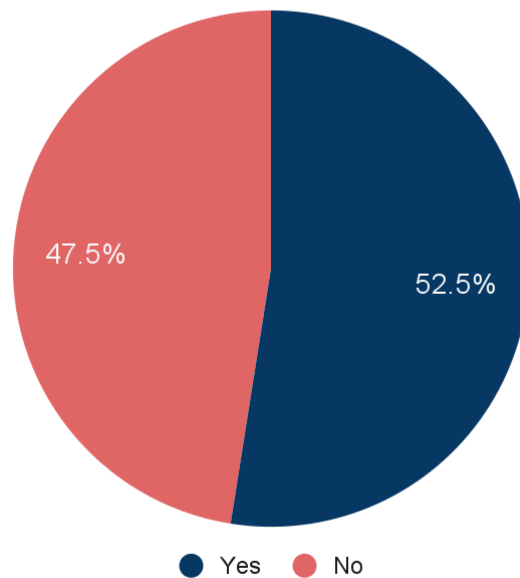
implement comprehensive solutions and improvements within the tourism sector. Additionally, goodtoknow.is, a platform operated by Hæfnisetur, which provides valuable information and resources for individuals working in the Icelandic tourism industry (Hæfnisetur - The Competence Center, n.d). The analysis assesses whether tourist guides are utilizing this platform to stay informed about industry developments, regulations, and best practices. It also delves into whether tourist guides are tapping into the resources and training opportunities provided by Hæfnisetur and goodtoknow.is to enhance their skills and knowledge.

4.6. Vakinn - Iceland's Official Quality And Environmental System

As previously discussed, Vakinn is supposed to serve as a cornerstone system in establishing and maintaining high standards of quality and sustainability within Iceland's tourism sector according to the government. This system was investigated in response to the expressed desire among tourist guides for regulation within the profession, driven by the objective of ensuring elevated quality and security for guests (The Icelandic Tourist Board, n.d and Vakinn, n.d). The survey findings reveal that there is a moderate level of familiarity among participants with Vakinn, the official quality and environmental system of the tourism industry in Iceland. Approximately 52.50% of participants reported having familiarized themselves with Vakinn's code of conduct and quality standards, indicating a substantial portion of the sample population who are aware of these guidelines.

Table 14 - Survey question regarding Vakinn

29. Have you familiarized yourself with Vakan's code of conduct and quality standards?

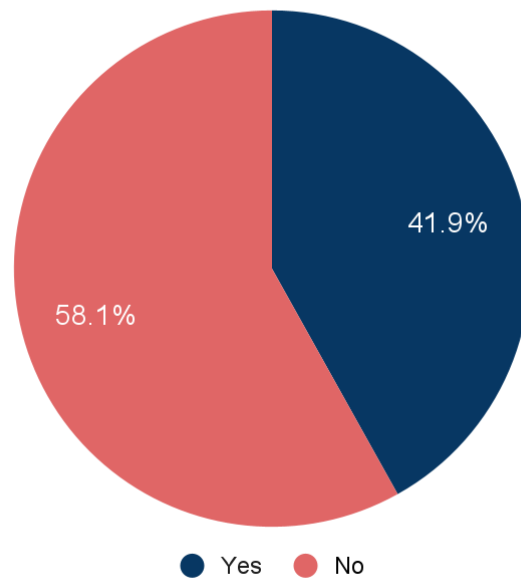


While approximately half of the participants are familiar with Vakinn's code of conduct and quality standards, it suggests that there is still work to be done in terms of promoting wider adoption and deeper understanding of these guidelines. Nonetheless, the acknowledgment of Vakinn by a substantial portion of tourist guides is indicative of a growing commitment to industry standards and the pursuit of excellence in tourism services.

The investigation also delved into Vakinn's specific category for guides and the corresponding qualities required for different types of tours (Vakinn, n.d). Surprisingly, only 41.90% of participants indicated their awareness of this aspect. They were also asked about whether travel agencies requests their information yearly in regards to qualifications or education (for Vakinn) and 70,1% of participants do not agree with that they are asked about it. This as well suggests that a significant proportion of participants (58.10%) may not be aware of Vakinn's tailored guidelines for tourist guides. This lack of awareness highlights an opportunity for increased education and dissemination of information regarding Vakinn's standards within the tourist guide community, potentially leading to improved professionalism and service quality in the Icelandic tourism sector.

Table 15 - Survey question regarding Vakinn's categories

30. Did you know that Vakinn has its own category regarding guides and what qualities it needs for the type of trip?



The findings underscore the necessity for broader dissemination of information concerning Vakinn's standards and guidelines within the tourist guiding community. While a substantial number of participants have familiarized themselves with Vakinn's overarching principles of quality, safety, and environmental awareness, there seems to be a knowledge gap regarding the specific criteria and standards pertinent to tourist guiding practices. This highlights an opportunity for targeted education initiatives aimed at enhancing tourist guides' understanding of and adherence to Vakinn's guidelines, ultimately fostering elevated professionalism and service quality in the Icelandic tourism sector.

It could be argued that the responsibility for the lack of awareness about Vakinn's standards lies with both Vakinn and the companies employing the guides. As previously mentioned, many tourist guides are hired on a project basis and may not be considered employees of the travel agencies they work for. Consequently, if the travel agencies themselves have limited familiarity with Vakinn, it is possible that the tourist guides have not been adequately informed about it.

Perhaps Vakinn, as a government-operated entity, should consider hosting open introduction meetings specifically tailored for tourist guides. This would help bridge the gap in knowledge and ensure that all tourist guides are well-informed about Vakinn's standards and guidelines,

ultimately contributing to a more unified approach to quality and professionalism within the tourism industry.

The survey participants were given an option for an open-ended question about Vakinn and they can be seen in appendix 8.3, these are few of the answers:

"Vakinn needs an international perspective; Iceland is too small, motivation is not high, and it's expensive for smaller companies." (Participant I)

"It's generally an expensive system that few consumers are aware of." (Participant VI)

"Vakinn is simply a quality system utilized by the tourism industry. It is not a law or regulation and does not possess any authority." (Participant VIII)

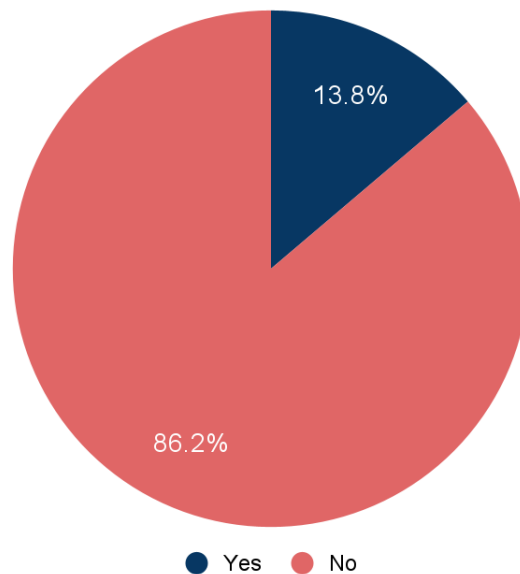
These responses indicate that there are several perceived challenges and limitations associated with Vakinn, the quality system used in the tourism industry. Firstly, there's a call for a more international perspective, suggesting that the current framework may not adequately address global standards or considerations. Additionally, the cost of implementing Vakinn is noted as being relatively high, particularly for smaller companies, which could potentially deter participation. Furthermore, there's a general lack of awareness among consumers about Vakinn, indicating potential gaps in communication or marketing efforts to promote the system's benefits.

4.7. Hæfnisetur - The Competence Center

Then continuing to investigate Hæfnisetur - The Competence Center, which aims to serve as a vital hub for enhancing the competence and professionalism of tourism staff in Iceland. Through collaborative efforts between the labor market, education providers, and the government, Hæfnisetur aims to implement comprehensive solutions and improvements within the tourism sector (Hæfnisetur - The Competence Center, n.d).

Table 16 - Survey question regarding Hæfnisetur

28. Have you taken advantage of Hæfnisetur - The Competence Center?



The utilization rate of Hæfnisetur - The Competence Center, as indicated by the survey results, stands at a mere 13.8%. This starkly contrasts with the optimistic vision articulated by the Ministry, which hailed the center as a pivotal force for enhancing quality within the tourism industry. However, the overwhelming majority of participants (86.2%) reported not availing themselves of this resource, signaling a significant gap between expectations and reality. This discrepancy raises critical questions about the effectiveness and impact of Hæfnisetur. Despite its noble objectives of promoting skills and professionalism, fostering industry-wide cooperation, and elevating the overall quality standards, the center appears to have fallen short in engaging the tourism sector effectively. The low uptake suggests potential issues such as limited awareness, inadequate promotion, or perceived inefficacy among industry stakeholders. Moreover, the disconnect between ministerial aspirations and practical outcomes underscores broader challenges within the tourism governance framework. While policymakers may envision ambitious initiatives to drive industry advancement, the translation of these aspirations into tangible outcomes relies heavily on effective implementation strategies and stakeholder engagement. In the case of Hæfnisetur, the gap between rhetoric and reality highlights the need for a critical reassessment of its operational mechanisms, outreach strategies, and alignment with industry needs (Government of Iceland, 2015).

While delving deeper into the role of Hæfnissetur in contributing to tourism and, consequently, the tourist guide profession, the platform known as goodtoknow.is was examined. This website serves as an informational hub tailored for tourism employees in Iceland, offering a comprehensive repository of essential information and facts about Iceland and its tourism industry (Goodtoknow.is). However, despite its intended purpose, our survey results indicate that the site's utilization among tourist guides is notably low. Merely a marginal percentage of participants reported using the site when preparing for a trip or during a trip to gather information: 0.00% always, 1.90% often, 8.10% sometimes, 11.30% rarely, and the majority, 78.80%, never. These figures suggest limited engagement with the platform within the tourist guide community.

Table 17 - Survey question regarding utilization of goodtoknow.is

Question	1) always	2) often	3) sometimes	4) rarely	5) never
38. Do you use the site https://goodtoknow.is/ when preparing for a trip or during a trip to gather information?	0.00%	1.90%	8.10%	11.30%	78.80%

Upon further investigation, insights from Haukur Harðarson (Personal communication, Harðarson, 2024) a representative from Hæfnsetur - The Competence Center, shed light on the site's target audience and purpose. According to Harðarson, the site is primarily designed for frontline staff who may lack extensive knowledge of Iceland and its culture, serving as a resource for basic information (Personal communication, Harðarson, 2024).

While tourist guides are presumed to possess a deeper understanding of Icelandic tourism, it is evident that there may be opportunities to leverage goodtoknow.is as a resource for new or inexperienced tourist guides. By tailoring the content and functionality of the site to cater to the specific needs of this demographic, Hæfnsetur - The Competence Center could enhance the site's relevance and utility within the tourist guide community. This strategic alignment could facilitate the seamless integration of new tourist guides into the industry while fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development.

