

(SP) QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN SPORT TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS – EMPIRICAL STUDY PROPOSAL

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Introduction

The tourism industry has a growing importance among those activities that create wealth. This trend is recognized by political agents, business managers and the academic community. Sport and tourism seem to assume a symbiotic relation. On the one hand, Sport promotes Tourism through sport events, seminars, congresses and tourist destinations. On the other hand, Tourism promotes Sport by increasing the participation rate, facility building and infrastructure construction (Bouchet, Lebrun, & Auvergne, 2004; Gammon, 1997; Higham & Hinch, 2002; Pigeassou, Bui-Xuan, & Gleyse, 2003; Standeven & Knop, 1999). Global growing competition and ever-increasing customer's expectations impel organizations that offer Sport Tourism services in the quest of higher quality and cost reduction.

Total quality management (TQM) is a management system based on human resources, which aims the continuous progress in the service to the client at a lower cost (Hodggets, 1993). The concepts associated with the quality of service were not developed the same way as of those associated with the quality of tangible goods production. Literature based on the vision of the founding authors of the TQM is prolific in product quality management and nearly non existent in service quality management. Nevertheless, the theoretical base and the methods of the TQM allow its application in both industries, products and services (Anderson, Rungtusanatham, & Schroeder, 1994 ; Bell & Keys, 1998; Deming, 1986; Waldman, 1994). Quality management is a widely studied subject. Edwards Deming, widely accepted amongst his peers, is one of the most renowned authors in this area of knowledge. Despite global practical evidences of the efficiency of his methods and practices, empirical investigation on Deming's model is still scarce (Fisher, Barfield, Li, & Mehta, 2005). Anderson et al., (1994) proposed a management model based on the methods and practices advocated by Deming (Figure 1).

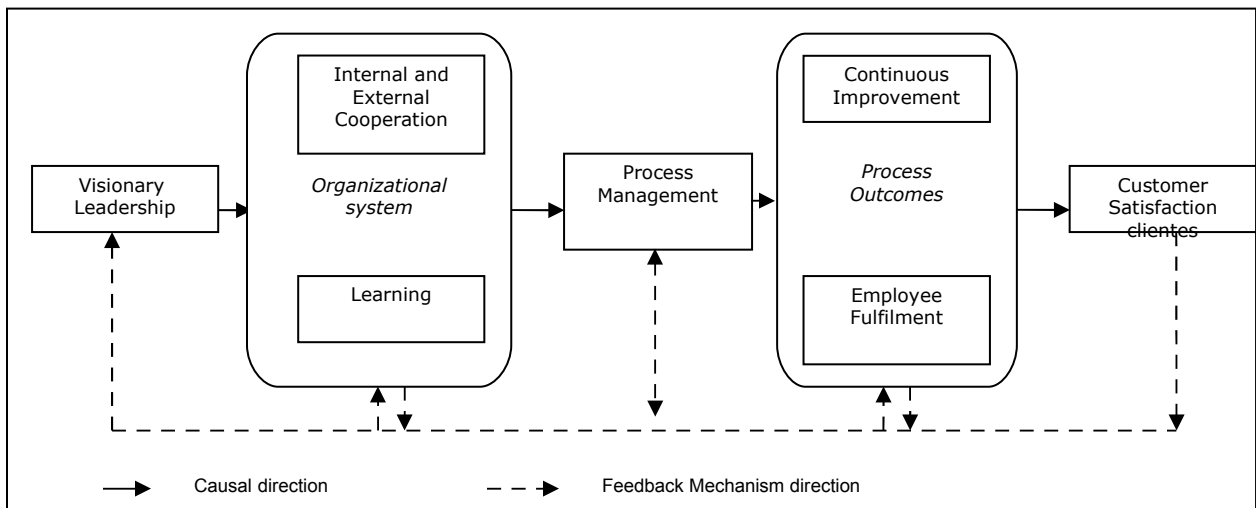


Figure 1: Proposed theory of quality management (Anderson et al., 1994)

Anderson et al. (1994:479) refers that “the effectiveness of the Deming management method arises from leadership efforts towards the simultaneous creation of a cooperative and learning organization to facilitate the implementation of process-management practices, which, when implemented, support customer satisfaction and organizational survival through sustained employee fulfilment and continuous improvement of processes, products, and services.” . This conceptualization has been tested with positive results in a few studies, in products (Anderson, Rungtusanatham, Schroeder, & Devaraj, 1995; Fisher et al., 2005; Rungtusanatham, Forza, Filippini, & Anderson, 1998) and in services (Douglas & Fredendall, 2004; Fisher et al., 2005)

Even though every referred study generally shows strong support for the model developed by Anderson et al (1994), several internal relationships do not present the same level of support along the group of studies. In this context, authors recommend that more studies, in different areas, should be accomplished in order to guarantee a wider acceptance of the proposed framework.

Methods

The proposed research has the following objectives. First, to check the applicability of the model of Deming proposed by Anderson et al., (1994) to the industry of the sport tourism; second, to test the theoretical model with data from organizations, from Portugal, Andorra and Spain (N=412), that manage ski resorts and golf courses; third, to integrate, in the theoretical proposed model, contributions of other theoretical conceptual frameworks; fourth, to analyse the obtained empirical results in order to attain conclusions and recommendations for the industry and the existent body of knowledge. Data collection will be made through a questionnaire, containing closed questions and distributed by E-mail. The questionnaire was originally developed by Anderson et al. (1995) and further improved by Fisher et al. (2005). This is a 33 item scale that includes seven dimensions: visionary leadership, internal and external cooperation, learning, process management, continuous improvement, employee fulfilment and customer satisfaction. The questionnaire will be translated into Portuguese and Spanish by professional translators, and will further be adjusted and proof read by four sport scientists and the sport tourism organizations managers.

Implications

The applicability of the concepts associated with the TQM framework to service quality; and the best understanding of the determinants of the organizations' performance are the main expected outcomes for academics and practitioners.

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