



## SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCING TOURISM SERVICES ON PHU QUOC ISLAND

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**ABSTRACT** The objective of this study is to propose some solutions to developing tourism on Phu Quoc Island. Data for the study were collected from domestic and foreign tourists to Phu Quoc. Such assessment methods as service quality gap model by Parasuraman et al (1985), Holiday Satisfaction (HOLSAT) and experts consultation were used. Research findings show both the positive and negative points in Phu Quoc tourism to promote and overcome them respectively. Thence, the researchers propose recommendations for Phu Quoc tourism industry to thrive in the future.

**KEYWORDS :** service quality, tourism, Phu Quoc.

### 1. Introduction

In the development of tourism, it cannot help but refer to the prominent feature of "Phu Quoc Marine Tourism", an island with an area of 589.23 square kilometers and a population of 103,000, which is considered to be the most beautiful and largest tourist destination in Vietnam today. In addition, Phu Quoc is also gifted with natural beauty of the wilderness but equally charming with its long and romantic coast, and rows of coconut tree lying over the shore of the white sand as if to invite visitors to this place.

According to Rough Guides magazine (the UK), Phu Quoc owns two of Vietnam's 20 most beautiful beaches, Bai Dai and Bai Sao. This is considered a very valuable acknowledgement as it is the basis for promoting the image of Phu Quoc tourism to domestic and foreign visitors. At present, domestic and foreign investors are investing in the construction of a number of tourism businesses on the island, contributing to the economic development of the island. The number of visitors to Phu Quoc was about 850,000 in 2015 (including approximately 35% of international visitors) with the total turnover of Phu Quoc's service industry of VND1.9 trillion and the growth of tourism in recent years has been more than 30%.

Although there are many favorable factors for the development of marine tourism, Phu Quoc's tourism industry has not been able to fully exploit its potential in recent years. The quality of the tourist service is not really good to meet tourists' needs, which has limited the development of Phu Quoc tourism.

### 2. Research Methods

#### 2.1. Research data

Secondary data were collected from the Kien Giang Tourism Department while primary data were collected through direct interviews of visitors via the prepared questionnaire. In this study, the data were classified in two groups of tourists, namely domestic and international tourists, and the observed rate is selected based on the number of visitors to Phu Quoc in 2015. The sample size is 140 observations, which is suitable for the Holsat model for the quality of tourism services.

#### 2.2. Analytical methods

This study uses descriptive statistics to analyze the status quo of Phu Quoc tourism. The HOLSAT (Holiday Satisfaction) model is also used to evaluate the quality of tourism services on the island. The results are presented in a matrix in which the positive and negative attributes are expressed on separate matrices with the Perception attribute on the X-axis and the Expectations attribute on the Y-axis. At the same time, expert consultation methods are used to make some recommendations that contribute to the development of Phu Quoc tourism.

#### 2.3. Theoretical basis and research model

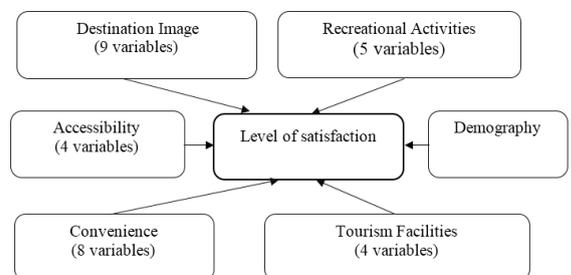
There are now many different methods of measuring and evaluating satisfaction such as the measurement and evaluation of service quality by Parasuraman et al. (1985), the Expectation – Feeling model, the Performance Only model (Erevelles and Leavitt, 1992), the Holsat (Holiday Satisfaction) model, a new model developed by Tribe and Snaith (1998), along with several other analytical methods like EFA factor analysis, multivariate linear regression analysis, etc.

The Holsat model was introduced on the basis of the Servqual models (Parasuraman et al., 1988), the Expectancy-Confirmation model, (Oliver, 1980), but the Holsat model has overcome constraints of the Servqual model. Both positive and negative attributes are used, in which the positive attributes convey good impressions of tourist destinations while the negative attributes are the opposite. Thus, it is possible to define a destination with a combination of both attributes.

This model originates from the synthesis of the theories of many different models. Furthermore, it does not use 22 fixed attributes, irrespective of the different destinations of the Servqual model. This ensures that the attributes being used are the most appropriate for each destination under study.

Tribe and Snaith (1998) developed the Holsat model and used it to evaluate tourists' satisfaction at the popular resort of Varadero, Cuba. Tran Thi Luong (2011) also inherited this model when studying the satisfaction of tourists coming to Da Nang. Visitors' satisfaction with a tourism destination is the extent to which visitors are satisfied with the properties of their beyond desired destination for their expectations.