4.8. Through the Lens of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

To fully grasp the challenges and motivations facing tourist guides in Iceland, it's crucial to acknowledge the varied needs influencing their job satisfaction and professional growth. By incorporating Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs into the analysis, this chapter aims to establish a comprehensive information regarding how different elements of the profession either satisfy or obstruct these needs. The findings from Idrus et al. (2022) on the impact of employee motivation factors on job satisfaction in relation to the Maslows hierarchy will also be integrated to provide a more robust analysis. The author used her industry knowledge as well as the answers from the guide to form a Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for tourist guides. The needs were not investigated after importances to the guides, the tool was mainly used to see the motivations in relations to the hierarchy and the answers and to see if there was some gap.

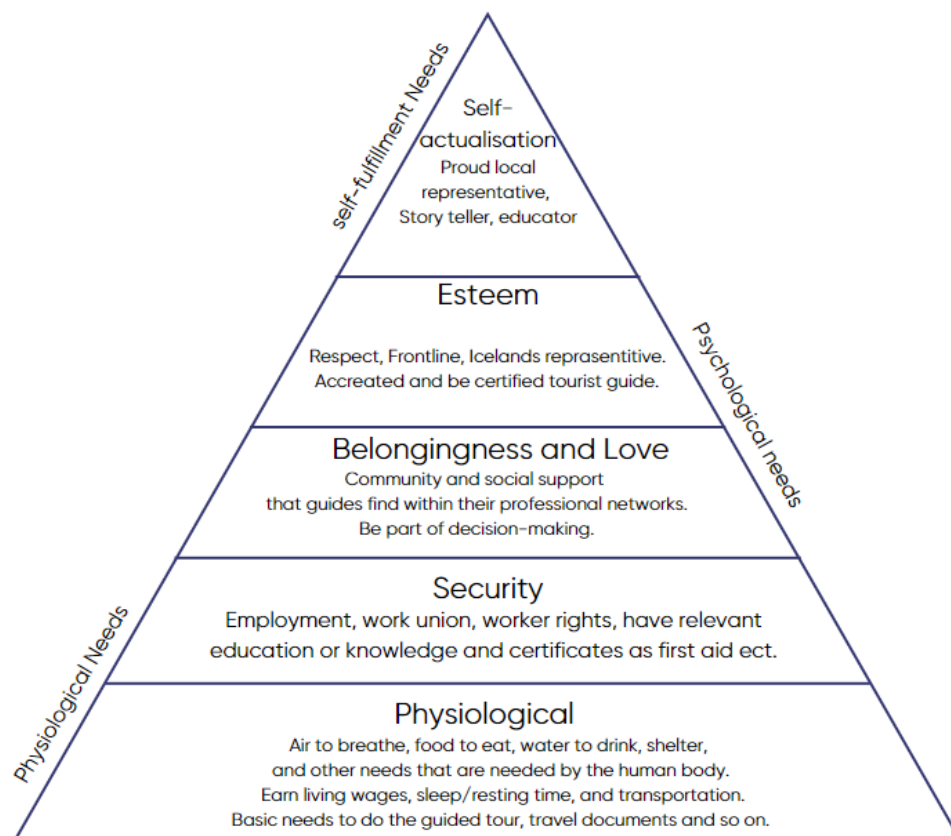


Table 18 - Autor's version of Maslow hierarchy for tourist guides

4.8.1. Physiological and Safety Needs

At the base of Maslow's pyramid, physiological needs include adequate wages and basic living conditions. In the survey of Icelandic tourist guides, income was identified as a significant concern, especially given the seasonal nature of the profession. Inconsistent and often unpredictable work availability directly affects the ability of guides to fulfill their physiological

needs. This aligns with Idrus et al. (2022), who found that physiological needs are crucial for job satisfaction as employees need to meet basic necessities before they can focus on higher-level needs. One survey participant noted, "The poor pay has led to my disinterest in continuing in this profession. It seems that anyone can label themselves as a guide now." This highlights the struggle for adequate compensation and the impact on job satisfaction. According to data from the Tourist Guide Union and VR Union, tourist guides without formal education start with lower salaries compared to those in combined occupations within recreational and tourism companies.

Safety and security needs become important once physiological needs are fulfilled. These include job security, safe working conditions, and physical safety (Maslow, 1943). Idrus et al. (2022) found that meeting these needs is crucial for job satisfaction. Safety needs can be categorized into personal and collective safety, such as the protection of property and personal rights. Safety can be interpreted as protection from harm, while security refers to stability and low levels of worry (Martin & Joomis, 2007 as cited in Idrus et al., 2022). Legal protections for tourist guides in Iceland, or the lack thereof, have direct implications for their safety needs. Inconsistent regulation has resulted in the prevalence of "pirate" guides who lack proper training and undermine the professional standards of the field. Proper legal protections, such as standardized training and licenses, could possibly enhance job security and provide better working conditions, contributing to a safer and more predictable work environment. As one survey participant noted, "Sensitive and often dangerous nature calls for knowledge," highlighting the need for competence and safety protocols.

4.8.2. Love and Belonging Needs

At the mid-tier of the pyramid, belongingness and esteem needs involve relationships with peers, feelings of accomplishment, and the respect of others. Once physiological and safety needs are met, individuals focus on love and belongingness needs. Rewards can provide a positive feeling of relief, pleasure, and satisfaction, enhancing relationships (Permana et al., 2021 as cited in Idrus et al., 2022). To increase employees' sense of belonging, organizations need to clarify employees' roles, align mutual goals and values, and improve social interactions among employees and with outsiders (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011 as cited in Idrus et al., 2022). Idrus et al. (2022) found that there is a significant relationship between belongingness needs and job satisfaction, indicating that social acceptance and supportive relationships are crucial for job satisfaction.

Since tourist guides are typically hired on a project basis and do not belong to a specific company, they are not considered employees. This employment structure contributes to their feelings of isolation and lack of support. To connect and gather, many guides rely on their union and Facebook groups, which serve as crucial platforms for community building and support as observed by the author. However, the survey revealed that only half of the participants are paying members of the Tourist Guide Union, indicating a potential gap in formal support and representation.

Formal education in tourist guiding also provides a platform for guides to build relationships with peers. The survey revealed that 90.6% of participants had received formal training, and many found it crucial to develop a sense of professional belonging. However, they expressed uncertainty about what constitutes "accredited" education, highlighting a gap in understanding and formal recognition within the field.

4.8.3. Esteem Needs

Esteem needs involve the desire for respect, recognition, and appreciation from others (Gouws 1995 as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). These needs are a measure of psychological well-being and emerge after lower-level needs are met (Adawiyah, 2021 as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). Esteem needs can be divided into two categories: the need for self-respect, including power, proficiency, maturity, self-reliance, and sovereignty; and the need for respect from others, such as rank, popularity, leverage, acceptability, importance, and compliments (Altymurat et al. 2021 as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). High self-esteem motivates employees and positively impacts job satisfaction. People with high self-esteem view difficult tasks as opportunities to learn, while those with low self-esteem see them as problems likely to cause failure (Locke et al. 1996 as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). Idrus et al. (2022) found that meeting esteem needs significantly enhances job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of recognition and respect in the workplace .

Legal protection of the tourist guide profession in Iceland can significantly elevate the recognition and respect that guides receive as well as recognition from the tourist guide union. A lack of regulation has led to mixed perceptions of tourist guides' competence, making it challenging for them to gain the respect they deserve. By advocating for the professionalization of the field and protecting the job title, tourist guides can achieve greater recognition and self-

esteem. Survey responses indicate that 75.6% of guides favor the legal protection of their job title, underscoring the importance of esteem needs.

Advanced qualifications and continuous learning are key to fulfilling esteem needs. Many participants have pursued higher educational qualifications, with 38.8% holding a bachelor's degree and 35.6% a master's degree. These achievements contribute to a strong sense of accomplishment and recognition within the professional community.

4.8.4. Self-Actualization Needs

Self-actualization, the pinnacle of Maslow's hierarchy, reflects the ability to achieve one's fullest potential. For tourist guides, this involves opportunities for career advancement, professional development, and personal growth. Self-actualization needs are described as the passion of the person to be capable of using their potentiality, ability, and capability (Oladayo, 2021 as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). When an individual has achieved all the other needs in the lower stage of the Maslow pyramid, they are able to achieve more and more (Dwivedi, 2021 as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). According to Bibi and Hessah (2019 as cited in Idrus et al. 2022), self-actualization is about reaching one's potential to the maximum level as an entity. The success of the organization depends on employees who have high self-actualization. It helps employees exchange knowledge within the organization, especially management practices (Gopinath, 2019 as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). Additionally, self-actualization includes becoming a healthy employee who is free from disease and having a peaceful mind (Chopra, 2021 as cited in Idrus et al. 2022). This could be seen as a proud local representative, good story teller and an educator for the tourist guiding profession. The diverse and dynamic nature of tourist guiding provides ample opportunities for creativity and problem-solving, allowing guides to develop unique tour experiences and innovate within their roles. However, the absence of formal regulations can hinder their ability to fully realise their potential as professionals, as there are fewer opportunities for career advancement and professional development in a non-regulated environment. By going through the tourist guides answers in the survey, it can not been seen that any of the tourist guides have reached their fullest potential.

5. Discussion

This chapter will discuss the main findings from the analyses chapter. The insights gathered from this research illuminate the multifaceted challenges faced by tourist guides in Iceland. The strong desire for regulation, driven by motivations aligned with Maslow's hierarchy, highlights a need for enhanced job security and professional recognition. However, the literature challenges the assumption that regulation will necessarily lead to improved quality, safety, less “piracy” and salary conditions. The educational paradox will be further addressed and in the end of the chapter, the sub research question will be answered:

What strategies can be implemented to address the concerns and preferences raised by the tourist guides in this study??

5.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Tourist Guide Motivation

Tourist guides in Iceland express a strong desire for the profession to be regulated, citing reasons such as quality assurance, safety, and accurate information dissemination. These concerns align with Maslow's hierarchy, particularly at the levels of safety and esteem needs. The regulation of the profession could potentially enhance the guides' sense of job security (safety needs) and professional recognition (esteem needs). However, the literature suggests that while licensing might lead to higher wages and greater job opportunities (Kleiner & Krueger, 2013), it does not necessarily improve the quality of service (Farronato et al., 2020; The White House, 2015). This discrepancy raises questions about the actual benefits of such regulation and whether it addresses the core needs and motivations of the guides.

5.2. The Salary Dilemma

The survey results highlight significant dissatisfaction with salaries among Icelandic tourist guides. Over 70% of respondents expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with their compensation, indicating a systemic issue. According to data from the VR Union (2024), Tourist Guide Union (n.d.) and Statistic Iceland (2023), tourist guide salaries generally fall below the national average, exacerbating this discontent. This situation resonates with Kleiner & Krueger (2013) research, which underscores the potential for higher salaries with licensing but also points out the associated challenges, such as increased service costs and potential exclusion of lower-income individuals (Kleiner & Krueger, 2013). The guides' call for regulation as a means to improve salaries reflects a practical approach to meeting their financial and professional needs.

