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METHODS OF DEFINITION OF TOURISM PRODUCT QUALITY

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1. Introduction

There are a great number of different enterprises carrying out tourist activity, amongst which firms – tour operators take the very significant place. The general meaning of tour operators (in English is “tour operator”) is the specialized enterprise, which organizes inner and international trips.

Firm-tour operator shall have the key and the most differential function which is organization of production and sale of group or individual tours being the package of main and additional tourist services.

A product of the tour operator is proposed at the tourist market as integrity but not as the common package of separate services [1; 2; 3]. It includes competency, abilities of the tour operator, his experience (know-how) in solving different problems which can appear during the process of organization and conduction of the tour. This fact shall be an additional argument for production function to be considered as the main one in the tour operator activity. However, some authors call the function as organizational type [4, p.150-230]. Consensus on this issues can be a term “organizational and production function of the tour operator”.

In addition to the above function there is a trade and servicing function in activity of the firm-tour operator. It is notable for a great diversity and embrace processes connected with servicing of clients in an office, provision of information, sale of tourist cards etc.

2. Definition of tourism product quality

Considering two main functions of the tour operators a concept “quality” in this case cannot be interpreted explicitly. It is lawfully to single out two types of quality which conditionally can be called as “tourist product quality” and “quality of client servicing”.

According to the given marking quality level of the tourist product K_{tp} and quality of servicing K_0 can be produced as follows:

$$K_{tp} = K_1 K_2 K_3 \dots K_n; \quad (1)$$

$$K_0 = K_1, K_2, K_3 \dots K_n, \quad (2)$$

where, K_i is the partial indices, which characterizes the quality of separate stages of both: the tour and client servicing when tourist product is being chosen or on return from the tourist trip.

We understand quality of the tourist product as the scope and characteristics of the product which provide it with an opportunity to satisfy conditional or foreseen need of the consumers. This interpretation fully complies with standardization which was determined by the International Organization (ISO).

Servicing quality concept is multidimensional and covers different aspects of interrelations between staff of firms and clients. Servicing quality concept includes routine of tourist firms, qualification and skills of the staff, form of customer servicing (way of taking an order for a tour and provision to the clients), average period for services provision, environment of servicing of the visitors of the tourist firm [5, p.121].

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Herein we will consider only the first component part of services quality, provided by the tourist firms, which is the tourist product.

First of all an attempt of the product structurization shall be made for assessment of the firm's tourist product quality. The following content of the tourist product (TP) shall be considered as the standard one:

$$TP = \{PT, T, A, E, C, ET\} \quad (3)$$

where, PT = preparation for the trip,

T = the transport facilities,

A = accommodation in a hotel,

E = excursion program,

C I=catering and ET shall be end of the trip.

Basing on an inquiry of customers or experts it is necessary to determine weight (significance) of each of the six stages. Then it is worth while determining an actual meaning of the tourist product quality on all the stages of the trip. It is possible to make on the basis of 10 grade assessment scale by inquiring clients of the firm who have already returned from the trip. The Table 1 contains results of an investigation of quality of the "Orbita" firm's tours to the Republic of Turkey under standard conditions of "Odessa-Antalya-Odessa" Charter.

Tab. 1. Assessment by tourists of quality of tours prepared by firm "Orbita" to the Republic of Turkey on "Odessa-Antalya-Odessa" route

Stages (component part) of the tour	Weight of the stage, %	Assessment by tourists of the separate component parts, points	Weighted quality assessment, points (%)
1. Preparation for the trip	5	9	45 (6,3)
2. Conduction of the trip			
2.1. Transport facilities			
2.2. Accommodation	15	8	120 (16,9)
2.3. Excursion program	30	6	180 (25,3)
2.4. Catering	20	8	160 (22,6)
	25	7	175 (24,6)
3. Final stage of the trip	5	6	30 (4,3)
Amount	100	–	710 (100)
Tour quality satisfaction	–	–	7,1

Taking into account the approach proposed in the table 1 to the tour quality assessment, it shall be provided for determination of indices as follows:

- weight (significance) of each stage of the tour;
- actual significance of quality of the trip on each stage under the 10 grade scale;
- weighted quality tour assessment for each separate stage, which to be determined by multiplication of weight values to the actual values of the tour assessment by tourists;
- satisfaction of the customers with quality of the tour in whole which to be determined by summation of the weighted assessments on each stage of the tour;
- ratio of the weighted quality assessment for each stage to the general tour assessment.

For the purpose of clear view of the tour quality state and being based on the assessment made we could draw a tree-like diagram of the customer satisfaction with quality of the tour and set priorities of further work of the firm in the sphere of services quality. An example of such a diagram is made on the figure1.

	Trip process	Level of the costumers satisfaction	Priorities of changes in the sphere of quality
	Preparation for the trip	6,3%	2
Quality of the tour	Transport facilities	16,9 %	3 *
	Accommodation	25,3%	6
	Excursion program	22,6%	4
	Catering	24,6%	5
	Final stage of the trip	4,3%	1

Fig. 1. Tree-like diagram of customer satisfaction with quality of tours to the Republic of Turkey of firm “Orbita”

3. Conclusions

Data of the table 1 and tree-like diagram (figure1) shall be the evidence of that the highest percentage assessment of the tourists' satisfaction is expected during the trip including accommodation, excursion program and catering. The lowest percentage assessment of the tourists' satisfaction is observed on finishing of the trip and when preparing for the trip. It is obvious that improvement measures for quality of tours of “Orbita” Firm and accordingly measures to increase in the level of satisfaction of its clients shall be taken on these stages, having priorities 1 and 2 (figure 1).

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Summary

The basic functions of tour operator's activity are considered: industrial and serving. Taking into account the listed functions two kinds of quality of services of the tour operator are allocated: quality of a tourist product and quality of servicing. Qualimetric methods of an estimation of services are offered.

Key words: tourism product quality; quality level of tourist product; quality of servicing.

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