Based on an overview of a number of related theories as well as theoretical and empirical studies related to visitors' satisfaction, the proposed research model consists of five factors that affect visitors' satisfaction: destination image; entertainment; accessibility; convenience; facilities.



**Figure 1: The proposed research model**

Source: Author's proposal

Destination image describes desirable features that attract tourists to specific destinations.

Types of leisure and entertainment activities available such as leisure activities on the beach, nightlife activities and so on.

Easy access to destinations, including the feeling of safety and security when traveling, friendly and hospitable locals, etc.

Styles and standards of accommodation facilities available at the destination such as the quality of meals, guest room, hotel staff attitudes, etc.

General facilities required by visitors such as banking services, ATMs, telephone service, shopping, Internet connection, etc.

The model that determines the factors affecting visitors' satisfaction is set as follows:

$$MHL = f(HAEM, SGT, STC, STN, CSVCDL)$$

In which, dependent variable Y is the measure of satisfaction of tourists. Y receives two values: (1) satisfied, (2) not satisfied. Destination Image, Recreational Activities, Accessibility, Convenience, and Tourism Facilities belong to independent variables.

### 3. Research results

#### 3.1. Current status of tourism activities on Phu Quoc Island

**Travel agencies:** Currently, there are many companies and travel agencies in Phu Quoc, which operate in the field of tourism and the number of these companies has been increasing over the years. Some well-known travel agencies worth mentioning include Phu Quoc Sun Tourist One-member Ltd. Co., , Phuong Nam Ltd. Co., John's Tours, Vinpearl Phu Quoc One-member Ltd. Co., Sun Ltd., Saigon-Phu Quoc Joint Stock Company, Phu Quoc Trading Services Joint Stock Company, etc.

**Accommodation:** According to the Phu Quoc Statistical Office, the number of accommodation establishments in Phu Quoc has increased over the years. By 2015, the number of establishments reached 160, increasing by 16 more compared to those of 2014. Among these, the number of hotels is 61 and that of guest houses and residences is 99. With the increase in the number of accommodation establishments, the number of rooms for tourists has also increased rapidly. Overall, according to the statistics, between 2012 and 2015, the number of rooms and beds has increased steadily. If in 2012 there were only 1,975 guest-rooms, this number amounted to 3,606 in 2014. By the end of 2015, the total number of guest rooms in Phu Quoc was 4,193 with 8,241 beds, of which there were 663 special rooms, 1,256 Type-I rooms, 1,988 Type-II rooms, and the rest were of other types.

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	100	125	144	160	170
Hotels	40	48	52	61	67
guest houses and hostels	60	77	92	99	103
Guest rooms	1.975	2.475	3.606	4.193	6.213
Superior	182	277	663	663	0
Type I	625	701	1.231	1.256	0
Type II	983	1.497	1.636	1.988	0
Single beds	3.366	4.078	6.797	8.281	0

Source: Phu Quoc statistical office, 2017

#### Food & Beverages

Over the years, the number of visitors to Phu Quoc has increasingly grown, including both domestic and international tourists. Therefore, the number of restaurants in Phu Quoc has also increased rapidly as

Table 2: Visitors to Phu Quoc from 2011 to 2016

Visitor number and revenue	units	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Domestic	Person	238.456	276.000	499.700	889.596	1.442.155	2.383.879
International	Person	119.228	132.000	122.779	161.589	195.555	267.439
Total	Person	357.684	408.000	622.479	1.051.185	1.637.710	2.651.318
Increase/decrease	Person	-	50.316	214.479	428.706	586.525	1.013.608
Revenue	Million VND	567.498	660.000	874.874	1.226.865	2.139.469	3.100.281

Source: Kien Giang Tourism Department, 2017

In terms of revenue in the tourism sector in 6 years, from 2011 to 2016 revenue increased from VND567,498,000 to a record number of VND3,100,281,000, 5.4 times higher than that of 2011. This is a remarkable achievement because it shows that Phu Quoc tourism is moving strongly and is predicted to develop further in the future.

#### The attractiveness of the beaches

Phu Quoc Island is also known as Jade island with a picturesque island district surrounded by mountains and forests with rivers and streams in a number of islets. Many places still retain the wild look, the traditional beauty of fishing villages, the richness of the marine living creatures.

