

# *Self Sale: Promotion of Tour Guide Service From Tourism Psychology Perspective*

-A Case Study of Shenzhen China International Travel Service

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**Abstract**—As smokeless industry and invisible trade, tourism industry has been developing quickly in recent years. However, the rapid expansion has caused a lot of problems and tourist complaints has been increasing. Tourism psychology is a new discipline of psychology applied in the field of tourism, plays an important role in improving the level of tour guide service and reducing the rate of tourist complaints. This paper first carries on the literature review and uses the case analysis method to analyze the related data and content of tourist complaints so as to summarize the characteristics and reasons of tourist complaints. Then it analyzes from relevant tour guides' practical experience through the interview research method. Finally it puts forward a series of development strategies to enhance service level so as to make tour guide self sale to tourists successfully and provide reference for the sustainable development of tourism service.

**Keywords**—*tourism psychology; tourist complaints; tour guide service; self sale strategies*

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to World Tourism Organization data, Chinese tourists have become the outbound tourists that spend the most from 2012. China's annual contribution to the global tourism market is more than 13%, taking the lead for years. However, the level of Chinese tour guide service is far from adequate, and complaint problem to tour guide is still serious. This paper studies the strategy of the guide service promotion through the analysis of the experience of tourist complaint case and the interview with tour guides.

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## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Concerned Concept

Tourism psychology is new subject in field of psychology and indispensable research in tourism. Sun and Zhao (2016) regarded that the most representative and widely adopted system in China usually divides tourism psychology into three parts: tourist psychology, tourism service psychology and tourism management psychology. Each of these three parts has more detailed divisions [1]. Yan and Wang (2016) referred that tour guide service is an important part of the travel trip, responsible for hosting or escorting tourists according to the contract or the agreed content and the standard for the tourist reception service [2]. This paper mainly studies the service psychology of tour guide and discusses the interaction between tour guide and tourists.

### B. Research Context

Jafar(2015) believes that the concept and framework of psychology cannot be directly applied to explain tourists' behavior, but should be established to meet the characteristics and needs of tourism, different from the models and framework of macro psychology [3]. Muzaffer(2011) studies the relationship between positive psychology and tourism, and put forward key challenges for the future development of positive psychology and tourism research [4]. Chen(2012) is focus on the factors influencing tourists' motives and behaviors from the aspects of behavioral psychology, and discusses the decision-making of tourism management [5].

Above all, tourism psychology help guide to understand the psychological characteristics and needs of tourists, grasp the psychological interaction between tourists and guides, so as to work more smoothly.

### III. METHODOLOGY

According to Guangdong province report in 2016, a total of 4,359 tourism complaints were officially accepted, and 345 cases were filed against tour guides who failed to fulfill their duties, accounting for 7.9 percent of all complaints [6]. The number of cases in which the tourist guides were not responsible ranked third in all the complaint categories, indicating that the tourist guide was the key object of complaints.

In January 2017, we went to Shenzhen China International Travel Service co., LTD, (hereinafter referred to as Shenzhen CITS) for field research and collection of relevant information.

Founded in 1954, Shenzhen CITS is one of the earliest, largest and most popular travel agencies in Guangdong province. Among the Top 100 travel agencies in China, Shenzhen CITS has been rated as one of the Top 100 enterprises for more than ten consecutive years. Shenzhen CITS has established its famous brand of "Nice Tour" whose average reception number in three years was 1.5 million visitors and the average annual income was 4 billion yuan RMB.

Shenzhen CITS attaches great importance to quality, and sets up special departments and staffs to propose and implement the service promise of "unsatisfactory refund". The selection of Shenzhen CITS for the survey is quite representative.

#### A. Status of Shenzhen CITS Complaints

According to the research, in 2016, the Quality Management Department received 177 customer complaints, among which 81 were valid complaints and solved, and the number was mainly concentrated in the peak tourist season. The complaint type mainly involves tour guide service, visa, shopping, group withdrawal, hotel restaurant, itinerary, etc. Among them, there were 53 cases, accounting for about 30% of the total number of customer complaints, among which 35 cases were effective, accounting for about 43% of the total number of customer complaints. We selected five typical cases as following:

#### B. Complaint Characteristics and Reasons of Tour Guide

- Case 1: In April 2016, a tourist on a six-day tour to Yunnan complained to the tour guide who inducing and threatening him on shopping. The complaint is valid after being verified.
- Case 2: In January 2016, a tourist on a five-day tour to South Korea complained that the tour guide has forced consumption behavior. Upon verification, it was that the needs of the tourist leaving the tour group were not met and they were always unhappy, so the complaint was invalid.
- Case 3: In February 2016, a tourist on a five-day tour to Thailand complained that the tour guide had not done a good job in detail during the whole journey. One of the complaints was that the tap water in the tourist destination could not be drunk directly, causing

the tourists to feel unwell. The complaint is valid after being verified.

