

THE STUDY ON CUSTOMER SERVICE QUALITY OF VIETNAM'S ISLAND TOURSIM

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to find out the relationship between the international tourists' expectations and their perceptions to investigate their satisfaction level with the current tourism service quality on Vietnam's island, case study in Phu Quoc island. In empirical research, the survey questionnaire was examined the feedback from 280 foreign tourists who visited Phu Quoc Island in the Tet holiday, 2013. The questionnaire was designed based on SERVQUAL dimensions. The findings indicate that the tourist satisfaction level in general is remarkably high in some aspects of service quality, but some are not. In particular, the lowest value was found in reliability such as the performance of service for the first time although it was not crucial. There was no significant difference in the rest of the variables; however, the best scored variable was assurance, meaning that adequate and available information, kindness, professional and knowledge levels were evaluated as well.

The study provides useful information for local authorities to improve the service quality on Vietnam's island tourism sector, effectively manage of the abundant nature resource and strength activities to maximize both tourist satisfaction and profitability of tourism enterprises, and at the same time sustain natural resources in the long term.

Keywords: island tourism, service quality, tourist satisfaction, SERVQUAL model, Vietnam tourism

1. Introduction

The tourism service business currently seemed to be a section which got the main income and contributed the majority of export turnover to developing countries (UNWTO, 2012). With this development, many tourism products and destinations increasingly in the world attract tourists. Yet, a country is dealing with an anxious problem of how to attract the tourists to visit, revisit or recommend the destination to others (Chen & Tsai, 2006). So, investigating the determinant elements of behavioral intention is legitimate and crucial not only in an academic field but an actual case as well. Moreover, the degree of behavioral purpose that is reflected in their desire to revisit the destination and recommend to others or not is very essential for destination managers and marketers (Oppermann, 2000).

In Vietnam tourism context, despite the still youth of tourism industry compared to some countries in Southeast Asia countries, tourism has progressed and gained significantly to the development of Vietnam economy and social progress of the nation. In the context of international integration, the rich and varied tourism sector was strongly improving; for example, received 3.8 million international tourists in 2009, ranked the fifth in the area (Luong, 2010). According to forecasting of Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, the number of international visitors to Vietnam in the 2012 was about more 6.8 million people, representing a 13.86% growth over the same period last year. Among those, the majority of tourists were from America, Australia, France, Malaysia and other countries (GSO Tourism, 2012); and in 2015 Vietnam tourism will be attracted 7-8 million international tourists, in 2020 it will be 11-12 million international tourists, the revenue from tourism will be achieved US\$ 18-19 billion in 2020 and contributed approximately 6.5-7% GDP. Tourism become basically a key economic sector in 2020 and reaches a high position in the area in 2020 (Phi, 2009).

Vietnam is a famous coastal and island tourism destination, which has more than 3200 kilometres narrow coastal strip and numerous beautiful islands. Some best-known islands in Vietnam including: Cat Ba Island in the north of Vietnam, Cham island in the central coast, Phu Quoc Island and Con Dao Island in Vietnam's extreme south. Among them, as a largest island of Vietnam, Phu Quoc is a wonderful largest island in Vietnam. Resort developers and Vietnamese tourism authorities are preparing for Phu Quoc Island to be the next big ecotourism vacation spot in Southeast Asia. Phu Quoc is the best place suited to those who have senses of exploring and a love of natural culture. Especially, Phu Quoc Island possesses several of the best and least trodden beaches in the region and gets unspoiled stretches of sand. All in all, there are natural landscapes, entertainments or activities as well as the intangible cultural heritage. Those elements have turned Phu Quoc Island into a popular tourist destination in the world where is mainly growing potential tourism attracted plenty of tourists annually coming for relaxation, entertainment, visiting.

The growths of domestic and international tourists to Phu Quoc Island year by year are very high. In 2012 Phu Quoc Island welcomed 408.000 tourists, included 132.000 international tourists, up 10.7% from 2011 to 2012 and up 16.3 (US\$ 8.9 million) of annual revenue compared to 2011. From 2012 to 8-2013, Phu Quoc welcomed 524.566 tourists, included 84.944 international tourists (<http://www.Kiengiangvn.vn>). Despite of economic and financial crisis and global recession influence, even the rate of tourist came to Phu Quoc Island increasingly and significantly. It means that Phu Quoc is a wonderful and exciting destination for both domestic and international tourists.

According to previous studies, researchers have been studies concentrating on the interrelationship among service quality, satisfaction and loyalty (Rahim Mosahab, 2010). However, perceived value quality of service in recent years has been

emphasized as the object of interest by tourism researchers (Petrick & Backman, 2002). Hence, Perceived service quality value and satisfaction all have been shown to be good predictors of future behavioral intentions of loyalty (Baker & Crompton, 2000). A review of tourism literature exposes a great number of studies on expectation and satisfaction, but measuring service quality of destination to international tourist satisfaction has not been thoroughly investigated. Up to now, the tourism have indicated and examined the influence of service quality on tourist satisfaction independently or making a comparison of tourist expectation and satisfaction. The relationships with measuring of them have been only conceptually discussed. Additionally, conceptual clarification, distinction, and logical method among the measurements have been lacking (Zhu, 2011).

