

The Analytical Study of the Qualities for Being a French Tourist Guide

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Abstract

This research paper aims to analyze the qualities of the French students who want to work in Tourism Industry (e.g. as the French Tour guides). In this research paper, the qualities which are needed to know for the French Students and those who especially want to be a tour guide are studied by means of the questionnaires answered by the French tourists and French Tourist guides and presented by the analytical study method. The study shows that there are seven qualities that are to be known by the French students and very useful for those who want to be French tourist guides.

Keywords: quality, guide, tourism industry, tourist, French, Myanmar

Introduction

Since 2015, French for Tourism has been taught in the 1st semester of MA (Qualifying) class as a subject. Before 2015, however, French students worked as French Tour guides. It is therefore that Tourism knowledge would be essential for the French teacher at the French department, from Mandalay University of Foreign Languages.

At the present time, the population of French Tourist guide is about 250 in Yangon and 39 in Mandalay. From 2010, after the political reform, there were not enough French Tourist guides for the French Tourists coming to Myanmar till 2017. So, in Myanmar, the needs of French Tourist guides increased and the students and many people want to be a French tour guide and other language guides. Although Ministry of Hotels and Tourism provides "Basic Training Course for Tourist Guides", not everyone gets the job after that. They need to study more and spend a lot of money to get knowledge and other qualities from the senior tour guides.

In order to get the French language guides human resource for the country, the facts and figures of tourism industry, knowledge, language and other do's and don'ts, and the other essential qualities for the students who want to be French guides are needed to be studied.

This paper is written by means of the questionnaires answered by French tourists, discussion with the senior French tourist guides, the experiences by the excursion trips with students and experienced tour guides and many interviews with the French tourists for this research paper, to get the data needed, twenty questionnaires are prepared for more than (150) French tourists coming to Myanmar, with the help of the old students French tourists guides (letting the French tourists answer the questionnaires) and getting opinions, attitudes and

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ideas from the experienced French tourist guides. The seven qualities getting by an analytical approach are to be very useful for the ones and students who want to make a living as a French tour guides, a regional tour guide, biking guide, in hotels and restaurants, and in the tourism industry. It is sure that the qualities found in this paper help the French students who want to be tour guide and can have the advantages for the University and the country.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to help the French students who want to make living as a French tour guide with the help of the qualities analyzed. The objective is to support the teaching and learning process of the French language at Mandalay University of Foreign Languages.

Materials and Methods

The data required for this paper were mainly based on the questionnaires answered by the French tourists and some ideas from experienced French tour guide and from some travel website and books. This research is made by qualitative approach and the analytical study method is used to get findings.

Research Questions

1. What are the qualities of French tour guide that are needed for the French students?
2. Why is the number of students who want to make living as a tourist guide increasing?
3. Do the modules of French department cover the qualities that are needed for the French students who want to be a francophone tourist guide?

Literature Review

As Myanmar is currently heading towards a peaceful developed democratic country, plenty of foreign travellers can be spotted throughout the country. However, publication of the books on tourism industry, which can help the youths become valuable human resources such as tourist guides, is still few and far between.

In the book "Travel business: a popular industry today", published by Today publishing house in 2016, the publisher states:

"As the volume of foreign travellers increase, travel service sector sees greater importance".¹

ThatoeLwin (Geography) also writes, in that book:

¹သာထွန်းဦး၊ ဒေါက်တာ၂၀၁၆၊ ထုတ်ဝေသူအမှာ။

"Nowadays, there are over 2150 travel agencies and nearly 50,000 hotel rooms in Myanmar".¹

In that book, culture based tourism, eco-tourism and other types of tourism are stated together with tourism related businesses such as hotels, restaurants and entertainment businesses. Nevertheless, tips on becoming a skilled and qualified tour guide, which are of real need, are not discussed in that book.