5.3. Quality and Regulation

The belief that regulating the profession will lead to higher quality and safety standards is prevalent among the respondents. However, existing studies indicate that licensing does not inherently enhance service quality (Cox and Foster 1990; Kleiner, 2006; Shani, 2017), that is stated by Weiler & Black (2014) as well and they suggest further research on the effectiveness. This suggests a potential disconnect between the perceived and actual benefits of regulation. The assumption that formal recognition and certification or licenses will translate to better service and safety may need re-evaluation, especially in light of evidence to the contrary.

Additionally, the data collected regarding Vakinn, Iceland's official quality and environmental system, suggests that it has not been effectively working. Respondents expressed that Vakinn is expensive, confusing, and lacks sufficient follow-up and enforcement. Many guides are unaware of it, and it appears to them that tourists do not recognize its significance either. This underscores the need for a more effective quality assurance mechanism that is both recognized and trusted by stake - and shareholders.

5.4. The Education Dilemma

An interesting paradox emerges regarding education. While the majority of tourist guides have completed formal tourist guide education and even possess additional qualifications, there remains a perception that certification could improve the profession. This is despite the literature indicating that formal education alone does not guarantee higher quality (Paugam, 2000). The emphasis on continuous professional development and practical experience over formal qualifications underscores the complexity of achieving high professional standards in the tourist guiding industry.

5.5. Suggestions and further research

This section presents suggestions for addressing the challenges faced by the tourist guiding profession in Iceland, along with suggestions for future research. Given the complex nature of these issues, a multi-stakeholder approach and further studies are essential to develop sustainable solutions for the profession.

To begin with, enhancing the standards and professionalism of tourist guides without necessarily implementing stringent licensing could be beneficial. Instead of focusing solely on licensing, the Tourist Guide Unions (they are few) could advocate for a standardized certification program that aligns with ÍST EN 15565:2008 standards or whatever the standards that union wants to work after, because as you have seen there are many types of tourist guides and there is a different qualifications for standard coach tourist guiding and then glacier guide. This program should be recognized in some way by the government (for example through Vakinn) and regularly updated to meet the evolving needs of the industry. There might also be a possibility to use Vakinn as a certificate body. By offering a voluntary certification system, guides who wish to demonstrate their commitment to professionalism can do so without imposing mandatory barriers that could restrict entry into the profession. As well, previous research by Black & Weiler (2005) indicates that professional associations may be instrumental in enabling guides to fulfill their diverse roles and achieve a minimum guiding standard (Pond, 1993; Weiler & Ham, 2001 as cited in Black & Weiler, 2005). They have also been proven to play an important role in unifying the guiding industry and enhancing its reputation (Pond, 1993 as cited in Black & Weiler, 2005) which appears to be needed according to the Maslow Hierarchy analysis here before.

Updating the curriculum of tourist guide education programs is another vital step according to the tourist guides. For the secondary level schools the process lies with the Iceland Tourist Guide School (MK). They need to get the curriculum accredited, author did reach out to the school few times but did not receive an answer regarding why they teach after the 2004 curriculum. The Continuing Educations are teaching after ÍST EN 15565:2008 standards and do not require to be accredited by laws.

Addressing the issue of "unlicensed" guides, often referred to negatively as "pirate" guides by tourist guides, requires a shift in perspective. Given that there are currently no licensing requirements in Iceland, these guides are operating legally. Instead of viewing them as illegitimate competitors, Icelandic tourist guides (or the one who represents the Icelandic Tourist guides) should emphasize their deep local knowledge and encourage tourists to choose tours led by locals. To add to the discussion on "pirate" tourist guides, consider that many Icelanders travel abroad in groups with Icelandic tour guides and directors. Should these guides then be considered "pirates" as well? (Vita, n.d.; Bændaferðir, n.d.; Sumarferðir, n.d.).

Regarding the tourist guide salary, a more detailed research is needed than this one covers to get a better oversight of the problem. However it has been addressed that the tourist guides are not satisfied with their salaries, the author's question is, wouldn't everyone want a better salary? However, this research has revealed that their basic salary, according to the union contract, is under the average monthly salary in Iceland. It can be arguable whether travel agencies are only paying the bare minimum or if they pay above that, the author's experience is that travel agencies tend to pay according to contracts (as in the bare minimum salaries). For these reasons, the law protection of the tourist guide profession could be seen as a beneficial tool to get a higher salary within the profession. The author also questions why the working contract has not been renewed and why the union is not fighting better for higher salaries.

Promoting the awareness and utilization of government resources like Vakinn and Hæfnisetur is another critical recommendation. Organizing workshops and sessions for tourist guides can help familiarize them with these tools and their benefits. Collecting feedback from guides on their experiences with these resources will help in making necessary improvements.

For future research, conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impacts of various regulatory measures on the quality of tourist guiding services, job satisfaction, and industry sustainability will provide valuable insights. Comparative analysis of the outcomes in Iceland with those in other countries that have implemented different forms of regulation can help identify best practices and potential pitfalls to avoid.

Studying the economic contributions of the tourist guiding profession to the broader tourism industry and local economies will help in understanding the financial impact of the profession and its potential for growth. Examining the social dynamics within the tourist guiding community, including issues of diversity, inclusion, and professional identity, can help in creating a more supportive and cohesive professional environment.

By addressing these recommendations and pursuing further research, stakeholders can work towards a more professional and sustainable tourist guiding industry in Iceland. This will not only improve the working conditions and satisfaction of guides but also enhance the overall professionalism in the profession.

6. Conclusion

The tourist guiding profession in Iceland faces a complex array of challenges shaped by a lack of regulation, varying educational standards, and issues related to job satisfaction. This thesis explored these facets through the lens of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, examining how different aspects of the profession meet or hinder the fulfillment of these needs. By integrating findings from Idrus et al. (2022), the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction among Icelandic tourist guides and proposes strategies for addressing these challenges.

The research addressed the primary question:

What are the perspectives of tourist guides in Iceland regarding the legal protection of the tourist guide profession, and what factors influence these perspectives?

The main findings indicate that over 70% of participants favor the legal protection of the tourist guide profession through laws. Their primary motivations include the potential for higher salaries, improved quality standards, the prevention of unqualified individuals from practicing, and the standardization of education and training. The study also revealed that the desire for legal protection is driven by concerns over job security, the impact of unregulated competition, and the need for professional recognition. Additionally, guides expressed that legal protection could help address issues related to inconsistent service quality and enhance the overall reputation of the profession. The varying perspectives are also influenced by the guides' personal experiences, such as dealing with unlicensed competitors, witnessing lapses in safety standards, and the challenges of maintaining high levels of professionalism without regulatory support.

And then the sub question:

What strategies can be implemented to address the concerns and preferences raised by the tourist guides in this study?

The strategies suggested by the study emphasize the need for standardized regulations, enhancing professional development opportunities, and promoting the use of government resources like Vakinn and Hæfnisetur.

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a analysis of the tourist guiding profession in Iceland, a context that has received limited attention in academic research. By applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the study offers a nuanced understanding of how

different aspects of the profession influence job satisfaction and professional motivation. The integration of findings from Idrus et al. (2022) enhances the robustness of the analysis, highlighting the significance of basic physiological and safety needs in job satisfaction.

However, the study has its limitations. The survey primarily reached guides with formal tourist guide education, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The absence of comprehensive official statistics on guided tours in Iceland also posed challenges in assessing the full scope of the profession. The responses may reflect a bias towards those more engaged in the profession and may not fully represent the views of all tourist guides in Iceland.

The challenges faced by the tourist guiding profession in Iceland are indicative of a wicked problem—a complex issue with no clear solutions and interconnected challenges that defy straightforward answers (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Addressing these regulatory, educational, and professional challenges requires a multi-faceted approach. Given the complexity of this wicked problem, there is a need for much more research to understand the underlying reasons and dynamics fully. Future studies should focus on comparative analyses of regulated versus unregulated environments, longitudinal studies tracking the career progression of guides, and the impact of different educational and training programs. Such research will be crucial in developing effective strategies to address the multifaceted challenges facing the tourist guiding profession in Iceland and beyond.

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8. Appendix

8.1. Survey Questions

Tourist Guide Survey Questions	Author's Translation to English
1. Ég samþykki að taka þátt í þessari skoðanakönnun ásamt vinnslu persónuupplýsinga minna sem verða meðhöndlaðar sem trúnaðarmál. Ég er meðvituð/að/ur um að ég geti hætt og lokað spurningarkönnun þegar/ef ég kys.	I agree to participate in this survey along with the processing of my personal information, which will be treated confidentially. I am aware that I can quit and close the survey whenever/if I choose.
2. Hver er aldurinn þinn?	What is your age?
3. Hver er þín hæðsta menntun? (annað en leiðsögu nám)	What is your highest education level? (other than guide training)
4. Hefur þú lokið leiðsögu námi? (viðurkennt/óviðurkennt)	Have you completed guide training? (recognized/unrecognized)
5. Hvaðan tókst þú/ert að taka leiðsögu nám?	Where did you/are you taking your guide training?
6. Hvaða ár laukst þú leiðsögu námi ?	What year did you complete your guide training?
7. Hefur þú sérþekkingu sem þú nýtir í leiðsögn ? (sem dæmi, ljósmyndun, snorkl, hestaferða leiðsögn, jöklaleiðsögn, gönguleiðsögn, sagnfræði, sjálfbærni o.s.frv.)	Do you have specialized knowledge that you use in guiding? (e.g., photography, snorkeling, horseback riding guiding, glacier guiding, hiking guiding, history, sustainability, etc.)
8. Í hvaða stéttarfélagi ert þú í?	Which union are you in?
9. Hvernig er ráðningu háttað þegar þú starfar við leiðsögn?	How is your employment structured when you work as a guide?
10. Hvað hefur þú starfað lengi við leiðsögn (sem ómenntaður og/eða menntaður)?	How long have you been working as a guide (as uneducated and/or educated)?
11. Ert þú í öðru starfi samhliða leiðsögu starfinu?	Are you working in another job alongside your guiding job?
12. Veldu þann árstíma sem þú starfar oftast við leiðsögn	Choose the time of year you most often work as a guide.
13. Hversu marga vinnu daga samanlagt leiðsagðir þú síðustu 6 mánuði?	How many working days in total did you guide in the last 6 months?
14. Varst þú ánægð/ð/ur með fjölda ferða eða hefðir þú viljað fleiri?	Were you satisfied with the number of trips, or would you have liked more?
15. Í hvers konar ferðum leiðsegir þú vanalega?	What type of tours do you usually guide?
16. Ég er sátt/ur við laun leiðsögumanna 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	I am satisfied with the wages of guides. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
17. Ég vinn mikla yfirvinnu til að fá meira í laun 1) alltaf, 2) oft, 3) stundum, 4) sjaldan 5)aldrei	I work a lot of overtime to earn more. Always, 2) Often, 3) Sometimes, 4) Rarely, 5) Never.

