

## Strategies of Improving the Quality Management System in the Tourism Industry: Pamukkale

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### Abstract

*The touristic activity is among the few phenomena that have been imposed in the contemporary era. Through the dimension reached today in tourism, in all its components, through its implications on the development of the economy, but also on the quality of the environment, we can appreciate that tourism really has implications in three essential areas: economic, social and environmental.*

*The organization and management of the touristic activity thus requires a process of ordering the components of the touristic device in order to ensure the functioning of the ensemble and to obtain a profit. It aims at synchronizing and correlating this field with the other branches and activities, as well as establishing attributions so as to ensure the development of tourism activity.*

**Key words:** touristic activity, quality management system, tourism management

**J.E.L. classification:** Z30

### 1. Introduction

In our days, tourism is considered an extremely important attribute in the economic development of more and more countries around the world. By engaging in a huge human and material potential, but also through the beneficial effects brought upon the interference domains, tourism is an important factor in the progress of a country's economy for which a major importance is given to tourism management.

Tourism management is the process of overseeing all activities related to the tourism and hospitality sector. It is a multidisciplinary field that prepares the people who have the interest, experience and training required for leading positions in the food, accommodation and tourism industry. Tourism management could also include businesses, associations and public authorities which are marketing tourism services to potential travelers.

Tourism management has been for a long period of time, a management that was impressed by the manager's personality. In the past, few of the tourist unit managers could be considered managers in the current sense of the term. Investments in tourism were few, and human resource management problems were largely unrecognizable. At an empirical level, tourism management is the ability to provide comfort to the traveler.

### 2. Literature review

The complex nature of tourism has been debated in numerous papers focused on this particular issue, emphasizing the emphasis on sustainable development that meets the needs of today's generations without compromising the possibilities of future generations to meet their own needs.

The tourists are looking for an extensive range of facilities and services that are supported by a multitude of operators participating in the development of tourist activities at different stages of their voyage or holiday. Their roles and functions fluctuate in the various stages of tourism

development and relate to a number of features: tourist attractions, accommodations, facilities and local services, transport.

Today, the touristic product has evolved to become more and more complex, its legal framework becomes an increasingly important component considering the phenomenon of the internationalization of the markets, so that the touristic enterprise operates in an increasingly complex environment. At the moment, the efforts are focused on reducing costs and increasing profit. In order to achieve these results, it is necessary to introduce appropriate scientific managerial practices in the activity of businesses in order to address the increasing pressures faced by the tourism industry, infrastructure and investments.

Tourism management includes business management functions, such as finance, human resources and marketing. Also, tourism management involves theories and management principles of the tourism industry sectors, such as travel motivation, environmental factors and tourism organizations.

The principles of general management need to be adapted to the tourism industry, according to its particularities, the service being the central element in this field. Thus, the branch of balneo-climatic tourism knows some features specific to its characteristics, for which the management is different from other areas of tourism.

The managerial approach to tourism at the microeconomic level focuses on the managerial activity needed by a business operating in the field of tourism. The managerial approach is considered to be the most important component in the study of tourism. Where changes occur in tourism products, institutions, legislation, society, the managerial approach needs to be modified and adapted to the new touristic environment.

The tourism industry usually includes three main components related to the business sphere. These are: *accessibility*: means of transportation and travel such as public transport or private car; *accommodation*: refers to the accommodation units, such as hotels, motels, resorts, etc.; *attractions*: touristic landmarks, such as parks, historical monuments, natural resources, etc.

The set of these elements, which motivate the touristic movement, represents, in a broad sense, the touristic offer. Each one of these tourism management components contributes to the development of tourism, because the existence of valuable touristic resources, although important, is not enough to attract tourists in the area. Their capitalization depends on the degree of development of the material base, the quality and diversity of the services offered.

