

Research Instructor Service Quality: An Important Guarantee for The Satisfaction of Participants in Research Activities

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Abstract

With the continuous introduction and implementation of study policies in various national departments, study tours are getting more and more attention, but there is a shortage of study instructor talents and uneven service quality at present. Using empirical learning theory, situational learning theory and customer satisfaction theory as the theoretical bases, we investigated the perceptions of study tour participants on the service quality of study tour instructors in study tour activities and analyzed the factors influencing their satisfaction. It was found that the service quality of study tour instructors, which consists of grooming, explanation work, service attitude, service standard and response ability, is an important factor affecting the satisfaction of study tour participants. Improving the service quality of study instructors can increase the satisfaction of study participants and is of great significance for the sustainable development of study tours.

Keywords

Research instructors; Service quality; Participants; Satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

In December 2016, the Ministry of Education (MOE), together with the National Tourism Administration (NTA) and several other departments, issued the Opinions on Promoting Study Tour for Primary and Secondary School Students, which advocated the development of primary and secondary school education and teaching programs that integrate practical educational aspects such as study tours. A number of important documents issued subsequently, such as the Moral Education Guidelines for Primary and Secondary Schools and the Study Tour Service Specifications, clearly require institutions and schools to carry out study tour practice activities. Study tour refers to an out-of-school practical activity of inquiry-based learning and experience through centralized travel and centralized accommodation, which is organized and implemented in a planned manner by education departments and schools [1]. Thanks to the support of national policies, the promotion of local governments and the social concern for quality education, various types of study and research practice bases have emerged and study and research practice activities have developed rapidly.

In 2016, the Study Tour Service Specification (LB/T054-2016) was recognized as an industry standard by the National Tourism Administration, which stipulates that during study tours, each study team must be equipped with a study instructor to develop teaching plans and programs for study activities, and this instructor, together with school lead teachers, tour guides, and other relevant service personnel, must provide study tour participants with appropriate travel services and educational services for study tour participants [1]. At present, the system related to study instructors in China is not enough imperfect, and the important role of study

instructors in research activities is related to whether the educational role of study tours can get good results. The functions and competencies required of research instructors are much higher than those of ordinary tour guide personnel. At present, the group of research instructors is still dominated by travel agency guides, who turn to research instructor positions generally through independent study or short-term social training as a knowledge supplement under the current demand orientation.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Status of foreign research

Andy Holdnak (1996), in his book *Educational Tourism: Learning on Vacation*, suggests that educational tourism programs can be broadly divided into two categories: tourism programs for general learning courses and tourism programs for skills learning [2]. Foreign research on "educational tourism" has focused on educational tourism in specific special areas. Nagai (2018) conducted systematic case studies on educational tourism in two different Asian countries - Dubai and Japan, respectively [4,5]. In addition, foreign studies on "educational tourism" have covered various aspects such as the characteristics of educational tourism by age groups, educational tourism activity sites, theoretical and empirical studies related to educational tourism, and the role and attitudes of educational tourism. In the review of foreign literature, it can be seen that the concept of "educational tourism" is similar to the broad sense of study tours, which is a kind of learning-oriented tourism activity with diversified participants, more focused on learning purposes and more diverse participants.

2.2. Status of domestic research

In recent years, "study tours" have become one of the most active branches and research hotspots in the tourism discipline. The study of teaching methods for students coming to China for study and tourism was the first research on study tours in China [6]. Since then, the term "study tourism" has been used by many scholars in their studies. It was not until 2013 that the term "study tour" appeared for the first time in the "National Tourism and Leisure Program (2013-2020)" that domestic research unified the name [7]. In China, Yang Sheng and other scholars found that "study tours" were first proposed in Japan, and were incorporated into the education system and implemented in Japan [8].

The definition of study tour instructors is not yet uniform in Chinese academia. Study instructors have their own unique professional characteristics and job requirements, and their main responsibilities are to organize activities, guide students' independent thinking, and learn knowledge during study tours. During this period, study instructors are responsible for both explaining course knowledge to teachers and carrying out the work of tour guides, planning and leading students to integrate learning into tourism activities, and study instructors are emerging professionals with both educational teaching levels and tour guide service capabilities [9].