18. Hefur þú kynnt þér stefnuna "Leiðandi í sjálfbærri ferðapjónustu - 2030" ?	Have you familiarized yourself with the policy "Leading in Sustainable Tourism - 2030"?
19. Þekkir þú heimsmarkmiðin Sameinuðu þjóðanna um sjálfbæra þróun ? https://heimsmarkmidin.hagstofa.is/	Do you know the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals? https://heimsmarkmidin.hagstofa.is/
20. Veist þú hversvegna starfsheitið og /eða starfið leiðsögumaður er ekki lögverndað?	Do you know why the title and/or profession of a guide is not legally protected?
21. Ertu hlynnt/ur eða andvíg/ur því að starfið leiðsögumaður yrði lögverndað? 1) mjög hlynnt/ur, 2) fremur hlynnt/ur, 3) í meðallagi, 4) fremur andvíg/ur, 5) mjög andvíg/ur. Hér getur þú séð muninn á lögverndun starfs og starfsheitis https://www.stjornarradid.is/verkefni/atvinnuvegir/idnadur/idnadur-og-loggiltar-idngreinar/spurt-og-svarad-um-logverndud-starfsheiti/#Logverndun	Are you in favor of or against the legal protection of the guide profession? Strongly in favor, 2) Somewhat in favor, 3) Neutral, 4) Somewhat against, 5) Strongly against. Here you can see the difference between the legal protection of a profession and a job title: https://www.stjornarradid.is/verkefni/atvinnuvegir/idnadur/idnadur-og-loggiltar-idngreinar/spurt-og-svarad-um-logverndud-starfsheiti/#Logverndun
22. Ertu hlynnt/ur eða andvíg/ur því að starfsheitið yrði lögverndað? 1) mjög hlynnt/ur, 2) fremur hlynnt/ur, 3) í meðallagi, 4) fremur andvíg/ur, 5) mjög andvíg/ur. Hér getur þú séð muninn á lögverndun starfs og starfsheitis https://www.stjornarradid.is/verkefni/atvinnuvegir/idnadur/idnadur-og-loggiltar-idngreinar/spurt-og-svarad-um-logverndud-starfsheiti/#Logverndun	Are you in favor of or against the legal protection of the guide job title? Strongly in favor, 2) Somewhat in favor, 3) Neutral, 4) Somewhat against, 5) Strongly against. Here you can see the difference between the legal protection of a profession and a job title: https://www.stjornarradid.is/verkefni/atvinnuvegir/idnadur/idnadur-og-loggiltar-idngreinar/spurt-og-svarad-um-logverndud-starfsheiti/#Logverndun
23. Vilt þú deila eitthverjum vangaveltum varðandi lögverndun á starfinu og/eða starfsheitinu?	Would you like to share any thoughts regarding the legal protection of the profession and/or job title?
24. Einstaklingur sem er ekki menntaður leiðsögumaður á Íslandi eða í íslenskum aðstæðum er hæfur til að leiðsegja á Íslandi 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	An individual who is not an educated guide in Iceland or in Icelandic conditions is qualified to guide in Iceland. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
25. Þegar einstaklingur sem ekki er menntaður leiðsögumaður á Íslandi eða í íslenskum aðstæðum er að leiðsegja á Íslandi þá ætti menntaður leiðsögumaður frá Íslandi að vera með í för 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	When an individual who is not an educated guide in Iceland or in Icelandic conditions is guiding in Iceland, an educated guide from Iceland should accompany them. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
26. Ófaglærður leiðsögumaður getur staðið undir góðri þekkingu um Ísland, miðlun upplýsinga, fagmennsku og öryggi gesta í leiðsagðri ferð um landið 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	An unqualified guide can uphold good knowledge about Iceland, convey information, professionalism, and guest safety in a guided tour around the country. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly

	agree.
27. Ef leiðsögn er ekki í lagi (leiðsögumaður er ekki kunnugur staðarháttum o.s.frv.), telst það sem vörusvik 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	If the guiding is not adequate (the guide is not familiar with local conditions, etc.), it is considered fraud. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
28. Hefur þú nýtt þér Hæfnisetur ferðaþjónustunnar? https://haefni.is/fraedsluefni/	Have you used the Tourism Skills Center? https://haefni.is/fraedsluefni/
29. Hefur þú kynnt þér siðareglur og gæða viðmið Vakans ? https://www.vakinn.is/is/gaedakerfi/ferdathjonusta/vidmid	Have you familiarized yourself with the Code of Conduct and Quality Standards of Vakinn? https://www.vakinn.is/is/gaedakerfi/ferdathjonusta/vidmid
30. Vissir þú að Vakinn er með sér flokk varðandi leiðsögumenn og hvaða eiginleika hann þarf fyrir tegund ferðar? https://www.vakinn.is/is/gaedakerfi/ferdathjonusta/vidmid https://www.vakinn.is/static/files/pdf/Hjalgargogn/nanar-um-menntun-og-thjalfun-fyrir-starfsfolk-leids.m-i-afthreyingu-o.fl..pdf	Did you know that Vakinn has a special category for guides and the qualities they need for different types of tours? https://www.vakinn.is/is/gaedakerfi/ferdathjonusta/vidmid https://www.vakinn.is/static/files/pdf/Hjalgargogn/nanar-um-menntun-og-thjalfun-fyrir-starfsfolk-leids.m-i-afthreyingu-o.fl..pdf
31. Ert þú með eitthverjar vangaveltur um Vakann sem þú vilt koma á framfæri?	Do you have any thoughts about Vakinn that you would like to convey?
32. Leiðsögumaður ætti að bera sérleyfi til að leiðsegja á náttúruverndarsvæðum og stöðum á heimsminjaskrá 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	A guide should have a license to guide in nature conservation areas and World Heritage Sites. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
33. Það ætti að vera til sér handrit/handbók fyrir leiðsögumenn varðandi heimsóknir á náttúruverndarsvæðum og stöðum á heimsminjaskrá, þá varðandi hvað skal kynna fyrir gestum 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	There should be a specific script/manual for guides regarding visits to nature conservation areas and World Heritage Sites, specifying what should be presented to guests. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
34. Aðgengi að upplýsingum fyrir leiðsögumenn er gott 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	Access to information for guides is good. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
35. Ég þarf oft að leita mér upplýsingar sjálf/ur/t fyrir ferð 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	I often need to seek information myself for a tour. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.

36. Ferðaskrifstofur gefa mér góðar upplýsingar fyrir ferð 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	Travel agencies provide me with good information for a tour. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
37. Ég þarf að fara á marga staði/ síður til að leita upplýsinga fyrir ferð eða meðan á ferð stendur 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	I need to visit many places/sites to seek information for a tour or during a tour. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
38. Notar þú síðuna https://goodtoknow.is/ við undurbúning fyrir ferð eða á meðan ferð stendur til að afla þér upplýsinga ? 1) alltaf, 2) oft, 3) stundum, 4) sjaldan 5)aldrei	Do you use the site https://goodtoknow.is/ for preparation for a tour or during a tour to gather information? Always, 2) Often, 3) Sometimes, 4) Rarely, 5) Never.
39. Notar þú Vefsjá Ferðamálastofu við undurbúning fyrir ferð eða á meðan ferð stendur til að afla þér upplýsinga ? https://www.ferdamalastofa.is/is/um-ferdamalastofu/frettir/ny-vefsja-fyrir-kortagogn-ferdamalastofu 1) alltaf, 2) oft, 3) stundum, 4) sjaldan 5)aldrei	Do you use the Travel Agency's web viewer for preparation for a tour or during a tour to gather information? https://www.ferdamalastofa.is/is/um-ferdamalastofu/frettir/ny-vefsja-fyrir-kortagogn-ferdamalastofu Always, 2) Often, 3) Sometimes, 4) Rarely, 5) Never.
40. Hvar leitar þú helstu upplýsingar fyrir eða á meðan ferð stendur?	Where do you seek the main information before or during a tour?
41. Ég veit hvað felst í sjálfbærri ferðaþjónustu 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	I know what sustainable tourism entails. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
42. Ferðaskrifstofur kynna fyrir mér sjálfbærnisstefnu fyrirtækisins 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	Travel agencies introduce me to their sustainability policy. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
43. Mér finnst ferðaskrifstofur ætlast til að ég sé "alfræðirit" og viti allt 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	I feel that travel agencies expect me to be an "encyclopedia" and know everything. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
44. Ég er dugleg/t/ur að sækja mér endurmenntun sem gagnast leiðsögn 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	I am diligent in seeking continuing education that benefits guiding. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.
45. Ég held mér upplýstum/-ri/-u um nýjar stefnur og þróanir í leiðsögn (e. trends) 1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.	I keep myself informed about new trends and developments in guiding. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.

<p>46. Ferðaskrifstofur óska árlega eftir upplýsingum um mig, hvort það sé komin auka menntun, fræðsla, stöðu fyrstuhjálpar námskeiðs o.s.fv.</p> <p>1) mjög ósammála, 2) fremur ósammála, 3) hvorki sammála né ósammála, 4) fremur sammála, 5) mjög sammála.</p>	<p>Travel agencies annually request information about me, whether I have received additional education, training, the status of first aid courses, etc. Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree.</p>
<p>47. Ertu hlynnt/ur eða andvíg/ur því að greiða fyrir áskrift á síðu/appi sem væri með allar upplýsingar á einum stað? Ástand gönguleiða, vegar, veður, upplýsingar um náttúruverndarsvæði, helstu hlekkir ferðaþjónustunnar og svo framvegis?</p> <p>1) mjög hlynnt/ur, 2) fremur hlynnt/ur 3) í meðallagi, 4) fremur andvíg/ur, 5) mjög andvíg/ur.</p>	<p>Are you in favor of or against paying for a subscription to a site/app that would have all the information in one place? Information about trail conditions, roads, weather, nature conservation areas, main tourism links, and so on. Strongly in favor, 2) Somewhat in favor, 3) Neutral, 4) Somewhat against, 5) Strongly against.</p>
<p>48. Er eitthvað annað sem þú vilt koma á framfæri sem gæti gagnast rannsókninni minni ?</p>	<p>Is there anything else you would like to convey that could benefit my research?</p>
<p>49. Ef þú ert opinn fyrir því að ég hafi samband við þig með frekari spurningar eða vangaveltur, þá er þér velkomio að skilja eftir netfang</p>	<p>If you are open to me contacting you with further questions or thoughts, you are welcome to leave your email address.</p>