Phu Quoc has 4 high-quality beaches with high-class tourism potential, namely Bai Dai, Bai Sao, Bai Khem, and Dat Do; and around

Phu Quoc is famous for its diverse seafood such as sea cucumber, raw fish salad, crab-blood soup, sea urchin (Nhum as called by locals), squid and many other delicacies. Some famous eating places in Phu Quoc include Zen Restaurant, Winston's Burgers & Beer, Mango Bay Restaurant, Nemo Restaurant, Phu Quoc Bee Farm Café, Huong Bien Restaurant, etc.

#### Transportation

To reach Phu Quoc visitors can choose to travel by sea or air. For traveling by air, there are domestic and international flights. For domestic flights, you can choose between Can Tho - Phu Quoc, Ho Chi Minh City - Phu Quoc, and Hanoi - Phu Quoc. For international flights, visitors can choose between Singapore - Phu Quoc, Cambodia - Phu Quoc, and Russia - Phu Quoc. Currently, the Korean Air is cooperating with Hanjin Travel Company (Korea) to come to Phu Quoc to explore and promote the flights from Korea Incheon Airport to Phu Quoc International Airport. For traveling by waterway tourists can go on board the Super Dong high-speed boats with two main routes of Ha Tien - Phu Quoc and Rach Gia - Phu Quoc. Alternatively, visitors can go by ferries on the Ha Tien - Phu Quoc - Ha Tien route.

#### Human resources

Human resources can be said to be the most essential factor in the development of tourism for a locality. According to the latest statistics of the Kien Giang Department of Tourism, by the end of April 2014 the entire island has 2,738 guest-rooms, with the total number of tourism workers of 2,057, too low as compared to the general standards of tourism industry. Over the past several years, many hotels, guesthouses and resorts have been built on Phu Quoc Island, requiring a large number of local laborers, especially skilled workers. Therefore, it is necessary to do research and make plans for the development of human resources on the basis of surveying human resource needs for each specific industry in order to make certain forecasts on tourism human resource needs in the future. In addition, attracting human resources from elsewhere, especially good experts with practical experience in management and development of tourism to consult or invest in Phu Quoc is essential.

#### Visitors to Phu Quoc

According to the statistics of Kien Giang Tourism Department, the total number of visitors to Phu Quoc increased steadily over the years. Specifically, in 2011, the total number of visitors to Phu Quoc reached 357,684, of which international visitors accounted for 33.3%. By 2014, the total number of visitors continued to increase sharply to 1,051,185. The year 2014 saw a strong return of international visitors, reaching nearly 162,000 arrivals, an increase of 31.6% compared to 2013. This can be considered a great success of Kien Giang's tourism industry in general and Phu Quoc in particular. The year 2015 was also a success for Phu Quoc's tourism industry as the number of visitors increased sharply by 586,525 compared to that of 2014, the strongest in the 5 recent years. The main reason for this was that in 2015 Phu Quoc was officially recognized as a Grade-2-city in Kien Giang province. This was a good opportunity for Phu Quoc tourism to attract more investment projects. High-end resorts will be built in Phu Quoc in the near future.

the island there are such beautiful and famous beaches as Duong Dong, Truong, Thom and Ganh Dau. Bai Sao in An Thoi area, about 7 km long, is one of the most beautiful beaches of Phu Quoc with sparkling and silky white sand, diverse topography and flora coverage, attractive landscape, fresh air with the cool breeze from the sea to ensure nice bathing, and other recreational activities with large accommodation capacity. This is a Class-1 beach, ideal for the construction of beach resorts that appeal to visitors, especially international ones.

Phu Quoc's Bai Khem is a beautiful beach, about 4 km long, well known for its fine white and cream-like sand and clear blue sea water. Intermingling with the white sand beach are ranges of rock protruding into the sea, which looks wild and miraculous. Bai Khem is arc-shaped with a white sand fringe that stands out amidst the green of the forest and the immense sea. Visitors can go swimming, fishing, catching sea snails and enjoying special food at Khem beach.

Dat Do (Red Soil) beach is quite special although it's not very large, only about 2 km long; the terrain is relatively flat, and the road leading to this beach is specially the only place on the island with red soil. On the beach there are many rows of green poplars. Bai Dai (Long Beach) located in the North West of Phu Quoc Island, is one of the clean, beautiful and very wild beach. With a long coastline of about 15 km, starting from Ganh Dau cape to Cuu Can canal, Bai Dai is a paradise of sunshine, cool water and quietly melodious atmosphere, full of wilderness. Viewed from Bai Dai, visitors can see two small islands far away, which are Hon Dam and Doi Moi. At present, a 5-star resort of international standards is being built at Bai Dai. Visitors coming here will face an immense space; beautiful scenery and local people as if

everything intermingles with heaven and sea. All will bring to visitors a feeling of relaxed and quiet when coming here to rest and enjoy themselves, forgetting the worries of daily life. There are also many beautiful beaches such as Bai Ghenh Gio, Ong Lang, Vong, Ong Doi, Ganh Dau, Vung Bau, etc.

