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## Development of a Tourism Destination through Corporate Events: the case of Portuguese Companies

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### Abstract

For the tourism destination, marketing strategies are very important in the management and promotion of the product. These strategies result in the segmentation of the tourist market, which through niches direct products to tourism, focusing and improving sales processes. For that, there are many types of tourism which can be treated as facilitators to answer the market needs, as events tourism. The link between events and tourism it is explicit in several studies, showing tourists as participants in events that in the same situation also do tourism, making the destination more dynamic and contributing to the development of tourism. Corporate events are a practice in the business world. This type of events, in a corporate context, besides belonging to the communication mix, can be defined as a previously planned event, with the purpose of adjusting a set of people to an idea or action. Through a qualitative study we aim to understand the development of a tourist destination, analysing the progress of corporate events in Portuguese companies. With this present study, we considered important to understand the impacts caused to tourism destination in the corporate events, analysing some Portuguese companies, contributing to the development of tourism through corporate events. To this methodology was used exploratory interviews to understand the human resource management processes, highlighting the enjoyment of corporate events. Specifically, 13 large companies and 15 SMEs were interviewed, using exploratory interviews. This theme, besides being current, contributes to the knowledge about the tourism destination promotion, through human resources management strategies, as corporate events. Through this research, it is our focus to understand the motivations and objectives of corporate events when consumed as a tourist product. We are looking for show the link between corporate events and tourism destination.

This research reinforces the role of the economy for the survival of companies, as well as the impacts of the tourism destination.

**Keywords:** Tourism Destination, Tourism Events, Corporate Events, Portuguese Companies, Human Resources Management

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a phenomenon that moves millions of people around the world, and the economy tends to evolve. In the last 20 years, great transformations have occurred in tourism and in areas that determine and condition their development (Cunha, 2010). We can define tourism as a set of activities developed by people, always involving a displacement. Usually associated with leisure activities, they can also be related to entertainment, fun and personal growth (Alves, 2017)

Many studies have found an association between tourism and quality of life, which, has a positive impact on working life. For several authors, today in society, personal growth is essential both for individuals and for the business world to respond to market needs and competitiveness existing (Shin & Konrad, 2017).

In the business world to establish what differentiates companies in the competitive market is the human potential that they possess. Thus, it's essential that companies maintain the levels of satisfaction among their collaborators, with the aim of obtaining the effective commitment to the organizational objectives. It's believed that human motivation exerts great influence on the quality of services rendered. Many factors determine the performance of service employees, but how the service employees approach their job and how satisfied they are with their work are considered key determinants. Work engagement influences service performance because it drives employees' commitment and enthusiasm toward their work (Menguc et al., 2013).

In fact, the link between events and tourism has deep historical roots. There are records of the oldest travels that, in addition to work and war, had as motivation to enjoy the emotions created by participation in major competitive events such as chivalry tournaments, religious events such as pilgrimages and, later, the participation of commercial events such as fairs. From early on events created impact on tourism activity for several reasons, such as the notoriety and prestige they give to the destination, the creation of supply and demand for tourism services with high value, and the economic and social dynamics it provides (Vieira, 2015).

The relevance of the events industry is defended not only by the participants, but also by society and researchers. Several authors agree that this type of events have always been part of society, but adopting different forms, purposes and importance (Pernecky, 2013).

In another way, corporate events are a practice in the business world. This type of events, in a corporate context, besides belonging to the communication mix, can be defined as a previously planned event, with the purpose of adjusting a set of people to an idea or action (Giácomo, 1993).

In the same line of thought, another author explains that corporate events can be considered a modernity strategy, whose purpose is to win over a company's audiences of interest by persuading and attracting them. According to the author, in the corporate world, events are strategically promoted in order to: diligence an event favourable to the image of the company and its products, before its publics of interest; reach certain publics with the ostensible purpose of selling a good image; incorporate the interests of different publics of a community, organization or group; communicate the promotional sense of the event, awakening in the individual the interest for its product; establish a direct and permanent communication channel, which indicates to its leader what is expected (Dias, 1996, p. 15).

Thus, in this article it is proposed to investigate and analyse the development of a tourist destination through corporate events. As such, specifically, it is our ambition to establish a direct relationship between corporate events and tourism in a vision of supply, presenting results obtained by interviews, promoting human resources management strategies for the companies. regional traditions. The general objective was structured according to this problem, presenting as a methodological solution a qualitative study in the form of interviews, studying the development of eTourism and corporative events in Portuguese companies.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

In science, methodical procedures are considered the whole process whose objective is to know and interpret reality, intervening in it and having as a guideline the problems formulated and supported by rules and actions appropriate to the constitution of knowledge.

