Evaluation of the quality in the service of tourist products in the magical towns of Yucatan

Evaluación de la calidad en el servicio de los productos turísticos en los pueblos mágicos de Yucatán

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Abstract

The project Study of Profile and Degree of Tourist Satisfaction of the Main Tourist Destinations of Yucatan aims to: Characterize domestic and foreign tourists in relation to their sociodemographic attributes and consumption structure of tourist and non-tourist services in the main destinations of Yucatan as well as to evaluate the satisfaction of the tourist in relation to the services consumed. The two methodologies used are: the proposal by the Center for Advanced Studies in Tourism (CESTUR) divided into three sections: The profile of the tourist, travel habits and satisfaction of the tourist and the SERVQUAL to measure the quality of service through the satisfaction index calculated by the difference in expectations and customer perceptions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1993). The study presents an analysis of the degree of satisfaction of the tourist products consumed during the visit of the tourist to the state.

Quality in service, Degree of satisfaction, Tourist

Resumen

El proyecto Estudio de Perfil y Grado de Satisfacción del Turista de los Principales Destinos Turísticos de Yucatán tiene por objetivo: Caracterizar a los turistas nacionales y extranjeros en relación a sus atributos sociodemográficos y estructura de consumo de los servicios turísticos y no turísticos en los principales destinos de Yucatán así como evaluar la satisfacción del turista en relación a los servicios consumidos. Las dos metodologías utilizadas son: la propuesta por el Centro de Estudios Superiores en Turismo (CESTUR) dividida en tres apartados: El perfil del turista, los hábitos de viaje y la satisfacción del turista y el SERVQUAL para medir la calidad del servicio por medio del índice de satisfacción calculada por la diferencia de las expectativas y las percepciones del cliente (Parasuraman, Zeithaml y Berry, 1993). El estudio presenta un análisis del grado de satisfacción de los productos turísticos consumidos durante la visita del turista al estado.

Calidad en el servicio, Grado de satisfacción, Turista

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Introduction

The measurement of quality in the provision of the service is often considered subjective, this in combination with an increasingly demanding market becomes for any economic unit an important requirement to be competitive.

That is, carrying out studies on quality, measurement and assurance of this, is a priority. One of the main indicators of the service is customer satisfaction, but knowing the scenario for any business depends on the perception of each individual and the performance characteristics of each service.

In Yucatán, specifically the tourism sector, requires information on tourism demand for decision making that benefits public, private and social agents who can make use of this information, in order to promote the development of tourism goods and services and not tourist and provide a quality service that is more in line with the profile of the tourist. So that in this way, specialized products can be provided, which satisfy the demand and consolidate the tourist offer. Added to this, there would be more visitors to the destination, which would generate more stable jobs and better remunerated for the benefit of the local population.

For this it is necessary to have indicators of evaluation of tourist destinations, as well as tools for planning, promotion and development of policies, for which, due to this need, the study is carried out, where a series of variables is proposed measure the quality of service index.

In the state of Yucatan, the profile and degree of tourist satisfaction study is currently being carried out, which aims to: Characterize national and international tourists in relation to their sociodemographic attributes and consumption structure of tourist services in the main destinations of Yucatan, as well as assessing tourist satisfaction in relation to the services consumed.

For in this work, the results obtained from the satisfaction of the tourist will be presented.

Problem Statement

The study of Profile and Degree of satisfaction of tourists in the main destinations of Yucatan, arises from the need to generate statistical information in order to guide the needs of tourists and providers of tourism services, so the project is aligned with the State Development Plan (2012-2018) of the Government of the State, specifically with the commitment 36, which consists of "establishing a statistical system that allows the obtaining of information of the tourist activity to make better decisions in the matter of promotion and commercialization "(P. 375), what is presented is only the results on the satisfaction of the tourist.