**3.2. The quality of Phu Quoc tourism according to the Holsat model**

Based on the survey findingd of domestic and international tourists, combined with the use of Paired Samples T-Test, the results of evaluation of Phu Quoc tourism quality are shown in Table 3:

**Table 3: Levels of importance and performance of tourism quality assessment criteria**

Attributes	Expectations		Perceptions		Expected perception	Level of significance
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
<b>Positive attributes</b>						
X1: Nice weather	4,08	0,730	3,94	0,789	-0,14	0,011
X2: Beautiful beaches	3,97	0,709	3,96	0,776	-0,01	0,014
X3: Historic sites (statues and monuments, Phú Quốc prison)	4,05	0,752	3,68	0,908	-0,37	0,000
X4: Visiting other islets (Dua Islet, Thom Islet)	4,13	0,698	3,48	0,904	-0,65	0,000
X5: Visiting fish sauce barrels	3,97	0,768	3,55	0,799	-0,42	0,000
X9: Abundant pleasure activities on the beaches	4,06	0,687	3,70	0,895	-0,36	0,000
X10: Phu Quoc Vinpearl Land	3,94	0,815	3,16	1,061	-0,78	0,000
X11: Fishing from tourist boats	4,05	0,752	3,44	0,939	-0,61	0,120
X14: Safety and security	3,93	0,765	4,01	0,877	0,08	0,036
X15: Friendly locals	3,84	0,810	3,73	0,821	-0,11	0,223
X18: Good restaurant meals	3,71	0,715	3,12	0,734	-0,59	0,000
X19: Reasonable priced meals	3,61	0,864	2,65	1,156	-0,96	0,000
X20: Well-equipped guest rooms	3,72	0,710	2,99	0,873	-0,73	0,000
X21: Enthusiastic hotel staff	4,11	0,740	3,47	0,791	-0,64	0,000
X22: Hotel staff's foreign language and communicative skills	4,09	0,719	3,44	0,867	-0,65	0,000
X24: Car and motorbike rental	4,04	0,734	3,89	0,846	-0,15	0,014
X25: Shopping at Dinh Cau night market	3,91	0,786	3,69	0,882	-0,22	0,110
X26: Tourist information system	3,66	0,792	3,01	0,869	-0,65	0,224
X27: Luggage handle at harbor and airport	3,48	0,869	2,67	0,933	-0,81	0,000
X28: Shopping at local markets	3,99	0,782	3,64	0,915	-0,35	0,000
<b>Negative attributes</b>						
X6: Crowds at tourist attractions	3,41	0,847	2,83	0,974	-0,58	0,000
X7: Street vendors and beggars	3,06	0,976	2,51	1,042	-0,55	0,000
X8: Litters on the beaches	3,29	0,825	3,26	0,851	-0,03	0,723
X12: Too few teambuilding and funny games at the beaches	3,49	0,885	3,11	0,987	-0,38	0,000
X13: Poor nightlife activities	3,63	0,781	3,42	0,823	-0,21	0,005
X16: Difficult to buy boat and airline tickets (in high seasons)	3,44	0,916	3,01	0,956	-0,43	0,000
X17: Poor information about Phu Quoc tourism at airports and harbors	3,63	0,733	3,41	0,906	-0,22	0,005
X23: High room rates	3,56	0,681	3,24	0,792	-0,32	0,000
X29: Lack of public toilet	3,61	0,783	3,89	0,854	0,28	0,001
X30: Difficult to withdraw cash from ATMs	3,77	0,843	3,79	0,852	0,02	0,784
X31: Lack of security guards at beaches	3,82	0,908	4,10	0,884	0,28	0,004

Source: Survey data, 2016

Tribe & Snaith (1998) proved that both positive and negative attributes would be expressed on two separate matrices with Perceptions on X - axis and Expectation on Y-axis. The "Gains" and "Losses" areas are delineated by the 45-degree diagonal line. Depending on the nature of the positive or negative attributes, the "Gains" and "Losses" areas are located on the left or on the bottom right of the diagonal line. For each attribute, visitor satisfaction or dissatisfaction is determined at the intersection between "Expectations" and "Perceptions". At this point, the further away from the diagonal line is, the higher the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each attribute is. In the case of negative attributes, a low level of expectation corresponding to a high perception tends to go towards the "Losses" area of the matrix. This means there is a decrease in satisfaction. In contrast, also at low expectations and high perceptions, but in the case of positive attributes, satisfaction tends to go towards the "Gains" area of the matrix respectively, which increases the satisfaction level.