8.2. Interview Guide

Interview Guide - Questions for Snorri the Leiðsögn - Tourist Guide Union Chairman
Getur þú sagt mér frá félaginu Leiðsögn
Hvað eru margir leiðsögumenn á Íslandi og hversu margir eru faglærðir?
Hvað eru margir í félaginu Leiðsögn?
Getur þú frætt mig um Skjöldinn og hversvegna hann er ekki í notkun?
Hversu margar leiðsagðar ferðir eru á ári?
Hversu margir velja leiðsagðar ferðir?
Hvað eru ferðirnar langar?
Menntun leiðsögumanna? staða á viðurkenndu námi leiðsögumanna
Hver ber ábyrgð á náminu og námsefninu? Menntamálaráðuneytið? En hver segir þeim hvað skal kenna? á hverju er það byggt?
Hver er ábyrgur fyrir upplýsingum sem þeir fá
Hvers vegna er starfsheitið ekki verndað?
Vilja félagsmenn að það verði lögverndað ?
Eru leiðsögumenn ósáttir við laun leiðsögumanna? Verð of hátt, hvað finnst þeim ?
Viljum við að leiðsögumenn (menntaðir sem og ómenntaðir), ganga um svæðin og segja sögurnar okkur eins og þeim hentar?
Vita þeir hvað sjálfbærni er?
Hafa þeir fengið menntun í sjálfbærni?
Hvar eru data base fyrir leiðsögumenn? er það til yfir höfuð?
Þá upplýsingar um hvert svæði fyrir sig, kynna þau að sum svæðin eru náttúruverndarsvæði?
Er þetta bara learn by doing?
Eftir mörg ár í starfi, ganga þau enn með gestum á svæðum eða gefa þau "free time" og gestir því "eftirlitlausir"
Eru þið að halda/bjóða uppá Fyrstuhjálpar námskeið?
Þekkir þú Vakann, hafa félagsmenn fengið kynningu frá Vakanum?
Hvað finnst þér um Vakann ?
Hefur nýja stefnan "Leiðandi í sjálfbærari ferðaþjónustu - 2023" verið kynnt fyrir félagsmönnum ?
Hefur Leiðsögn nýtt sér Hæfnisetur ferðaþjónustunnar?

2023 Tillögur starfshóps til að styrkja og efla menntun og starfsþjálfun leiðsögumanna með áherslu á neytendavernd, náttúruvernd og öryggi.

8.3. Open-ended answers from Survey

23. Vilt þú deila eitthverjum vangaveltum varðandi lögverndun á starfinu og/eða starfsheitinu?	Author's Translation to English : Do you have any thoughts or speculations regarding the legal protection of the job and/or job title?	Theme	Number
Til að anna eftirspurn eftir menntuðum leiðsögumönnum þyrftu yfirvöld að niðurgreiða nám í leiðsögn. Mjög mikilvægt fyrir gæði leiðsagnar og alla ferðamennsku á landinu.	To meet the demand for educated tour guides, the authorities should subsidize tour guide training. It's crucial for the quality of guiding and the overall tourism industry in the country.	Education /Knowledge	XXVI II
Hefur verið barist fyrir lögverndun frá því ég útskrifaðist 1984 en stjórnvöld hafa alltaf verið á móti mvi	Legal protection of the profession has been advocated since I graduated in 1984, but the government has consistently opposed it.	Doubts	XXIX
Eina leiðin til að leiðsögn verði fagmannleg og áhugaverð er að lögvernda greinina. Eins og stendur getur hver sem er og með hvaða þekkingu sem er leiðsagt.	The only way to ensure that guiding is professional and engaging is to legally protect the profession. Currently, anyone with any level of knowledge can become a guide.	Piracy/Knowledge	XXX
Þar sem vandað starf í ferðaþjónustu er afar mikilvægt upp á framtíð landsins sem spennandi ferðaland tel ég að stjórnvöld þurfa að hugsa sinn gang í sambandi við lögvernd á srarfinu	Considering the importance of quality work in tourism for the country's future, the government needs to reconsider legal protection for the profession.	Quality	XXXI
Er hægt að lögvernda starfið?	Is it possible to legally protect the profession?	Doubts	XXXI I
Ísland getur og á ekki að taka á móti tugmilljónum ferðamanna. Sérstaða landsins felst einmitt í ósnortnu náttúrunni sem er einstök á heimsmælikvarða, landið er það ungt jarðfræðilega séð og staðsetning landsins á jarðkringlunni einnig það sérstök. Því á sem flest ef ekki allt varðandi ferðamálin hér að vera einstaklega vandað, landið stendur undir því og fólkið almennt vel menntað. Lögverndun leiðsögumanna sem bílstjóra, sem matreiðslumanna sem annarra er því lykilatriði. Ferðirnir verða auðvitað mjög dýrar fyrir vikið en unga fólkið og aðrir sem hafa gífurlegan áhuga á að sækja Ísland heim, munu finna sér leiðir, til dæmis eru farfuglaheimilin sem ég hef heimsótt hér það góð, allt annað en í mið-Evrópu. Sem sagt lögverndun og allt sem vandaðast bæði fyrir	Iceland should not aim to welcome millions of tourists. The country's unique, untouched nature, geological youth, and specific location should be preserved. Everything related to tourism here should be of the highest quality. Legal protection for guides, drivers, chefs, and others is crucial. Tours will be expensive, but those truly interested in visiting Iceland will find a way. Quality should be the priority.	Quality	XXXI II

ríkisbubba, háskólaþólk, fjölskyldufólk og puttalinga. Gæði gæði gæði, landið og þjóðin standa þar vel undir.			
Elur aðeins á úlfúð	Legal protection only fosters animosity.	Doubts	XXXI V
Ég held að ef aðrar þjóðir geti stjórnað því hver fer upp í rútu og leiðsegir ættum við líka að geta það. Þetta er ekki spurning hvort það er hægt heldur hvort vilji sé fyrir því. Það er kominn tími til að gera þetta almennilega því náttúran líður fyrir núverandi fyrirkomulag og það má ekki vera heppni ef orðspor Íslands er gott.	I think if other nations can control who gets on the bus and guides, so should we. This is not a question of whether it is possible, but whether there is a will for it. It is time to do this properly, because nature feels for the current arrangement and it cannot be luck if Iceland's reputation is good.	Environment/Quality/Reputation	XXX V
Væri nóg að hafa bara lögverndun innan þjóðgarða í upphafi	Would be enough to just have legal protection within national parks in the beginning	Natural Parks	XXX VI
Viðkvæm og oft hættuleg náttúra kallar á sér þekkingu.	Sensitive and often dangerous nature calls for knowledge.	Education/Knowledge	XXX VII
Menntun er ekki allt. Og spurning hvort sú menntun sem í boði er sé endilega það besta.	Education is not everything. And the question is whether the education offered is necessarily the best.	Education/Knowledge	XXX VIII
Það vantar samræmd viðmið um námið.	There is a need for standardized guidelines for training.	Education/Knowledge	XXXI X
Það þarf ekki annað en skoða námsskrá Leiðsöfunámsins, þetta er víðtæk þekking sem við verðum að hafa og bíljstórar heyra vel bullið hjá þeim sem ekki hafa réttindi hér.	The tour guide curriculum is comprehensive, and bus drivers can easily detect the lack of knowledge among unqualified guides.	Education/Knowledge	XL
Það geti líka byggst á viðurkenningu í tengslum við afmörkuð svæði/staði og gildi ekki útfyrir það þá. Það er mikilvægt að hækka standardinn og halda betur utanum fagfólkið, sérmenntun þarf líka að vera hægt að meta inn.	It can also be based on recognition in relation to defined areas/places and valid not beyond that. It is important to raise the standard and keep the professionals better, special education also needs to be evaluated.	Natural Parks	XLI
Ég er smeykur um það að lögverndun muni engu breyta um kjör leiðsögumanna : ferða(manna) þjónustan er rakið láglounastarf, hvar sem er í heiminum og auðvelt fyrir ferðaþjónustufyrirtækin, t.d í skipaleiðsögn , að skipta út dýrari leiðsögumönnum gegn fólki sem enga þekkingu hefur enda kröfurnar sem farþegar gera ekki háar	I am concerned that legal protection will not improve tourist guide salaries. Tourism is often regarded as a low-wage industry worldwide, making it easy for tourism companies, particularly in cruise guiding, to replace more experienced guides with individuals lacking knowledge. Passengers' demands are not typically	Salary & Piracy	XLII

	high, which exacerbates this issue.		
Slíkt væri liður í því að tryggja öryggi ferðamanna, réttar upplýsingar og fræðslu um land og þjóð, sem og verndun lands og gróðurs.	This would be part of ensuring the safety of tourists, correct information and education about the country and the people, as well as the protection of the land and vegetation	Safety/Knowledge/Preservation	XLIII
SAF hefur ekki viljað samþykkja lögverndun leiðsögumanna til þess að halda launum niðri og hafa betra tangerhald á þeim leiðsögumönnum sem starfa í greininni.	The Icelandic Travel Industry Association (SAF) has opposed legal protection for tour guides to keep wages low and maintain better control over those working in the industry.	Salary & Piracy	XLIV
Mikilvægi þess að kunnátta sé fyrir hendi	It's important to have the necessary knowledge.	Education/Knowledge	XLV
Skilar engu. Starfsleyfi er málid	It doesn't achieve anything. Licenses are the solution.	Doubts	XLVI
Lögverndun á starfsheitinu er afar mikilvægt til að lyfta starfinu upp á hærri stall, tryggja gæði og öryggi, og tryggja að viðskiptavinurinn fái þá leiðsögn sem hann á skilið. Ófaglærðir aðilar sem stunda leiðsögn eru margir hverjir óhæfir til starfans, sérstaklega þeir sem koma erlendis frá og hafa aldrei komið til landsins, þekkja hvorki til landsins, staðhátta, sögu þess eða menningu. Þeim tilfellum fer því miður fjölgandi og er ólíðandi. Ég vil kalla það vörusvik við viðskiptavininn. Ófaglærðir aðilar með reynslu geta þó verið afbragðs leiðsögumenn en þyrftu að fá færni sína metna af þar til bærum aðila.	Legal protection of the job title is crucial to elevate the profession, ensure quality and safety, and guarantee that clients receive the guidance they deserve. Unqualified guides, especially those from abroad who are unfamiliar with the country, should not be allowed to practice. However, experienced unqualified guides can still be excellent and should have their skills assessed.	Safety/Knowledge/Piracy	XLVII
Það er grundvallaratriði fyrir framtíð ferðaþjónustu á Íslandi að lögvernda störf leiðsögumanna. Alltof mikið er um réttindalausar "sjóræningja" starfsemi á okkar litla heimamarkaði sem getur orðið til þess að ferðaþjónustan fari í algjört upplausnarástand og engum er hagur að því. Orðsporsáhætta blasir við á vegum og víðernum. Ef við náum ekki utanum fagmennskuna í greininni þá verður hún ekki virðingarverð og arðbær til framtíðar.	It is fundamental for the future of tourism in Iceland to legally protect the work of guides. There is too much unlicensed "piracy" activity in our small domestic market, which can cause the tourism industry to go into a state of total disintegration, and that will be the end of it. Reputational risk is faced on the roads and in the wilderness. If we don't achieve professionalism in the industry, it won't be respectable and profitable in the future.	Piracy/Knowledge	XLVII I
Leiðsögumenn eiga að vera gæslumenn nútúrunnar. (Auka landverðir) Þeir eiga að sýna gott fordæmi og brjóti þeir af sér eiga þeir að missa réttindin. Svo verða laun að hækka.	Tour guides should be guardians of nature (additional park rangers). They should set a good example, and if they violate rules, they should lose their rights. Salaries must also increase.	Salary & Environment	XLIX

