

Tourists' Perceptions of Group Package Tour Relative Parties' Questionable Tour-Related Behaviors

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ABSTRACT

This study identified important questionable behaviors conducted by tour group leaders, tour guides, travel agency reception personnel, and other tourists in group package tours and investigated how tourists perceive those questionable behaviors. Data for this study were obtained from tourists who had taken part in a Taiwanese group package tour in the recent year. Results of the study show that, leading to damage on others' properties, violating principles on information giving and handling, inappropriate voluntary behavior, and violating pre-set itinerary were mostly perceived by tourists as inappropriate. Significant correlations between certain questionable behaviors and tourists' general attitudinal statements were also verified. This study is beneficial in helping both academia and industry personnel better understand the behaviors that affect tourists' perceptions.

Keywords: Group Package Tour, Questionable Behavior, Tourists' Perception

INTRODUCTION

Given the nature of the service industry, such as simultaneous production and consumption, the determinants of service quality are various and not easily controlled. For service businesses, not only do behaviors of their frontline employees influence service quality, but other persons who participate in the service delivering process also play a role. As the interest in business ethics has increased, increasing research attention has been directed toward understanding how ethical and unethical behaviors influence consumer perceptions.

Some behaviors, however, are not easily classified dichotomously and even the standards with which people judge events differs from cultures to culture. As only a

small number of studies have been published on this topic; little is known concerning how questionable behaviors of tour-related personnel influence consumer perceptions. For tour operators, there is the issue of how tourists' perceptions of personnel exert influence. Additionally, questionable behaviors of tourists must likewise be well understood and controlled, such that negative perceptions by other tourists can be avoided. At a time when relevant literature on this issue is lacking, this paper can serve a supplementary role.

Like Wong's study (Wong, 2000), which discussed tourists' perceptions of frontline hotel employees' questionable job-related behaviors, this study used the same term, "questionable behaviors," to discuss certain disputed actions as opposed to classifying behaviors into two categories (e.g., moral/immoral) and extend his study to distinct industry and culture. However, this research differs in three ways to Wong's (2000) work. First, he used a sample from the hotel industry; the current focus was on the questionable behaviors in a group package tour. Owing to unique properties of the tour industry, interactions among consumers, frontline employees, and others tourists are more frequent and, thus, the relationships between their questionable behaviors and consumer perceptions in a setting with a high level of contact could be examined. Second, various parties participate in the process of tour service delivery, which makes questionable tour-related behaviors more diverse and complicated. As different group package participants may affect tourist perceptions to varying degrees, their behaviors and impacts are worth addressing. Third, this study took samples from group members who had participated in Taiwanese group package tours. Associated with the growing importance and the development of Taiwan's tourist industry, group package tours are deemed the most popular tour type. Because the ethic perceptions of certain behaviors are related to culture differences (Michael, 2010), the results of this article might provide a selective view from multiple cultural contexts and could be regarded as an important reference to the tour industry as well as international service industries.

In sum, this study had five main purposes. First, identify important questionable behaviors that are demonstrated by tour group leaders, tour guides, travel agency reception personnel, and fellow tourists in a group package tour. Second, investigate how tourists perceive such questionable behaviors. Third, examine the correlations between those behaviors and tourists' general attitudes. Fourth, analyze the differences in tourist perceptions that arise from demographics and group package tour characteristics. Fifth, draw conclusions and offer recommendations for the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Questionable Behaviors

The analysis of questionable behaviors was derived mainly from ethics-related studies. For example, Olsen, Sijtsema and Hall (2010) defined “moral attitude” as a situation in which one takes the responsibility for the consequences of his behavior so that the people around him also feel pleased. Arvola, Vassallo, Dean, Lampila, Saba, Lähteenmäki and Shepherd (2008) indicated that moral attitude is a situation when people do something right and they will feel self-evaluation increasing. As ethics influences human actions and decisions (Macbeth, 2005), they serves as an important factor in determining whether an action is good or evil. Moreover, emphasis in recent years on issues such as consumer environment, consumer rights, and the social responsibilities of marketing personnel has contributed to the emergence of ethical issues as a trend in both academia and industry. As tour activities cover multiple aspects (both personal and non-personal) and systems, such as environments, society, and culture, the ethical demands and considerations differ from those applied to other businesses. Nevertheless, tour activity must be viewed as a special case in its in-depth study (Walle, 1995). In conducting a comprehensive analysis, we see that ethical issues that are related to the tour industry focus on understanding the influences exerted by tour operators, activities or tourists on the economic society, the natural environment, and cultural activities. Currently, studies cover such issues as ecological impacts, marketing, sustainable development, humanistic and social concerns, and education (Hultsman, 1995). Viewed from a narrower perspective, with a focus on tour-related personnel behaviors, the influence is limited to a more minor scope (i.e., individuals). The study of questionable behaviors is precisely such an example of this narrower perspective.