**Positive attributes**

Positive attributes are shown in Figure 2 of the matrix. The results of the test in Table 3 showed that 16 out of the 20 positive attributes attained a statistical significance of 5%. Attributes (X11) " Fishing from tourist boats ", (X15) "Friendly locals", (X25) "Shopping at Dinh

Cau Night Market", ( X26) "Good tourist information system" did not achieve statistically significant levels due to the significant level of observation being below 0.05.

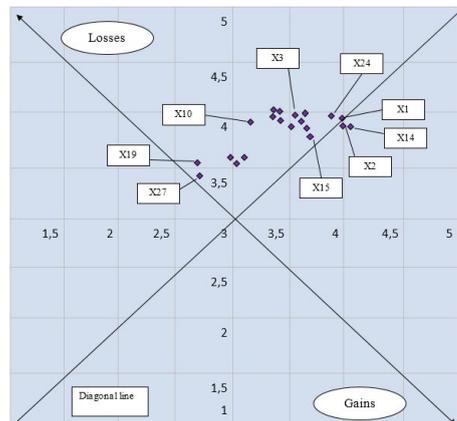


Figure 2: Matrix of positive attributes  
Source: Survey data, 2016

There is a difference between Perceptions and Expectations among positive attributes, i.e. gaining the higher level of satisfaction, specifically the attribute (X14) "Feeling safe to travel" in this study. The difference between the Perception and Expectation of 0.08 shows that most visitors are impressed with the level of safety and security in Phu Quoc. On Phu Quoc most local people are very friendly and hospitable, and security and order here is very good with very few social evils such as gambling, drinking alcohol on the streets, especially no mugging and pickpocketing. Locals and visitors can comfortably park their motorbikes/cars outside or by the roadside without worrying of theft. This is what makes most visitors feel very satisfied. This attribute is located on the "Gains" area and close to the diagonal line. This proves that the actual perception has exceeded the initial expectations.

The closer to 0 of any attribute that has a difference between Perceptions and Expectations, the more satisfied visitors will be, namely, attributes (X1) "Nice weather"; (X2) "Beautiful beaches", (X24) "Available car/bike rental". For attributes (X1) "Nice weather", the mean scores for perceptions and expectations are 3.94 and 4.08 respectively, equivalent to "Good". This indicates that most visitors enjoy the weather and climate there. At present, Phu Quoc has very few mills or factories, consequently the environment and the atmosphere here are still very fresh and unpolluted. It can be said that this is a huge advantage for the future development of tourism on Phu Quoc Island. For attribute (X2) "Beautiful beaches", the mean scores for Perceptions and Expectations are 3.96 and 3.97 respectively, equivalent to the classification of "Good", which indicates that most visitors reached their expected level of beautiful beaches on Phu Quoc.

Phu Quoc owns many beautiful beaches, including the two beaches on the list of the top 20 most beautiful beaches in Vietnam: Bai Dai (Long Beach) and Bai Sao (Star Beach). With such advantages, Phu Quoc travel authorities needs to take action to protect and preserve their beaches of pristine beauty. It this can be done, many more visitors will come here in the future. The (X24) attribute "Available car/motorbike rental" also has a high mean score of Perceptions and Expectations. As mentioned above, Phu Quoc's local residents are very friendly and hospitable, which makes visitors feel very comfortable and happy towards the people here. Also on Phu Quoc it is very easy to rent a car or motorbike to go sightseeing because vehicle lessors are not afraid of thieves so anyone can rent a car or motorbike to explore the island's attractive landscapes.

The remaining positive attributes do not have high mean scores of "Perceptions". They range between 2.65 and 3.70. Attribute (X19) "Cheap food (especially seafood)" has the Perception mean score of 2.65 while its expectation is 3.61. This is very unreasonable because the local seafood is quite cheap compared to other places thanks to the very high fishing output in Phu Quoc in addition to the fact that the seafood is sold locally without going through many intermediary stages. However, seafood prices there are higher than those of other places, which makes the majority of visitors dissatisfied. The reason is that most of the tourists to Phu Quoc are group-customers going on tours organized by travel agencies, and the tour guides often bring them to expensive restaurants so that they can earn much more commission from restaurant owners. Therefore, visitors have to pay for seafood dishes at higher prices. If this practice cannot be stopped soon, tourists may turn their back on Phu Quoc in the near future.