Sorgleg þróun að sjá fólk sinna leiðsögn sem hefur ekki þekkingu til þess og því miður virðist fjölga í þeim hópi.	It's sad to see people guiding without the necessary knowledge, and unfortunately, this group seems to be growing.	Piracy/Knowledge	L
Mér finnst óþolandi að vita af fólki sem "kann ekkert og veit ekkert" en starfar við leiðsögn - bæði íslensku og erlendu. Held að lögverndun myndi hjálpa við að síða þannig fólk úr.	It's intolerable to know that people who 'know nothing and understand nothing' are working as guides. Legal protection would help filter out such individuals.	Piracy/Knowledge	LI
Það er mjög mikilvægt að ferðamaður sem kemur til landsins fái réttar og heiðarlegar upplýsingar um land og þjóð. Um umhverfismál og líf fólks á Íslandi	It's crucial for tourists visiting the country to receive accurate and honest information about the country, environmental issues, and life in Iceland.	Knowledge/Information Given	LII
Mikið ábyrgðar starf. Skapar eða eyðileggur upplifunina af landinu.	Guiding is a highly responsible job that can create or destroy the visitor's experience of the country.	Guest Experience	LIII
Það þarf að lögvernda starfið svo að ekki komi inn fólk erlendis frá sem mekkir ekki sögu landsins og bulla bara eitthvað	The job needs to be legally protected so that people from abroad who do not understand the country's history do not come in and just say something	Piracy/Knowledge	LIV
Eins og er núna eru margir að starfa sem "leiðsögumenn" og kunna mjög lítið um land og þjóð, hafa ekki skilning/virðing fyrir náttúruvernd, reglur og lög landsins, kunna heldur ekki fyrsta hjálp m.m. Þetta og margt meira mun að enda koma sér illa fyrir land og þjóð.	Currently, many people work as 'guides' with very little knowledge about the country, lack respect for nature conservation laws, and do not know first aid, among other things. This will eventually harm the country and its people.	Piracy/Knowledge	LV
Hef ekki lengur áhuga á að starfa í faginu vegna lélegra launa og það virðast allir geta kallað sig leiðsögumenn.	I'm no longer interested in working in this field due to poor pay, and it seems that anyone can call themselves a guide.	Salary & Piracy	LVI
Markapurinn sér um starfið	The market regulates the profession.	-	LVII
Lögverndun leiðir til gæðastýringar og þal. meiri sjálfbærni	Legal protection leads to quality control and, therefore, greater sustainability.	Quality	LVIII
Ástæðan fyrir því að starfið er ekki lögverndað er að fyrirtækin vilja fá að ráða hvern sem er.	The reason the profession is not legally protected is that companies want the freedom to hire anyone.	Freedom to hire /Piracy	LIX
Bara gott eftirlit með að ferðaskrifstofur hafi rétt leyfi og ökumenn með rétt réttindi þegar þeir leigja bíla!	It's important to ensure that travel agencies have the correct permits and that drivers have the proper qualifications when renting vehicles.	Travel Agency Responsibility	LX
Mjög nauðsynlegt að við lögverndum bæði starf og starfsheiti, að ólöglegt verði að vera með ferðamann í einka eða rútuleiðsögn frá öðrum löndum án þess að Ísl leiðsögumaður sé með í för	It is essential to legally protect both the job and job title, making it illegal for foreign guides to lead tours without an Icelandic guide.	Piracy/Knowledge	LXI

Margir af bestu leiðsögumönnum okkar hafa ekki mentun til þess.	Many of our best guides are not educated tourist guides.	Education /Knowledge	LXII
Lögverndun starfsins verður að miðast við hæfni, ekki prófgráður.	The legal protection of the profession must be based on competence, not degrees.	Education /Knowledge	LXIII
Það eru ekki nógu margir menntaðir leiðsögumenn í landinu til að sinna leiðsögn við núverandi aðstæður. Ef lögvernda á starfsheitið þurfa þá laun að hækka eða aðstæður að breystast til að laða að menntaða leiðsögumenn eða fækka ferðum.	There aren't enough educated guides in the country to meet the current conditions. If the job title is legally protected, salaries must increase, or conditions must change to attract qualified guides or reduce the number of trips.	Salary, Knowledge & Piracy	LXIV
Verndun lands og náttúru.	Protection of the land and nature.	Land protection	LXV
Mun aldrei gerast	It will never happen.	Doubts	LXVI
Ef á að fjölga í stéttinni má einfalda og stytta námið. Fólk man sáralítið af því sem það er skikkað til að læra, að loknu "námi"	If the number of trained guides is to increase, the course should be simplified and shortened. People remember very little of what they are sent to learn, after "graduating"	Education	LXVII
Þarf þá að bjóða upp á ódýrt og einfalt starfshæfnimat fyrir ómenntaða með áratugareynslu	It is then necessary to offer a cheap and simple vocational assessment for the uneducated with decades of experience	Education /Knowledge	LXVII I
Ég myndi gjarnan vilja löggildingu á starfið okkar m.a. til að reyna að fá leiðsögumenn sem geta veitt góða og vonandi vandaða þjónustu.	I would like to see the profession licensed to ensure that guides can provide good and hopefully quality service.	More quality	LXIX
Lögvernda frekar sérhæfðara starfsheiti. Vantar raunfærnimat og endurmenntun. Samkeppni við "selfdrive" og bílaleigubíla.	Legal protection should focus on more specialized job titles. There is a need for competency assessments and continuing education. Competition with 'self-drive' and rental cars is an issue.	Education /Knowledge	LXX
Þýðir það meiri laun ef að starfið/starfsheitið yrði lögverndað? Finnst það frekar óljóst.	Would legal protection of the job or job title lead to higher salaries? It seems unclear.	Salary	LXXI
Það eru margir mörg erlend fyrirtæki sem fá að starfa hér án nokkura leyfa og lögregla og vegagerð og aðrir eftirlitsaðilar skikifta sér ekkert af þessum aðilum eru kallaðir sjoræninjar. Mín spurning til þín við sem störfum í þessum bransa og erum buinir að gera leingi hvernig stendur á því að það er alltaf verið að kroppa af okkar litlu launum við erum síðasti lyng urinn í keðjunni og það erum við sem seljum landið og skilum hamingjusömum ferða mönnum frá landinu.	Many foreign companies operate here without any permits, and authorities do nothing about it, calling them pirates. Those of us who have been in this business for a long time wonder why our already low wages are constantly being chipped away at. We are the ones selling the country and delivering happy tourists.	Piracy/Knowledge & Salary	LXXII

31. Ert þú með eitthverjar vangaveltur um Vakann sem þú vilt koma á framfæri?	Author's Translation to English: Do you have any thoughts or speculations about Vakinn that you would like to share?	Theme	Number
Vantar alþjóðlegan Vaka, Ísland of lítið, hvatningin ekki mikil, dýrt fyrir minni fyrirtæki.	Vakinn needs an international perspective; Iceland is too small, motivation is not high, and it's expensive for smaller companies.	Cost and Bureaucracy	I
Ég hef ekki kynnt mér Vakann neitt nákvæmlega og tel að þó eitthvað flott standi á blaði þá skiptir það litlu máli ef engin eftirfylgni eða prófun fylgir. Það er erfitt að sjá eitthvað sem gæti komið í staðinn fyrir lögverndun starfa leiðsögumanna sem og annarra starfa. Af einhverjum ástæðum var lögverndun komið á !!!	I haven't studied Vakinn closely and believe that even if something looks good on paper, it means little without follow-up or testing. It's hard to see anything that could replace the legal protection of tour guide jobs and other professions. For some reason, legal protection was established!!!	Implementation and Follow-Up and Legitimacy	II
engin eftirfylgni og kaflinn um leiðsögumenn er mjög rýr	No follow-up and the section on tour guides is very sparse.	Implementation and Follow-Up	III
Leitt að félag Leiðsögumanna/Leiðsögn var aldrei spurð aðkomu að skilgreininhu staðla Vakans.	It's unfortunate that the Tour Guide Association was never asked to contribute to defining Vakinn's standards	Implementation and Follow-Up and Legitimacy	IV
Mér finnst Vakinn í besta falli ruglingslegt kerfi og mjög erfitt að átta sig á kröfum. Miðað við annars konar gæðakerfi stenst það engan samanburð.	I find Vakinn at best a confusing system, very hard to understand the requirements. Compared to other quality systems, it does not hold up	Confusion and Complexity	V
Að jafnaði dýrt kerfi sem fáir neytendur þekkja til.	Generally, an expensive system that few consumers are aware of.	Cost and Bureaucracy	VI
heyri um þetta framtak í fyrsta sinn. Þetta sýnir það enn eina ferðina, hversu ónýtt félag "Leiðögn" er í rauninni	Hearing about this initiative for the first time. This shows once again how useless the 'Leiðsögn' association really is.	Lack of Awareness and Familiarity	VII
Vakinn er bara gæðakerfi, sem ferðapjónustan notar. Er ekki lög eða reglur og hefur engar valdheimildir	Vakinn is simply a quality system utilized by the tourism industry. It is not a law or regulation and does not possess any authority.	Ineffectiveness	VIII
Taldi að það væri verið að leggja hann niður	I thought it was being discontinued.	Lack of Awareness and Familiarity	IX
Vakinn er handónýtt batterí, fyrirséð eru með gull frá Vakanum ástunda launaþjófnað í miklum mæli og meirihluti leiðsögumanna eru útlendingar og ófaglærðir	Vakinn is a useless system, those awarded gold from Vakinn practice significant wage theft, and most guides are foreigners and untrained	Ineffectiveness	X
þekki ekki til.	Not familiar with it.	Lack of Awareness	XI