Also, a particular influence on the tourism management activity is represented by the technical progress registered in the development of the field dedicated to the means of transportation and the visible and invisible touristic infrastructure. Regarding the demographic evolution, correlated with the population dynamics and with the mutations in its structure, they also influence the tourism activity, as well as the urbanization process and the governmental actions or psycho-sociological factors and the facilities provided by the tourism organizers.

The latest strategic management theories believe that entrepreneurship and innovation development are more favored by certain organizational development contexts. Due to the fact that innovation has become both an instrument and a condition for performance, its approach should be done in a systematic way. Managers are responsible for developing an organizational entrepreneurial environment and adopting innovation as the main tool for development.

Thus, managers occupy an important place in the development of the touristic activity, and they are assigned to perform a management activity. In the context of tourism, the manager is not the person who directs the organizational activity in a direction that has been previously established, but has the role of realizing the activity through a continuous stream of changes and innovations at the level of the entire structure.

The manager performs the role of leader that is particularly important in the tourism industry. The leader must tend to reflect the character and spirit of an organization in this industry. Many of the activities done by the managers in the tourism industry are rooted in the activities related to the gathering, processing and transmission of information. This means that the receiving and communication of information is a very important element of the manager's activity.

Tourism and management are closely related concepts and without the strategic approach of tourism management, the evolution of tourism cannot be commensurate nowadays. Maintaining the competitiveness and efficiency of tourism destinations can be ensured by the direct response of

management and tourism to the global market. The management puts its mark on improving the tourism through the strategic system that benefits it, so that the vision, mission and goals define the current and future potential of tourism. In reality, there are innumerable opportunities where the management can improve and enhance knowledge in tourism organization, addressing the system and developing strategic competitive advantages.

The activities belonging to the touristic services sphere are directed mainly to the outside, to the client or to the consumer, but also to the other components of the economic environment in which the organization operates - regardless of its size. More than any field of activity, as it is well known, touristic services cannot exist and cannot be provided without the participation in the same place - in most cases - of the supplier and the tourist.

In this context, a complex arsenal of management principles, methods and techniques, decision-making, informational and organizational procedures will be used to achieve the desired objectives that will put the human, material and financial factors in motion to achieve the results. In using this arsenal there is an increased reorientation towards operational methods that offer the opportunity to replace descriptive empirical leadership with a normative and scientific one.

The set of procedures, rules, and tools used to conduct the leadership activity, helps the formation of leadership. The complexity of the touristic system is due to the embedded primary units (methods or techniques) which are harmonized to achieve the proposed results.

The scope of management in the touristic destination is identified by three leadership systems: *leadership through objectives*: is that system that has led the leadership field at the rank of science and the one that outlines the moment when it began to talk about scientific leadership; *product management*: is a management system that consists in creating a leader in the form of a product or product group in the organizational structure with the unitary responsibility to organize, coordinate and control all successive activities involved in the product or product group from the conceiving moment, until it is completed; *management through exceptions*: is a simplified management system based on the upward movement of information that reflects deviations from tolerance limits and the focus of the best leaders and specialists in key decision-making and operational areas for enterprise competitiveness.

Tourism management is a complex process. The most valuable attributes of a management are its credibility as a strategic leader in the development and marketing of the destination, as well as its ability to facilitate partnerships and cooperation of the tourism industry in order to establish a common vision of the destination.

Organizational structures in tourism management can help avoid overlapping efforts in terms of promotion, visitation services, initial and in-service training of human resources, business support and identifying any management deficiencies that have not been identified.

### 3. Research methodology

Pamukkale, also known as the "Cotton Castle", offers a picturesque and unique natural beauty blend with stunning limestone formations. This place it is found in Turkey. Pamukkale is designated as having a remarkable universal value, for which UNESCO named it as a World Heritage Site and a cultural and natural patrimony for World Heritage.

The Pamukkale balneary resort addresses mostly, or even exclusively, to the curative tourism, which aims towards health care. This area has natural therapeutic factors that are exploited, protected and used under special legal regulations. This resort is well-equipped and well-suited to the activity which is carried out.

