

The Quality of Tour Guides on Tourists' Satisfaction in Malaysia Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

Tour guides are one of the key players in the tourism industry as intermediaries between travel agents and tourists. They have a responsibility to explain the culture and all information involving the destination. This research aims to study the service quality of tour guides on tourist satisfaction. Empirical data were gathered from a large-scale online survey with 58 national and international tourists from Malaysia and Indonesia. The result shows that tour guides' service quality has a positive relationship with tourist satisfaction.

Keywords : *Tour guides, Service Quality, Tourist Satisfaction, Tourism Industry, Malaysia*

A. INTRODUCTION

A tour guide is one of the intermediaries between travel agents and tourists therefore a tour guide must have extensive knowledge related to local history, culture, and tourist destinations, then be able to communicate well this aim is to convey information to tourists well and easy to understand. The importance of tour guides in the tourism industry stems from their direct interaction with tourists and the fact that they spend more time with them than other employees in the same profession. A tour guide is a person who leads groups or individual tourists around a city or region's buildings, sites, and landscapes, and who interprets the cultural and natural legacy in the visitor's preferred language (Black & Ham, 2005). Tour guides with advanced degrees and fluency in English or another foreign language prefer to work.

Tour guides from out of town pose a threat to local businesses. (Weiler & Walker, 2014) stated that the role of tour guides is becoming increasingly linked with sustainability issues and that tours should contribute to changing visitors' behavior and conservation perspectives not only on the destination that they are visiting but also in their everyday situations. Due to an oversupply of tour guides, lower-priced tour services are not guaranteed to be of the same quality as higher-priced options. Furthermore, when the tourism market is still in its infancy, tourists are more open to bargaining and willing to compromise on the quality of a tour in order to save money. Occasionally, the tour operator retains a sizable portion of the package price and pays the tour guide only a small portion of that dissatisfaction will ensue if the planned activities are not completed.

Professional competencies of tour guides can be considered part of travel products because they can influence visitors' views of tour guiding service quality and improve tourist satisfaction (Lin et al., 2017). The competencies of the tour guide have a

significant impact on the emotions and knowledge that tourists develop following the tour (Demirovic Bajrami et al., 2020). To ensure that tourists receive the promised service and fully understand the destination, qualified tour guides must have excellent humanistic skills and destination knowledge (S. Huang et al., 2010). Most tourists were dissatisfied with tour guides' performance in terms of their ability to guide them (Syakier & Hanafiah, 2021). As long as this issue persists in Malaysia, the country's reputation as a desirable tourist destination will suffer, as will the number of visitors and tourism revenue. Therefore, this research aims to study the service quality of tour guides on tourists' satisfaction in the Malaysia tourism industry.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tour Guide

The definition of a tour guide is expressed in many ways in the literature. A tour guide has responsible for guiding tourists during tours or sightseeing. Accompany visitors, individual tourists, or groups of tourists during their vacation to interpret historical, cultural, and natural sights in the visitor's language in an interesting way, explaining aspects of the local culture (Abd El kady, 2021). As a guide, you must have an effective combination of enthusiasm, knowledge, personality qualities, and high standards of conduct and ethics. A guide is someone who leads groups to the most important sites (in our city) while also providing interpretation and commentary. Being a tourist guide is, without a doubt, one of the most demanding professions, regardless of whether it is done for a living or as a volunteer.

Tourist Guides are a resourceful group of professionals whose vocation necessitates a diverse range of skills, subject knowledge, and personal characteristics that are difficult to come by. Social element refers to his or her responsibility tour group unity and morale. The element of interaction is related to his function as an intermediary between his

party and locals, places, institutions and tourist facilities (Huang et al., 2010).

Service Quality of Tour Guides

Service is defined as "an action or activity that can be offered by one party to another, which is essentially intangible and has no bearing on ownership." Service can be related to either a tangible or intangible product.' Service quality denotes the degree of disparity between the service provider's expectations prior to accessing the service and the level of service quality (Ninpradith et al., 2018). The quality of the services provided by tour guides includes their customer service approach, friendliness, efficiency, and the quality of the memories tourists take away with them (Chand, 2010; Chen et al., 2016). Tour guides' service delivery and service outcomes (e.g., friendliness, courtesy, efficiency, reliability, staff competency) create service quality in the tourism industry. Travel agents and the local environment of tourist attractions can benefit from having a tour guide as a sort of neutral third party. One of the most important factors in the tourism industry is the quality of service provided by tour guides.