Fennel and Malloy (1999) pointed out that most applied psychological studies have used a binary ethical/unethical method to analyze subjects’ judgments on ethical behaviors. Such a binary method undoubtedly weakens the richness and diversity of “ethics” as a term. Hultsman (1995) went a step further by classifying two reasons for the complexity of ethics as a concept. One is that the term is not discernable and, at the same time, it is easily affected by personal feelings. The other reason is that ethics is subjective, it is a concept caught between “is” and “ought.” The complex implications of the word ethics and the difficulty in fully explaining it using simple language can lead to difficulties in the research process.

An example is the study by Wong (2000), who probed respondents’ perceptions of frontline personnel’s multiple questionable behaviors; a new direction in ethical

studies. For respondents, it seemed easier to express their thoughts and internal perceptions of improper behavior than to use words that involved several layers of meaning and of far-reaching and deep implications. At the same time, as individuals expressed their opinions on designated behaviors, their real experiences as consumers made it easier to make judgments on behavioral propriety.

In the literature on improper behaviors, common unethical behaviors reported in the industry include: sexual harassment, theft, misleading information on menus and brochures, overbooking, and the harm done to natural resources and communities (Yaman and Gurel, 2006). Baumhart (1961) listed, in order of priority, a number of unethical practices that many in the industry would like to eliminate: (1) gifts, gratuities, bribes, and “call girls;” (2) price discrimination and unfair pricing; (3) dishonest advertising; (4) miscellaneous unfair competitive practices; (5) cheating customers, unfair credit practices, and overselling; (6) price collusion by competitors; (7) dishonesty on making or keeping a contract; (8) unfairness to employees and prejudice in hiring; and (9) others.

The above results covered several industries and included a variety of unethical behaviors demonstrated by personnel within and outside businesses, as well as among competitors and consumers. Together, they formed a comprehensive description of a practical phenomenon. Further, Wong (2000) limited the scope of study to the hotel industry by proving questionable behaviors among frontline personnel. Specifically, he arrived at four major aspects of questionable behaviors: (1) infringement of guests’ property, (2) unethical behaviors, (3) benefiting at the expense of guest supplementary services, and (4) against company rules. These results served as references for later studies; however, but owing to differences in industry characteristics, the questionable behaviors also differ from industry to industry. In this paper, we attempted to study questionable behaviors in the tour industry and expand the target of the study to questionable behaviors in tour-related entities with the goal of giving more depth and scope to this line of research. In usual practical and theoretical research, the effects of questionable behaviors are easily observed. Tourists might feel unhappy about their consumer experience owing to improper behaviors by diverse people. Such perceptions not only result in consumers giving a negative evaluation of a particular service but also possibly lead to dissatisfaction, refusal to buy, and other actions. Therefore, for management, there is the need to understand relevant behaviors in order to reduce the possibilities of such effects.

Tourist perceptions

What are the influences of questionable behaviors on tourists? Literature on consumer perceptions has shown an important research direction. As perception is often used to probe into the emotions or reactions of users of certain product or service characteristics, these studies jointly illustrate the importance of consumer perceptions. Perceptions of designated persons, issues, or objects usually serve as an impetus for next-stage behaviors and, much more, they serve as major factors for human behavior and decision-making (Yükeel and Yükeel, 2007). For this reason, they are significant topics to marketing research.

Multiple subjects affect man's perception, such as travel agents (McKercher, Packer, Yau, and Lam, 2003), travel agencies (Millánr and Esteban, 2004), tour guides (Pizam and Gang-Hoan, 1996), employees (Ross, 1997), tour group leaders (Wang, Hsieh, and Chen, 2002), etc. Further, different personnel exert an influence on perception to a different degree and in a different way because their roles in service delivery vary.

Owing to its characteristics, the tour industry involves a high degree of person-to-person interaction (Bitner, 1990). Therefore, influence that arises from personal behaviors is greater here than it is in other industries. In tourists' process of purchasing, touring, and consuming, there exists a consumer environment that is characterized by a high degree of interaction. This phenomenon means that multiple participants in a tour activity serve as part of the service. Therefore, interaction among tourists and service employees, as well as that among customers (Wu, 2007), become important components that influence tourist perceptions and attitudes. As group package tours have become the mainstream in many countries, their importance has come to the attention of many scholars (Wang et al., 2002). In general, group package tours appear to be more special because (1) tour size is often larger than a usual tour, such that there is more interpersonal contact; (2) there is more common itinerary, such that interpersonal interaction is enhanced; and (3) the duration of a tour is longer and, as such, there are deeper mutual interactions and longer periods of contact. For the abovementioned reasons, tour members are important participants in tour activities. Earlier studies on perceptions mainly carried out analyses on the behaviors of service providers (Fennel and Malloy, 1999). However, for group package tours, behaviors of tour members and travel industry service personnel form part of such tour activities and overall perceptions. It is this special characteristic that distinguishes the tour industry from other service industries.