The activities which are offered there, are based on specific procedures, thermal baths, calcareous or gaseous water baths, or medicinal waters cures. In addition to the natural resources that allow the treatment of certain affections, conditions were created in order to allow more specific procedures such as kinetherapy, thermotherapy, hydro-physiotherapy, sleep-therapy, aerosols, etc.

In order to establish management strategies for tourism development in Pamukkale, we used the analysis as a research method.

#### 4. Results

As far as accessibility is concerned, Pamukkale offers various possibilities for its guests in terms of transport modes. Located about 20 km away from Denizli, Pamukkale is visited by local and foreign tourists, who want to see thermal springs and travertine but to also treat various diseases. For this reason, the transport network is highly developed, with access to both land and air.

Those who come to Pamukkale with their own vehicle can follow directions by connecting to the nearest motorway in their cities. Tourists can follow the İzmit route from Istanbul and continue on the Eskişehir one, without departing from the Anatolian highway. They will move from the Bursa - Kütahya direction, to Afyon and then to Denizli.

Those who choose the air route can fly with Turkish Airlines and Pegasus to Cardak Denizli airport from Istanbul. From there, tourists can take the bus and reach Pamukkale in about an hour.

Tourists can also come by train to Pamukkale, but those who choose to use this transport method on the Istanbul - Denizli route will face a 12-13-hour long journey that can be difficult.

The technical and material base is the combination of the material means used to ensure the comfort and all that a tourist needs during his stay. Thus, in the composition of the material base, there are accommodation, food, and entertainment and facilities to spend the free time, namely recreation and leisure facilities. All components play an important role, making it a complete and attractive tourist product, but the accommodation places present a bigger attention because they are practically becoming the home of the tourists. Also, the degree of development of those that are part of the technical-material base is regarded as an advantage, the touristic resorts are enjoying a higher degree of development and better conditions, registering a high tourist circulation, unlike those with a lesser degree.

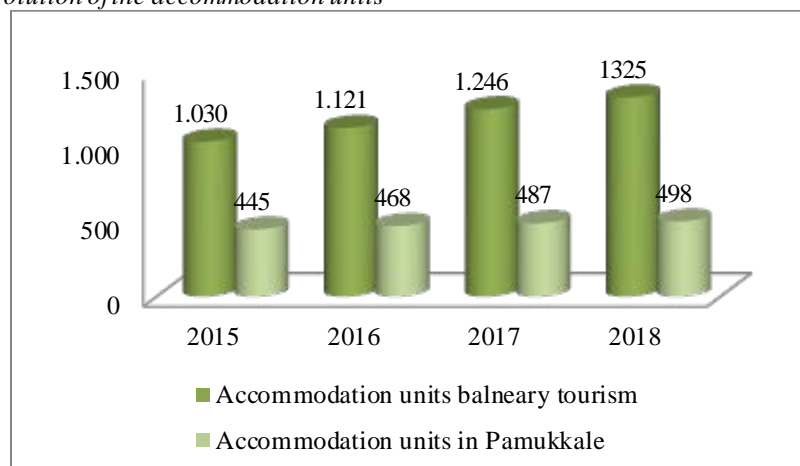
Table no.1 The number of accommodation units in the period 2015-2018

Year	Accommodation units in the balneary sector in Turkey	Accommodation units in Pamukkale
2015	1.030	445
2016	1.121	468
2017	1.246	487
2018	1.325	498

Source: drafted by the authors, based on data from <http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr>

It can be noticed that the number of tourist units which are functional in the balneary resorts was 1,030 in 2015, but in 2016 their number increased to 1,121. Starting with 2016, the number of units is on the rise, so in 2017 it has been 1,246, an increase followed by a real explosion in 2018, as the number of units currently reached 1.325.

Figure no.1 The evolution of the accommodation units



Source: drafted by the authors

The existing tourist accommodation capacity represents the number of accommodation places available to tourists by the touristic structures, taking into account the number of days they are open. There are excluded the places in the rooms or structures which are temporarily closed, for lack of tourists, for fundamental repairing or for other reasons. The touristic accommodation capacity available for the years 2015-2018 is highlighted in Table no.2.