It is important to emphasize that the study is carried out in magical towns where there is scarce literature on tourism demand. In such a way that valuable information could be generated that could trigger the activity in the destinations located inside the state, thereby supporting the economy of the communities. It is also worth mentioning that this information would contribute to the generation of successful strategies and to a better design of the offer of goods and services suited to the needs of tourists, especially the government institutions responsible for promoting tourism in the state.

Objectives

The general objective is to measure the quality of the tourist service in relation to the services consumed during their stay in the state of Yucatan. The following specific objective can be derived from this objective: quantify the degree of satisfaction of the tourist according to the perception of consumption.

Justification

Statistical information is a tool with a dual purpose: First, it is an instrument for the design of programs and policies that lead to the achievement of objectives such as the growth of special segments and the improvement of the tourism infrastructure; and the second purpose is to increase the visitor's stay and to promote the state in a comprehensive manner. Information is also a fundamental tool for making decisions that lead to the realization of actions that address problems, needs and opportunities that affect the welfare of the population of an entity.

Therefore, the purpose of this research proposal is to serve as an input in the design and implementation process as well as in the evaluation of public and private actions (entrepreneurs and social entities) with the purpose of improving the performance of local tourism and state in order to generate paid employment and thus contribute to the alleviation of poverty in Yucatan.

Scope of the investigation

The study was carried out in six places located in the state of Yucatan: However, in this work two magical towns will be analyzed, which are considered to have a competitive advantage over the other destinations studied for their attractions. The target population is the tourist aged 18 and over, that is, of legal age, and who have at least stayed overnight at the destination.

Literature cited

Definitions according to the General Law of Tourism

Next we will mention the technical concepts that will be mentioned throughout the study for a better understanding of the study. According to the General Tourism Law published in the Official Gazette of the Federation (2009, p.2). The first concept that must be understood is that of tourist destination, considered as the geographically located place, which offers various tourist attractions. A tourist attraction is a natural, cultural or artificial feature of a destination or tourist region. Where the tourist services are directed to attend the requests of the tourists in exchange for a consideration, in accordance with the provisions of the Law and its Regulation, tourist vocation, which considers the characteristics and economic, social, cultural and / or potentialities or natural that motivates the tourist to move outside their place of residence generating a tourist advantage of a specific territory.

Tourist consumption

The tourist consumption for this study is understood as all consumer spending made by a visitor or on behalf of a visitor, to meet their needs during their travel and stay in the place of destination, this definition is based on the recommendations of the World Tourism Organization (WTO in Datatur, 2017).

According to the UNWTO, it says that tourism consumption based on type and categories of tourism, and are the following:
By "Types" of tourism: Domestic tourist consumsátion, is the consumpcion made by resident visitors as a direct result of their trips within their country of residence. The tourist consumption receptor, It is the consumption effected by the nonresident visitors, as a direct result of their trips inside the economy. Outbound tourism consumption, is the consumption made by residents as a result of their trips to countries other than the one in which they reside.

By "Categories" of tourism: Inland tourism consumption, includes all the expenditure made by visitors, both residents and non-residents, when visiting the economy of compilation. It is equivalent to the sum of the internal tourist consumption and the tourist consumption. The national tourist consumption, includes all the tourist consumption on the part of resident visitors, without taking into account where it takes place. Consumption, Includes domestic tourism consumption and tourist consumption. The international tourist consumption, includes the tourist consumption receptor and the tourist consumption. The interior tourist consumption, includes all the expense of tourist consumption that takes place within the economy of compilation. It includes the internal tourist consumption, the tourist consumption receptor and the part of the tourist consumption that corresponds to goods and services provided by residents.

Types of tourism

There are several ways to classify travel as mentioned by Quesada (2006). However for the study only the classification will be defined based on its duration in the destination, which is divided into tourists and hikers. Where the hiker is the one who stay less than 24 hours, that is, he only spends the day in the destination without overnight, on the other hand the tourist is the one who sleeps at least one night. The importance of studying only tourists is that there is a direct relationship between the permanence and use of tourism services, that is, while the stay is longer, the tourism consumption will be greater and therefore the services consumed will be evaluated.