Combing domestic and foreign research on study tours found that foreign studies started earlier and are relatively mature, mainly based on case studies and connotation studies, with more theory than data, more concepts than operations, and overall less comprehensive and in-depth studies [10]. Among them, more studies focus more on practical aspects such as research curriculum design, research activity planning, and not many studies about the comprehensive quality requirements of research instructors.

3. STUDY DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

3.1. Variable selection

Based on empirical learning theory, contextual learning theory, and customer satisfaction theory, five variable elements of service quality evaluation of research instructors were selected: grooming, explanation work, service attitude, service specification, and resilience [11].

3.2. Questionnaire design and data collection

The respondents were mainly students who had participated in study tours in Anhui Province, and the survey was conducted by filling out questionnaires online. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and 290 were collected, of which, 288 were valid. The contents of the questionnaire include: introduction and research introduction (to let respondents clearly understand the confidentiality of information, eliminate worries and ensure reliable data); personal situation (gender information, grade level, etc.); satisfaction and variable information variable information (satisfaction level, grooming, explanation work, service attitude, service standard, and resilience).

3.3. Research hypothesis

Combining literature research and questionnaire survey, when the conditions of the tour route and reception standards are roughly the same, it can be assumed that the explanation work, service attitude, grooming, service specification, and adaptability jointly determine the service quality of study tour instructors [11]. Meanwhile, the satisfaction of study tour participants is significantly and positively correlated with the service quality of study tour instructors. Based on the service quality of study tour instructors, the following five hypotheses are proposed to explore the extent to which each factor of study tour instructors' service quality affects satisfaction.

H1: There is a significant positive correlation between the grooming of study instructors and the satisfaction of study tour participants.

H2: There is a significant positive correlation between the explanation work of study instructors and the satisfaction of study tour participants.

H3: There is a significant positive correlation between the service attitude of study instructors and the satisfaction of study tour participants.

H4: There is a significant positive correlation between the service specification of study instructors and the satisfaction of study tour participants.

H5: There is a significant positive correlation between the resilience of study instructors and the satisfaction of study tour participants.

4. ANALYSIS PROCESS

4.1. Reliability and validity tests

4.1.1 Reliability analysis

Reliability is the consistency of the results of multiple measurements of an object using the same method, which can be used as a measure of test reliability. It has been widely used in social sciences [12]. SPSS 24.0 was used to analyze the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.813, which is between 0.8 and 0.9, and the reliability test results are good (Table1.).

Table 1. Table of Cronbach's alpha coefficients

Cronbach's α	Standardized Cronbach's α	Items	Samples
0.813	0.814	5	300

If the value of "correlation between corrected items and total correlation" is below 0.3, or the value of " α coefficient" is significantly higher than the α coefficient after removing the items, then we can consider removing the questions (Table 2.).

Table 2. Table of Cronbach's α coefficient after removing terms

Question items	after removing terms Average value	after removing terms Variance	Correlation between deleted items and after deleted items	after removing terms Cronbach's α coefficient
Q4	15.274	7.508	0.637	0.767
Q5	15.295	7.316	0.601	0.777
Q6	15.260	7.255	0.631	0.767
Q7	15.328	7.244	0.575	0.785
Q8	15.286	7.514	0.568	0.787

As can be seen from Table 4-1, the Cronbach's α factor of the relevant variables is 0.813. As shown in Table 4-2, the deleted Cronbach's α value does not exceed the Cronbach's α value, so the questions of the scale can be left unmodified, indicating that the indicators are set in good condition and the questionnaire is credible, which provides a basis for the next stage of data analysis.

4.1.2 Validity analysis

Validity is a measure of whether a method or instrument can accurately measure the object being tested, that is, whether the results measured reflect what is being tested, and the higher its validity, the better its consistency, while the lower its validity, the less it conforms [13]. In this questionnaire, the KMO test examined the bias correlation among the variables with a KMO of 0.840, which is more than 0.7 and is a valid test (Table 3.).