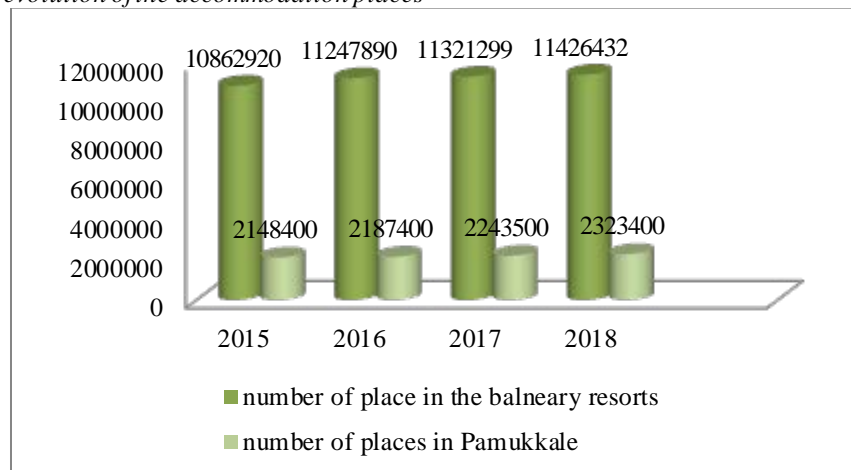
Table no.2 The touristic accommodation capacity in the period 2015-2018

Year	Number of places in the balneary resorts	Number of places in Pamukkale
2015	10,862,920	2,148,400
2016	11,247,890	2,187,400
2017	11,321,299	2,243,500
2018	11,426,432	2,323,400

Source: drafted by the authors, based on data from <http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr>

Regarding the existing accommodation capacity (places), in 2015 in balneary resorts there were 10,862,920 places, and in 2016 they increased significantly, reaching 11,247,890. Starting with 2017, the growth has been slower. Thus, in 2017 there were 11,321,299 places and in 2018, 11,426,432. We note that the number of accommodation places offered by the Pamukkale area in Turkey, has a significant share in the total number of accommodation units in the whole thermal touristic area. (see figure no.2).

Figure no.2 The evolution of the accommodation places



Source: drafted by the authors

Both the number of accommodation units and capacity in Turkey's balneary resorts reached higher rates in 2018, this being an increase in this Turkish tourism sector. Within the Pamukkale resort, being the most visited in Turkey, the number of accommodation places has risen.

The Pamukkale balneary resort, which hosts thousands of local and foreign tourists every year, with natural beauty and historical sites, was preferred by foreign tourists in 2015, more so than in 2014. Pamukkale, which attracted the world with its white travertine, is among the natural beauty which have to be visited, mentioned in the Huffington Post, one of the most important newspapers in the United States. This has led to an increase in foreign tourists who visited Pamukkale in 2015.

Even though in 2015, Pamukkale has been visited by a large number of foreign tourists, the total number of tourists has been declining.

Denizli Metropolitan Municipality began the advertising campaign in order to attract local tourists to Pamukkale in 2016 with the support of the tourism ministry, businesspeople and non-governmental organizations. After the actual spread of promotional activities in the social media, there was a visible increase in the number of local visitors to Pamukkale. Although the number of

local tourists increased, the decrease in the number of foreign tourists led to a decrease in the total number of tourists in 2016, reaching 1,543,000 people who visited Pamukkale.

The total number of tourists (Turkish and foreigners) accommodated in the tourist accommodation facilities which are functional in Pamukkale in the period 2015-2017 has fallen and in 2018 it has seen some increases, but not significant.

