

Organisational quality culture in the Greek hotel industry

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Aim of paper and research questions

This study aims to investigate the level of acknowledgement and awareness of organisational culture (OC) issues to the hotel industry in Greece and compare and investigate any possible differences between middle and top level Hotel Units (HU). Research of this kind in Greece is very limited and considering the fact that tourism in Greece is one of its strongest assets, such a study, could enlighten weak points of HU organisation and suggest possible solutions, as well as, results might be used for the general good of Tourism.

Literature review

Denison (1984) highlights the importance of an organisation possessing a “strong” culture, by exhibiting a well integrated and effective set of specific values, beliefs and behaviours, which will lead to a higher level of productivity performance. Sathe (1985) and Louis (1985) emphasised OC in terms of meanings and understandings with a focus on cognitive aspects. Culture as something being shared, which is distinctive and unique. On the other hand, Bidney (1968) describes OC as “idealistic” and “realistic”. Other scholars try to differentiate between descriptive and explicative concepts of culture (Kluckhohn & Kelly, 1972). Organisational culture could be seen as values and norms, shared by people in an organisation. These values are beliefs and ideas about what kinds of goals members of an organisation should pursue and ideas about the appropriate modes or standards of behaviour organisational members execute to achieve these goals (Hill & Jones, 2001).

Although as -commonly accepted- it is difficult to give one clear definition for OC, as Schein (1990) suggests; the idea of corporate culture provides a basis for understanding the differences that may exist between successful companies operating in the same national culture. This means, that studying organisational culture and trying to apply a “strong organisational culture”, as also argued by Deal and Kennedy (1982), can contribute towards the successful organisational performance. This also comes to an agreement with Sadri and Lees (2001), who claim that, although culture is not the only determinant of business success or failure, a positive culture can be a significant competitive advantage.

Research design and data analysis

A random sample of 140 2-3-4-5 Star Hotel Units (HU) was used from around Greece. The Organisational Culture Assessment Questionnaire (OCAQ) is mainly measuring OC with a 30-item scale developed and modified by Sashkin (1997) to help people identify and understand the nature of the culture in their own organisation, identify the problems and define the sort of culture they want and need to adopt in order to be able to deal with the different organisational problems emerging. Five (5) factors have emerged through research and they are: Managing change, achieving goals, coordinated teamwork, customer orientation and cultural strength.

Results

Based on the OCAQ norms developed by Sashkin (1997) the mean values of managing change, of achieving goals and of cultural strength are considered as average with a range of average being for managing change from 19-25, for achieving goals from 16-22 and for cultural strength from 17-21. At the same time, the means for coordinated teamwork, customer orientation and the total OC score are considered to be high, with a range of 24-27 for coordinated teamwork, 21-24 for customer orientation and 108-118 for the total OC score. Furthermore, a One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to test whether there are statistically significant differences among the 5 stars classification on the five OCAQ Factors and the total OC score. Results revealed significant differences only for the Customer Orientation Factor ($F= 3,40$, $df= 3$, $p=.020$).

Discussion and conclusion

This research has revealed that although the individual scoring of the factors was mainly to the average, with no significant differences amongst the HU stars classification, when looking at the Total Mean Scores, numbers revealed high scoring for all HU. This means that in general all HU irrespectively of stars classification have an equilibrated relation as to all the 5 factors and thus the "business is rather smoothly run". A point of consideration for further research is also the sample size being rather small therefore further research should increase the sample size and improve the response rate. Considering the limited research of this kind in Greece, the present research might prove to be a good reference for further studies of this kind, which are essential, considering the width of tourism in Greece.

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