Based on those facts, the intent of this study is to design an overall form of research to observe service quality of Phu Quoc objectively and evaluate the succeeding of their service performance. This study aims to offer an integrated approach to finding tourist expectation and attempts to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence on the relationship between perceived service quality and tourist satisfaction so that it can add the existing evidence. In addition, by findings and understanding the tourist expectations, destination tourism managers had better recognize how to build up an attractive image and improve their marketing effort to take advantage of resources.

Service quality has a key role in the success and survival in today's fiercely competitive market, and this study will be worth for Phu Quoc tourism to display opinions and perceptions of their tourists at this early of establishing destination image. As long as the problem is found early, it will be fixed better. Although this report concentrates on service quality, the outcomes could be used for stronger marketing strategies for managers and operators' future success as well.

Thus, this study examines and analyzes the expectation and satisfaction of international tourists with their travel experiences on Phu Quoc Island. Base on measuring the quality of tourism services and its impact on the tourist satisfaction, in order to make a suggestion for tourism managers who will reform tourism service quality and enhance the tourist satisfaction and allure tourists further.

This study consists of five sections. The first, provides literature reviews on service quality in the tourism context by highlighting the characteristics of tourist expectation and tourist satisfaction and in order to explain the research hypothesis. The research methodology and empirical result analysis are presented as well. Finally, the last section concludes the significant findings, makes conclusions of this study and offers a recommendation to the future research.

2. Literature review and research hypothesis

Nowadays, service quality is predictable as one of the majority vital subjects in the consistency of service marketing and management. Service quality will be the main component of business success or failure the nation's economy in an area. In this study, four notable objectives are notable as service quality, customer perceptions and customer expectations and SERVQUAL model. There are also many definitions relevant to these objectives, the definitions that are followed in this study:

2.1 Service quality:

Service-quality is a very important part in the structure of tourism products and tourist satisfaction. If the service is good quality, tourist will satisfy highly; and when tourists are satisfied, they are ready for turning back this destination again and again and moreover they will be willing to introduce this destination to their friends (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). So service quality is extremely important to attract and retain customers (Kotler, 2007).

SERVQUAL (service-quality) is a model of analyzing designed to measure service quality and tourist expectations; it offers a framework or skeleton and so to be adopted and modified to value particular services by Parasuraman et al. 1988. The aim of this model is to help managers to predict and improve the quality of services under their conduct and power. Numerous tourism researchers use it to value the quality of service provided in tourism and affiliated industry (Baker & Fesenmaier, 1997). Childress & Crompton (1997) stated simultaneously SERVQUAL model was developed to help managers in analyzing the sources of quality problems and then perceive the proper ways to reform the quality of service. Kettinger & Lee (1997) and Atigan et al., (2003) argued this approach that it was a workable predictive tool for evaluation of service quality in the informative service. This model could apply to various service contexts. The SERVQUAL is critically well-built relationship between customer services and value in the tourist industry, which was the highest essential for determining the actual meaning of client satisfaction (Augustyn & Ho, 1998 in Atilgan et al., 2003). To test the quality of service got from travel agencies, Bigne et al. (2003) also used the SERVQUAL model in their studies; hence, they explored that it is still a valuable and reliable model with which to measure the service quality offered by travel agencies.

According to SERVQUAL, quality is the difference or the gap between consumer's expectations and perceptions of performance. Qualitative research with twelve focus sections and several executives was conducted by Parsuraman et al (1985). They realized that the subjects indicated a same pattern of perceived service quality with inconsistency in their expectation and actual service performance. Found on these findings, they gave out a conceptual model with five gaps. Subsequently, they continuously introduced the SERVQUAL multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions quality in any service organization or

association, including 22 items in five dimensions, known as RATER: reliability which is ability to perform the promised service dependably ; assurance which refers to employees' knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and

confidence; tangibles which refers to appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and written materials; empathy which refers to caring, individualized attention given to customers by the company and responsiveness, which is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service (Zeithaml and Bitner,2003)

All of those factors are equally essential to achieve one hundred percent of quality and have various influences on the last service quality. Tourists use those dimensions to manage information about a service in their minds. Based on a certain situation, sometimes all the dimensions are applied, and at other times not. Personals in various backgrounds seek different experiences from the similar set of service and also perceive actual experiences differently. This has to be taken into account when applying these dimensions (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2009).

2.2 Tourists' expectation

The phenomenon of expectation has been described in numerous ways. Strogdill indicates expectation's conceptualization as "function of the drive, the estimated probability for a possible outcome, and the estimated desirability of the outcome" (Strogdill Yau, 1994). Besides that, Oliver (2010) asserts that expectation is as a predictability of the future results based on the past experience, present circumstances, or other informative sources for example.

Manente (2008) specifies that expectation happens before visiting. Tourists always envision their travel or chosen destination and the hidden benefits that they can get toward their coming trip. It can be inspired and encouraged from tourism advertisement, commercial fair, brochures, mass media and informal information, or

recommendation by friends or relatives. Many first time visitors; for instance, of Ireland context, have well prepared for their visit or trip by using the internet as a helpful way to search for several advance information beforehand. By making eye-catching tourist attractions, a destination can easily and effectively become a push factor to motivate tourist to travel (Skinner & Theodossopoulos, 2011). Expectations have many various classifications in a tourist side such as the ideal type, the expected type, the minimum toleration type, and the deserving type. Foreseeable expectations are allocating beliefs in the prospect of the performance level and can crucially cause dissatisfaction. Normative expectations are the ideal standards of how a product should be performed, and are linking to the above ideal facet (Yau, 1994). Customer expectations should be focused, exposed, and adjusted to raise lastingness quality. And the author also developed the dynamic model of expectation in the way that the quality of professional services, develops in a customer relationship over time (Grönroos, 2007).

