

# ON QUALITY OF TOURISM SERVICE

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**T**he quality of goods and services has different definitions because of complexity of goods and services.

The quality of produced goods has many aspects to be considered:

- Goods should conform to fixed standards. These standards are constants decided by functions of the goods, these constants can't be contrary to factors influencing their existence, for example: weight, length, width, diameter of a car, etc.
- Goods should be appropriate to usage, that is, they should provide buyer with utility.
- The price of goods should be acceptable and salable.

Not all the consumers have bought the best goods in market, but they bought the best-produced or best-sold goods which they could afford. Some people like buying used cars instead of new ones. Although used cars are of low quality, but they couldn't afford to buy a new one.

- Goods of high quality require small incidental expenses. If goods are durable, their reliability is high. Buyers will not waste time for them uselessly. In order to achieve this feature, sellers should supply good after-sale services (making regular checks, carrying out repairs, cleaning and greasing, etc.)

- The quality of goods as the satisfaction of consumers' demand: Marketing science has set a new viewpoint on quality which centers on buyers' demand. But in my opinion, it's strange to think that the quality is simply a satisfaction of buyers' demand for some material products!

Therefore, in order to measure the quality of goods, an equation has been suggested:

Quality = No defect + High credibility + Fewest breakdown + Lowest incidental expenses + Demand satisfied.

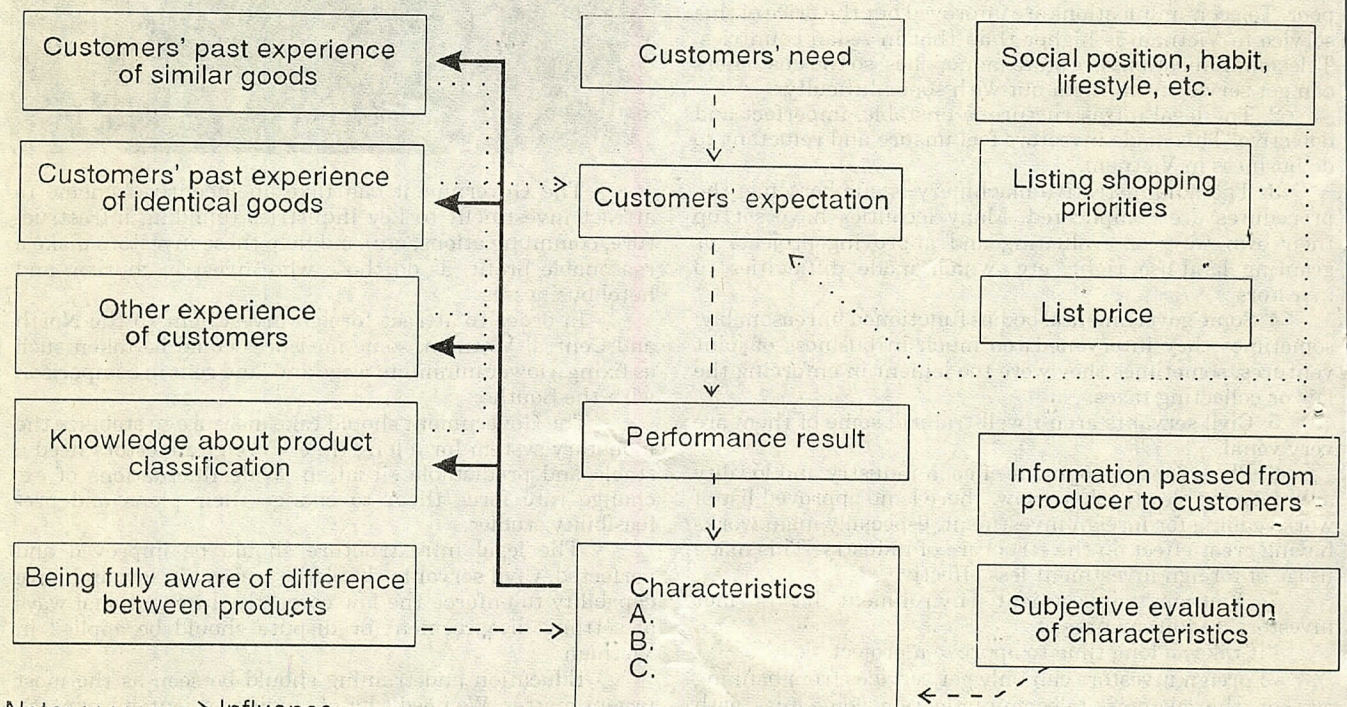
As for the quality of services, numerous managers in service industry thought that "Good services are what come up to customers' expectations".

From this definition, we could define the quality of tourism service as follows:

"The quality of tourism service is capability of being appreciated by customers of a tourism product or service, it satisfies customers' demand as expected".