In the same way, in the book "Tour guide's manual (1)" by Tin Than Yu (Myanmar Travel), the writer states;

"A tour guide must be resourceful and must have passion for books and literature. They much have certain knowledge on history, geography, architecture and culture, too".²

She also says that :

Tourism industry is one of the best economic sectors in Myanmar.³

That book also presents guidance a tour guiding service, fundamentals of Buddhism that a tour guide should know, certain historical facts and figures, flora and fauna of Myanmar along with the rules and regulations for tour guides.

In another book by the same author, entitled "The art of guiding and providing service (Advanced level)", she claims:

"Tourism industry is becoming one of the essential economic resources in every country all over the world today and it can help develop the economy of a nation".⁴

Ethics and Do's and Don'ts for the tour guide, service-providing manner, problem solving and approaching, dressing and behaviors of a quality tour guide are also included in that book. That book, however, does not provide any particular guidelines or savoir-faire for the French speaking tour guide. All the suggestions and instructions appeared in that book are intended to the tour guide in general.

Likewise, internet website such as giltravel.com and other travel blog do not provide any particular tips or professional know-how for the French speaking tour guide. They are all focused on the tour guide in general. This paper, therefore, attempts to highlight and analyze the skills and competence(sevenqualities) based

¹သတိုးလွင် (၀၀၀၀၀၀)၊ ၂၀၁၆၊ စာရေးသူ၏အမှာစာ။

²တင်သန်းယု (မြန်မာ့ခရီးသွား)၊ ၄။

³ယင်း၊ ၁၈။

⁴ချစ်ဆွေမြင့်၊ ၂၇-၁၁-၂၀၀၂၊ ဧည့်လမ်းညွှန်တို့အတွက်သတင်းကောင်း။

on ten years study in tourism field that are of usual requirement for the French speaking tour guide.

Findings and Discussion

In current global trend, tourism industry occupies a pivotal role in the economy of a country. Each and every country all around the world is putting effort on the development of tourism for the sake of economic progress. In Thailand, a neighboring of Myanmar, the income of tourism contributes much to its **GDP**¹. This is the reason why every country is ceaselessly trying to promote the tourism with the aim of becoming one of the most visited countries on earth. Similarly, in the People's Republic of China, Tourism English courses are available at several universities to meet the growing demand of qualified tour guides.

The number of foreign tourists is increasing year after year in Myanmar thanks to the political change in 2010. In 2015, tourist arrival reached its peak with over 4 and half million travellers. The greater the volume of tourists, the bigger the demand for hotels, transportation and tour guides. Accommodation such as hotels and guest houses, and means of transportation such as boats, trains and buses can be implemented within a short time when circumstances call for, but production of qualified tour guides definitely takes time.

According to the figure announced, the French ranked 10 at the table of tourist arrivals in Myanmar. They stand second among westerners who come and visit Myanmar. Statistics shows that over 2150 tour companies exist in Myanmar. The number of French speaking tour guides is around 250 in Yangon and 39 in Mandalay. Therefore, shortage of French speaking tour guides has become a problem during the peak season of French travellers (from Nov to Feb) since 2010. As a result, the number of people who would like to work as French speaking tour guides, who can earn between US\$ 1500 and 2000 per month, is on the rise.

Although there is a growing demand for tour guides, tour companies are unwilling to employ inexperienced tour guides, especially those with the following defects: poor interpersonal skills, lack of problem solving skills, insufficient personal hygiene, imprudence, inability to provide proper service, inadequate knowledge of traditional customs and codes of conduct, inability to abide by the existing laws and rules, linguistic weakness, poor translation skills, severe greed for money, etc. It can be observed that to maintain their image, tour companies usually choose to work only with quality tour guides with strong characters though they are to pay more to them.

¹**GDP** = Gross Domestic Product

On account of the reasons above, this paper has been carried out by analyzing the international norms of the tour guide while comparing them with the local ones.