A knowledgeable tour guide can help visitors get a better understanding of the culture and customs of the country they're visiting. In the context of tour guiding, a tour guide's perceived service quality can be assessed using three major constructs: (1) core service delivery, (2) customer orientation, and (3) effective communication (Heung, 2008). Furthermore, (Heung, 2008) explains that core service refers to the essence of a tour guide's service (e.g., follows the agreed itinerary, provides commentary, and ensures customer satisfaction during the tour) that the guide must consistently deliver. Customer orientation, on the other hand, denotes the extent the guide puts tourists' needs and interests ahead of his/her own in providing superior value to tourists (e.g. not to be focused on short-term self-interest and not to adopt a 'hard' selling approach to tourists). Communication involves the exchange of information (e.g. communicates the itinerary/arrangement to tourists and handles tourists' inquiries) and is regarded as a crucial function of the tour guide.

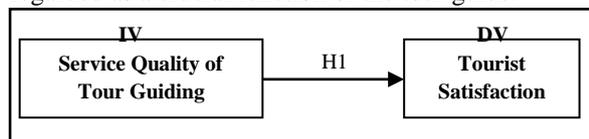


Figure 1: The proposed Framework
Hypothesis 1: Tour guides' service quality has positive relationship with tourist satisfaction.

In this study adapt the framework of Tour Guides' Professional Competencies Influence on Service Quality of Tour Guiding and Tourist Satisfaction source from Lin et, al, 2017. Figure 1 show the proposed framework of the study where it relates to the aim.

Indeed, more research is being conducted on the service quality aspect of the tour guiding profession. For instance, (Zhang & Chow, 2004) identified, twenty tour guide service quality attributes relevant to mainland Chinese tourists were identified. The six most important attributes perceived by Chinese tourists were: (1) punctuality, (2) ability to solve problems, (3) knowledge of the destination, (4) honesty and trustworthiness, (5) inform safety regulations, and (6) deliver service promised in the itinerary.

Likewise, (Mak et al., 2010) suggest that the tour guide's attitude toward service (particularly in terms of how money-oriented or customer service-oriented the guide is), product knowledge, and communication skills are important factors in determining the guide's perceived service professionalism.

Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction can be measured in terms of expectations about the destination and the experience, motivations or desires, activities or experiences, perceptions, preferences, and psychological outcomes, among other things (e.g., Dann 1981; Iso-Ahola 1980; Lounsbury and Polik 1992; Manning 1986; Van Raaij 1986, 1987; Weber 1997; Williams 1988). Satisfaction with the guide service can be defined as "tour- ists' overall evaluation of various services provided by tour guides in a destination"(J. Huang & Hsu, 2010). Tour satisfaction is defined as "tour services as tourists' affective response resulting from a cognitive appraisal of the tour operator's services"(Hwang & Lee, 2019). Furthermore, satisfaction with the guide service is directly linked to the post-consumption evaluation of a service (Heung, 2008).

Tourist satisfaction is the ratio of tourists' actual feelings after travelling to their expectations before travelling. Satisfaction is defined as anything that can reduce human tensions, which are caused by human needs. Because satisfaction is crucial in predicting future behavioural intentions (Ninpradith et al., 2018). Customers, according to the theory, have some level of expectation when purchasing products. That expectation plays a significant role in determining satisfaction and dissatisfaction. For example, dissatisfaction arises when service provider performance falls short of expectations (also known as negative confirmation). Unlike dissatisfaction, satisfaction can occur in two ways. That is, satisfaction occurs when service provider performance meets or exceeds customers' expectations (also known as confirmation) (also known as positive disconfirmation) (Hwang & Lee, 2019).

Consumers' repurchase intentions and how they represent their purchase experience to others (word-of-mouth intentions) are all influenced by their

level of satisfaction with their purchase experience. Most travel operators must make concerted efforts to improve their staff competencies and establish positive relationships with their customers in order to ensure tourist satisfaction (Syakier & Hanafiah, 2021). Additionally, Tourist satisfaction will be achieved automatically once travel companies provide good packages and knowledgeable tourist guides. However, the results of numerous studies support the notion that consumers' level of satisfaction and complaints influence their repurchase intentions and how they represent their purchase experience to others (word-of-mouth intentions) (Yun et al., 2016).

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Measurement

The primary data were collected through an online survey using google form and distributed to social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, etc. To empirically test the constructs in the proposed model, measurement items were developed based on multi-item measurement scales that had previously been used and validated. Service quality was measured using 5 items cited from (Lin et al., 2017). Tourist satisfaction was measured using 7 items cited from (Syakier & Hanafiah, 2021).

Most people agree that closed questions on a numerical Likert scale are easier for respondents to answer, this study employs them. In this study, a 5-point Likert scale was used; additionally, the 5-point Likert scale offers 5 different answer options related to an agreement that are distinct enough for the respondents without confusing them.