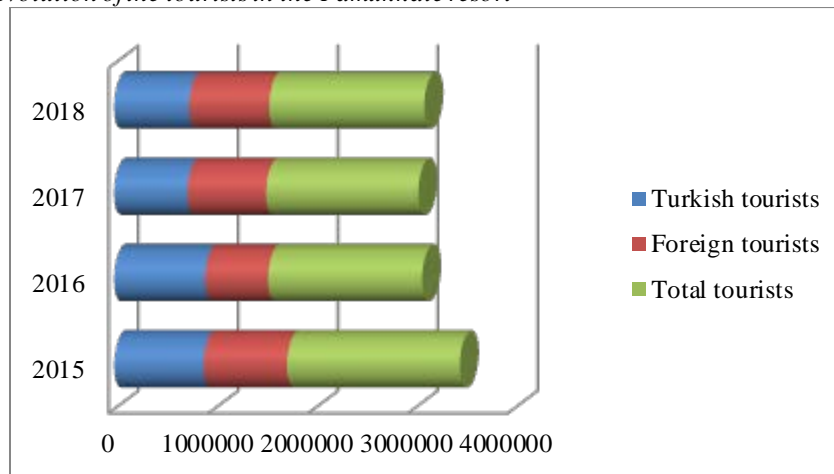
Table no.3 The number of tourists in the period 2015-2018

Year	Turkish tourists	Foreign tourists	Total no. of tourists
2015	895,000	837,000	1,732,000
2016	912,000	631,000	1,543,000
2017	735,000	789,000	1,524,000
2018	752,000	802,000	1,554,000

Source: drafted by the authors, based on data from <http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr>

We note that the total number of tourists who visited the Pamukkale resort in 2014-2017 has been decreasing, even though the number of foreign tourists has increased at some point, while the number of tourists in Turkey has decreased. (see figure no.4).

Figure no.4 The evolution of the tourists in the Pamukkale resort



Source: drafted by the authors

Although in 2014, Pamukkale was the most visited area in Turkey, since 2015 the Cultural and Tourism Agency in Denizli, said there was a slight decrease in the number of tourists visiting Pamukkale, but that they are still expecting the hotels to be full the next year. Unfortunately, 2016 did not offer an increase in the total number of tourists, but on the contrary. Only in 2018 there is a certain increase in the number of tourists.

## 5. Proposals and recommendations

In order to be able to create a micro-enterprise or a world-class tourism industry, the work carried out must be characterized by high professionalism. This is all the more so since the touristic product is the result of several related activities. The touristic product must be looked at especially in its *intangible* side. Many of the elements from the tourism industry activity are *tangible*, but the main factor determining the attitude of tourists towards the tourist product is targeting its intangible side. In connection with this, the tourism industry, both in terms of inputs and outputs, emphasizes the *human element* as a determinant element of this activity.

This section aims to show that there are a number of available activities that could be made for the development of the balneary tourism. What is missing is primarily the promotion of these activities as balneal tourism products, especially by stakeholders, such as the national tourism organization and tour operators. Most hotels are increasingly trying to exploit the growing interest

in natural health care by developing tourism packages based on different treatments and spa procedures.

Participation of stakeholders can be understood in two related ways. Broadly, it can be understood as a multitude of techniques or practices through which the stakeholders are involved in taking the decisions regarding the development of balneary tourism. Thus, attending a meeting, engaging in a partnership or a consultation exercise could be described as forms of stakeholder participation to the development. In a narrow sense, stakeholder participation can have a deeper meaning, just like the partnership and collaboration. Thus, some believe that the participation requires more of an active role for the stakeholders both in the decision-making process and in the related activities.

Depending on the type of stakeholders, their benefits within the development are different. Therefore, a clear understanding of their attitudes and interests is a necessary precursor to planning and managing a sustainable tourism.

The involvement of the community can be defined as how the residents are involved in the daily activities of the communities where they live. Therefore, tourism development will be more successful with the involvement of local communities, as their perceptions and attitudes are important for decision-makers in achieving a sustainable balneary tourism in Pamukkale.