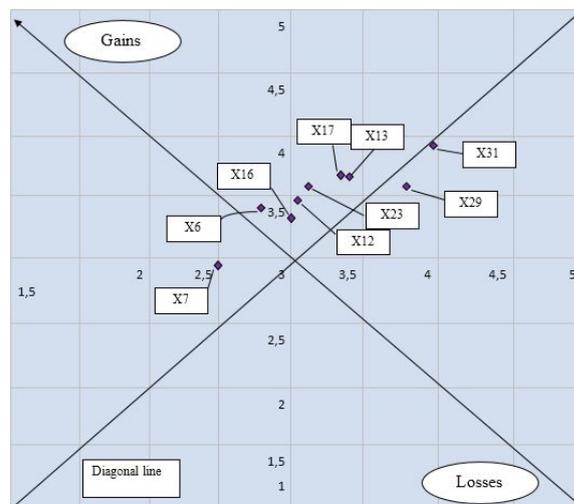
Attribute (X27) "Fast and efficient baggage handling services at harbors and airports" has the Perception mean score of 2.67 while the Expectation is 3.48. This is a disappointment for many travelers because there are international airport and harbor on Phu Quoc Island, of which the harbor has so far been completely built but still not been officially operated while the international airport has not yet reached its full capacity. Baggage handling services are also very poor, making the majority of visitors dissatisfied. The remaining attributes have average mean scores and therefore there is nothing special to analyze.

### Negative attributes

According to Tribe & Snaith (1998), if the value of the difference between perceptions and expectations is negative ( $<0$ ) for negative attributes, it shows satisfaction. This means that the attributes are not as bad as originally thought. On the other hand, if the difference between the perceptions and expectations is positive ( $>0$ ) for negative attributes, it indicates dissatisfaction. This means the attributes did not meet the initial expectation. Negative attributes are shown in the

matrix of Figure 2. Test results in Table 3 show that 9 out of 11 negative attributes attained statistically significant levels of 5%. Attributes (X8) "Litters on the beaches", and (X30) "Difficult to withdraw cash from ATMs" did not reach statistically significant level due to the significant level of observation being below 0.05.

### Negative attributes



**Figure 3: Matrix of negative attributes**  
Source: Survey data, 2016

Based on Table 3, in the attributes (X31) "Lack of rescue workers at tourist beaches" and (X29) "Lack of public toilets", the differences between the perceptions and expectations received a positive value ( $>0$ ), which indicates that these two attributes do not meet the initial expectations from most visitors.

Negative attributes X31 "Lack of rescue workers at tourist beaches" and X29 "Lack of public toilets" have a mean score of 4.10 and 3.89 respectively, which are very high. The reason is mainly due to the fact that at Phu Quoc's tourist beaches there are almost no rescue workers, except for large resorts, but the number of rescue workers there is also very small since most of these rescue workers are recruited from the local labor force, who have no trained skills and expertise needed for first-aid. Therefore, when unexpected incidents happen, they almost do not know how to respond. This is a great shortcoming at such popular tourist beaches as Bai Sao, Bai Dai. Attribute (X29) "Lack of public toilets" also receives absolute agreement from the majority of visitors, indicating the fact of lacking in public toilets is at an alarming rate. According to the statistics in recent years, the number of tourists coming to Phu Quoc has increasingly grown while public toilets there are seriously lacking and this will seriously affect the quality of the tourism services as it will cause difficulties and inconveniences for visitors to enjoy their vacation on Phu Quoc Island.

The differences between perception and expectation of the remaining negative attributes are negative ( $<0$ ). This means that most visitors are satisfied and these attributes are not as bad as originally thought. The two attributes (X6) "Crowds in tourist attractions" and (X7) "Street vendors and beggars" have negative differences between Perceptions and Expectations ( $-0.58$  and  $-0.55$ ). The main reason why there are very few street vendors and beggars in Phu Quoc is because the island is growing so quickly that it needs a larger workforce to work in various tourism construction projects, upgrading roads and building more ports, etc. As a result, there are labor shortages and the number of unemployed here is quite low, which explains why Phu Quoc has fewer street vendors and beggars as such. Although the number of visitors to Phu Quoc has increased year by year, in reality, the island has many tourist sites and its accommodation capacity is large enough to make visitors feel comfortable regardless of being overcrowded. Currently, Phu Quoc is building many more tourist areas which are large enough to meet tourists' entertainment needs in the coming time. The remaining negative attributes are not so high and most visitors feel satisfied with these attributes. In the future Phu Quoc will have to further improve its facilities as well as service quality to attract more visitors to Phu Quoc.