Assuredly, as the expectation is a motivation to encourage economic activity, movement through space, social change and reorganization in particular local settings. It seems to be a vital role in the formation of tourism experience in determining success or failure in promoting the local community or students to get used to travelling or discovering new possibilities through cultural boundaries.

2.3 Tourists' perception

Some authors explain that perception is a process by which personal options, organizes and interprets encouragements translate sensory impressions into a meaningful, unified and coherent view of the world (Seaton & Bennett, 1996). Someone enable to see, hear, or come aware of something through the senses. Though necessarily depended on incomplete and unverified or reliable information, perception is equated with reality for most actual goals and guides the human attitude in common (<http://www.Oxforddict.com>).

Pizam & Mansfed (1999) stated that a tourist perception can be identified as the procedure of transforming tourist information from the external world into the internal, mental world that each of us experience. Tourists' perception may be impacted by the overall impressions and feelings of a destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). Perception has external and internal stimulation. External stimuli consist of controlled, urged or targeted information like advertisement or spread. Internal stimuli contain uncontrolled, doubt or self-directed information on television, internet, magazines, reliability or previous experience, or by word of mouth. Perception may not cover and be acceptable if the information does not go through the present beliefs. Moreover, internal stimuli with motives, needs, want, and benefits play as an essential role in the tourists' perception. The factor of personality, lifestyle, and manners may influence on how tourists feel pleasant, enjoyable, angry or amazed at a destination (Hubnera & Gossling, 2012). Other researchers argued that perception could be affected by individual characteristics such as people's value orientations, expectations, experiences, and interests, as well as denotes to a tourism behavior before, during and after their travel. Reisinger & Turner (2003)

2.4 Tourist's satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is the key factor of success in the tourist industry. There are many ways to define about satisfaction and it is ordinarily recognized as a post- purchase construct that was involved in how much a consumer likes or dislikes a service or product after experiencing it (Woodside, Frey & Daly, 1989). And Weber (1996) has also proposed that consumer satisfaction was as a fundamental pillar of marketing doctrine and as a main influence over future purchase intentions, market share and word of mouth (WOM) communication. Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1994) claimed that a customer's overall satisfaction might be related to their assessment of both service quality (e.g. courtesy, responsiveness, etc.) and product

features (e.g. size of hotel room, etc.) and specially price. Meanwhile, amount of researchers had distinguishable conceptualizations of customer satisfaction between transaction-specific and their global or cumulative evaluation of the service such as Holbrook & Corfman, 1985; Boulding et al., 1993. In other works, Westbrook and Oliver (1991) proposed to be the key judgments that tourists make regarding a tourism service. Hence, it is a well-established, long-standing focus service provider's attention (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2002), Fornell (1992) and Bitner & Hubbert (1994) stated that cumulative tourist satisfaction was an entire measurement relied on the integrated purchase and consumption experience with an item or service over time. Thus, satisfaction was a multifaceted concept (Truong & Foster, 2006, Truong & King, 2009).

Numberous tourism and service quality studies of the elements affecting the level of tourist satisfaction were worked out. Tourist satisfaction could be seen as a tourist's post-purchase assessment of the destination (Oliver, 1981), repurchase intention (Gotlieb, Grewal, & Brown, 1994; Choi & Chu, 2001; Petrick, 2004, and Tam, 2000) and it has also been noted that tourists who have had a positive experience doing one activity will probably repeat itself (Petrick & Backman, 2002). Satisfaction was primarily referred to as a function of pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences (Pizam, Neumann & Reichel, 1978). And tourism satisfaction with a destination has been determined such as a gap analysis between both of them by Moutinho, 1987; Moutinho, Pizam, Neumann, & Reichel, 1978). On the other hand, investigating the perceptions of tourist is very crucial to prosperous destination marketing because they influence directly the choice of destination (Ahmed, 1991), the consumption of items and services while a holiday or vocation, and the decision to turn back especially (Steven, 1992). The most of tourists have experiences with other destinations, and their perceptions are influenced by comparisons among facilities, attractions, and service criteria (Laws, 1995).

2.5 Hypothesis Development

The relationship between the concept of service quality, customer expectations, customer perceptions and satisfaction is described in a previous paper by Oliver (1980). Satisfaction could be understood as the difference and contrast between two factors, namely expectations and perceptions. Empirical and conceptual articles related to customer satisfaction and service quality, not only their nature but also how to measure them, are plentiful of the recent marketing literary material (Cronin & Taylor, 1992) or Gronross, 1990 has mentioned in his studies. Taking a look at the concerned literature displays an expansion in the number of articles facing with various facets of customer satisfaction on tourism, travel, hospitality, and recreation. Reisinger & Waryszak (1995), for instance, referred satisfaction with tour guides; Hughed (1991) examined satisfaction with cultural tours, and Ross & Iso-Ahola (1991) considered satisfaction with daily tours. In addition, customer satisfaction in the restaurant and hotel field was studied by Fick & Ritchie (1991). Besides, Pearce also reported the level of tourist satisfaction with the behavior of the local people in 1980. Hence, research on tourist satisfaction with destination simultaneously has increased (Chon & Olsen, 1992).