Many factors, such as dangers, destinations, risks, and quality might impact tourists' perceptions (Carr, 2001; Correia, Valle, and Maço, 2007; Lawrence, Clifford, and Moonkyu, 2005). However, few studies have addressed how questionable behaviors affect tourists' perceptions. Of them, Fennel and Malloy (1999) reported that, in the eyes of relativists, ethical judgments differ significantly from person to person and from culture to culture. Furthermore, tourists' characteristics and motives are also important factors that affect perception (Singhapakdi, 1999). As we now live in a global village, and because tourism is an industry with no frontier, idiosyncrasies that arise from diversity of culture represent an issue that the tour industry cannot afford to neglect. Finally, whether demographics and variables behind tourists affect perceptions of questionable behaviors in different ways has become an issue for comparison and contrasting with other cultures.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Measurement Development

The major participants in group package tours include: tour agency reception personnel, tour guides, tour group leaders, and other tour members who participate in the tour together. Items of questionable behaviors were developed from in-depth interviews (six group package tour participants and four experts on consumer behavior were interviewed). In all, there are a total of 20 questionable behaviors that were common to tour-related people. These behaviors were as follows:

Tour guides' behaviors: (1) during the trip, giving special care to tourists with whom they had developed friendly ties, (2) shortening other itineraries because of stopping too long at shopping points, (3) photo service charges were more expensive than market price, (4) no detailed introduction to tourist spots, (5) telling jokes with sexual innuendo, and (6) sudden changes in itineraries.

Tour group leaders' behaviors: (1) no detailed pointers and tips on the tour, (2) bringing tourists to shopping places selling poor products at high prices, (3) asking tourists in the group to share designated tourists' baggage weight or limited-purchase products in order to economize on their customs tariffs or expenses, (4) enforcing fixed tips but without offering corresponding services, and (5) failing to make roll calls such that tourists leave the group.

Travel agency reception personnel's behaviors: (1) offering special prices to designated tourists only, (2) failing to handle tourists' complaints or opinion, (3) promoting tourist spots that make false claims, and (4) leaking tourists' personal information.

Behaviors of other group members: (1) tourists in the group do not comply with tour rules (shouting or picture taking), (2) tourists in the group show up late, delaying itineraries, (3) tourists in the group steal from fellow tourists, and (4) tourists in the group request visits to immoral sites.

The same procedure was adopted to identify general attitudinal statements of consumers concerning questionable behaviors. This part also included usual Chinese aphorisms on behavioral ethics for individuals, tour groups, and others. A total of seven types of general attitudinal statements were identified. Of them, four statements included “Honesty is the best policy;” “If one treats others well, others should treat him well, too;” “Even if it violates company policy, it is still necessary to satisfy costumers’ needs;” and “Expediency is more important than honesty.” These statements were derived from Wong (2000) and modified to meet our research purpose. Others statements included: “Harmony is above everything in group activities,” “Overall group needs are more important than individual needs in group activities,” and “A matter that serves public interest is an ethical matter,” which were developed from in-depth interviews (six group package tour participants and four experts on consumer behavior). The results of a pilot test with 40 group package tourists were then used to refine the initial measurement items.

Questionnaire

A final version of a survey instrument was developed and comprised of 20 questionable behaviors and seven types of general attitudinal statements. Tourists then were asked about their perceptions of the appropriateness of the above-mentioned behaviors. A five-point Likert scale was adopted for all the items and ranged from 1 = “strongly believe that it is wrong” to 5 = “strongly believe that it is not wrong.” Similarly, a five-point Likert scale was adopted for general attitudes on questionable behaviors and ranged from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree.”

Data Collection

Snowball sampling was adopted for this study. Targets for the questionnaire survey (i.e., tourists who had taken part in group package tours in the past year) were found via recommendations from colleagues, friends, relatives, and students. The targets were then used to identify more respondents for the questionnaire interview who had joined a group package tour in the past year. This approach was adopted to expand the target list of qualified respondents who were later sent the questionnaires.