The international criteria for the quality tour guide consists of seven norms, they are:

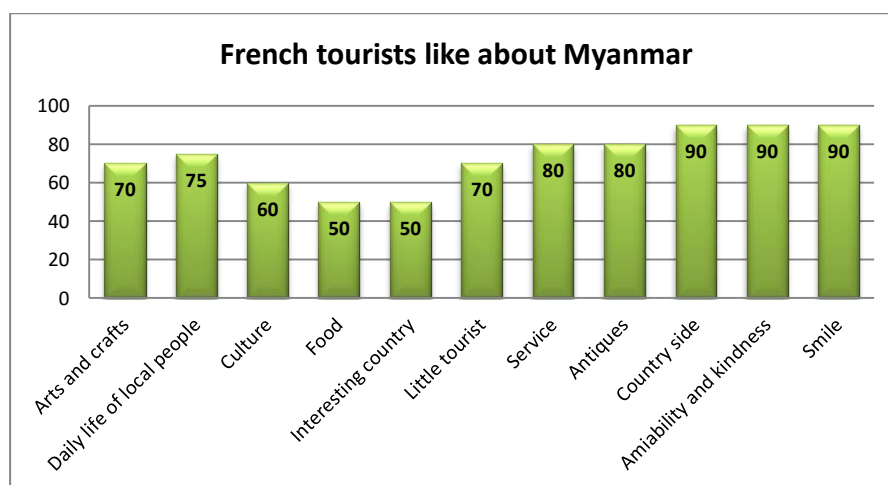
1. Have good communication skill
2. Be passionate
3. Have an outgoing personality
4. Have a good sense of humor
5. Knowledge
6. Be empathic
7. Good organization skills¹

The local criteria, however, is assumed to be made of those seven norms plus the following:

1. Understand Myanmar culture and tradition
2. Knowledge on Myanmar and ethnic traditional costume
3. Have good nature, which is typical of Myanmar, and willingness to help others
4. Always wear a smile while dealing with the client, and
5. Upkeep traditional customs and practices.

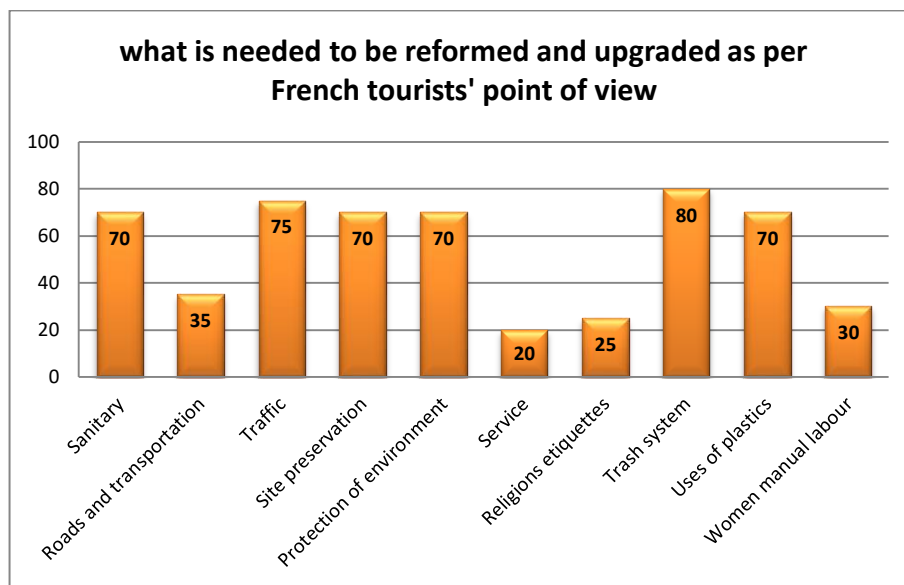
Moreover, in order to find out more about the required skills of the French speaking tour guide, a questionnaire has been created and delivered it some 150 French tourists. The results are as follow:

The table shows what French tourists like about Myanmar.



¹ Gil Travel. (FEB 15, 2018 11:11:03 AM). *TOP 7 QUALITIES OF AN IDEAL TOUR GUIDE*. <<https://www.blog.giltravel.com>>

The table shows what is needed to be reformed and upgraded as per French tourists' point of view.



