

TOURISM AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT- CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

****Author: M.KIRUTHIKA, Assistant Professor MBA Tagore Institute of Engineering and Technology,
Deviyakuirchi – 636112**

*****Co – Author: Dr. M. S. JOHN XAVIER, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Corporate
Secretary Ship, Presidency College, Chennai.**

Abstract:

Tourism as a concept compile attributes in services by configuring the quality sensations. The quality management is necessary for all the service clues which intimate caters of the consumer preference. The area and the destination path are clearly determined only with the help of quality attributes. The tourism characteristics of heterogeneous and seasonality is the major objective for the tourism industry to maintain quality in the service encounters both the producers and consumers concern. The different forms of tourism have discussed in the paper to enact the role of quality in the tourism arena. The integral parts of quality standards are included with the factors causing the faults in providing the quality and substantiality in their actions. The social aspects of quality are included in the paper with the modern development in the tourism industry. The paper is a conceptual theory based structure as an empirical view on the general descriptions based on the secondary data enumeration. The conclusive part is included based on the author understanding level of the information in the conceptual context.

Introduction:

“Tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction among tourists, business suppliers, host governments, host communities, origin governments, universities, community colleges and non-governmental organizations, in the process of attracting, transporting, hosting and managing these tourists and other visitors”

“Tourism is the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one complete year for leisure, business and other purposes”.

The concept of tourism can be applied to different forms of tourism. Depending upon whether a person is travelling to, from or within a certain country the following forms can be distinguished:

– **Inbound tourism** – involving the non-residents received by a destination country from the point of view of that destination; – **Out bound tourism** –

involving residents travelling to another country from the point of view of the country of origin;

– **Domestic tourism** – involving residents of a given country travelling within that country.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURISM: (TGA & TDA)

Tourism products are heterogeneous – they are complex and consist of many complementary components provided by suppliers from various public and private sectors. The purchase and consumption of the tourism product is spread over time and distance. Thus, the tourism consumer buys expectations at the *tourism generating area* which should meet with the reality during the transit and consumption of the tourism product at the *tourism destination area*

TOURISM QUALITY CONTROL GAP

Tourism quality control gap, relates to the discrepancy between the need for quality control at every stage of the total tourism product delivery and the feasibility of the individual tourism company of exerting actual control over this process. The existence of this gap accounts for an inability of individual tourism companies to offer the total quality tourism product that the customer expects at the beginning of the tourist purchase – consumption process. The tourism quality control gap is also responsible for the increasing number of tourists dissatisfied with their total tourism experience. Tourists consume other elements of the total tourism product during their overall tourism

experience, mainly at the destination area – an individual tour operating company is not in a position to control the quality of all the elements of the total tourism product offered by the providers operating at the host area. Moreover, the human aspect of the product is of utmost importance for total tourist satisfaction, which can be confronted only at the time of tourism consumption. Tourism, typically a service offering, cannot be stored for future consumption; this constitutes one of the unique features of services, referred to as perishability. “In addition to the inability to store tourism services, managers are also faced with seasonality, which e.g. results in: a fluctuation in demand at a ski resort between winter and summer; a fluctuation in occupancy in a city centre hotel during weekdays and weekends, a fluctuation in demand at a restaurant during breakfast, lunch and dinner hours to the rest of the day, the fluctuation of demand for travel facilities during certain times of the day”. While the consumption of tangible goods may be delayed for future consumption and/or inspection of quality, services are generally produced and consumed almost simultaneously. These differences render the delivery system and quality control systems tourism quality utilized in the product industry, inappropriate in tourism services. Tourism managers are thus required to consider alternative strategies to facilitate the efficient management of both demand and capacity (supply) of services as, unlike the goods manufacturing industry, service organizations are unable to increase the supply in accordance with the increase in demand