A two-wave e-mail method, supplemented by an e-mail reminder, was adopted for data collection. A total of 1,000 survey questionnaires were sent out. Respondents answered the questionnaire based on their most recent experience in a group package tour. A total of 332 were completed and returned, which represents a 33.2% return rate.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical methods, including a ranking were used to measure tourists' degree of agreement with general ethical attitudes. The principle components analysis, with a Varimax rotation method, was used to reduce the 20 questionable behaviors into newly designated factors without leaving much variance unexplained. Based on the new composite factors that were derived from the factor analysis, a Pearson's coefficient correlation was conducted to investigate the correlation between the newly identified questionable behaviors and tourists' general attitudes. We further tested whether there were any differences between each demographics, group package tour characteristics, and the newly composite factors by way of independent *t*-test and one way ANOVA.

FINDING

Sample Description

The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1, which shows that most respondents were female (52.9%); with an age range of 21-30 (35.3%) or 31-40 (29.0%); university degree (55.6%); and who travelled twice a year (44.8%). The group sizes were under 10 (24.8%), 11-15 (18.7%), 16-20 (22.7%), 21-25 (14.2%), and over 26 (19.6%), and most respondents interacted with members to a normal degree (39.9%), high degree (41.7%), or very high degree (14.5%).

Analysis of Tourists' General Attitudinal Statements

In Table 2, the mean and standard deviation are tabulated, together with a ranking of degree of agreement with ethical attitude. Results show that tourists generally approved of these statements (mean values for each statement were above 3). Of them, statements 5 "Harmony is above everything in group activities" and 6 "Overall group needs are more important than individual needs in group activities" were ranked first and third, respectively. These results corroborate Hofstede's (1980) finding that the Chinese have highly collective characteristics. Further statement 2, "If one treats others well, others should treat him well, too," was ranked 2, which explains

the importance of interpersonal expression of goodwill and reciprocity. Ranked number 4 was statement 1 “Honesty is the best policy.” This was followed by statement 7, which explains the ethical significance from different perspectives-“A matter that serves public interest is an ethical matter,” and statement 3, which stresses individual benefits, “Even if it violates company policy, it is still necessary to satisfy costumers’ needs.” The next was statement 4, which challenges the existing sense of values to some extent “Expediency is more important than honesty.” The last three statements occupied the fifth, sixth and seventh ranks, respectively, which shows a lower agreement and acceptance from tourists.

Table 1 Characteristics of the Sample (N= 332)

Demographic items	Valid Percentage	Demographic items	Valid Percentage
Gender		Age	
Male	47.1%	Under 20	17.2%
Female	52.9%	21-30	35.3%
	100.0%	31-40	29.0%
		41-50	15.4%
		Over 51	3%
			100.0%
Education		Frequency of travelling	
Junior high school or below	2.1%	Once a year	21.2%
Senior high school	14.2%	Twice a year	44.8%
Vocational school	19.6%	Three times a year	24.2%
University	55.6%	Four times a year	8.2%
Post-Graduate	8.5%	Five times or more a year	1.5%
	100.0%		100.0%
Group size		Member interaction	
Under 10	24.8%	Very low	0.3%
11-15	18.7%	Low	3.6%
16-20	22.7%	Usual	39.9%
21-25	14.2%	High	41.7%
More than 26	19.6%	Very high	14.5%
	100.0%		100.0%

Table 2 Mean Score and Ranking of Seven General Attitudinal Statements

General attitudinal statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
1. Honesty is the best policy.	4.17	.686	4
2. If one treats others well, others should treat him well, too.	4.19	.702	2
3. Even if it violates company policy, it is still necessary to satisfy costumers' needs.	3.57	.973	6
4. Expediency is more important than honesty.	3.37	1.007	7
5. Harmony is above everything in group activities.	4.22	.646	1
6. Overall group needs are more important than individual needs in group activities.	4.18	.728	3
7. A matter that serves public interest is an ethical matter.	3.92	.879	5

Analysis of Group Package Tours Relative Parties' Questionable Tour-Related Behaviors

The Kaser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett test of Sphericity were conducted to test the fitness of the data. The KMO was 0.939, which is considered "meritorious" and the Bartlett test of Sphericity was 4491.634, with significance lower than 0.000. The above statistical data supported the use of a factor analysis for these items. Using the principle components with Varimax rotation method, four distinct factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 emerged, which accounted for 70.1% of the total variance in the data. We also found that the composite reliability was larger than 0.70, which indicates an acceptable fit of the data. Table 3 lists the results of the factor analysis with Varimax rotation and reliability analysis of the tourists' perceptions of questionable tour-related behaviors. They included:

Factor 1: Leading to damage on others' property.

Factor 2: Violating principles on information giving and handling.