The study's questionnaire had two parts: one with participants' demographic information and the other with their responses to the scale items of the major constructs. Gender, age, marital status, education, monthly income, and experiences on participate tours with tour guides. Then the scale items for the major constructs of the proposed research model were included in the second section.

Sample and Data Collection

After obtaining informed consent, the proposed research model was tested using data from a large-scale survey collected using a convenience sampling procedure. Consumers and tourists who have participated in tours with tour guides were cordially invited to participate in this survey. Green (1991) proposed many approaches for determining how many respondents are required for a study.

This study uses a quantitative method by using Green (1991) method in determining the sample size. It proposed the sample size for the coefficient of determination (R^2) to be $N \geq 50+8m$ (where m refers to the number of predictors in the model). For

example, if a model has seven independent variables, a regression analysis requires $50+(8)(7)$, or 116 samples. This study only has one independent variable so $N \geq 50+(8)(1) = 58$. The respondents are 58 people from Malaysia and Indonesia tourists.

Before answering the questionnaire, respondents answer the screening question as follow” *Have you experienced a tour in Malaysia using tour guide?*”. If the respondents answered no, the survey was terminated.

Analysis Methods

This study examines the service quality of tour guides on tourist's satisfaction in Malaysia tourism industry. The data obtained in this study analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software. Quantitative data analysis is used to analyse data obtained from numbers because data processing uses statistics, then the data must be classified in certain categories to make it easier to analyse.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Variable	N	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	34	58.6%
Female	24	41.4%
Age:		
Less than 20	2	3.4%
21-30	43	74.1%
31-40	10	17.2%
41-50	3	5.2%
Above 50	-	-
Nationality:		
Malaysia	26	44.8%
Indonesia	32	55.2%
Education:		
Primary/Junior High School	-	-
Secondary/Senior High School	3	5.2%
Diploma	8	13.8%
Bachelor degree	28	48.3%
Postgraduate	19	32.8%
Marital Status:		
Single	33	56.9%
Marriage	25	43.1%
Widowed	-	-
Divorced	-	-
Monthly Income:		
Less Than RM 1,500 / IDR 5.000.000	22	37.9%
RM 1,500 – RM 3,000 / IDR 5.000.000- IDR 10.500.000	26	44.8%
RM 3,100- RM 4,000 / IDR 10.500.000- IDR 14.000.000	7	12.1%
RM 4,100- RM 5,000 / IDR 14.350.000- IDR 17.500.000	1	1.7%
Above RM 5,000 / IDR 17.500.000	2	3.4%
Experience on Participate Tours with Tour Guides		
Once	26	44.8%
Twice	20	34.5%
Thrice	9	15.5%
Four Times	-	-
Above Five Times	3	5.2%

D. FINDINGS

Response Rate and Profile

Among the 58 respondents, 34 (58.6%) are male respondents, while the female respondents are 24 (41.4%). The majority of the respondents are between 21 and 30 years old (n = 43; 74.1%). Next, most of the respondents are male (n = 34; 58.6%) while only 24 (41.4%) are females. Furthermore, most of the respondents are from Indonesia (n=32; 55.2%) while only 26 (24.8%) are Malaysian. Next the majority of respondents are used tour guides for Once (n=26; 44.8%), Twice (n=20; 34.5%), Thrice (n=9; 15%), Above four times (n=3; 5.2%).

Descriptive Analysis

Tour Guide Service Quality

Table 2 shows the descriptive analysis for Tour Guide Service Quality. From the table, the mean score fell from 4.31 to 4.19, which indicated that most of the respondents were satisfied with the tour guide service quality.

Looking at the table below the highest mean 4.31 with reflect that the majority of respondents agree that the tour guide can provide specific information and friendly service (TGSQ1). Other than that, the least mean 4.19, reflects the respondent's moderate agreement that the tour guide's overall service quality is satisfactory (TGSQ5).

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis- Tour Guides Service Quality

Code	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
TGSQ	Tour Guide Service Quality		
TGSQ1	The tour guide can provide specific and friendly service	4.31	0.598
TGSQ2	The tour guide can be seriously dedicated in explanation	4.29	0.622
TGSQ3	The tour guide can have clear and organized explanation.	4.21	0.720
TGSQ4	The tour guide can immediately respond to tourists' needs.	4.22	0.727
TGSQ5	The tour guide's overall service quality is satisfactory.	4.19	0.712

N=58, TGSQ (tour guide service quality)

Tour guide can immediately respond to tourist need (M=4.22; TGSQ4), tour guides have clear and organize explanation (M=4.21; TGSQ3), tour guide can be seriously and dedicated in explanation (M=4.29; TGSQ2).