CHALLENGES FACING MODERN TOURISM

The tourism sector can be viewed as comprising a variety of producers, distributors and facilitators. Whereas in the past the boundaries between the different players in the market were clear, vertical and horizontal integration in the tourism sector has resulted in a blurring of these boundaries. The field of tourism has developed a dual economic structure over the years. In the light of recent studies on the phenomena of concentration and restructuring, two categories of companies seem to coexist: the traditional small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), which seek a second breath, in order to become international and try to adapt their services to the new requirements of domestic and international demand, by the introduction of innovations (constitution of purchase networks and regionalization of supply); the corporate companies which specialize in large-scale tourism, according to strategies of cost rationalization. They entered into heavy restructuring operations, directing them towards increased integration of subsectors. Whereas in the target countries or destinations SMEs continue to offer such tourism services as accommodation, catering and leisure time activities, an international travel and tourism industry has gradually emerged in the source countries as part of the globalization process. SMEs in tourism, notable micro and small enterprises play a key role in terms of number of enterprises, number of employees and profit, and on average they are continuing to increase. Tourism is

today one of the most internationalized sectors of the world economy. The world tourism market has been substantially extended, adding considerably to the potential for further growth and at the same time bringing about greater competition between tourism countries. Globalization affects the supply and demand side in tourism in many ways. The most important supply factors are: Worldwide acting suppliers, as well as the impact of computerized information and reservation systems. Global-acting airlines, hotel chains and tour operators already have branches throughout the world and cover major parts of international tourism demand with their *global distribution systems* (GDS). Strategic alliances, co-operations and/or mergers are additional driving forces of the globalization process.

Decreasing costs of air travel and the possibilities of having access to destinations with relatively low price and income levels, as well as relatively low social standards.

The development of new destinations supported by hardware investments of multinational enterprises and infrastructure investments.

Today's secularly increased travel exposure and experience of international tourists can be cited as the reason for such "globally" universal or converging behaviour. The increase in travel exposure and experience leads to converging quality demands, particularly with respect to technical (as opposed to functional) quality dimensions.

SERVICE ATTRIBUTES AND OBSTACLES TO ATTAINING QUALITY ENHANCEMENT:

There are several service attributes which have particular significance for management and control of service operations:

a. Labour intensity – the ratio of labour costs incurred, to the value of plant and equipment used. Some researchers make a distinction between people- and equipment-based services.

b. Interaction – defined as the extent to which the consumer actively intervenes in the service process to change the content of the service. Here, intervention is interpreted as also including customer participation to provide information, from which needs can be assessed, and also customer feedback, from which satisfaction can be inferred

c. The direct recipient of service – can be either people or things. Some researchers call this attribute “the nature of the service act”, as service result can be either tangible or intangible.

d. Contact – defined as the proportion of the total time required to provide the service for which the consumer is present in the system. This approach provided some insights into the nature of service operations. It classifies services along a continuum from high to low contact. Contact was defined in terms of the time that the consumer is present in the service providing system.

e. Customization – defined in two main parts: choice – defined as meeting customers’ needs by

supplying one or more selections from a fixed range of options (low customization means that “choice” is limited to a single option) and adaptation – defined as the interaction process in which the customer’s requirement is decided upon, designed, and delivered to match the individual’s needs.

f. The place where value is added – enables grouping all the services into four groups they are service factory, mass service, job shop and professional service

MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY IN TOURISM:

Quality management is usually defined as a “set of coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to quality” (ISO 9000:2000). It could be of reactive or proactive character. Reactive approach means in fact complaints management and reflects the desire to avoid problems with customers instead of recognizing and dealing with their requirements. The Proactive quality management is always of strategic character. Quality is used to differentiate the organization’s service offering and lies at the heart of the organization’s strategy to gain competitive advantage. Here, usually, quality is one of the primary drivers of the business.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF QUALITY IN MODERN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Competition in the Tourism Market:

We are all aware that quality has become one of the most, if not the most, important factors in international competition for business success and

that continuous improvement in quality makes good business sense. This is especially true of the broad tourism sector, where an ever-increasing array of “new” tourism destinations has forced destination marketers and operations managers to invest in the delivery of higher levels of service quality as a competitive strategy aimed at differentiating their product offering (WTO, 2004). Growing competition, lack of willingness to provide a service, growing loss of individuality by standardization of products, adverse price performance ratio etc. are good reasons for systematic quality management in tourism are widely documented: growing competition.