A qualitative research is based on data and its implementation depends on three moments that need to be adequately defined and related to what is intended to analyse or respond, concretely: what to collect, how to collect and how to analyse (Carvalho, 2016).

To this end, the data obtained for this qualitative approach were derived from exploratory interviews with duly segmented companies, according to the sample defined and presented, and, in a later phase, the semi-structured and exploratory interview with tourism agents.

Given the relevance of research, the sections of companies with a population employed above 100 thousand are highlighted, limiting this value as the minimum value to be considered for study purposes, corresponding to "Manufacturing Industries", "Construction" and "Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles" (INE, 2007). Specifically, were interviewed 28 companies (13 large companies and 15 SMEs), and all the interviewed companies are from the northern region of Portugal. Concretely, for this methodology, interviews were conducted with 19 companies in the manufacturing industry, 3 in the construction industry, and 6 in the wholesale.

In this context, we consider pertinent study the contributions of corporate events to the development of tourism, to this end, a qualitative study was carried out, by conducting interviews with companies in the northern region of Portugal.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally, tourism is seen as an important factor in the world economy and a strong contributor to the development of several countries. In the 1970s, international tourism was already seen as an economic activity that demonstrated an irreplaceable role in international trade. Being defined by Wahab (1977, p. 94) tourism seeks the relationships of exchange of goods and services as a major exporter.

Tourism with economic globalization has become, in many situations, a stronger economic financing sector for some countries. All tourism logistics, such as means of transport, hospitality and catering, and local commerce, make the sector a generator of investment and employment. In 2018, the OMT found that the economic recovery strengthened tourist demand in several markets; growth was notorious in Europe and Africa, with data higher than the world average (Martins, 2019).

The tourist activity has economic effects which can be direct, when resulting from the expense made by the tourist in the tourist area, such as the payment of a meal or stay; indirect, when they are expenses incurred by tour service providers in the purchase of goods and services, such as the purchase of food from the restaurants serving tourists. There is also the induced effect, which consists in changing consumption as a result of the distribution of salaries and capital income. When thinking about the state's perspective, the public sector also benefits from the economic impact of tourism, through the taxes to which companies are subjected, visas and customs duties (Barretto, 2014).

Clearly tourism influences a country's economy, contributing to the increase in the cultural level of the population. However, in addition to the damage that tourism can suffer, as some have already mentioned,

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there are other negative impacts, such as the change in exchange rate. These inflations may result from excessive demand for goods and activities of economic agents (Martins, 2019).

In 2018, Portugal was named the winner by the OMT in the category of Policies and Public Administration, which demonstrates the country's commitment to develop tourism (OMT, 2018).

Portugal receives thousands of tourists from other countries every day. According to 2018 data, the UK stood out for the emitting market countries, with 19.5% of the total overnight stays of non-residents. Next, the German and Spanish market correspond to 13.5% and 10.2% respectively. Among the main markets, there were also the increases in the North American, Canadian, Brazilian and Chinese markets (INE, 2019).

Currently, a tourist destination is understood as something more than a city, region or place that brings together environmental resources and cultural and artistic characteristics (Cracolici et al., 2006).

Valls et al. (2006) identifies five particularities of a tourist destination that should deserve special attention at the time of its definition: homogeneous geographical space – i.e. the common characteristics of space; centrality – the capacity of place to attract people and make them want to visit it; structured offer – the presentation of products and services in an integrated offer for the best satisfaction of tourists; brand – the presentation of a brand, which reflects the offer of place, which allows its rapid identification and that is able to trigger affections and feelings in people; joint marketing – i.e. the promotion of place, from a strategic perspective, under planning, and involving all actors who are somehow directly or indirectly linked to the tourist activity of the destination.

The connection between events and tourism is created either by participants in events that in the same situation also do tourism, or by tourists who during their visit to a tourist destination also participate in events held there. Neither the main motivation of the former is tourism, nor the second is to participate in events, but, either in one case or in the other case, events and tourism meet, interact and overlap (Vieira, 2015). In 1993, trips are planned before various destinations and activities, and therefore a trip could be conceptualized as a set of events (activities, attractions and places) that responded to the needs of travellers. This allows us to recognize the link between events and tourism. <sup>1</sup>

### 3.1. TOURISM EVENTS

In fact, the link between events and tourism has deep historical roots. There are records of the oldest trips that, in addition to work and war, were motivated to enjoy the emotions created by participation in major competitive events, such as cavalry tournaments, religious events such as pilgrimages and, later, the participation of trade events such as fairs. From an early age the events created an impact on the tourist activity for various reasons, such as the notoriety and prestige they give to the destination, the creation of offer and demand for tourist services with high value, and the economic and social dynamics it provides (Vieira, 2015).