Tourist destination

It is known as a tourist destination to the place visited. In the case of internal visitors, the destination is an area within the same country of residence. In the case of international visitors, the destination may refer to the country visited or to a region of said country.

A destination is the basic geographical unit used for the development of tourism statistics. Within the country of reference, the country can be divided into destination zones that represent homogeneous tourist regions or that can be groups of administrative regions of the local government (Datatur, 2017).

The tourist attractions as motivators of tourism

The tourist attractions are existing own values, whether natural, cultural or of site, that motivate the concurrence of a foreign population susceptible to be arranged and / or conditioned specifically for their acquisition and / or direct recreational usufruct; (Datatur, 2017).

Being this a motivator, tourists move to the places where the tourist attractions are located, a place or receptor nucleus (place where destinations and attractions are found), in order to carry out activities of the characteristics of the destination and its equipment (Quesada, 2006). For this reason the tourist attractions are considered as the raw material of tourism, which offer visitors everything necessary for their permanence and enjoyment during their visit.

The attractions as motivators of tourism are the raison d'être of a tourist destination, since the latter is built in the place and with the characteristics that promote a rational exploitation of attributes of the attractions, which in turn will define the tourist activities that will make their visitors.

The categories of tourist attractions are the following: Natural sites, museums, cultural events, folklore, contemporary technical, scientific or artistic achievements, scheduled events, where depending on their importance and size of space, they can determine the characteristics of the offer and the tourist demand of a destination; (Quesada, 2006).

Services and products consumed by tourism

The tourist offer comprises the set of goods and services capable of facilitating the commercialization of the tourist product in order to satisfy the demand of the visitors, in this condition it is understood that it can be any establishment where the client and / or user consumes. Therefore, the same must meet the following conditions to be established as a tourist offer: Sell goods and services that by their characteristics are sued mostly by tourists. And these establishments must sell their product for final use in tourist areas, therefore, most of their customers will be tourists.

The following tourist services or products are defined below:

Travel agency. It is a company that conceives, creates, plans, organizes and executes travel service programs for the organizer or the client in which it normally includes accommodation, food, approach and local transport, as well as excursions on site and surroundings for the group of participants in the event at the request of the client; either directly or as intermediaries between users and providers of tourism services both nationally and internationally.

Hotel: It is an establishment traditionally built in vertical physical structures, which has undergone various transformations over time until reaching its specific characteristics of current service, which make it be considered as the typical tourist establishment. These characteristics are given by the accommodation units that are proper in rooms and suites, and where appropriate, by the availability of complementary services (social spaces, restaurants, swimming pools, bar, nightclubs), some of them concessioned to third parties (travel agencies, specialized stores, aesthetics, sports consultancy, etc.). Where the hotel-type service is classified as one that is provided in an establishment with a minimum of 10 rooms, which have been instituted to provide basically accommodation, food and complementary services demanded by the tourist. Where the unit of measurement is overnight and refer to the number of days that tourists stay in a locality. The data is recorded in the place of accommodation.

Touristic infrastructure. It includes basic works, generally of state action, in terms of access, communications, water supplies, waste disposal, ports, airports, etc.

Tourist product. It is the set of goods and services that are offered to the market individually or in a very wide range of combinations resulting from the needs, requirements or wishes of the tourist and / or visitor. Now, in the production of tourism products, special mention must be made of the special treatment of three types of tourism productive activity: Production of goods, Travel agencies and Tour operators.

Tourist transport. It is all that legally constituted tourist service provider that provides national and international tourists, travel inside or outside the country, transfers, excursions, tourist circuits or car rental with or without driver; by tourist transport companies registered in the National Tourism Registry, with transport units duly authorized, and in which they provide comfort, agility of movement, price, speed and safety to users.