Tourists are those who consume the services, satisfaction implies a tourist's desire to sustain a business relationship with the organization and it is also the feelings of the tourists towards the services supplied to them by the organizations. Other authors- Zeithmal et al. (2006) have proven that "perceived service quality is a component of customer satisfaction". Cronin & Taylor (1992) stated that since customer satisfaction has reviewed to be depended on the customer's experience on a specific service encounter, it was suitable for the fact that service quality was a driving force of customer's satisfaction; Oliver (1993) first proposed that service quality would be premise to customer satisfaction without considerations of these constructs being

cumulative or transacted-specific. Lately, some researchers also have been absolute about the meaning and measurements of satisfaction and service quality. Satisfaction and service quality have convinced things in general, yet satisfaction is commonly an overview concept, while service quality concentrates particularly on service's dimensions (Wilson et al., 2008)

Several authors believed that there was no difference between service quality and satisfaction when they share a general theoretical derivation (Crompton, 2003). However, the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction has been analyzed in some studies; also that service quality could be gauged with the use of five service quality dimensions and the most useable is the SERVQUAL scale. Gounaris et al., 2003 is to illustrate for this, who revealed service quality has essential influence and positive relationship with customer satisfaction in the Greek retailing industry. Similarly, Jay & Hsin (2007), Osman & Sentosa (2013) and Chen & Lee (2008) explored that service quality has substantial effect and positive relationship with customer satisfaction in the tourism industry and the shipping industry.

Based on the literature discussed above, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the five dimensions of service quality on tourist satisfaction on Phu Quoc Island.

H_{1.1}: There is a positive relationship between tangible of service quality on tourist satisfaction.

H_{1.2}: There is a positive relationship between reliability of service quality on tourist satisfaction.

H_{1.3}: There is a positive relationship between the responsiveness of service quality on tourist satisfaction.

H_{1.4}: There is a positive relationship between assurance of service quality on tourist satisfaction.

H_{1.5}: There is a positive relationship between empathy of service quality on tourist satisfaction.

3. Methodology

The study was conducted among 305 foreign tourists who had visited Phu Quoc Island during ten days. The study was to gather diversified outcomes from all classes of international tourists and various age groups by selecting random tourists. Respondents were questioned to express their tourist expectation, perception level and overall satisfaction with tourism products and services on Phu Quoc Island.

Questionnaire design includes three parts, in the first part, about individual information surveying about nationality, gender, age, education, occupation, and monthly income. In addition, some experience such as reason for visit, number of nights, transportation, the number of visits, accommodation is also mentioned. How foreign tourists knew about Phu Quoc and what tourists attraction or interest would be asked in this part. The second part totally consists of 44 statements following a five-point Likert rating scale where encode "1" response indicating "strongly disagree" and "5" correspond with "strongly agree". It asks foreign tourists about general service information divided into two obvious parts - expectations and perceptions - depended on the SERVQUAL - questionnaire which consists of 22 different statements (Parasuraman et al., (1990). The third part consisted of five rating scale questions where can find out tourists overall impressions and satisfaction in their viewpoint. There are the main data gathered to assist the research study as the survey questionnaire. In other words, to gather travel experiences from actual tourists, it is very necessary to take the actual trip to Phu Quoc Island.

Making description a quantitative of service quality and tourist satisfaction has been done in this study. The object of this study is Phu Quoc tourism. The design research process consists of questionnaires that were conducted with people who have experience of travelling to Phu Quoc Island. The sample of participant is done in a non-probability kind of way and respondents where can be found in a convenient way, on the seashore

for example. SPSS software is applied to analyze the reliability of 280 observations. Three main analytical methodologies applied in this study included Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha), Regression Analysis, and IPA. The purpose of reliability analysis is to assess the degree of consistency among multiple measurements of a variable. Regression Analysis is used for finding out the importance of each element which influence on the satisfaction of tourists having experience in using the services on Phu Quoc. The method for analyzing is the SERVQUAL model and using the IPA model for making suggestions.

4. Empirical Analysis

4.1 Demographic analysis

The entire 350 questionnaires were delivered to the tourist at random from January, 2013 from 20th to 30th, but there were 305 sets gathered. While most of the data appeared to be valid, all of the responses have 25 invalid. As a result, 280 valid observations are used in this study, accounting for 76.7% of the total given questionnaire.

The responses were coded and key into SPSS. Respondents information surveying about nationality, gender, age, education, occupation, and monthly income. In addition, some experience such as reason for visit, number of nights, transportation, the number of visits, accommodation is also mentioned. How foreign tourists knew about Phu Quoc and what tourists attraction or interest would be asked in this part. Demographic of respondents are summarized as in Table 1

4.2 Reliability of data

This study used the analysis of Cronbach alpha coefficients to analyze the reliability of scales. All scales were demonstrated sufficient reliability as they passed over concerns the reliability guidelines by 0.6. Thus, all evaluating dimensions had a high consistency and reliability of scales.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all evaluating dimensions of service quality include tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and

empathy are greater than 0.7, so they have strongly high internal consistency. Thus, this is also considered an expectation factor that affects the decision-making of tourists in choosing their attracting destination. Reliability test result shows in Table 2.