		and Familiarity	
Virkar ekki	Doesn't work.	Ineffectiveness	XII
Væri ekki bráðsniðugt að þeir kynni þessi gögn hjá Leiðsögn-félagi leiðsögumanna	Wouldn't it be smart for them to present this data to the Tour Guide Association?	Lack of Awareness and Familiarity	XIII
Of dýrt	Too expensive.	Cost and Bureaucracy	XIV
Getur verið að aðildarfyrirtækjum sé að fækka? Getur verið að fyrirtæki sjái sér ekki hag í að vinna eftir gæðakerfi sem erlendir viðskiptavinir þekkja ekki?	Could it be that member companies are decreasing? Could it be that companies don't see the benefit of working with a quality system that foreign clients are not familiar with?	Skepticism and Criticism	XV
Flest vönduð fyrirtæki fara þegar eftir þessu. Hvað sem vantar er löggjöf um þegar farþegar/túristar brjóta lög, skemma náttúru, keyra utanvegar, skilja eftir rusl í stórum stíl. Hingað til hafa alvarleg brot komið upp án þess að það hafi afleiðingar fyrir þá. Jafnvel þó myndir og vídeó clip eru til þá vantar fleiri lögreglumenn og jafnvel önnur úrræði eins og að rukka þeim þegar þeir eru komnir heim til sín aftur. Svo koma videoclip á TicToc um hversu gaman það var hjá þeim á Íslandi og aðrir koma í kjölfarið og gera alveg eins.	Most reputable companies already follow this. What is needed is legislation for when passengers/tourists break laws, damage nature, drive off-road, leave large amounts of trash. So far, serious offenses have come up without consequences for them. Even though there are pictures and video clips, we need more police and possibly other measures like charging them when they get home. Then they post videos on TikTok about how much fun they had in Iceland, and others follow and do the same.	Implementation and Follow-Up and Legitimacy	XVI
Gott upp að vissu marki, en mikið bla bla	Good up to a point, but a lot of blah blah.	Ineffectiveness	XVII
Bákn og allt of dýrt! Ferðaskrifstofur notfæra sér Vakann ekki því þeir þurfa að borg!	Bureaucracy and way too expensive! Travel agencies don't use Vakinn because they have to pay!	Cost and Bureaucracy	XVIII
Ágætt kerfi sem þarf að kynna mun betur gagnvart erlendum ferðamönnum, gefa út skildi sem leiðsögumenn geta haft um hálsinn, auk þess sem hægt er að setja á vefsíður.	A decent system that needs to be much better introduced to foreign tourists, issue badges that guides can wear, as well as place it on websites.	Lack of Awareness and Familiarity	XIX
Það vita ekki margir hvað Vakinn er fyrir utan þá sem eru í rekstri. Ferðamenn vita ekki hvað þetta er þar sem Vakinn er hvergi í neinum upplýsingum, eða auglýsingun.	Not many people know what Vakinn is except those in the business. Tourists don't know what it is because Vakinn is nowhere in any information or advertisements.	Lack of Awareness and Familiarity	XX
Vakinn er yfirbyggður hrokarammi. sorry!	Vakinn is an overbuilt bureaucratic framework. Sorry!	Bureaucracy	XXI

Bara aldrei heyrt um þetta áður	Just never heard of it before.	Lack of Awareness and Familiarity	XXII
Veit ekki hvað það er	Don't know what it is	Lack of Awareness and Familiarity	XXIII
að sumuleyti hvítþvottur	In some ways, it's whitewashing.	Skepticism and Criticism	XXIV
mig langar að nefna, að ég veit um góða leiðsögumenn,án leiðsögumennntunar,semerumjög góðir,en það er held ég, undantekning, því miður.	I want to mention that I know good guides without guide education who are very good, but I think that's the exception, unfortunately.	Not related	XXV
Maður getur líka vitað um eiginleika án að vera með VAKANn!	One can also know about features without having Vakinn!	Lack of Awareness and Familiarity	XXVI
Hef starfað hjá fyrirtækjum sem í Vakanum	I have worked for companies that are part of Vakinn.	Not related	XXVII

48. Er eitthvað annað sem þú vilt koma á framfæri sem gæti gagnast rannsókninni minni ?	Author's Translation to English : Is there anything else you would like to convey that could benefit my research?	Number
Það væri mjög gott að fá yfirlit yfir hversu margir hafa útskrifast úr öllu námi fyrir leiðsögumenn (sundurliðað eftir skólum og helstu árum), hvort viðkomandi hafi starfað við leiðsögn eftir útskrift, hversu lengi og ef ekki, hvers vegna. Enn fremur hvort leiðsögumenn / ferðaskrifstofur hafi lausn á því að koma í veg fyrir að þeir sem útskrifast hröklist úr starfi vegna þess hve ótryggt og stopult starfið er. Margir góðir leiðsögumenn af minni kynslóð þurftu að fórna starfinu fyrir fast starf til að geta séð fyrir fjölskyldu. Þetta hrekur menntaða og góða leiðsögumenn úr þessu starfi.	It would be very good to get an overview of how many have graduated from all guide training programs (broken down by schools and preferably by years), whether they have worked as guides after graduation, for how long, and if not, why not. Additionally, whether guides/travel agencies have a solution to prevent those who graduate from leaving the job due to its insecurity and instability. Many good guides of my generation had to sacrifice the job for a stable one to support their families. This drives educated and good guides out of this profession.	LXXIII
Spurt var um leiðsögudaga s.l. 6 mánuði, einmitt þá sem fæstir eru í mikilli vinnu. Gædadagar hjá mér (72 ára) 2023 voru 88.	Asked about guiding days in the last 6 months, which is precisely when most people have little work. My guiding days (age 72) in 2023 were 88.	LXXIV
Eitt gott heilræði: Þótt upplýsingar séu mikilvægar, þá eru flestir ferðamenn sem koma til Íslands í frí. Hlutverk leiðsögumanns er að gera ferðina skemmtilega, örugga og áhugaverða. Fólk er ekki að fara að taka neitt próf í því sem það fékk að vita eftir að ferð lýkur.	One good piece of advice: Although information is important, most tourists who come to Iceland are on vacation. The role of a guide is to make the trip enjoyable, safe, and interesting. People are not going to take a test on what they learned after the trip ends.	LXXV
Góð rannsókn og ég græddi á henni upplýsingar	Good research, and I gained information from it.	LXXVI
Sumar spurningar eiga ekki við þá sem vinna mest eða eingöngu yfir sumarmánuðina og þar sem maður varð að halda áfram og krossa við	Some questions are not relevant to those who work mostly or only during the summer months, and since one had to continue and tick something, it	LXXVII

eitthvað hlýtur þetta að skekkja niðurstöðu. Svo er sama spurningin í 21 og 22.	must skew the result. Also, the same question is in 21 and 22.	
Margir lsm í VR en sá það ekki sem kost í flípanum!	Many guides in VR, but I didn't see it as an option in the tab!	LXXVII I
Of fáir leiðsögumenn til að sinna skipaferðum	Too few guides to handle ship tours.	LXXIX
Þar sem ég er núna eldri borgari þá er ég hætt að vinna nema við leiðsögn mest að sumri til, því annars dregst of mikið frá ellilífeyrinum. Vil líka tak fram að spurning 21 og 22 eru alveg samhljóða.	Since I am now a senior citizen, I have stopped working except for guiding mostly in summer, otherwise, too much is deducted from the old-age pension. I also want to point out that questions 21 and 22 are exactly identical.	LXXX
Téð app ætti að vera á kostnað fyrirtækjanna sem selja ferðirnar, ekki minn kostnað.	The mentioned app should be at the expense of the companies selling the tours, not my expense.	LXXXI
leiðsögumenn hafa aldrei haft rödd innan ferðapjónustunnar	Guides have never had a voice within the tourism industry.	LXXXII
Í raun ekki þar sem ég er u.þ.b. að hætta	Not really, as I am about to retire.	LXXXII I
Mér finnst vinsælustu ferðamannastaðirnir orðnir ofhlaðnir og upplifun gesta ekki góð. Aðal áhyggjuefnið er að týna ekki farþegum.	I find the most popular tourist sites too crowded, and the guest experience is not good. The main concern is not losing passengers.	LXXXI V
Þetta er svo misjafnt eftir ferðum	This varies so much depending on the tours.	LXXXV
Áhugaverð rannsókn. Gangi þér vel!	Interesting research. Good luck!	LXXXV I
Það er nauðsynlegt að leiðsögumenn fái sína menntun viðurkennda og löggilta.	It is necessary for guides to have their education recognized and certified.	LXXXV II
Tel að menntaðir landverðir ættu að fara með fólk um friðlýst svæði	I believe that trained rangers should guide people through protected areas.	LXXXV III
Mun pottþétt kynna mér þessar heimasíður betur hér eftir.	I will definitely explore these websites better from now on.	LXXXI X
Vantar innsýn í krísur sem eru í gangi	Missing insight into ongoing crises.	XC
Mjög fín könnun og tímabær! Stórefla þarf samskipti þeirra sem starfa við stefnumótun í ferðapjónustu við leiðsögumenn. T.d Ferðamálastofa, Vakinn, Hæfnissetrið, SAF osvfrv. Það er sjokkarandi hvað leiðsögumenn eru sjaldan ef nokkru sinni nefndir í þeirra stefnum og gögnum!	Very good and timely survey! Communication between those who work in tourism policy-making and guides needs to be greatly improved. For example, the Tourist Board, Vakinn, Hæfnissetrið, SAF, etc. It is shocking how rarely, if ever, guides are mentioned in their policies and documents!	XCI
vedur.is hefur mikinn gagnagrunn á sinni síðu, einnig vegagerdin.is með ástand vega og veðurmælingar - auk fyrirmyndar símaþjónustu sem er í boði hjá þeim allan daginn fram á kvöld, visindavefurinn.is, safetravel.is og wikipedia.is ásamt heimasíðum áfangastaða þegar við á, t d sögulega áhugaverðir staðir á landsbyggðinni eru það sem ég nota mest við undirbúning ferða.	Vedur.is has a great database on its site, as well as vegagerdin.is with road conditions and weather measurements - plus their excellent phone service available all day until evening, visindavefurinn.is, safetravel.is, and wikipedia.is along with destination websites when applicable, e.g., historically interesting sites in the countryside are what I use most for tour preparation.	XCII