Tourist Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is an important factor that is reflected in the utility of the business or company. "It is known that companies that have 98 percent customer retention rate are more productive than those with a lower rate" as James and William (2008) mention in this context, when talking about productivity refer to lending a service that the client fully appreciates. Grönroos (1984) presents another definition and says that the quality of the services must be considered from the perspective of the clients indicating that it is the result of an evaluation process, where the consumer compares their expectations with the perception of the service that has received. Another concept that must be made clear is the meaning of service. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) identifies service companies as those that are dedicated to providing an activity to people, businesses or government agencies and other organizations to meet their needs. Of course, this definition includes all the services of the tourism industry. James and William (2008) tell us about some others such as: hotels and other places of accommodation, establishments that offer personal, business, leisure and fun services.

Materials and methods

This study is considered quantitative since it allows to analyze the data in a numerical and statistical way.

The research is considered non-experimental descriptive transectional. Not experimental because, as mentioned by Hernández, et al. (2010, p.149) "is done without deliberately manipulating the variables. Secondly, it is said to be of a transectional type because data will be collected at a single moment in order to describe the variables and analyze their incidence and interrelation at that moment, for this study the information is collected from the month of July to the month of September of the year 2017. And finally descriptive because "it has as objective to investigate the incidence of the modalities or levels of one or more variables in a population" Hernández, et al. (2010, p. 152).

The research aims to identify the degree of satisfaction of the tourist and measure the quality of the service from which the following research questions emerge. What is the degree of satisfaction of the tourist of the different services consumed in the destinations visited in the state of Yucatan? and What tourist services and products are the most consumed by domestic and foreign tourists in the different destinations of the state of Yucatan?

Hypothesis

The hypotheses of the study are descriptive because they predict data of the variables that are intended to be measured and refer to the observation of quantitative variables.

The hypotheses for this investigation are the following:

Hi 1. The lodging establishments have the highest rating.

Hi 2. The security of the destination is perceived as excellent.

Hi 3. The result of the index of general satisfaction of the tourist is placed as excellent, that is, qualifies the different destinations visited with 10 points.

Population and master design

Tourists aged 18 and over with at least one overnight stay at the destination. For this, the monthly statistics of the tourist influx included in the months of June to September were taken as reference (SEFOTUR, 2016), it is important to emphasize that due to the lack of statistical data in one of the magical towns, the calculation was made based on to hotel occupancy to know the approximate tourist influx.

Once the population was determined, the sample was calculated for the different destinations per month and on these values the sample was calculated according to the formula of finite populations:

$$[(n = Z^2 (p) (q) (N) / Z^2 (p) (q) + e^2 (N-1)] \quad (1)$$

The sample was calculated from the total of national and international tourists of each month in the state; The result obtained was stratified by national and international visitors. Then the number of surveys for each destination was calculated for both national tourism and international tourism. It is worth mentioning that these are the preliminary results, with a total of 147 surveys processed.

Design of the investigation

For the design of the instrument, reference was made to the variables of the SECTUR-CESTUR methodology, based on the preparation of profiles studies at the national level. In addition, this methodology is in accordance with the recommendations in the matter issued by the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2008), which promotes the systematic development of statistics from tourist destinations. The purpose of taking as reference the methodological proposal of the federal dependency is to elaborate a homogeneous study that can be compared with those carried out in other federal entities.

This methodology is proposed to complement in the tourist satisfaction part with the SERVQUAL model, which is a multiple-scale summary instrument, with a high level of reliability and validity, to measure the expectations and perceptions that customers have regarding the service.

This provides a basic framework or framework based on a format representing expectations and perceptions that includes statements for each of the five criteria on quality of service, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1993).

The declarations of SERVQUAL are grouped according to the five criteria or dimensions: tangible elements, reliability, responsiveness, security and empathy.

To evaluate the quality of a service with SERVQUAL, it is necessary to calculate the difference between expectations and perceptions, called Deficiency 5. This can be calculated in the score that customers give to each of the five criteria. All the clients in the service of a company obtaining an average of the individual SERVQUAL scores that are obtained in turn, qualifying their declarations and their declarations for each of the criteria and following the following steps:

1. Three criteria taken from SERVQUAL were evaluated: tangible elements, empathy and fidelity for each of the evaluated products and in some public services, safety was included. This at the request of the specific demand of the end user.
2. Afterwards, the average of each question that represents the evaluated dimension was calculated, in order to know individually the rating awarded and detect opportunities for improvement for each service.
3. At the end of the previous step, the total results of the three criteria are added, which will give us the result and the average is calculated to obtain the overall score of the evaluated product. Where it can be seen that the lowest scores represent the highest gaps to achieve quality in the service.

