

STUDY ON THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT METHODS APPLIED BY XCARET MEXICO GROUP AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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Abstract

Management methods refer to the processes used by an organisation to achieve proposed objectives, they suggest the way forward to achieve results. The choice of a management method is based on its compatibility with the internal and external conditions of the organisation, as each method has a different potential to contribute to the sustainability of the business. The management method is the set of principles, procedures, rules and tools by which management functions are carried out in order to achieve the best possible results through the rational use of the resources available to the organisation. Performance management is the process of using management techniques and methods in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner to achieve organisational objectives and ensure long-term success through increased economic and management performance. Our research objectives were based on the following ideas:

- *Defining the concept of a water theme park;*
- *Examination of theme parks in Mexico in relation to their development possibilities in the Romanian tourism industry;*
- *Descriptive and financial analysis on this segment of the tourism industry.*

The success of this business model within the leisure industry is described by the customer-oriented management model. Our initiative is circumscribed to present the management of such a business that has become a model of tourism development.

Key words: (maximum 6): management methods, recreational parks, Mexican xenote, sustainable tourism development, visitor numbers

INTRODUCTION

The management method is that managerial method whose phases and components are precisely outlined and rigorously structured into a functional whole that facilitates the exercise of certain components of the managerial process with implications for the content and effectiveness of the work of one or more managers. (Bibu, N., Predișan, M., Management Course, 2007). These management methods are classified in the literature into general methods and specific management methods, among which specific methods for stimulating creativity are distinguished.

This article presents a management model for a type of business based on a certain corporate philosophy. One of the models sustainable business in the leisure industry is the Xcaret by Mexico water nature park, located in the vicinity of a tourist resort that in 10 years has become of international interest.

Xcaret is an eco-archeological, themed, fun water park located in one place. Geographically, the park is located in the Yucatan Peninsula, in the Mayan jungle, among underground rivers, xenotes and overlooking the Caribbean Sea. Xcaret is also a theme park in Cancun and the Riviera Maya that spectacularly showcases present and ancient Mexico, a country steeped in superb traditions, culture and folklore.

Xcaret opened in 1990 and in 2018, Xcaret achieved "Liseberg Applause Award" as Best World Park, crowning almost 3 decades of originality and service excellence.

The company around which the water and theme parks have developed as a national and international business is called Xcaret Group. It has three business units divided into:

- Parks, under which it operates the most iconic parks in Cancun and the Riviera Maya: Xcaret, Xel-Há, Xplor, Xplor Fuego, Xoximilco, Xenses and Xavage;
- Hotels, a business unit that began operations with the 2017 opening of Hotel Xcaret México; and
- Tours offering unique tours to Xichén, Cobá, Tulum and Xenotes.

In the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico, on November 5, 2020, Grupo Xcaret, a leading company in sustainable tourism recreation, was recognized by the Confederation of Industrial Chambers (CONCAMIN) with the Industry Ethics and Values Award in the category "Great Mexican Companies" for its commitment to the principles of responsibility towards its employees and the communities in which it operates, as well as for developing an ethically governed culture in its organization. The construction of these water parks was based on the resources natural potential, namely, Mexican xenotes. These are surface connections to underground bodies of water.

There are at least 6,000 xenotes in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. The water in xenotes is often very clear because the water comes from rainwater that slowly filters through the ground and therefore contains very little suspended particles.