Mjög þarft að skoða hug leiðsögumanna og yfirvalda til lögverndunar á starfsheiti og störfum leiðsögumanna.	It is very important to examine the attitude of guides and authorities towards the legal protection of the title and jobs of guides.	XCIII
Nei bara að lögleiða þetta stéttarfélag	No, just legalize this union.	XCIV
Vefsíða Ferðamálastofu burkas ekki á iPhone 15	The Travel Agency's web viewer does not work on iPhone 15.	XCV
Hætta að runkast með hugtakið sjálfbærni	Stop playing around with the term sustainability.	XCVI
Upplýsingar um ferðir frá ferðaskrifstofu eru frekar um bókanir á hótélum og afþreyingu, máltíðir og klukkan hvað dagur byrjar og endar o.s.frv. frekar en upplýsingar um landið, landslag og staði. Ég hef aldrei fengið handrit frá ferðaskrifstofu. Ferðaskrifstofur líta yfirleitta á leiðsögumanninn sem sérfræðinginn á sínu sviði. Spurningar um þessi mál hér þyrftu að vera meira skilgreindar. - Ég hef verið beðinn um upplýsingar um endurmenntun á skyndihjálpi frekar en viðbótarmenntun. Lið 17; Varðandi yfirvinnu leiðsögumanna. í langferðum hefur hann enga stjórn á því hvort að hann vinni meiri yfirvinnu en ferðalýsing segir til um. Eina leiðin fyrir leiðsögumann að ákveða að vinna meiri yfirvinnu er þegar hann velur að taka dagsferðir um helgar frekar en virkum dögum. Annað:) ekki besti tíminn til að biðja um fjölda ferða 6 mánuði aftur í tímann í mars. Bæði vetrarferðir eru færri en á sumartíma og síðan hefur verið almennur samdráttur í ferðaþjónustu síðustu mánuði vegna meðal annars eldgosanna á Reykjanesi.	Information from travel agencies is more about hotel bookings and activities, meals, and the start and end times of the day, etc., rather than information about the country, landscape, and places. I have never received a script from a travel agency. Travel agencies generally see the guide as the expert in their field. Questions on these issues here need to be more defined. - I have been asked for information on first aid training rather than additional training. Item 17: Regarding guides' overtime. On long trips, the guide has no control over whether they work more overtime than the tour description suggests. The only way for a guide to choose to work more overtime is when they choose to take day trips on weekends rather than weekdays. Another: it is not the best time to ask about the number of trips 6 months back in March. Both winter trips are fewer than in summer and there has been a general downturn in tourism in recent months due to, among other things, the volcanic eruptions in Reykjanes.	XCVII
Varðandi 47: Við lsm eigum að hafa aðgang að þessu frá fyrirtæki eða jafnvel stéttarfélag. Við erum annars að borga fyrir töluvert annað sem fylgir starfinu (skór, töskur, ípad, heyrnartól og margt annað) sem fyrirtækið ekki sér okkur fyrir.	Regarding 47: We guides should have access to this from the company or even the union. We otherwise pay for quite a bit else that comes with the job (shoes, bags, iPads, headphones, and much more) that the company does not provide us with.	XCVIII
Langar að vinna meira við leiðsögn, en fæ miklu betri laun í þeirri vinnu sem ég fyrst menntaði mig til.	I want to work more in guiding, but I get much better pay in the job I was first trained for.	XCIX
Spurning 47 er valmöguleikunum snúið á hvolf miðað við hinar spurningar held það gæti verið villandi	Question 47 is phrased the opposite way compared to the other questions, which I think could be misleading.	C
Afhverju er fullt af nefndum og nær heilt ráðuneyti sem hafa mojað peningum í sjávarútveginn. En hvað með stærstu atvinnugreinina?	Why are there so many committees and nearly a whole ministry that have funneled money into the fishing industry? But what about the largest industry?	CI
Þetta er ekki svona klippt og skorið eins og fullt af spr. gefa til kynna. en gangi þér vel.	It is not as clear-cut as many questions suggest. Good luck.	CII

Það væri mjög erfitt að athuga hver má að fá aðgang á vefsíðu sem er nefnt undir 47. Það má ekki hver sem er.	It would be very difficult to check who can access the website mentioned in 47. Not just anyone should be allowed.	CIII
Margir af bestu leiðsögumönnum okkar hafa aldrei verið í leiðsöguskóla. Leiðsögumannafélagið var stofnað á barnum á Loftleiðum af fólki úr öllum stéttum. Fæstir fóru í leiðsöguskóla.	Many of our best guides have never been to guide school. The Guide Association was founded at the bar at Loftleiðir by people from all walks of life. Few went to guide school.	CIV
Sumar af spurningunum eru þess eðlis að það er erfit að svara með einhverju viti. T.d "Ég þarf oft að leita mér upplýsingar sjálf/ur/t fyrir ferð" hvað ertu að spyrja eiginlega um. Já ég athuga veður og færð en annars þarf ég engan sérstakan undirbúning... veit alveg hvað ég er að fara að gera. Ef eitthvert ný ferð kemur upp, eitthvað að sem ég hef ekki gert áður, þá þæli ég eitthvað í því hvernig ég framkvæmi ferðina en oftast fer maður bara afstaða og læri svo hvað mætti betur fara...	Some of the questions are such that it is difficult to answer sensibly. For example, "I often need to seek information myself for a trip" - what exactly are you asking about? Yes, I check the weather and conditions, but otherwise, I don't need any special preparation... I know exactly what I am going to do. If a new trip comes up, something I haven't done before, then I think about how to execute the trip, but usually, you just go and then learn what could have been done better...	CV
Aðstæður manna eru misjafnar. Mér fundust margar spurningar ekki eiga við mig, og svörin því handahófskend.	People's circumstances vary. I found many questions not applicable to me, and the answers therefore random.	CVI
Veit ekki hvort þetta tengist, en það hefur oft reynst erfitt að semja um verktaka kaup samkvæmt samningum (með viðeigandi álagi), virðist vera mjög 'samþykkt' að greiða stundum langt undir og jafnvel erfitt þó maður vitni í taxtana	I don't know if this is related, but it has often been difficult to negotiate contractor payments according to agreements (with appropriate surcharges), it seems very 'accepted' to sometimes pay well below, and even difficult if one refers to the rates.	CVII
Ég er að útskrifast úr námi og hef ekki hugmynd um að hvaða leyti eða hvort ég fæ einhverja viðurkenningu á náminu. Skilst að ég fái ekki einu sinni skjöld. Þannig að maður fer í þetta nám samviskunnar vegna til að finnast maður hafa næga þekkingu til að veita góða leiðsögn en síðan er lítill eða enginn greinarmunur gerður á menntuðum og ómenntuðum leiðsögumönnum þegar komið er út í bransann. Hvorki í launum né öðru. Þó er þetta mjög krefjandi nám og mikill utanbókarlærdómur og hagnýt verkefni. Hver sem er virðist geta farið upp í rútu og leiðsagt sem ég tel að dragi úr trúverðugleika greinarinnar. Það vinnur með greininni að í skipaferðum t.d. þá upplifir fólk svo mikil hughrif af náttúrunni að það virðist vera hægt að bjóða upp á ómenntaða leiðsögumenn og samt skila ánægðu fólki. Síðan virðist ekki vera neitt regluverk sem stöðvar það að komið sé með hópa erlendis frá með þarlandum leiðsögumönnum og bílstjórum sem vita ekkert um land og þjóð. Ganga jafnvel illa um landið	I am graduating from a program and have no idea to what extent or whether I will get any recognition for my studies. I understand that I won't even get a plaque. So one goes into this program for the sake of conscience to feel one has enough knowledge to provide good guidance, but then there is little or no distinction made between educated and uneducated guides when it comes to the business. Neither in pay nor otherwise. However, this is a very demanding program with a lot of memorization and practical tasks. Anyone seems to be able to get on a bus and guide, which I think undermines the credibility of the profession. It works in favor of the profession that, in ship tours, for example, people experience such a great impression of nature that it seems possible to offer uneducated guides and still deliver satisfied customers. There also doesn't seem to be any regulation preventing groups from abroad with local guides and drivers who know nothing about the country and people. They even treat the land poorly and damage nature. They get away with claiming these are friends	CVIII

og skemma náttúruna. Þeir komast upp með að halda því fram að þetta séu vinahópar að ferðast saman og ekki sé með leiðsögumaður. Það finnst mér að eigi að stoppa.	traveling together and there is no guide. I think this should be stopped.	
Það væri gott að þjálfa sum leiðsögumen í framkomu	It would be good to train some guides in presentation skills.	CIX
<p>Varðandi síðustu spurninguna þá myndi ég ekki greiða fyrir slíkt. Veit hvar ég get aflað mér þessara upplýsinga og reynsla mín af svona samlögum er að tenglar hætta að virka og upplýsingar ganga úr sér.</p> <p>Annað varðandi rannsóknina þína sem ég óska þér sannarlega góðs gengis með þá hefði verið gott fyrir þig að fá einhvern til að lesa textann yfir með orðanotkun í huga. T.d. er yfirleitt talað um skoðanakönnun ekki skoðunarkönnun.</p> <p>Leiðsögunám ekki leiðsagnar nám, leiðsögn ekki leiðsagnar starf, iðnmenntun ekki iðnaðarpróf og stúdentspróf ekki menntaskólapróf.</p> <p>Á löngum lista yfir stéttarfélag vantar t.d. kennarasambandið og möguleikan á því að merkja við tvennt. Eins í spurningu um menntun leiðsögumanna þá vantar</p> <p>Símenntunarmiðstöðvar sem eru víða um land og hafa haldið utanum leiðsögunám eða gerðu það á sínum tíma þegar hægt var að taka svæðisleiðsögn sérstaklega. Í þeirri spurningu hefði líka verið gott að geta merkt við tvennt.</p> <p>Ég verð líka að hrósa þér en ég hnaut ekki um stafsetningar eða innsláttarvillur í textanum og gangi þér vel með þetta verkefni.</p>	<p>Regarding the last question, I would not pay for that. I know where I can get this information, and my experience with such gatherings is that links stop working and information becomes outdated.</p> <p>Another thing about your research, which I sincerely wish you good luck with, is that it would have been good for you to have someone read over the text with word usage in mind. For example, it is usually called a survey, not an opinion survey.</p> <p>Guide training, not guiding training, guiding, not guiding work, vocational education, not industrial exam, and matriculation exam, not high school exam.</p> <p>On a long list of unions, the Teachers' Union is missing, and the option to mark two things.</p> <p>Similarly, in the question about guide education, Continuing Education Centers, which are spread around the country and have managed guide training, or did so at a time when it was possible to take regional guide training, are missing. In that question, it would also have been good to be able to mark two things.</p> <p>I also have to praise you as I did not come across spelling or typing errors in the text, and I wish you well with this project.</p>	CX
Í spurningu 13 ætti að vera valkostur fyrir fjölda ferða á 12 mánaða tímabili	In question 13, there should be an option for the number of trips over a 12-month period.	CXI
Ekki gerður munur á að starfa sem lsm í aukastarfi/hobbí eða sem aðalstarfi.	No distinction is made between working as a guide as a side job/hobby or as a main job.	CXII
Ég starfa ekki leingur sem driver guide er 100% öyrkki í dag fyrirtækið sem ég starfaði fyrir síðast var ég Driver no1 lenti í bílveltu á Kjalvegi við að elta eiganda fyrirtækisins hann	I no longer work as a driver-guide; I am 100% disabled today. The last company I worked for, I was Driver no. 1, had a car accident on Kjölvegur while chasing the owner of the company; he	CXIII

sleit samstarfinu eftir þennan túr .	terminated the cooperation after this tour.	
There is a lot of request of guides here in Iceland and we have a huge amount of people coming....Iceland became since recent years a popular destination for nature, volcano and glaciers but too much expensive for the "Europeans wallet". So too expensive for people coming from Europe	There is a lot of demand for guides here in Iceland, and we have a huge number of people coming... Iceland has recently become a popular destination for nature, volcanoes, and glaciers but too expensive for the "European wallet". So too expensive for people coming from Europe.	CXIV