

Total quality management in sports tourism: a bibliography review

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1. Aim of the abstract/paper - research question

The purpose of this paper is to provide a systematic overview of possible approaches to sports tourism management, from a TQM perspective. To accomplish this goal, a bibliography review has been carried out by analyzing the articles that studied TQM in companies of Sport Tourism.

Services, sport, leisure or sports tourism issues are present in our society and in the current specific literature. This paper seeks to build a structured synthesis of this knowledge based on its bibliography. Firstly, the services are characterized and classified. Secondly, as defended by some authors, sports and leisure services' specificity is exposed. The following section examines sport tourism services by addressing not only its definition but also the industry's dimension. Finally, there is an approach to the sport tourism sector, through some studies on Total Quality Management, in the services sector. This last aspect constitutes the paper's core.

2. Theoretical background or literature review

Sports Tourism represents the body of knowledge which is related to a set of practices that associate tourism and sport. Sport activities and tourist activities present a symbiotic relationship. Definitions of Sport Tourism are based on the concepts of Sport and Tourism, which are not consensual in the literature. The diversity of definitions leads to additional difficulties in the theoretical definition of sports tourism. Consequently, as argued by Weed (2009), the definition of terminology, categorization and the nature of the phenomenon are the central issues in academic journals.

Once the term Sports Tourism is bounded, we approach its study from the transversality of Total Quality Management (TQM). The TQM literature is extensive regarding the number and diversity of the covered sectors. Possibly, any sector of the economy has been influenced by a TQM related program. Nevertheless, on what the sports tourism application is concerned, similarly to other sectors, much research remains to be done. This derives from the fact that the published works are essentially descriptive and/or prescriptive and usually adopt a case study approach (Bovaird, & Löffler, 2009).

This shortage is not verified in relation to the works that advise the adoption of TQM methods and practices by organizations that manage leisure activities, in general, and sport, in particular. We also found papers describing case studies on the implementation of TQM practices, associated

with sports services: management of sports facilities, town arenas, gyms and fitness centers and sports federations.

3. Methodology, research design and data analysis

This paper presents a review of relevant literature and synthesises an integrated framework about TQM based sports tourism. The search protocol was carried out by keywords (sport, tourism, total quality management, etc.) mainly using databases (JCR, Scopus and others). The selected papers were those that related to some aspect of TQM sports tourism. Thus, initially 20 literature review articles about TQM and scale development were studied. Subsequently we analyzed 10 articles that related TQM and services, 8 about TQM and sports, 10 on TQM and tourism; and 3 that related TQM and Sports Tourism. Regarding the possible limitations, the first that can be pointed out is related to the very nature of the theoretical review, since this paper relies on the use of secondary sources (some of them were not published in peer-reviewed publications). Secondly, the paper addresses a very specific context restraining its possible generalization.

4. Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

This review fills a gap in the literature, by providing researchers and practitioners with an overview of studies on Sports Tourism, from a TQM perspective.

Despite this, as several authors argue, the study of TQM in sports tourism is at an early stage of development. However, TQM appears to be an important topic as a starting point to better understand sports tourism.

Summing up, this work compiles the most important features of the published papers that address tourism, sport and sport tourism. Studies on the subject are analyzed based on the theoretical framework of TQM and its possible applications. Regarding the three articles that relate TQM to Sports Tourism, Crilley et al. (2002) identify and develop external indicators of operational performance and service quality, related to customer perceptions of golf courses. Quaresma (2008), in a larger study than the previous, validates a model for quality assessment extended to managers, employees and customers. Knop et al., (2004) in their study on the regulation of risk control in sports tourism activities anticipate that the issue of quality management will be one of the issues that will raise great interest in the context of sports tourism. Therefore, it contributes to a better understanding of the shortcomings of current approaches and opens the possibility for further research paths.

5. References – limited to 5

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