Factor 3: Violating pre-set itinerary.

Factor 4: Inappropriate voluntary behavior.

Table 3 Factor analysis with Varimax rotation and reliability analysis of the tourists' perceptions of group package tour relative parties' questionable tour-related behaviours ($N = 332$)

Questionable behavior	Factor loading	Factor	Eigen value	% of variance	Communicative variance	Cronbach α
Bring tourists to shopping places selling poor products at high prices.	0.747					
Photo service charges more expensive than market price.	0.774	Leading to damage on others' property.	4.23	21.16	21.16	0.89
Tourists in the group steal from fellow tourists.	0.783					
Enforce fixed tips but without offering corresponding services.	0.839					
No detailed pointers and tips on the tour.	0.787					
Fail to handle tourists' complaints or opinion.	0.700	Violates principles on information giving and handling.	3.64	18.22	39.39	0.88
Promote tourist spots that make false claims.	0.672					
Leak tourists' personal information.	0.701					
Tourists in the group show up late, delaying itineraries.	0.734					
Stop too long at shopping points shortens other itineraries.	0.667	Violates pre-set itinerary.	3.25	16.29	55.68	0.88
Sudden changes in itineraries.	0.876					
Fails to make roll calls such that tourists leave the group.	0.862					

Table 3 Factor analysis with Varimax rotation and reliability analysis of the tourists' perceptions of group package tour relative parties' questionable tour-related behaviours ($N = 332$) (Continued)

Questionable behavior	Factor loading	Factor	Eigen value	% of variance	Communicative variance	Cronbach α
Offers special prices to designated tourists only.	0.659					
No detailed introduction to tourist spots.	0.661	Inappropriate voluntary behavior.	2.88	14.42	70.10	0.75
Tourists in the group request visits to immoral sites.	0.648					
Tell jokes with sexual innuendo.	0.633					

Ranking Identified Factors

Table 4 ranks the obtained factors based on mean value. All factors revealed a mean value less than 3, which suggests that tourists perceived these behaviors as not being appropriate; the lower the mean, the less appropriate is the behavior as perceived by tourists. From Table 3, we can see that the lowest mean was for "Leading to damage on others' property." The tourists thought that when their property was damaged in real terms, the said behavior was the most inappropriate. The next was "Violating principles on information giving and handling." Tourists thought that information, related to the tour, must be properly disseminated and handled, including the protection of personal information. If the request was violated, the behavior was considered inappropriate. The next factor was "Inappropriate voluntary behavior," which involved differential treatment and gender discrimination. These were also given negative evaluation and disapproved by tourists. Finally, the last factor was "Violating pre-set itinerary." Although it was considered to have a lesser degree of inappropriateness, this factor was still considered unacceptable.

Table 4 Ranking Identified Factors

Factor	Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
Leading to damage on others' property.	1.6035	.67480	1
Violate principles on information giving and handling.	1.6631	.74201	2
Inappropriate voluntary behavior.	2.0121	.73433	3
Violate pre-set itinerary	2.079	.8449	4

Correlation Analysis of Four Identified Factors with General Attitudinal Statements

Table 5 shows the correlation analysis of four factors as identified from 20 questionable behaviors with general attitudinal statements. Of them, statement 1 and factor 4 were significantly and negatively correlated, which suggests that the more tourists stress the statement “Honesty is the best policy,” the more they disagree that tourist-related personnel should commit “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors.”

Statement 2 also showed a significant and negative correlation with factors 1 and 2; however, was significantly and positively correlated with factor 3. This implies that the more tourists stress the statement “If one treats others well, others should treat him well, too,” the more they are unable to accept “Leading to damage on others’ property” and “Violating principles on information giving and handling.” However, if the “Violating pre-set itinerary” committed by relevant personnel was done to repay an act of goodwill by others “If one treats others well, others should treat him well, too”, the feeling of inappropriateness reduces.

Statement 3 yielded a significant and positive correlation with factor 1 and a significant and negative correlation with factor 4, which indicates that tourists who agree with the statement “Even if it violates company policy, it is still necessary to satisfy costumers’ needs” tended to disagree that tour-related personnel engage in “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors.” However, if the behavior was done with the purpose of satisfying customers’ needs, tourists reported a higher degree of acceptance of “Leading to damage on others’ property”.

Statement 3 yielded a significant and positive correlation with factor 1 and a significant and negative correlation with factor 4, which indicates that tourists who agree with the statement “Even if it violates company policy, it is still necessary to satisfy costumers’ needs” tended to disagree that tour-related personnel engage in “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors.” However, if the purpose of the behavior was to satisfy customers’ needs, tourists reported a high degree of acceptance of “leading to damage on others’ property.”