The relevance of industry events is deferred not only by participants, but also by society and researchers. Several authors agree that these types of events have always been part of society, but adopting different forms, purposes and importance (Pernecky, 2013).

The events industry are all actors who continuously develop activities directly related to events, including event management and logistics activities. The reality is that, until a few years ago, these kinds of events were thought and sold by advertising or public relations companies. Currently, the creation and sale of these activities is directed to secretarial companies, reception, rental spaces, catering, among others. This modern "industry" has shown a growth that requires a greater expansion of supply (Vieira, 2015, p. 65).

These strategic planning techniques are important both in the analysis of critical success factors and in the preparation of the planning of the tourist destination. Tourist destinations can take advantage of events to

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capture a number of tourists, that is, they are organized in order to maximize the value created by these practices of tourist acts by participants, and to adapt to the new requirements of the events industry (Vieira, 2015).

These phenomena of events are quite frequent. The professionals of this type of events face high expectations on the part of the participants, forcing a more dynamic and flawless management (Nizam & Kam, 2018).

The relationship between events industry and tourist activity is intense and its effects are reciprocal, although these are not part of the tourism system. In this book the author Vieira (2015) presents this relationship as something complementary, that is, tourism complements the events and events complement tourism. While the holding of events, especially large ones, are facilitators of tourist acts by their participants, such as the purchase of accommodation, catering and entertainment and transport, they generate important effects on the tourist destination. These effects go beyond financial, because events are also generators of jobs, value creation, quality of life, among others. On the other hand, tourism is one of the main contributors to the success of events, providing tourist services indispensable to its realization. Therefore, it can be concluded that both tourism and events industry are market partners, which complement each other and cooperate for tourism success.

The motivation that leads individuals to move to these types of events is a determining factor for their planning and realization. Participation in industry events and have associated wills, such as obtaining cultural, emotional, professional, motivational satisfaction, among others (Vieira, 2015).

Most of the activities created by the events industry can have objectives and strategies directed to the corporate events. Specifically, the activities of corporate events are offered by a wide range of entities, such as events industry, in which the offers of the activities are of the most varied, from sports challenges, strategy games, games by objectives, among others. These activities are intended to combat the frictions of employees and companies, work sessions should not be training workshops, but as an activity aimed at solving work-related problems. The involvement of third parties favours a neutral structure that can facilitate debate by helping the group to clarify and resolve its conflicts. By creating an environment of trust, members feel confident in sharing their feelings, which in turn increases the honesty of the feedback obtained, despite the risk in which members incur when they make known their "secrets", consequently these experiences allow to develop mutual trust and team spirit (Andrade, 2011).

## 3.2. CORPORATE EVENTS

The events attract participants tourists whose main economic acts are tourist acts, namely the purchase of services provided by tourist companies. On the other hand, the fact that an event takes place at a certain destination retains those participating destinations their residents who, if the event were not held, would spend part of their income in another company, situation or country. Tourism can cooperate in the success of events by supporting the most complex and expensive, helping in their promotion and institutional support and to their promoters and organizers. In this context it is important to remember that in tourism and events there is no physical expression, they correspond to an experience, which makes it difficult to conceptualize them (Vieira, 2015).

In the days of which occur, the concept of "events" is understood as a purposeful landmark, planned and organized with calendarization and destination (Pedro et al., 2005). Faced with the analysis of the conceptualization of several authors, Matias (2001) presents the concept of event as "professional action through research, planning, organization, coordination, control and implementation of a project, aiming to reach its target audience with concrete measures and projected results" (Matias, 2001, p. 75).

As in tourism and marketing, the phenomenon of globalization has led to a "great boom" about the increase of companies in the market, emphasizing the need for differentiation of brands. In this business context, events play a fundamental role with increasing trends (Caetano et al., 2018, p. 6).

Corporate events are a business practice. This type of events, in a corporate context, besides belonging to the communication mix, can be defined as a previously planned event, with the aim of adjusting a set of people to

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an idea or action (Giácomo, 1993). The conceptualization of the term "corporate events" has undergone updates throughout industrial evolution.