Within the aspects of the Likert-type scale, it is important to highlight the alternatives or points, which correspond to the response options according to the selected instrument. Then the alternatives and values used in the investigation were: (2) Very bad, (4) Poor, (6) Fair, (8) Good, and (10) Excellent.

Instrument

The measuring instrument consists of 56 questions. Which is divided into variables to measure the sociodemographic profile of the tourist, these include from question 1 to 15 and 49. And for the Measurement of quality has the following classification.

a)   The tourist products consumed are in questions 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24,26,28, 29, 29A-D, 34, 34A-D, 39, 39A-E, 45, 45B and 46 where Tourists indicate which ones they consumed during their visit. After this, the evaluation of the different quality criteria began, which were divided as follows:

b)   Destination (Question 18): In this variable, the destination is evaluated globally in three aspects: public services, accessibility of place and security.

c)   c) Tourist Infrastructure (Questions: 16A, 17A and 47): Bus station, airport and information modules where the dimension of tangible elements is taken (Quality in the facilities, signage of the place, printed information and personal image); And Empathy (Attention and service). These will only have results of these two dimensions.

d)   Tourist product (Question: 20, 22, 23A, 25, 27, 28A and 47) In these variables we know the consumption of the main tourist products of the destination such as hotels, restaurants, tourist guides, transport and travel agencies, where Three dimensions are taken: Empathy (Attention and service), Tangible elements (Hygiene in food, Quality of the facilities, personal image, quality of the vehicle and modernity of the facilities) and Reliability (Cost of service).

e)   Attractions and Activities: (Question: 30-32, 35-37, 40-43): In this also three dimensions are touched: Empathy (Attention and service), Tangible elements (Cleanliness of the place and conservation of the place) and Reliability (Cost).

f)   Global Question (Question 48). This question is asked to verify the qualification of the whole experience of the visit to the destination after having been at least one night in the destination.

Results

Below are the preliminary results of the pilot study of the service quality of the main tourist products of two magical towns.

The first table presents the results of the ratings assigned to the lodging services, food and beverage establishments, transportation and travel agencies and it is observed that the lowest score is obtained by the Food and Beverages establishments (7.6), followed by transportation of transfer and travel agencies with 7.7 rating; then Transport continues to travel to the destination (7.9) and the best qualified with 8 (Good) points were the lodging establishments and the guides. In the table you can also see the qualifications of each criterion which represent the opportunities for improvement.

Criterion	Establishments of A and B (135)	Hosting (108)	Guides (8)	Transportation to travel (61)	Transport of transfer (20)	Travel agencies (2)
Attention and service	7.7	8.1	7.5	7.8	7.8	8
Modernity or quality of the Facilities / Vehicles, Image of the staff	7.5	8.1	8.2	7.9	7.5	8
Cost	7.6	7.9	8.2	7.9	7.8	7
Total	7.6	8.0	8.0	7.9	7.7	7.7

Table 1 Quality evaluation in the service of tourist products
Source: Self Made

Table number 2 and 3 presents the rating assigned to natural attractions, cultural attractions and other tourist activities, which are consumed during the stay of tourism for entertainment. For these the tourist is asked which has visited and is asked to qualify them. The one that obtained the lowest rating are the cultural activities (3.1), followed by the beach (7.2); then cenote and archaeological zones with 7.9.

These are the regular range. However, the best rated activity was light and sound and video mapping in the destinations with 8.7, that is, they rated it as good.