4.3 Ranking the expectation level

Based on the mean value of dimensions what analyzed reliability, all of the five factors extracted are reliable for further analysis. With the five determinants, the tourist perception level and tourists' expectations on each factor are already shown under the mean, minimum and maximum values summarized in Table 3. From the comparison between in Table 3, it can seem that Phu Quoc tourism has well performed in Tangible and Assurance dimension. However, the service quality still does not meet the tourists' expectations in remaining three other dimensions, including Reliability, Empathy and Responsiveness.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is an analytical method used in order to evaluate the role of each dimension to the overall satisfaction level of Phu Quoc tourism services. In regression analysis, the overall satisfaction level is the dependent variable and the five dimensions are independent variables. The analysis results are approved as in Table 4.

With the given significant of 5%, the significant values are greater than the given one. Based on table 4, the above results show that the positive relationship between Responsiveness and satisfaction is not significant ($\beta = 0.02$, $t = 0.03$), Assurance and satisfaction had a positive effect on satisfaction is not confirmed ($\beta = 0.061$, $t = 0.931$, $p = 0.353$) and the positive relationship between Empathy and satisfaction is also not significant ($\beta = 0.074$, $t = 1.273$, $p = 0.204$), which do not have any impact on the overall satisfaction level of the tourists towards Phu Quoc tourism services in terms of regression analysis. That means these three dimensions do not support to overall satisfaction, respectively H1.3, H1.4, H1.5 in the

proposed framework. Those variables explained 9.3% ($R^2 = 0.093$) of the variation in the tourists overall satisfaction in visiting Phu Quoc.

4.5 Comparing the demographic characteristic to overall satisfaction

One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to identify the mean differences of satisfaction by demographic characteristics of these spondents and identify the demographic characteristic differences influenced to tourist satisfaction and to revisit or recommendation.

The results analysis indicated that no significant difference in tourists' satisfaction was found by nationality, age, occupation and monthly income, as table 5 showed. Because the significance of F-statistics is greater than the given one (5%); therefore, it is said that there is no difference in satisfaction of each feature in one factor. The significant difference in the satisfaction of the international tourists was found by education ($F = 11.587$, $p = 0.000 < 0.1$). The results explained that the educational group with diploma was the most satisfied with Phu Quoc tourism (the mean value was 3.33). Followed by senior high school group and the high educational group are slightly satisfied with Phu Quoc (the mean value was 3.05 and 2.99 respectively), but not much satisfied as diploma group. Gender is also significant difference in this model with $F = 45.643$, $p = 0.000 < 0.1$, so there is a positive difference between female and fame in travel decision making.

4.6 Importance -Performance Analysis

The aim of this part is to analyze the weakness and strength in order to make suggestions in this case of Phu Quoc tourism further by using the Importance -Performance Analysis (IPA) model.

4.6.1. Measuring the service quality of Phu Quoc tourism

Based on Paired Sample t-test which evaluates the difference from the average value of each sample in SPSS software, the significant level (Sig.) for each pair (expectation-perception) was analyzed. To examine the level of satisfaction of

international tourists, the author compares the difference between tourists' expectations and perceptions toward the service quality what service providers offered. The result of measurement about the quality of service is implemented, shown as Table 4

As showed in Table 6, there are 33 out of 39 elements which are analyzed by the t-test results, obtaining the statistical significance level of 5%. Others (number 6, 15, 16, 29, 31 and 44) cannot gain statistical significance ($\text{Sig} > 5\%$). It means that there is no difference between the two means of expectation and perception.

The result shows that the service quality in Phu Quoc tourism is still too low and even it does not meet international tourists' expectation. One of the big problems is the performance of the service(s) to the tourist at the first time. It is very essential because tourists value service reliability above all other dimensions. If the service fails in the recovery period, putting it right the second time is even more important than it was the first time. For instance, foreign tourists still wait for several times to be served and they would think possibly they were not valid in providers' look. So they may evidently choose other destinations for their holidays.

Besides, transportation and road system has been limited so much. Vehicles are public buses, taxis, bicycles, etc., which are not comfortable and modern. They are still circulating in the small red dirt roads lacking of traffic lights. So vehicles travelling from this place to that place are very difficult so that the older they become, the more inconvenient they will be.

The factor with worse quality is about operating time. The shops, agencies, restaurants and amusement areas; for examples, are closed before 12 p.m., so when tourists have their individual needs immediately such as asking information, eating and buying something, they have to wait until tomorrow morning for meeting those demands. In addition, communication skills, foreign language qualification and professional

skills of tourism staffs, employees and tour guides are not good enough to communicate fluently and accurately with international tourists. And then the courtesy and available tour guides are also an important shortage. Those are common problems about human resource in whole the delta. They are only trained in short-term through vocational schools on the island. Even in some private businesses, employees almost cannot speak English in communication.

In conclusion, Phu Quoc tourism develops very quickly. It has attracted a huge number of international tourists annually coming for holidays, relaxation and amusement. However, all analyses above can be concluded that apart from several positive elements, tourism service quality on Phu Quoc Island is still quite low and stagnant. So it is very difficult to satisfy tourist's requirements. Perhaps, it is a nearby island, so the conditions are not able to approach and grow up as same as other areas in mainland.

