

## **Walk the Tightrope: The Risk Entails in the Profession of National Tourist Guide Lecturers in Sri Lanka**

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Since professional tour guides are brand ambassadors of a destination and local community members who have first-hand experience and know-how about the destination, their service is one of the key determinants of overall tourist satisfaction. The sustainability of this profession largely depends on factors including risks that require a clear understanding and the management of the same. Hence, the purpose of conducting this study is to structure the risk factors involved in professional tour guides, which are considerably triggered by my personal experiences as well. The professional risks of tour guides are conceptualized using the phenomenological approach. I have adopted transcendental phenomenology to understand these risks through conscious experience and subjective perceptions of tour guides. Five experienced professional tour guides were selected by using purposive, criterion, and snowball sampling methods and conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews for data collection. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, followed by a manual coding process to bracket out the lived experiences of respondents employing six types of coding; descriptive, value, in vivo, versus, parent, and child coding. Professional risks of tour guides have been constructed through four main themes; safety and security, social issues, psychological stressors, and obstacles in the industry, followed by eleven categories like job security, internally-driven social issues, industry-oriented psychological stressors, and tour operator-oriented obstacles, etc., making the phenomenon multidimensional. Furthermore, the respondents showed the means for the industry to be restructured and the areas of risks that should be eliminated or reduced. The trustworthiness of the study is assured by employing the methods of peer debriefing, triangulation, member checks, audit trails, etc.

**Keywords:** *Professional Risks, National Tourist Guide Lecturers, Transcendental Phenomenology*