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	Natural attractions			Cultural attractions		
Criterion	**Beach (41)**	**Beach (41)**	**Nature reserve (13)**	**Archaeological Areas (93)**	**Museums (27)**	**Farms (11)**
Attention and service	7.5	8	8.1	8.1	8.2	8.2
Cleaning	7.1	7.9	8.1	8.2	8.4	8.5
Conservation	7.1	7.8	7.7	8	8.4	8.2
cost	7.1	7.7	8.1	7.3	6.9	6.9
Total	7.2	7.9	8	7.9	8	8

Table 2 Quality evaluation in the service of natural attractions and cultural attractions
Source: Prepared by the authors

Other tourist activities				
Criterion	**Cultural activities (142)**	**Nature activities (7)**	**Tours / Excursions (17)**	**Light and sound or videomapping in the destination (13)**
Attention and service	3.1	8	8.2	8
Cleaning	3.1	8	8.2	9.5
Conservation	3.1	8.6	8.2	8.5
Cost	3	8.3	8.5	8.6
Total	3.1	8.2	8.3	8.7

Table 3 Quality assessment in the service of other tourist activities
Source: Prepared by the authors

In the following tables 4 and 5 the tourist infrastructure is qualified and the results are that the bus terminal obtained the lowest rating of 7.6 (regular) and the international airport and the tourist information modules received the rating of good (8).

Criterion	Bus terminal (47)	Airport (14)
Modernity of the facilities	7.7	8.1
Signage of the place	7.4	8.1
Attention and service	7.8	7.8
Total	7.6	8.0

Table 4 Evaluation of the tourist infrastructure
Source: Prepared by the authors

Criterion	Tourist information modules
Attention and service	8
Image of the staff	8
Printed material	8
Total	**8**

Table 5 Evaluation of tourist information modules
Source: Self Made

Finally, we present the general results of the destination in which the public services and the accessibility to the destination in general obtain a grade of 7.6 (regular), being the lowest. And security receives 8 points that is considered good (table 6).

Public services	Accessibility	Security	Total
7.6	7.6	8.1	7.8

Table 6 General assessment of the destination
Source: Self Made
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It includes a global question of the destination where tourists describe the destination as good with 8.7 points with a positive recommendation of 144 tourists of the 147 evaluated this is observed in table 7. However the rating that results from the totals of the tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 is 7.7 points, that is, as regular.

Overall rating of the destination	Recommendation of the destination
8.7	144

Table 7 Global question qualification of the destination.
Source: Self Made

Discussion

Regarding the results, it is agreed with the hypothesis raised where it is that the lodging establishments and the guide service were the best qualified, but this qualification is considered good (8) and it will have to look for excellence ie 10 In the second hypothesis, it was stated that in terms of the aspects of the destination, security would be perceived as excellent, but it is rated as good.

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And finally, in the third hypothesis, the expected index of general satisfaction of the tourist is considered excellent, it is not fulfilled since this is considered as good. And according to the gap is 1.3 points in the general question. But in the sum of the averages of all the criteria the gap is 2.3. Therefore, it is important to generate improvement strategies in each of the results. These results have similar results with the study conducted by Bethencourt et al. (2005). Which presents the results of the evaluated criteria, but in the study the dimension of tangible elements was the lowest rating and in our study the cost that is the reliability was the lowest in the products and services of tourist consumption, that is to say that the client considers that what he received does not correspond to the contracted and paid services. And the highest scores were obtained in the dimension of tangible elements from which it differs from the study mentioned, they have a gap of 2.2 points to obtain excellence.

Conclusion

Regarding the objective of measuring the quality of service of tourists in relation to the services consumed during their stay in the state of Yucatan, the expected results were obtained and it is possible to observe the dimensions that represent a competitive advantage of these destinations and On the other hand, opportunities for improvement. Regarding the specific objective of quantifying the degree of satisfaction of the tourist according to the perception of consumption, results are obtained by dimension proposed in the design of the research.

To finish it is important to recommend a particular study of these municipalities, since they have specific characteristics that differentiate them from the other destinations considered in the total study carried out.

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