Although Phu Quoc tourism still exists some problems, tourism potential development is extremely high. Therefore, it is urgent to implement enhanced the quality of services further in order to meet tourist's high requirements.

4.6.1. Solutions to enhance the quality of tourism service on Phu Quoc Island

IPA model is applied for proposing the solutions so as to enhance the quality of tourism services. The pair sample is dropped into four-quarter model to suggest the strategies, respectively, each component of proper service quality. The result is shown (See in Figure 1) that it is very necessary to make suggestions for what should be enhanced the service quality of Phu Quoc tourism.

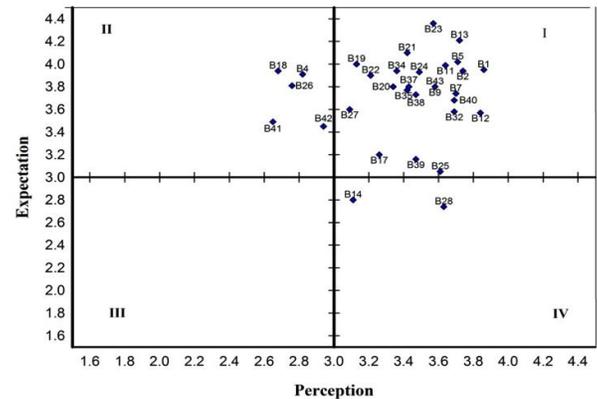


Figure 1: Expectation-Perception model found on Importance -Performance Analysis model

Quadrant I: Phu Quoc tourism also has much better strength, but to satisfy international tourists are not adequate, services need to be further reformed so that tourists would feel pleasant. Service providers should have seriously paid attention on clean and modern equipped hotel and restaurant systems (1), handmade/ souvenir goods in shops (2), various services such as banks, health care, shopping (7), vehicle rental and other forms of transportation (17), holding the promise to tourists by the certain time (19), and so on. Tourism managers should be focused on some factors as night life and amusement activities at the beach (BBQ, sport competition) (5), the aesthetics of landscapes/sceneries/beaches (12), cleanliness of public toilets (9), crowded beaches (11), availability of sporting facilities and recreational activities (13), environmental safeguarding (life, property, foods) (32) and so on. These are their expectations and perceptions, so to implement the maintaining of these elements in quadrant (I) is immediately giving out the solutions below:

The first of all is about functional agencies in which need to test frequently restaurant and hotel systems about ensuring safety and security, food safety and hygiene, fresh food, eye-catching beverage. And vehicle transfer should be ensured in appropriate standard about serving tourism. The second is enhancing state management about public order in the attractions. The third is about

amusement which the more diversified activities are held, the more exciting international tourists will be. Especially, souvenir shops are also attributed partly in attracting tourists. Providing information to tourists is the fourth one that can ensure accuracy and upgrade frequently the news via printed documents and e-documents. The last one is the media, which can be useful to help the development of tourism for local people in order to understand that they would be willing to take part in the tourism service activities.

Quadrant II: There are six elements which need to be concentrated on resources to develop tourism services. These are factors that are reckoned the expectation of foreign tourists. But based on tourists' perception, the author can derive that tourism service providers have not performed the quality of services very well yet and are not interested in them rightly. The first factor need to be focused is traffic infrastructure in general and cleanliness of local transportation /roads (4) in particular. It is included electric systems, water systems and environmental sanitation. The next is performing the service(s) at the first time (18). The third is training employees how to be willing to serve whenever tourists need (26). The fourth is giving tourists individual attention (41), and tourists' best interest in heart always (42) is the last one. The majority of tourists coming to Phu Quoc Island are foreign people, so people from different cultural backgrounds are likely to have various attitudes. Enhancing foreign languages at least English speaking is extremely necessary to understand what they need or what they expect.

As the results mentioned above, this study suggests some solutions that focusing on tourists' satisfactions is the most critical thing right now. The first notable thing is increasing the attraction of constructional investment in the infrastructure. Service systems supporting to develop tourism are also carefully interested in. The second suggestion is service employees in tourism section. Hence, employees should be trained methodically in communication or their behavior to tourists. Employees, staffs and managers can be sent to

some tourism development countries in order to learn from them something new in a good way. Or service providers can hire the tourism experts who can conduct their employees to enhance professional at their place.

Quadrant IV: There are two elements that tourists do not highly expect, namely good quality of the water and bath areas (14) and understanding and attention to tourists' needs from staffs and agencies (28). They come to visit and enjoy natural scenes and beautiful beaches within some days. This study proposes that service providers and tourism managers should consider about the sanitary around instead of care of the bath or the quality of water. Furthermore, to reduce the paying exceedingly attention to tourists' needs should be implemented. Because tourists may think that agencies want to cheat them for their money.

In brief, to investigate the level of satisfaction of international tourists, the author compares the variety between tourists' expectations and perceptions toward the service quality what service providers offered to foreign tourists.