Statement 4 yielded a significant and positive correlation with factor 2 and a significant and negative correlation with factor 4. This findings suggests that actions such as “Violating principles on information giving and handling,” if viewed in terms of “Expediency is more important than honesty,” could generate less negative reactions from tourists. However, the more tourists identified with the statement “Expediency is more important than honesty,” the less they tolerated “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors.”

Statement 5 was significantly and negatively correlated with factor 1, which also implies that tourists who believed that “Harmony is above everything in group activities” tended to reject the idea of behaviors “Leading to damage on others’ property.”

Statement 6 showed a significant and negative correlation with factors 1 and 4. This findings suggests that the more tourists support the idea that “harmony is above everything in group activities,” the more they are opposed to the idea of tour personnel’s behaviors “Leading to damage on others’ property” and “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors.”

Statement 7 yielded a significant and negative correlation with factor 4, which implies that the more tourists agreed with the statement “A matter that serves public interest is an ethical matter,” the more they disagreed the idea that tour-related personnel should engage in “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors.”

Table 5 Correlation Analyses of Four Identified Factors with General Attitudinal Statements

General attitudinal statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Honesty is the best policy.	-.079	-.078	-.071	-.168**
If one treats others well, others should treat him well, too.	-.123*	-.127*	.109*	-.016
Even if it violates company policy, it is still necessary to satisfy costumers’ needs.	.116*	-.003	.003	-.138*
Expediency is more important than honesty.	.098	.155**	.017	-.209**
Harmony is above everything in group activities.	-.151**	-.052	-.068	-.093
Overall group needs are more important than individual needs in group activities.	-.122*	-.068	-.062	-.115*
A matter that serves public interest is an ethical matter.	-.032	.020	-.062	-.252**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The Impacts of Tourists’ Demographics and Group Package Tour Characteristics on Four Factors Identified by Independent *T*-Test and ANOVA Analysis

Table 6 summarizes the impact of tourists’ demographics and group package tour characteristics on four factors identified by independent *t*-test and ANOVA analysis. In terms of gender, there were no significant differences in judgments on questionable

behaviors among males and females. There was a significant difference on the factor “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors” among tourists of difference age brackets. Specifically, those between the age of 31-40 and over 51 years old felt this behavior was less acceptable than did other age brackets. Analyzed according to educational attainment, those with university and senior high school experience regarded the fourth factor, “Inappropriate voluntary behavior,” as more appropriate, which was significantly different from those in other educational attainment brackets who tended to think of this factor as unacceptable. Moreover, in terms of the frequency of travelling, tourists who participated in tour groups once, twice, and five times a year were less able to accept “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors,” while those who participated 3-4 times a year tended to accept this behavior more often.

In this study, two types of group package tour characteristics were analyzed for their impacts on the factors defined. In terms of tour group sizes of 11-15 and more than 26, there was more acceptance for factors such as “Violating principles on information giving and handling” and “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors.” Groups of other sizes gave lower evaluations of these two factors, which was also significantly different. Finally, the degree of tourist interaction within the group influenced perceptions of questionable behaviors. In three of the factors, namely “Violating principles on information giving and handling,” “Violating pre-set itinerary,” and “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors,” the degree of acceptance differed significantly with different degrees of interaction within groups.

Table 6 Summary of tourists’ demographics and group package tour characteristics on four factors identified by independent *t*-test and ANOVA analysis

Criteria for typology	Factor 1: Leading to damage on others’ property	Factor 2: Violate principles on information giving and handling	Factor 3: Violate pre-set itinerary	Factor 4: Inappropriate voluntary behavior
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Gender				
Male	0.05	0.09	-0.05	0.05
Female	-0.05	-0.08	0.05	-0.04
	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test
	F=.625	F =2.489	F =0.74	F =0.732

** Significant at the 0.01 level

* Significant at the 0.05 level

+ Significant at the 0.1 level

Note 1: The mean value listed was first deducted from the mean value of each demographic or group package tour characteristic and sorted by each identified factor.