Table 3. KMO test and Bartlett's test

	KMO	0.840
Bartlett's sphericity test	Approximate cardinality	457.224
	df	10.000
	p	0.000***

Note: ***, **, * represent 1%, 5%, 10% significance levels, respectively

4.2.4.2 Descriptive statistical analysis

4.2.1 Descriptive statistics of the sample

(1) Sample gender distribution

Among the participating samples, the number of male students was 120, accounting for 41.7% of the total number of respondents; the number of female students was 168, accounting for 58.3%.

(2) Grade distribution

In terms of the grade distribution of the interviewed participants, there were 13 junior high school students, accounting for 4.51%; 36 junior high school students, accounting for 12.5%; 49 junior high school students, accounting for 17.01%; 33 senior high school students, accounting for 11.46%; 68 senior high school students, accounting for 23.61%; and 89 senior high school students, accounting for 30.9%. The number of seniors accounted for the largest number of students, and the sample was selected relatively evenly with more than 10% of all grades except for the junior class, which accounted for the smallest percentage.

(3) Distribution of the number of activities

The survey found that 23.70% of students participated in only one study activity, 70.46% participated in 2-3 times, and 5.84% participated in 4 times or more.

(4) Overall Satisfaction Distribution of Study Instructors

In the overall satisfaction survey of students, 18.32% were very satisfied, 56.17% were satisfied, 20.16% were average, 3.85% were dissatisfied, and 1.50% were very dissatisfied.

(5) Distribution of reasons for dissatisfaction

Dissatisfaction with the service quality of study instructors is mainly due to the lack of knowledge of study instructors, accounting for 54.87%, while other reasons are 28.90% for poor service attitude, 49.68% for poor service skills, 30.52% for deceiving or coercing participants, and 21.10% for increasing or decreasing study tour projects without authorization, indicating that the study instructors' own ability and professionalism still need to be improved.

(6) Impression distribution

(6) Impressive distribution

In the satisfaction survey on the service quality of study instructors, the most impressive service work of study instructors is the explanation work of study instructors, accounting for 75.97%, while other service work accounts for 43.83% of grooming, 63.64% of service attitude, 44.48% of service standardization, and 32.79% of resilience.

According to the above: the survey results show that there are slightly more girls than boys in this sample, more high school students than junior high school students, and students have participated in study tour activities mostly 2-3 times. Most of the students are satisfied with the service quality of study tour instructors, where the main reason for dissatisfaction is the lack of service skills and weak knowledge reserve of study tour instructors. The explanation level and ability of study instructors have a profound impact on the activity experience of study participants.

4.2.2 Descriptive statistics of the sample as a whole

Descriptive statistics were conducted for the questionnaire questions, and data were analyzed for the mean, standard deviation, variance, kurtosis, and skewness of each variable. (Table 4.)

Table 4. Descriptive statistical analysis of the overall survey sample

Variable	Sample	Average value	Standard deviation	Variance	Kurtosis	Skewness
Grooming	288	3.838	0.811	0.658	1.931	-1.023
Service attitude	288	3.815	0.889	0.79	1.527	-1.03
Explanation	288	3.851	0.875	0.766	0.57	-0.644
Service standard	288	3.782	0.932	0.868	0.998	-0.892
Contingency	288	3.825	0.874	0.764	1.081	-0.8

The descriptive statistical analysis revealed that the great value of each variable was 5, the very small value was 1, and the mean value was greater than 3.00, indicating that the respondents were satisfied with the study tours. In addition, the sample basically satisfied the normal distribution (absolute value of skewness < 3 and absolute value of kurtosis < 10), which provided a basis for data analysis.