### 3.4. Proposed solutions to enhancing the quality of Phu Quoc tourism services

Having analyzed the development status quo and assessed the quality of Phu Quoc tourism, some solutions to improving the quality of Phu Quoc tourism services in the coming time are proposed as follows:

#### (1) Improving the quality of tourism human resources.

More English classes for waiter/waitresses in restaurants, hotel and resort staff should be conducted. Well-known speakers and experts with extensive experience in customer relation skills and working skills for employees in tourist resorts, restaurants and hotels should be invited to give lectures.

More rescue workers who must be trained in first aid, rescue techniques, etc. are needed at tourist beaches. They must be able to deal with emergency cases when arising.

Undergraduate training with a major in tourism should be provided for local youth. There should be policies to attract local students who have graduated from universities in big cities to come home to work to help develop tourism in Phu Quoc.

Staff's service attitude should be improved. Service staff at tourist attractions must show their enthusiasm and hospitality towards visitors. This is very important because it will help keep visitors to stay longer. In addition, local people should show friendly hospitality when interacting with tourists. This will not only make visitors feel sympathetic to Phu Quoc but also can bring certain income to them in tourist-related activities.

#### (2) Developing more services

There should be such additional services as medical services, aesthetics, banking to facilitate the development of tourism services, especially building more ATMs in tourist resorts and entertainment areas to stimulate visitors' consumption.

More entertainment areas such as bars, karaoke shops, casinos, gymnasiums, parks, football fields, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc. should be built, especially nightlife activities should also be put into operation.

More recreational parks on beaches with volleyball courts and football ground should be further built. Such water sports as rowing, surfing, etc. should be held to attract more tourists to take part in these activities.

#### (3) Upgrading transportation network and means of transportation

It is necessary to concentrate on building and upgrading the transportation network synchronously, especially in the rural areas so that it can easily and quickly connect to the urban areas. Traffic lights, street lights and road signs on the island should be further installed. Routes to tourist attractions need to be paved.

More domestic and international flights and cheap flights should be opened to attract more visitors. Cheap fare bus routes from An Thoi to Duong Dong should be established to facilitate travel for tourists as Phu Quoc has currently no bus routes. The international port in the An Thoi area should be soon put into operation to fully exploit tourism potential, thereby shortening the travel time of visitors.

It is also necessary to repair and upgrade speed boats to shorten the travel time between Rach Gia – Phu Quoc – Rach Gia. There should be additional snacks for tourists and more staff on board to handle their luggage.

Tourist boats should be equipped with rescue equipment like lifejackets, rescue boats, seasick pills to ensure safety for tourists when they go for sightseeing or fishing. More tools such as fishing rods, fishing nets should be provided so that tourists can easily catch fish because at present these boats only provide each tourist with a very primitive fishing rod, making it very difficult for many of them to fish. Moreover, the boats should be equipped with specialized diving goggles for visitors-divers to watch the coral reefs.

#### (4) Caring for natural landscape

Natural landscapes should be protected to serve tourism. All illegal activities of logging, hunting and trapping of animals must be

prohibited. The marine environment, reefs, coral reefs for conservation of fish species, and rare marine species must be preserved and protected. Barren hills and wild land should be reforested to expand the habitat for flora and fauna.

The authorities should take strong actions against the massively destroying means of fishing like using electric fishing nets to catch marine organisms as these actions are destroying the marine environment.

#### (5) Ensure security and safety at the resorts

Reasonable prices at the tourist sites need to be fixed to make tourists feel more secure when traveling to Phu Quoc so as to avoid the so-called "stick it on". There should be strict punishment for local vendors' behavior of disturbing tourists while they are visiting tourist sites. The facilities, equipment and accommodation for tourists should also be provided to ensure food safety and hygiene for visitors. At the same time, the tourist sites should not let local people come in for binge drinking, making trouble to tourists.

#### (6) Ensuring environmental sanitation at tourist attractions

Cleaning teams should be set up at tourist destinations full of visitors such as Sao Beach, Khem Beach, Suoi Tranh Beach, etc. There should be more garbage bins on the streets and sites full of visitors so that people do not litter around and help clean up the streets.

There must be a system to collect and treat waste. More modern waste treatment plants should be built to better treat waste. At the same time, people's awareness of environmental protection and hygiene in public places needs to be raised.

#### (7) Improving the service staff's and local people's attitude

Service staff at the tourist attractions should show their enthusiasm and hospitality to tourists. This is very important because it will help retain visitors for longer stay. Local people should show their friendly hospitality when interacting with tourists, which not only makes visitors feel sympathetic to Phu Quoc but also can bring income to them in future tourist-related activities.