Table 6 Summary of tourists' demographics and group package tour characteristics on four factors identified by independent *t*-test and ANOVA analysis (Continued)

Criteria for typology	Factor 1: Leading to damage on others' property	Factor 2: Violate principles on information giving and handling	Factor 3: Violate pre-set itinerary	Factor 4: Inappropriate voluntary behavior
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Age				
Under 20	-0.15	-0.04	-0.10	0.39
21-30	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.07
31-40	-0.04	0.01	0.06	-0.34
41-50	0.15	0.02	0.00	0.07
Over 51	0.07	-0.25	-0.04	-0.13
	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test
	F= 0.664	F= 0.207	F= 0.238	F= 5.373**
Education				
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Junior high school or below	0.22	-0.05	-0.65	-0.64
Senior high school	-1.0	0.00	0.10	0.11
Vocational school	0.11	0.03	0.05	-0.30
University	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	0.19
Post-Graduate	0.11	0.23	0.15	-0.21
	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test
	F= 0.572	F= 0.467	F= 1.128	F= 4.449*
Frequency of travelling				
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Once a year	0.15	0.04	-0.01	-0.07
Twice a year	0.01	-0.03	0.01	-0.22
Three times a year	-0.07	0.01	-0.06	0.40
Four times a year	-0.3	-0.07	0.46	0.21
Five times or more a year	0.3	0.16	-0.74	-0.14
	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test
	F= 1.156	F= 0.114	F= 2.362	F= 5.654 * *

** Significant at the 0.01 level

* Significant at the 0.05 level

+ Significant at the 0.1 level

Note 1: The mean value listed was first deducted from the mean value of each demographic or group package tour characteristic and sorted by each identified factor.

Table 6 Summary of tourists' demographics and group package tour characteristics on four factors identified by independent *t*-test and ANOVA analysis (Continued)

Criteria for typology	Factor 1: Leading to damage on others' property	Factor 2: Violate principles on information giving and handling	Factor 3: Violate pre-set itinerary	Factor 4: Inappropriate voluntary behavior
Group size	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Under 10	-0.14	-0.06	0.01	-0.18
11-15	0.18	0.24	-0.16	0.03
16-20	0.02	-0.26	0.00	-0.22
21-25	-0.00	-0.13	0.04	-0.41
More than 26	-0.03	0.24	0.11	0.29
	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test
	F= 0.931	F= 3.497 * *	F= 0.637	F= 5.038 * *
Member interaction	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Very low	0.82	-1.20	2.34	-2.17
Low	-0.18	-0.5	0.47	-0.23
Usual	0.02	0.02	-0.02	0.12
High	0.08	-0.04	0.02	-0.05
Very high	-0.25	0.23	-0.21	-0.09
	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test	ANOVA Test
	F= 1.289	F= 1.994 ⁺	F= 2.619*	F= 1.965 ⁺

** Significant at the 0.01 level

* Significant at the 0.05 level

⁺ Significant at the 0.1 level

Note 1: The mean value listed was first deducted from the mean value of each demographic or group package tour characteristic and sorted by each identified factor.

DISCUSSION

Several important conclusions can be derived from this study, as follows:

Important Questionable Behaviors

Using an in-depth interview method, 20 questionable behaviors of tour guides, tour group leaders, travel agency reception personnel, and other tourists in the group were identified. Following this, a factor analysis revealed four factors as follows (ranked based on highest to lowest degree of unacceptability): "Leading to damage on others' property," "Violating principles on information giving and handling," "Inappropriate voluntary behaviors," and "Violating pre-set itinerary." As these factors yielded a mean below 3, they were considered inappropriate by the majority of tourists interviewed in this study.

General Attitudinal Statements

Through interviews, moral aphorisms, and previous literature, this study identified seven ethical behavioral statements of group tour tourists in regard to questionable behaviors. Most of these statements yielded a mean value higher than 3, which suggests that tourists mostly approved of these statements.

Correlation between Questionable Behaviors and General Attitudinal Statements

Significant positive correlations existed between factors and statements including (1) statement 2 “If one treats others well, others should treat him well, too” and factor 3 “Violating pre-set itinerary;” (2) statement 3 “Even if it violates company policy, it is still necessary to satisfy costumers’ needs” and factor 1 “Leading to damage on others’ property;” and (3) statement 4 “Expediency is more important than honesty” and factor 2 “Violating principles on information giving and handling.” These findings imply that tourists tolerate or identify with questionable behaviors that are committed by tour-related personnel. The proviso was that said behavior should, to a certain extent, be an expression of goodwill or for the goal of increasing tourists’ benefits and welfare. Only in such a circumstance are questionable behaviors considered acceptable.

Significant negative correlations also existed between factors and statements, such as in the cases of statement 1 and factor 4; statement 2 and factors 1 and 3; statement 3 and factor 3; statement 4 and factor 4; statement 5 and factor 1; statement 6 and factors 1 and 4; and statement 7 and factor 4. These results suggest that the greater emphasis on general attitudinal statements, the greater is disagreement with questionable behaviors among tour-related personnel. Here, attitudinal statements and questionable behaviors shared a negative relationship.