4.3.4.3 Analysis of the influence of service quality of study instructors on the satisfaction of study participants

In the multiple linear regression analysis, it was found that there was a significant positive correlation between the service quality of study instructors and the satisfaction of study participants, and the relationship had a good fit. From the analysis of the results, it can be seen that the significance p-value is 0.000***, which presents significance at the level, and the model does not have the problem of multicollinearity and has good modeling ability. The equation of the model is as follows.

$$Y=1.019+0.327*Explanation+0.103*service\ attitude+0.098*grooming+0.087*service\ standard+0.139*contingency$$

Table 5. Multiple linear regression analysis table

	Non-standardized coefficient		standardized coefficient	t	p	VIF	R ²	Adjust R ²
	B	standard error	Beta					
Constants	1.019	0.208	-	4.897	0.000***	-	0.402	0.392
Explanation	0.327	0.057	0.333	5.764	0.000***	1.687		
Service attitude	0.103	0.050	0.115	2.045	0.042**	1.605		
Grooming	0.098	0.052	0.108	1.874	0.062*	1.679		
Service standard	0.087	0.047	0.102	1.876	0.062*	1.503		
Contingency	0.139	0.050	0.152	2.778	0.006***	1.516		

Note: ***, **, and * represent 1%, 5%, and 10% significance levels, respectively

a. The independent variables are the five aspects of study participants' perceived service quality of study instructors

b. The dependent variable is the satisfaction of study participants

The level of explanation of study instructors had a significant effect on the satisfaction of study participants (Tables 5.). Study tours are different from ordinary travel activities in that they are conducted in an "education+travel" manner, and participants in study tours are also different from participants in other tourism activities. The interpretation work of study tours is to select different topics of study tours in the context of different social life, regions and cultures, and to process and refine the contents of study courses to create a simple language that is easy to express.

Explanation work had the greatest impact on the satisfaction of study participants, verifying the H1 hypothesis. The results showed that the better the explanation work of the study teachers, the higher the satisfaction level of the study participants with the study trip. Study tour participants attach great importance to the explanation work of study instructors in study tour activities, so efforts can be made in the future development of study tour activities in terms of the study instructors' own abilities.

Service attitude has the second highest influence on the satisfaction of study participants, accepting hypothesis H2. the beginning of a good interactive relationship is a satisfactory

service attitude. The purpose of study participants' participation in study activities is to achieve practical teaching goals, and its special nature, which is different from ordinary tourism activities, determines that the service quality of study instructors must be improved to ensure the high quality completion of teaching goals, therefore, it is necessary to improve the quality and skills of study instructors, strengthen the professional degree of study instructors, and enhance the construction of study instructor teams. The degree of influence of grooming, service specification, and resilience on satisfaction ranked third, fourth, and fifth, accepting the original hypotheses H3, H4, and H5.

It was found that the decisive factors for improving the service quality of study instructors under the orientation of participants' satisfaction were, in order, the level of explanation, service attitude, grooming, service specification and strain ability.

5. CONCLUSION

The study used questionnaire survey, literature review, statistical analysis and other research methods, based on relevant domestic and foreign research, empirical learning theory, situational learning theory and customer satisfaction theory as the theoretical basis, combined with the content and purpose of the study, theoretical research on the influence mechanism of study tutor service quality on the satisfaction of study participants, through quantitative and qualitative analysis, the relevant hypotheses of the study were verified. The following conclusions can be drawn from the study.

(1) Through a questionnaire survey of study participants and the use of statistical methods such as multiple linear regression analysis, there is a significant positive correlation between the service quality of study instructors and the satisfaction of study participants.

(2) The five factors influencing the service quality of study instructors: explanation work, service attitude, grooming, service standard, and adaptability all positively affect the satisfaction of study participants with the service quality of study instructors.

For study tour activities, improving the satisfaction of study participants with study tour activities needs to be done from various aspects to improve students' participation and promote study participants' interest in study tour activities, so as to achieve students' overall development. The role of study tour instructors in study tours has not been sufficiently played and there are certain problems. The purpose of study tours is to integrate education, and study instructors should strive to improve their service quality and comprehensive quality, and link themselves closely with study participants in order to maximize the role of study tours.

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