#### (8) Communication activities

There should be a number of advertising programs to introduce well-known tourist destinations of Phu Quoc to potential visitors. Full and accurate information should be timely conveyed to visitors, and advertisement must not be gimmicky to attract them while in reality, it is not true as advertised. In short, the provision of travel services must be ensured as exactly as what was introduced in the ad so that visitors do not feel cheated and disappointed when arriving at tourist sites on the island.

The mass media such as newspapers, radio, TV, internet service to introduce the image of Phu Quoc tourism to everyone should be fully used.

#### (9) Participation of local communities in tourism activities

The local authorities should encourage local people to maintain traditional craft villages, especially traditional products like fish sauce, sim wine and pepper cultivation. These traditional professions should always be preserved and increasingly developed.

The marine culture, the sea festivals, the rustic simplicity of fishermen at sea and the fish markets crowded with local people every morning should be maintained and developed. Those scenes are very attractive to tourists. Local residents should maintain their daily activities and promote the beauty of marine culture.

Local authorities should create favorable conditions for residents to engage in business activities related to tourism services such as selling souvenirs and specialties of Phu Quoc to domestic and foreign tourists as well.

Local communities are responsible for and obliged to protect tourist resources and environment; and the local authorities should encourage and mobilize people to protect the environment in which they live, maintain social security, order and safety. Regular meetings of households should be held. TV propaganda programs, cleaning activities at workplaces, hospitals, schools, places of living should be publicized to gradually raise the local residents' awareness of protecting their living environment.

### (10) Setting up tourism products in and outside the region

Tourism is an interregional economic sector; therefore, the coordination of regional links is the open direction for local tourism development. Phu Quoc tourism is one of the tourist clusters of Ha Tien - Phu Quoc - Rach Gia, with the relationships between domestic and international tourism. Phu Quoc is also located very close to developed and industrial tourism centers of such countries in the region as Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, etc. Therefore the domestic and international connections reflect in designing tours and tourism products, and in coordinating the training of tourism human resources to enhance the service quality and to create a common playing ground for the regional provinces so as to develop together.

Linkages between Kien Giang and its neighboring provinces, especially Can Tho, Ca Mau, and An Giang should be strengthened to develop national tourism routes connecting Can Tho - Ca Mau - Rach Gia, Ha Tien - Phu Quoc and Can Tho - Chau Doc - Ha Tien - Phu Quoc. This is a national factor that will ensure the linkage of tourism development in general and the development of tourism products in particular of Kien Giang province and the special economic zone of Phu Quoc in the future.

### (11) Developing tourism products

*Sea resort tourism:* High-end tourism products in the tourist areas should be developed. Accommodation, catering services in high quality resorts with star standards, such particular products as seabed exploration, scuba diving, islands visits, fishing services, etc. should also be provided

*Sea sport tourism:* This type of tourism should be promoted in various forms such as inviting celebrities to introduce and organize beach sports contests. A number of pedestrian and cycling routes for adventure sports and eco-tourism in Phu Quoc National Park should be built. To enhance the quality of tourism products of the region, Phu Quoc should design unique tours of beaches, water sports, swimming races.

*Cultural & community tourism:* Traditional festivals and craft villages on the island should be developed, and the cultural characteristics of people living on the island should be exploited. Cultural and historical tours should be combined with other activities on the island to help develop the island's tourism while preserving traditional cultural features and historical sites of Phu Quoc. The project to convey the message of Phu Quoc's prison monument through the completion of the display system, collection of information and documents should be implemented, and the team of guides on the spot should be enhanced.

*Ecotourism:* The task of management and protection of Phu Quoc National Park should be strengthened. Ecotourism activities should be expanded within allowed limits if that does not affect the rare and precious flora and fauna. Ecotourism sites should be rationally replanned in combination with tour operators. Such ecotourism activities as sightseeing, waterfall bathing, walking and cycling in the forest should be organized along the existing and future routes. Research on the flora and marine organisms in the surface area should be conducted. Various types of marine ecological resorts, mountain resorts, sports activities, scientific research on ecology should be developed.

### 4. Conclusion

Phu Quoc is named "Hon dao Ngoc" (Pearl Island) of Vietnam for its immensely favorable natural conditions which created a Phu Quoc with its beauty and pristine rarely found elsewhere. Therefore, Phu Quoc has great potential to develop tourism. However, in order to achieve this, Phu Quoc should first tackle the shortcomings that still exist such as the lack of infrastructure for tourism, the number of qualified staff working in tourism and the low quality of services in Phu Quoc. The planning of tourism development policies of Phu Quoc remains non-synchronous and not strategic. Furthermore, Phu Quoc needs to take advantage of its geographic location and the inherent value of its natural resources to create new tourist products for visitors, increasing visitors' satisfaction, attracting and retaining them for longer stay on Phu Quoc Island.