In the same line of thought, Dias (1996) explains that corporate events can be considered a strategy of modernity, whose objective is to conquer the audiences of interest of a company, persuading them and attracting them. According to the author, in the business world, the events are strategically promoted with the aim of: to end eave an event favourable to the image of the company and its products, before its audiences of interest; reach certain audiences for the ostentatious purpose of selling a good image; incorporate the interests of the different audiences of a community, organization or group; communicate the promotional sense of the event, arousing in the individual the interest in his product; establish a direct and permanent communication channel, which indicates to its leader what is expected (Dias, 1996, p. 15).

In 2019, the author Boléo dedicated herself to the study of the events held by tourism animation companies for other organizations (corporate events), considering that, mostly, these boost their corporate activities in an outdoor context, always according to the type of activity planned., the author interconnects the "offer of corporate events by tourism animation companies and events with the demand for these activities by companies and organizations, through corporate events that intend to meet the needs of their work teams, that is, the realization of these activities is directed to the employees of the companies they seek" (Boléo, 2019, pp. 46–48).

According to Popravko (2017), in a business context, corporate culture is an important condition for the company's successful work, the basis of its dynamic growth, adding that corporate events serve as a guarantee for a better efficiency. Corporate culture forms a certain image of the company, creating a system of social stability, providing standards of conduct to employees, who are characteristic elements of this system.

Several online articles identify the types of corporate events with the best results, presenting corporate events as one of the most advantageous and accessible. They describe it as a good strategy for analysing a company's human resources when activities are designed to meet the needs of employees (Hanchar, 2018; Hard, 2020).

## 4. EMPIRICAL COMPONENT

Faced with a qualitative approach, at this level of analysis, it was intended to identify and know the consumers of corporate events, through their profile (studying motivations, determinants, and the decision of the purchase), trying to perceive their consumption behaviour in tourism (experiential), study elements of human resource management in the tourist behaviour of the consumer. In this perspective, the data processing allowed to respond to the specific structured objectives.

Considering the size of corporate events, through a set of open questions, it was understood what behaviours were adopted by the companies interviewed in relation to the activity, as well as the possible connection of the two concepts, tourism and corporate events.

From this aspect, it was possible to highlight that companies practice this type of activities and in a way that takes place in terms of organization and performance of activity. The data processed allowed us to analyse that the companies that assume to practice corporate events belong to the universe of large companies, contrary to the universe of SMEs, because most of the companies interviewed assume that they do not practice them. Still, it is important to understand that SMEs that admit to holding corporate events are in the field of wholesale and manufacturing.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Companies that assume not to practice corporate events justify that, in many cases, they do not practice because of lack of knowledge, or simply financial resources. In another perspective, the companies that took over to hold corporate events, shared a very positive feedback, understanding that, for the universe of large companies, logistics is quite different when compared to SMEs. Specifically, it was found that large companies hire, mainly, tourism animation companies and external companies, which can be associated with tourist



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activity, or not. For the universe of SMEs, they assume to hire external companies, some admit that they are companies associated with sports, and companies in the field of hospitality and tourism agents. However, both assume the consumption of corporate events to agents associated with tourist activity.

About the consumption of the activity, several companies admit to looking for outdoor activities, and in many cases, several times a year. They seek to promote and strengthen people's relationships, through corporate events, and establish a direct relationship with motivation and participation in these activities, hence the need to have continuous investment, it is still important to highlight that, when questioned about the association of corporate events with motivation, some companies assume that those who participate change and have changes in their behaviours.

In the view of the beneficiaries of the corporate events, it was summarized that, in addition to the family and employees, the tourism and hospitality animation companies were highlighted.

Also, in the analysis that companies are oriented towards the consumption of this product, it was understood that, before the companies interviewed, there is this connection of tourism and corporate events. It was considered that, for the most part, in addition to valuing corporate events create the connection with tourism, and would be possible tourism customers in corporate events, from the perspective of consumption of the product if quality is ensured and, citing some companies, prices remained, or at least did not skyrocket.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

To study elements of human resources management in the tourist behaviour of the consumer, in a context of corporate events, we understood the connection of motivation to the performance of the employee, justifying the need to use human resources management techniques. Specifically, it was found that, about motivation, the interviewed companies accept that it has an influence on the performance of employees, but assume that, in some cases, employees are not motivated. It is important to understand that, in the universe of large companies, in addition to the awareness of motivation, most companies consider their employees motivated and proactive, highlighting teamwork as a central aspect in their performance, and driving positive results. About SMEs, although the majority identify their employees as motivated, the reality is that, for the manufacturing industry as well as for construction, the satisfaction of employees is a complex issue, and there are some barriers to combat.

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