- Case 4: In March 2016, a tourist on a six-day tour to Vietnam complained that the tour guide was not responsible and the service was not thoughtful. The tour guide did not recommend any interesting projects to the guests in advance during free trip. The complaint is valid after being verified.
- Case 5: In March 2016, a tourist in the six-day tour group to Japan complained that the tour guide only cared about himself without any narration on tour and interpretation service. The complaint is valid after being verified by the quality management department.

#### C. Psychological Analysis of Tourists

The above problems are all based on the characteristics to related tour guide complaints of shopping and tour guide service. Tour guides should learn to make psychological analysis of tourists and study their personal characteristics and emotions. Only by knowing the other side can they provide tourists with satisfactory services and improve their service level.

If the tour guide fully understand tourists' personality and characteristics through their insight into the mood, emotion expression and behavior changes, then timely and well-organized targeted psychological service will be good for both sides.

#### D. Psychological Analysis of Tour Guide Service

Through the interview with 10 tour guides, we made a record of practical and psychological experience as following:

- Pay attention to personal dignified appearance and always dress appropriately. Keep spirits up and serve the tourists from heart, so as to infect the tourists and let them enjoy the tourism activities joyfully.
- Have firm and resolute will, encounter any difficulty without shrinking back. Solve problems actively and quickly.
- Keep warm, optimistic, friendly and humorous personality, establish harmonious and interpersonal relations with the tourists in the shortest time.
- Be astute and observant, be good at observing the expression, manner and speech of the tourists in the travel itinerary, find out the shortcomings in time, adjust and solve problems in advance.
- Be flexible and resourceful and efficient. Be good at dealing with all kinds of tourists. Flexibly handle the relationship with each one of them. Face with the contradictions and problems with tourists, and know how to skillfully resolve them.
- Have good language skills to introduce and explain the content related to tourist destinations vividly and accurately, deal with conflicts and embarrassment timely and correctly as well.

#### IV. FINDINGS

Through complaints analysis and interview, we set up the three-stage psychological strategy for tour guides in the tour.

##### A. *Initial Stage of Travel*

At the first and second day arrived at tourism destination, tourists feel curious, excited, anxious because of the fresh and unknown environment.

Tour guides should do a good job in the following aspects: be prepared to endure hardships, have a strong will, and adjust himself to positive state so as to make the tour travel smoothly. Dress and conduct in comfortable and appropriate way, be clean and neat, sedate and easy, warm and friendly, leaving responsible impression to tourists. Shopping is sensitive topic for both tour guide and travelers as Case 1, tour guide could speak out the active attitude frankly. Respect for tourists and reassure their consumer right so as to gain support from them.

##### B. *Intermediate stage of Travel*

At the second and third days that tourists stay in the tourist destination until the end of the trip, the uneasiness and tension caused by the unknown strange environment gradually began to fade or disappear. Tourists gradually relaxed which make their shortcomings be exposed as Case 2. This stage is the most important and challenging period of tour guide service, which is the longest and the most prone to problems and accidents. Always make tourists be ware of importance about safety and health, avoiding something happening like Case 3.

Tour guide should arrange travel activities and itinerary meeting psychological needs of tourists from their perspective. During free time, tourists are recommended to travel according to their age and interests. If recommendation is not done well, complaints such as Case 4 may arise.

Tour guide should narrate according to the tourists' personality characteristics, age, career, hobby and other factors. Only by this way can they catch the tourists' attention and leave professional impression on them instead of Case 5.

##### C. *Late stage of Travel*

The day or two before the end of the trip, tourists will feel more or less sad and reluctant before leaving, some tourists will feel excited about returning home, and some tourists will focus on personal affairs.

The tour guide should reserve enough time for tourists to buffer these emotions and do what they like freely, help them as much as possible according to their needs, and improve the tourists' satisfaction with the tour guide with considerate and selfless services.

Before the farewell, the tour guide can organize the tourists to toast at the last meal, so that everyone can share the

experience and feelings of this trip, and make a sincere farewell at the end, leaving a good impression. The tour guide can sort out the photos or video taken in the tour activities and send the memories that the tour group members have experienced together to every tourist, such kind and meticulous service will improve the tourist's favorable impression of the tour guide.

The tour guide can investigate tourists' travel needs, and give feedback to the travel agency on the survey feedback and opinion, which is conducive to the company's development and packaging of tourism products in line with their demands.

#### V. SUMMARY

This paper adopts the method of literature review and interview, combined with the tourist complaints cases analysis through the tourism psychology perspective, studies the self sale, self promotion psychological strategy for tour guide to tourists, so as to provide reference for development of tourism service. The efforts would be made for further study: firstly, search for more comprehensive and updated tourism complaint data and representative tourism complaint cases; secondly, interview more tour guides, conduct effective in-depth interviews and make sufficient experience for reference, expand the channels of information collection and improve the psychological strategy of tour guide service improvement in the following sustainable research.

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