When French tourists' opinions and outlook on Myanmar, its peoples and its tourist attractions are generalized, it is observed as follow;

1. Interest and fondness for Myanmar's religion, culture and traditions (80 %)
2. Fondness for undamaged environment (90 %)

Fondness for not being cramped with tourists (80 %)

3. Fondness for Myanmar people's honesty, kindness, friendliness, hospitality and keen upkeep of traditions and customs (70 %)

According to French tourists, the following things and situations need to be changed or upgraded.

1. Insufficient knowledge on maintenance of historic ancient buildings
2. Lack of knowledge on environmental conservation of local people
3. Over use of plastic, unsystematic waste management, not following the traffic rules at full scale.
4. Higher price of accommodation comparing with that of neighboring countries.

After analyzing the questionnaire, it is evident that the students of French who would like to work as tour guides need not only language proficiency but also knowledge on faith and religions, historical and geographical facts and figures, architecture of religions edifices, and health, education and social situations of both Myanmar and France. Moreover, knowledge on traditional cooking can be a plus for the tour guide. If the tour guide is capable of understanding and explaining traditional recipes and ingredients, his/ her French client(s) would be impressed. And even better if he/ she can compare traditional cuisine with French cuisine.

According to above studies, the seven qualities that are needed for the ones who want to be a French speaking tourist guide are as follow:

1. Good communication and social skills

2. Knowledge on environmental preservation
3. Good service with sweet and smiling face
4. Good knowledge on the traditional customs, beliefs of all the ethnics in Myanmar
5. Culinary knowledge on French and Myanmar
6. Knowledge about the daily life of local people in Myanmar
7. Knowledge on human right ,woman right and child right

In studying the qualities above, the modules of the French department, at the Mandalay University of foreign languages, can cover most of above qualities that the students need. In second year, the French students learn French history and geography in the modules 2102 (A) and 2102 (B) Reading and Writing skills; they learn Literature, History and Culture as the modules 3104 (A) and 3104 (B) and the modules 3105 (A) and 3105(B) :Translation & Interpretation skills in third year; in fourth year , they continue to learn Translation& Interpretation skills as the modules 4105(A) and 4105(B). So, it is deduced that the French modules can cover most of the qualities mentioned above.

Conclusion

In analyzing the qualities of the French tour guide and those who want to be a French tourist guide, the seven qualities were found which are based on Myanmar cultures, traditions, religion and other environmental and architectural knowledge interested and loved by the French tourists who are always looking for new things, and have the nature of directing and criticizing mind-set. It is so important for the students who want to be a French tour guide need to keep and respect the regions disciplines, Myanmar cultures and traditions, local cultures and disciplines, and know well about guide services for their clients.

In studying the getting results, there are no big differences between the qualities and the skills that the French students learn during the school time. The French students have to learn French history and geography in second year, literature, history and culture in third year and fourth year, Translation and Interpretation in third year and fourth year. In Translation and Interpretation skills, French dramas, stories, cartoons, movies, culture, tradition, do's and don'ts, the articles from newspapers and magazines were provided as exercises and lessons for practices. Moreover, in fourth year, Research Paper Writing skills and Public Speaking skills are to be learned and practiced in order to get research mindsets and presentation skills that they need to have.

So, there can be seen most qualities which are already studied and learned after their school time. Moreover, French for Tourism subject has to be learned in MA (Qualifying) class. It is sure that the French students have not so many difficulties to be a French tour guide.

In this research paper, the qualities of French guide for the French students are investigated and analyzed. It has been found that the other research will be able to be done such as: "The study of the essential vocabulary and expressions for French tourist guides", "The most frequent questions about Myanmar by the French tourists", etc.

In conclusion, the findings in this research, "The analytical study on the qualities that should be known by the French students who want to be a French speaking tour guide ", will fulfill a need of French and other language students to be a good tour guide. But the students make lifelong learning to understand the things changing in everyday life in the world.

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