5. Conclusion

The objectives of this study were to examine the measurement of tourism service quality on Vietnam's island tourism. Based on tourist's satisfaction, to identify the evaluation model used for research in the tourism service quality and to propose solutions to enhance tourism service quality in Vietnam's island tourism sector. So, research objectives were met depended on the outcomes of the study. The research findings showed that the tangible dimension was the most concerning significant from foreign tourists. Tangible and reliability had important relationships with not only tourist satisfaction and service quality as well and vice versa. This could mean that service quality dimensions are dependent factors in the relationship between tourist satisfaction and service quality in Vietnam's island tourism. Thus, there could be relationships among service quality dimensions,

tourist satisfaction and service quality, but tourists in service sectors might be satisfied because of service quality reasons than others.

In terms of improving the quality of service, almost international tourists require highly the service quality, but Vietnam's island tourism has not met these demands yet. The tourism service quality is currently quite low and poor. Even though the majority of factors has enabled to respond tourist serious requirements, Vietnam islands tourism and particular in Phu Quoc island tourism in general service providers and tourism managers should have consistent targets to keep up and reform the quality of service so that international tourists can be more satisfied for their return. Besides, the attempt of investment into factors is such road systems, sanitary, employees' ability, supporting service that they need to be enhanced day by day. IPA model is very effective on the analysis of inquiry of service quality standard and evaluating the quality of service in the tourism section. This model is useful for helping the author propose suggestions so as to improve the tourism quality in Vietnam's Island tourism.

Finally, this study has numerous limitations. The first point is the questionnaire that is quite long. It sometimes was a reason for the reactions from the respondents who thought that the questionnaire was too long and boring to read. In that way, the research was lost a few respondents and some

questionnaires what answered quickly without deep thinking. Most respondents answered without big persuasion though. The second, time and money have always been the main constraints in almost all research studies. Since this is an academic research with limited time, a few service sectors were targeted only because of the time period to conduct the research. If the time was longer, the study would have preferred to target as aspects of the quality of service as possible, to draw a better conclusion and generalization. The last one is this study that the data collected did not spread in a year regularly, so the survey could not gather in both low seasons and peak ones on Phu Quoc Island.

This study was a background for further research, but there were some limitations and unexpected outcomes. So this study suggested that the researchers could do interviews to figure out more details. During interviews it is possible to explain the questions and also ask follow up questions. Moreover, further research should be performed in both low and peak seasons to have a comprehensive overview about tourism section on Phu Quoc Island as well as Vietnam's another islands. Later researchers could also expand the framework with the verification of other hypotheses such as the relationship of tourist perception and tourist satisfaction or tourist expectation and tourist satisfaction to make sure the research more significant and in depth.

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Table 1: Demographic variables description

<i>Demographic Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Demographic Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Nationality</i>			<i>Number of nights</i>		
America	102	36.4	0 night	17	6.1
Australia	105	37.5	1-3 nights	161	57.5
Europe	42	15.0	4-7 nigh	87	31.1
Asia	16	5.7	>7 nights	15	5.4
Other	15	5.4			
<i>Gender</i>			<i>Transportation</i>		
Female	104	37.1	Ferry	115	41.1
Male	176	62.9	Plane	165	58.9
<i>Age</i>			<i>Number of visits</i>		
20-30	67	23.9	First time	199	71.1
31-40	76	27.1	2-5 times	24.6	
41-50	52	18.6	>5 times	12	4.3
51-60	58	20.7			
Above 61	27	9.6	<i>Accommodation</i>		
<i>Education</i>			Hotel	226	80.7
Senior high school	33	11.8	Camp site	31	11.1
Diploma	162	57.9	Motel	3	1.1
High education	85	30.4	Other	20	7.1
<i>Monthly income</i>			<i>Information about Phu Quoc Island</i>		
Under 1000\$	27	9.6	Media (T.V, Radio, etc.)	140	19.4
1000\$-2000\$	113	40.4	Tourism trade fair/exhibitions	112	15.6
2000\$-3000\$	127	45.4	Internet/newspapers/magazines	188	26.1
3000\$ & above	13	4.6	Recommendation by friends or relatives	168	23.3
<i>Occupation</i>			Other	112	15.5
Businessperson	62	22.1	<i>Attractions reason</i>		
Civil servant	109	38.9	Beaches	204	19.1
Educator	21	7.5	Temples	145	13.6
White-collar worker	10	3.6	Mountains	113	10.6
Blue-collar worker	13	4.6	Night markets	114	10.7
Student	31	11.1	Activities on beaches	218	20.4
Retired	23	8.2	Cultured Pearls Centers	161	15.1
Unemployed	8	2.9			
Other	3	1.1			

Source: Compiled by author

Table 2: Reliability test

	Service quality dimensions					Tourist overall Satisfaction
	Tangible	Reliability	Responsibility	Assurance	Empathy	
Cronbach α	0.858	0.735	0.762	0.794	0.750	0.769

Source: Compiled by author

Table 3: Perception level of each dimension

Dimension	Perception			Expectation			Expectation and Perception ratio
	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	
Tangible	3.501	2.686	3.857	3.501	2.686	3.857	91.9%
Reliability	3.181	2.682	3.421	3.181	2.682	3.421	84.3%
Responsiveness	3.774	3.046	4.357	3.774	3.046	4.357	102.2%
Assurance	3.506	3.275	3.743	3.506	3.275	3.743	98.2%
Empathy	3.2	2.604	3.686	3.2	2.604	3.686	91.2%

Source: Compiled by author

Table 4: Regression analysis results

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
	Overall Satisfaction
Constant	4.667
Tangible	0.141* (2.429)
Reliability	0.210*** (3.222)
Responsiveness	0.02 (0.030)
Assurance	0.61 (0.931)
Empathy	0.74 (1.273)
R2	0.093
Adjusted R2	0.077
F	5.627
St. error	0.548

(): P, (*) P<0.05, (**) P<0.01, (***) P<0.001

Source: Compiled by author.