HOW QUALITY IMPROVES BUSINESS

The literature indicates also that the setting and maintenance of quality standards is an increasingly important activity for hospitality firms and tourism areas. More and more often, guests and customers are opting for those products and services that allow them to be certain of receiving high quality and value for money. Below find the main arguments for quality improvement in a business organization:

Improving quality generates higher profits. Better services are directly reflected in the business success, compensation costs are reduced and guest loyalty is promoted. If buyers can detect higher quality of products and services encounters, they will “reward” such sellers with greater volume. If reimbursement is above marginal cost, this higher

volume turns directly into higher profits. Higher quality, in a sense, generates its own reward.

Quality management decreases costs. The introduction of a quality management system does not come free. But it is much more expensive to go on making the same mistakes’, having the same loses, manage all the same complaints, dealing with some misunderstanding between employees suffering from the badly organized workplace etc. Despite cutting costs by preventing mistakes and lower costs of control, high quality means lower costs thanks to more effective work, less stuff needed because the work is efficient, consequently cheaper services. Still it is worth understanding: quality efforts and investments are by their nature long-term investments. High quality service brings competitive advantages. The quality programme promotes the creativity of services, making them more difficult to copy, thus improving the market chances. In tourism guests look for an aid to orientation in the wide variety of tourist offers and quality assurance is one of points of orientation for the customers enabling them to make right decisions. High quality is the way to better and stronger trade mark which generates higher profit.

Quality management leads to increased employees’ morale and job satisfaction and therefore less fluctuation. If employees are involved in the preparation and implementation of the quality programme and they see the system to be more profitable for themselves as well, they are more motivated, satisfied and loyal. This can be gained through better communication between

management and employees. Proper quality management reduces employee turnover and therefore also reduces costs. As a result quality management encourages hospitality. All employees pull together in the same direction – guest satisfaction – and the guests notice that. That’s why it is crucial to employ staff truly devoted to their job and responsibilities.

Quality management enhances company image. Customers prefer companies with some kind of a Quality Label as it generally means better customer service and ensures reliability. Quality in fact is the only way to create the market brand. Proper customer service is more effective than expensive advertising. Improving customer service is essential for tourism industry. It is sometimes easier and cheaper to rely on customer’s recommendations by satisfying their needs rather than putting a lot of money in marketing, advertising and sales promotions. It has been proven, that 9 out of 10 guests spend their holidays on the recommendation of friends and relatives.

Quality management improves financing possibilities. The creditors tend to require financial schemes which are tied with quality management plans. This also proves that introducing quality management systems leads to increasing companies’ value, creditability and reliability. Receiving financial help such as loans or leasing becomes easier and sometimes less expensive. • Quality management improves dealing with critical incidents. Each guest has his specific expectations, needs and opinions. No matter how tactful staff

may be, the odd mistake or misunderstanding is unavoidable. Such occurrences are described as “critical incidents” (see chapter 18.3); these are defects of varying degrees in a service chain which result in failure to satisfy guest expectations and hence trigger dissatisfaction. Guests tend to remember critical incidents and do not hesitate to talk about them. One of the most important developments in the tourism industry is the growing attention for service quality from the customer’s perspective. This is the consequence of the growing customer dominance in the service process. Nowadays, customers are much better informed about travelling and are an increasingly experienced traveller, which makes them less dependent on the proficiency of the service provider, e.g. the travel agent. As the customer’s dominance increases, he becomes more and more demanding.

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM:

Service is becoming the differentiator and the source of achieving a competitive edge. At its heart must be the realization that service is about people and the manner in which they are managed. Total quality management is one such approach because “it is a strategy, which is concerned with changing the fundamental beliefs, values and culture of a company, harnessing the enthusiasm and participation of everyone (...) towards an overall ideal of right first time” (Atkinson and Naden, 1989). Fundamental to this strategy is the human element of the service production and delivery process.

CONCLUSION:

Tourism is the vast and wide area where the managerial of quality standards is too hard but as a business and industry concern if they control the quality gap in the service encounters and maintain the service quality with feasible allocation may lead the tourism industry in the quality assured path.