Thus, local communities can carry out the following types of activities in order to develop the tourism in the Pamukkale region: to take part in the decisions regarding the balneary spa tourism; to share the information and knowledge they have regarding the benefits and "secrets" of the touristic area and the existing thermal waters; the increase of the citizens' participation in their community; the identification of the needs that have not been met; the conservation of natural resources and environmental care.

On the other hand, tourist accommodation facilities in Pamukkale need to be expanded and modernized. However, this approach should not affect the degree of attractiveness of the resort in terms of architectural and urban planning. It is important to ensure a high degree of occupancy of the accommodation structures and the limitation of new constructions in order not to clutter the town from an urban point of view and to not environmentally aggravate the green spaces and the neighboring natural landscapes.

Travel agencies play an important role in the development of the Turkish balneary tourism. Travel agencies are defined as companies qualified to organize travel-related services on behalf of various tourism industry managers. As far as the balneary offers are concerned, Turkish travel agencies, and even less so from abroad, do not have a wide range of touristic offers. Improving and diversifying those offers for these touristic areas would bring a major contribution to the development of the balneary tourism in Turkey and implicitly in Pamukkale.

In this sense, tourism agencies could: promote more the Turkish touristic areas which have thermal waters; to promote the facilities offered by the Pamukkale thermal waters; to increase the cooperation between travel agencies and accommodation facilities; providing special packages for the elderly or families; promoting existing offers in on-line media; to provide transport for groups of people to the resort where the accommodation is located.

The Turkish Tourism Authority (Ministry of Culture and Tourism) may develop a strategy to promote the products developed by healthcare providers through: identifying the markets and potential customers; identifying the product-market couples with the greatest potential in the context of competition; coordinating the promotion effort, along with suppliers of new products and services; establishing conventions and partnerships with international organizations; the development of projects for the decongestion of the balneary tourism destinations and redirecting the flow of tourists to those.

Improving existing touristic offers in Pamukkale, as well as creating new touristic products must also consider the demographic changes among tourists and the implications which those have regarding their travel preferences and motivations. Thus, among tourists, it is necessary: to change the perception about the Turkish balneary tourism destinations; to influence the viability of services and products based on demand; recommending visiting Pamukkale to other people; playing a role as a reference tourist; sharing the beautiful experiences of the places visited in Pamukkale and spreading positive opinions about them.

The main objective for the development of balneary tourism in Turkey is to ensure the effectiveness and consistency of all the actions undertaken in all areas of activity and all stakeholders in order to achieve an optimal outcome. All plans for tourism development in the Pamukkale area should focus on the competent public authority in the field of tourism as the institution responsible for all the implementations. However, we must state that in order to achieve all the objectives that are required for the sustainable development of the balneary resorts in our country, it is necessary to involve all stakeholders through effective actions aimed at improving and promoting the medical services within the Pamukkale area.

## 6. Conclusions

In the context of the existence of a multitude of touristic areas with a specific destination in Turkey, which presents numerous natural resources, which are beneficial to the treatment of various medical conditions, the touristic development is considered absolutely necessary through the involvement of all forms of promotion both internally and externally and by increasing the responsibility of all the actors involved.

Regarding the balneary and cultural resort, Pamukkale, thanks to its curative waters, cultural and historical landmarks, unbeatable natural landscapes, is a great potential for Turkey, both in terms of increasing the level of competition with other countries, and as well as ensuring an economic interest by expanding the spa tourism.

In conclusion, the future of tourism depends on the development of an adequate global infrastructure, involving all parties, both public and private, by creating new facilities (entertainment, cycling trails, golf courses) according to the advantages that each have, as well as highlighting the natural, historical and cultural heritage. These actions will stimulate the organized tourism by enabling the involved stakeholders to streamline and guide towards the tourism, to implement its better organization over time, and reduce the negative effects of existing gaps.

Therefore, countries aiming at developing and achieving a level of competition in the field of tourism have to shape their tourism policies in this direction by creating new tourism activities and promoting the benefits of alternative tourism by spreading them throughout the world, in one word to implement management improvement strategies.

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