Tourists Satisfaction

Table 3 shows the descriptive analysis for tourists' satisfaction. From the table the mean score fell from 4.33 to 4.07, which indicate the most of respondents were satisfied with the tour guide service quality.

Looking at the table below the highest mean 4.33 with reflect that the majority of respondents

satisfied with tour guide provides satisfactory information to the tourist (TS2). Other than that, the least mean 4.07, reflects the respondent's enjoyed the service/package with the tour guide (TS5).

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis- Tourist Satisfaction

Code	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
TS	Tourists' Satisfaction		
TS1	The service that provides by the tour guide is up to a satisfactory level	4.10	0.667
TS2	The tour guide provides satisfactory information to the tourists	4.33	0.803
TS3	I was pleased with the outcome of tour guide performance	4.24	0.630
TS4	The tour guide provided a satisfactory resolution to the problem	4.12	0.727
TS5	I have enjoyed the services/package with the tour guide	4.07	0.769
TS6	I am delighted with the tour guide services	4.17	0.679
TS7	My choice to use this tour guide was a wise one	4.26	0.762

N=58, TS (tourist satisfaction)

They delighted with the tour guide service (M=4.17; TS6), then their choice to use this tour guide was a wise one (M=4.26; TS7), furthermore, they were pleased with the outcome of tour guide performance (M=4.24; TS3), The service that provides by the tour guide is up to a satisfactory level (M= 4.10; TS1), the tour guide provided a satisfactory resolution to the problem.

Hypothesis Testing

Study variables have been analysed through simple linear regression analysis. Kumar et al. (2013) stated that the simple linear regression is able to test the relationship of the independent variable to the dependent variable.

Table 4: Regression analysis

Predictors	Hypothesis 1
DV	Tourist Satisfaction
IV	Tour guide service quality
Std.β	0.639**
R ²	0.408
Adj. R ²	0.398
F-Change	38.621

Table 4 reports the result of the linear regression analysis. Looking at Hypothesis 1, the independent or predictor: the tour guide service quality accounted for 40.8% percent (R²= 0.408; F-change = 38.621). level of significance 0,000 p< 0.05. The value of (β =.639**) indicated that the tour guide service quality positively has relationship to the tourists' satisfaction. In other words, the tour guide service quality influences the tourists' satisfaction. With this, the hypothesis one (H1) is strongly supported.

E. CONCLUSIONS

According to the finding of this study, tour guide service quality positively has relationship to tourists' satisfaction in Malaysia tourism industry. This study supports the critical part played by tour guide performance in determining the happiness of the visitor, which in turn affects their behavioural intention. Therefore, the quality of tour guide on tourist satisfaction were significantly influenced by tour guide can provide specific information and friendly service as seen in table 3 followed by tour guide can be seriously dedicated in explanation, tour guide can immediately respond to tourists' needs, tour guide can have clear and organized explanation, and tour guide's overall service quality is satisfactory.

Tour guides are representatives of their workforce and tourism stakeholders due to their crucial role in the tourism system and strong interaction with tourists. Their performance will have an impact on both the destination itself and the experiences of present guests. The efficiency of the tour service is not only determined by the level of knowledge that the guide possesses regarding the topic at hand and the manner in which they convey this knowledge to the audience, but also by the interaction that the guide has with the tourists from Malaysia and Indonesia.

The study's findings add to our understanding of how satisfied tourists are with tour guide services. Our empirical findings further demonstrate that the level of service provided by tour guides has a considerable and favourable impact on tourists' satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction will be higher when tourists' have a positive opinion of the tour guides' services. It implies that a key element affecting tourists' satisfaction is the quality of the service provided by tour guides.

The primary responsibility of tour guides is to lead and educate guests. They successfully connect tourists to the locations. Therefore, they should be skilled in guiding tour groups, including language, explanation, communication, negotiation, and management, in order to introduce tourists to a good journey. The role of tour guides in fostering a positive perception of the location is also amply stressed in the tourist literature. Additionally, interaction between tour guides and visitors enhances the quality of their travel experience.

The results of this study motivate considerably more effective tour guide management through ongoing training because tourists today place a high value on tour guide performance and quality. In order to interact with tourists and foster loyalty, tour guides must learn crucial traits such as new knowledge, abilities, and personalities. With this study, tour guide needs to pay more attention on how to get the experience of customers to have higher services quality on tourist satisfaction. Future research might need to be conducted to validate the results that came

out of this study. This study might be beneficial for tour guide's out there to know at least which type of variables are needed to look out for when they give out with their performance.

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