Table 5: ANOVA analysis results

Variables	Frequency	Mean	F	Sig
<i>Nationality</i>				
America	102	3.21		
Australia	105	3.24	1.568	0.183
Europe	42	3.06		
Asia	16	2.98		
Other	15	3.34		
<i>Age (years)</i>				
20-30	67	3.21		
31-40	76	3.29		
41-50	52	3.19	1.625	0.205
51-60	58	3.05		
Above 61	27	3.2		
<i>Gender</i>				
Female	104	3.47	45.643	0.000
Male	176	3.03		
<i>Education</i>				
Senior high school	33	3.05	11.587	0.000
Diploma	162	3.33		
High education	85	2.99		
<i>Occupation</i>				
Businessperson	62	3.16		
Civil servant	109	3.23		
Educator	21	3.24		
White-collar worker	10	3.22		
Blue-collar worker	13	2.94	2.141	0.302
Student	31	3.02		
Retired	23	3.19		
Unemployed	8	3.81		
Other	3	3.50		
<i>Monthly income (USD)</i>				
Under 1000\$	27	3.23		
1000-2000\$	113	3.21	0.155	0.926
2000-3000\$	127	3.17		
3000\$ & above	13	3.23		

Source: Compiled by author.

Table 6: Expectation and Perception performed on the quality of service

No.	Statements	Expectation	Perception	Gap (P-E)
	Tangible	3.81	3.5	-0.31***
1	Clean and modern equipped hotel and restaurant systems	3.95	3.86	-0.09**
2	Handmade/ souvenir goods in shops	3.94	3.74	-0.2***
4	Cleanliness of local transportation /roads	3.91	2.82	-1.09***
5	Nightlife and amusement activities at the beach (BBQ, sport competition)	4.02	3.71	-0.31***
6	Excursion offers, local gastronomy, and catering services	4.01	3.63	-0.38***
7	Various services (banks, health care, shopping)	3.74	3.70	-0.04**
8	Comfortable climate/weather conditions	3.80	2.69	1.11
9	Cleanliness of public toilets	3.80	3.58	-0.22***
11	Crowded beaches	3.99	3.64	-0.35***
12	Aesthetics of landscapes/sceneries/beaches	3.57	3.84	0.27***
13	Availability of sporting facilities and recreational activities	4.21	3.72	-0.49***
14	Good quality of the water and bath areas	2.80	3.11	0.31***
	Reliability	3.72	3.18	-0.53***
15	Performing the services what promised	3.70	3.35	-0.35
16	Provision of adequate information about the service delivered.	3.10	3.08	-0.02
17	Vehicle rental and other forms of transportation	3.20	3.26	0.06***
18	Performing the service(s) right the first time	3.94	2.68	-1.26***
19	Holding the promise to tourists by the certain time	4	3.13	-0.87***
20	Handle tourists complain promptly and satisfying tourist	3.8	3.34	-0.46***
21	Helping tourists to resolve the encountering problems as best as it could	4.1	3.42	-0.68***
22	Availability of tourist information documents/notes	3.90	3.21	-0.69***
	Responsiveness	3.75	3.30	0.446***
23	Courtesy and availability of tour guides	4.36	3.57	-0.79***
24	Enthusiastic and quick service to tourists	3.93	3.49	-0.44***
25	Provision of information on local cultural events/entertainment by posters, leaflets, brochures	3.05	3.61	0.56***
26	Willing to serve whenever tourists need	3.81	2.76	-1.05***
27	Offering prompt service	3.60	3.09	-0.51***
	Assurance	3.45	3.51	0.06***
28	Understanding and attention to tourists needs from staffs and agencies	2.74	3.63	0.89*
29	The correct and completed food order	3.14	3.74	0.6
31	Professional qualification and foreign language fluency of staffs/tour guides	3.16	3.28	0.12
32	Environmental safeguarding (life, property, foods?)	3.58	3.69	0.11***
34	Friendly and polite public/hotel/restaurant service staffs	3.94	3.36	-0.58***
35	Cultivation of friendly relationship with tourists	3.77	3.42	-0.35***
37	Courtesy of local staffs and merchants	3.80	3.43	-0.37***
	Empathy	3.57	3.2	-0.37***
38	Friendliness of the local people	3.73	3.47	-0.26***
39	Understanding tourists' specific needs	3.16	3.47	0.31*
40	Helpful locals in giving directions/suggestions	3.68	3.69	0.01***
41	Giving tourists individual attention	3.49	2.65	-0.84***
42	Tourists' best interests in heart always	3.45	2.94	-0.51**
43	Answering tourists' questions completely	3.80	3.58	-0.22***
44	Convenient operating time for all tourists	3.68	2.60	-1.08

Source: Source: Compiled by author.