Its satisfactoriness is subjective because customers' evaluation is based on all of characteristics of tourism product or service.

Factors deciding the quality of tourism service could be embodied in the following chart:



Note: ..... > Influence  
 - - - - - > Decision  
 —————> Decision (formation of new experience)

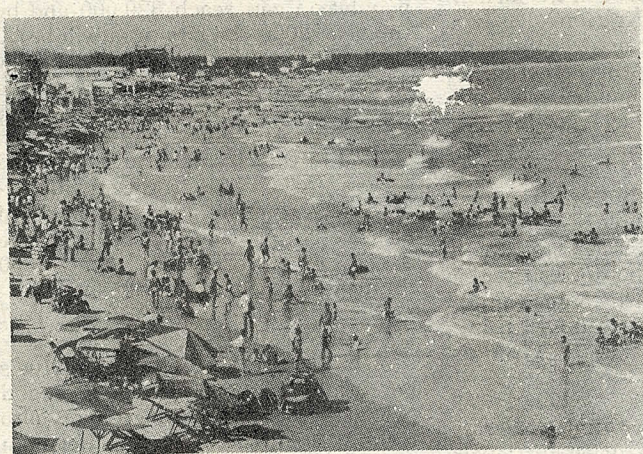


By this chart, we can see that the quality of tourism service includes the following basic characteristics:

- Tourism services aren't like other material goods. The quality of products and the characteristics of service are not exactly alike, because the quality of tourism services depends on the tourist's values. The tourist's evaluation, in its turn, depends on what the tourist expects and whether he/she feels satisfied or not. Frenchmen, for instance, are connoisseurs of food and drink, they aren't satisfied with anything but the best.

- The tourist's evaluation of the quality of service results from their comparison between degrees of contentment provided by this service in the past or the present. The quality of service with its characteristics is evaluated by the tourist basing on experience. The tourist becomes more and more experienced because he/she has visited many countries, so their demand and expectation become higher and higher. Therefore, the tourism services should be improved qualitatively.

- Perception of the quality is always subjective and formed by tourists, not by tour operators. The same room or dish could be evaluated differently by tourists of various tastes.



- Different tourists (market segments) will have different qualitative demands. French tourists like spacious hotel rooms while American or Japanese tourists are different. French tourists want to visit Điện Biên Phủ while Japanese are attracted by historical remains in Huế and Hà Nội.

- Perception of the quality of service could change over times. In developed countries, a majority of tourists are from middle class which is on the increase in these societies. This factor forced tour operators to improve the quality of service. But there is also a fact that the quality of service shows a downward tendency because number of tourists becomes larger.

In short, in order to attract more tourists, tour operators should find out ways to satisfy their demand and pay attention to their expectation. It's said that tour operators sell "dreams". Tourists will feel satisfied if their dreams come true. If they feel discontent, they won't come back. Many Vietnam tour operators can't materialize the tourists' dreams. Their dissatisfaction and disappointment, to some extent, have reflected objectively the bad quality of service. Generally, the quality of tourism service in Vietnam is low and this situation has caused tour operators a lot of worries ♣

## REVISITING ĐỒNG THÁP



Coming back to Đồng Tháp after flood, I saw dramatic changes in both towns and countryside. Đồng Tháp Town is well-planned. There is no skyscraper or glass wall, but there are a lot of trees giving shade from the sun.

Đồng Tháp's economy is still based on agriculture and has been damaged by the flood last year. The people here are trying to develop their province in order to keep pace with other provinces in the Mekong delta. There are two potentials in Đồng Tháp which should be protected and exploited methodically. They are cajuput forest and bird sanctuary which have an important meaning to economic development (especially development of tourism industry) and preservation of the environment.

Đồng Tháp bird sanctuary is very wide and scenic. Numerous species of bird found this area a promised land. One of the rarest species is the red-headed crane and there is now considerable concern all over the world for their existence. In March, 1990, an international conference held in Tam Nông (Đồng Tháp) financed by ICF (International Center of Forest) had attracted a lot of experts from the US, the UK, Canada and Southeast Asia. The conference came to the conclusion that Vietnam was the only place in the world where red-headed crane could be found. This is a rare and precious species which is threatened by extinction. Besides red-headed crane, there are some 130 species of bird living in Đồng Tháp bird sanctuary as teal, bittern, stork, wild duck, etc.

Revamping cajuput forest and bird sanctuary, Đồng Tháp could become a tourismagnetic area. Ecotourism is a major trend in the world today. Tourists have been tired of big-city way of living and they wanted to return to nature.

Sitting on a sampan sliding along a canal bordered with rice fields, seeing flocks of bird flying up from the cajuput forest is quite an interesting experience ♣

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