

## MASTER'S THESIS

### Measuring the perceived service quality of group package tours in China: a conceptual model and empirical evidence

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**Measuring the Perceived Service Quality of Group Package Tours in China:  
A Conceptual Model and Empirical Evidence**

**HE Xiaomin**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements**

**for the degree of**

**Master of Philosophy**

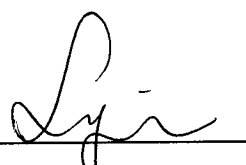
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**Hong Kong Baptist University**

**September 2004**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been done after registration for the degree of MPhil at Hong Kong Baptist University, and has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation submitted to this or other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Signature: 

Date: September 2004

## ABSTRACT

Recently, the development of tourism has made travel services in China understand the importance of managing and improving the service quality of group package tours, their major line of business. However, few research studies have examined the service quality of group package tours in a Chinese socio-cultural context. To advance new knowledge, this study investigates the perceived service quality of group package tours and their impacts on customer satisfaction.

Following the 'stepwise' approach to advancing knowledge, this study integrates exploratory and descriptive research to conduct an in-depth and focused study of the perceived service quality of group package tours in China. In the first stage, the critical incident technique is used to obtain substantial information about customers' perceptions of group package tour service. The grounded theory approach is then employed to develop a tentative model. The descriptive research is used to verify the tentative model, and examine the relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. Finally, the Perceived Service Quality for Group Package Tours (PSQGPT) model is developed.

The PSQGPT model shows nine perceived service quality dimensions—competence, credibility, courtesy, comfort (lodging), comfort (transportation), efficiency, novelty, safety, and reliability. All perceived service quality dimensions influence customer satisfaction. Credibility, efficiency, and reliability are the three most influential dimensions. Based on their different service attributes, these nine dimensions can be further grouped into three parts—tour guide, tour arrangement, and associate services.

This study extends service quality research into the group package tour context. Three new dimensions—efficiency, novelty, and credibility—will also advance the knowledge in the field of perceived service quality research. Managers of travel services will benefit from knowing the dimensions of perceived service quality as an assessment tool for their service performance and a guideline for achieving quality excellence. The PSQGPT model also has managerial implications in terms of human resource management, tour management, and external cooperation.

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