Certain Demographics and Group Package Tour Characteristics Will Impact Tourists’ Judgments on Appropriateness of Questionable Behaviors

The conclusions of this study show that certain demographic variables and group package tour characteristics influence tourists’ judgments on the appropriateness of questionable behaviors. In terms of demographic variables, “gender” did not lead to differences in how tourists judged the appropriateness of questionable behaviors. In contrast, different age brackets, educational attainment, and frequency of travelling did lead to significant differences in judgments on “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors.” Further, the size of tour groups led to significant differences in tourists’ judgments on “Violating principles on information handling” and “Inappropriate

voluntary behaviors.” Finally, the degree of intra-group interaction also revealed significant differences on such issues as “Violating principles of information handling,” “Violating pre-set itinerary,” and “Inappropriate voluntary behaviors.”

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through empirical analysis, this paper aimed to study tourists’ perceptions of group package tours relative parties’ questionable tour-related behaviors. In addition to including frontline personnel behaviors as the target of the study, this study also focused on the behaviors of group package tour members. This is beneficial for increasing the understanding of factors that affect tourists’ perceptions for both academia and industry.

The results of this study indicate that perpetrators of questionable behaviors are not restricted to frontline personnel only. In fact, other members in the tour group also engage in inappropriate behaviors. This underscores the importance of other tour group members in tourists’ perceptions as well. Furthermore, among the four factors, factor 1, “Leading to damage on others’ property,” was the least acceptable among the questionable behaviors. This finding coincides with that by Wong (2000) and implies that actual financial or property loss, compared to perceptions of simpler ethical defects, is seen as being more inappropriate in tourists’ perceptions. Other behaviors, such as violating principles on information giving and handling, inappropriate voluntary behaviors, and violating pre-set itinerary committed by tour-related parties also impact tourists’ perceptions. The study of such questionable behaviors properly reflects common attitudes in group package tours and, furthermore, highlights problematic issues that lead to tourists’ negative perceptions.

Moreover, there was also positive and negative significant correlations between certain factors on questionable behaviors and tourists’ general attitudinal statements. These findings differed from those by Wong (2000) who reported only significant positive correlations. This may be explained partly by the fact that not all questionable behaviors and general attitudes adopted in this study were the same as those addressed in Wong’s (2000) study. It may also be possible that cultural differences among the targets played a part. At the same time, to a certain extent, conclusions made in this study seem to point to the fact that general attitudinal statements, used by tourists in judging the appropriateness of different incidents may, because of different scenarios and factors, be swayed by issues of flexibility and expediency. In addition, a single questionable behavior may correlate with multiple attitudinal statements. This seems to suggest that an individual may use multiple standards to make judgments on the

same incident in order to help reach a final conclusion. This phenomenon highlights the complexity involved in making moral judgments.

As previously discussed, culture is often seen as an important factor that affects moral judgments. Future research, occasioned by this study, might focus on comparing tourists from different cultures. Additionally, as in Fennel and Malloy's (1999) study of ethical expressions of different tour industry agents (e.g., eco-tourism, fishing, cruise line operators), they discover that eco-tourism operators were superior to others when it came to ethics. Classified standards adopted to study group package tour itineraries to elucidate differences in tourists' or operators' perceptions of ethical issues or questionable behaviors might be profitably explored further. In addition, the ethical attitudes of hotel managers has been found to be related to their willingness to take corporate social responsibility (Gu and Ryan, 2011). Therefore, it is recommended that future research is directed toward discussing the relationship between ethical attitudes and questionable behaviors so that the premises or determinants of such behaviors can be explored. Furthermore, this study can be expanded to explore the impact of human behavior on other' moral perceptions and consequences, such as purchase intention or service satisfaction in order to further develop the relationship between perceptions and decision-making.

This study's conclusions show that factors that affect tourists' perceptions include those issues within or beyond a travel agencies' control (such as other tourists in the group). Additionally, certain questionable behaviors really cause a varied degree of distress on others. These findings serve to remind operators of the need to pay attention to their frontline personnel's attitudes and behaviors and, thus, point to the need to establish systems for monitoring work ethics and professionalism. Moreover, they must likewise set proper regulative and management requirements that are targeted at other individuals who affect consumer perceptions. Only by doing this can personnel service quality be upgraded and damage caused by others can be effectively reduced. Furthermore, the results of the study revealed that demographic variables and package tour characteristics contributed to differences in tourists' judgments on the appropriateness of questionable behaviors. Therefore, to enhance positive perceptions, operators must acquire a better understanding of tourist groupings and status, as well as make proper arrangements and allocations. At the same time, they might offer same-age-bracket group tours, set up tourist behavioral regulations, and control package tour size to create a tour environment that can be perceived as comfortable for all tourists.

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