Source: own

MATERIAL AND METHOD

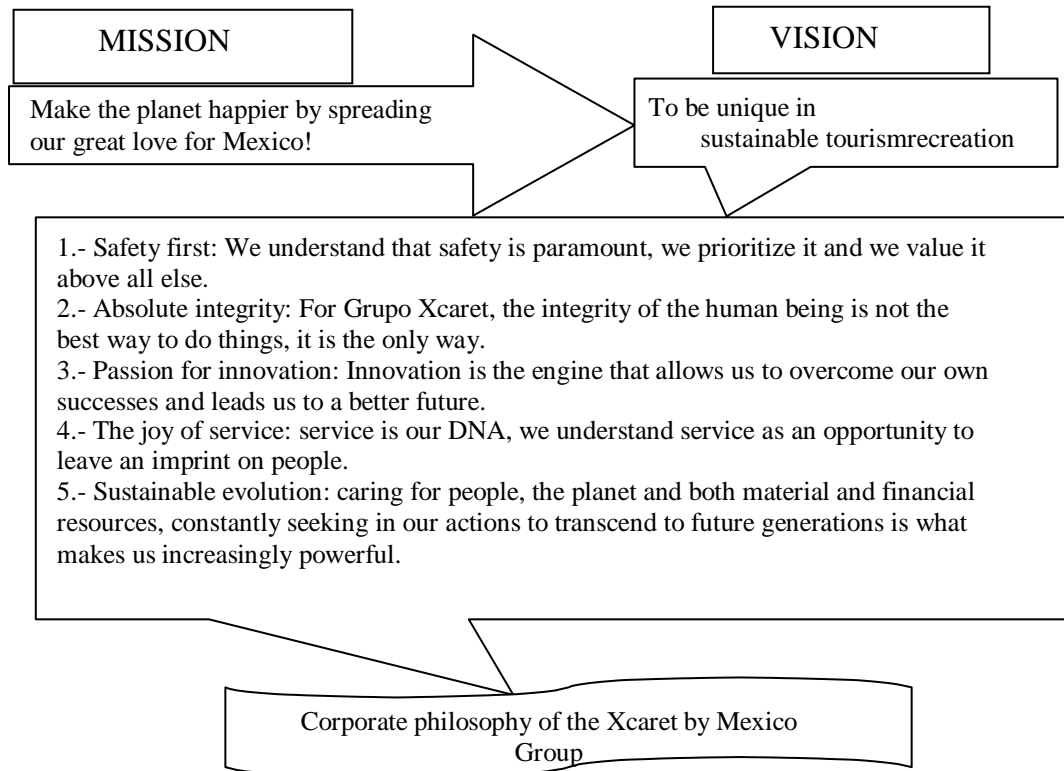
The research methods by which we report on the achievement of these objectives are chosen from the perspective of observing those management methods that have led to measurable results.

We used documentary study when we aimed to present the description of Mexican theme parks, using information present on Mexican websites, and data analysis when we conducted a quantitative, subjective analysis of the impact of recreational opportunities on tourist satisfaction.

We used the comparison method to capture the magnitude of the importance of tourism in GDP in a Central American country compared to Romania.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Their industry has a corporate philosophy: "At Grupo Xcaret we love our country's culture and natural wealth, it's what motivates us to work every day, because we believe that promoting knowledge and respect for our traditions and natural resources will make it possible for them to prevail over time. We are committed to making this a reality and to achieve it, we base our actions on the guiding axes outlined in our Mission, Vision and Values." (Xcaret Mexico Group Sustainability Statement, 2019, pg. 10-22)



For us, sustainability is the balanced creation of economic, socio-cultural and environmental value that guarantees the harmonious growth of our business, the well-being of our communities and the environment in which we operate. Sustainability has been inserted into the Group's strategic agenda and is one of the elements that form part of our unique management style. This understanding of the concept, even before it was named as such, made it possible to design the vision of "being unique in sustainable tourism recreation". Today, it constitutes a true path that the founding partners have charted for our Group. This vision is based on the principles included in the Sustainability Policy and the X- Sustainability Model, which describe how we implement it at corporate level and in each business unit.

Based on this mandate, the founders established a policy and a management model:

- Sustainability policy;
- The sustainability model.

The **sustainability policy** focuses on ensuring alignment between the group's management and sustainability model through a system of continuous evaluation and improvement of its processes, programs and projects that contribute to the development of unique sustainable tourism experiences that generate better environmental and economic conditions for Mexican communities and future generations. We see in the company's development strategy the insertion of local patriotism, the encouragement of national firms, the development of local businesses to ensure the national welfare of a state whose main pillar of economic development is tourism.

The **X Sustainability Model** allows the company to easily communicate actions aimed at thriving business performance, generating social well-being and preserving our environment, based on three pillars identified as the "3Ps": People, Planet and Prosperity. The scope of the company's actions has two dimensions: internal and external. The internal encompasses all actions that take place within the company that are related to the development of the business; and the external, which considers all actions that have an impact on the environment in which the company operates.

The **Planet** pillar includes programmes and projects that support environmental conservation and covers two aspects: conservation of ecosystems and species and animal welfare. This pillar reflects the fact that through the company's actions, a more environmentally friendly relationship can be achieved.

In the **people** pillar, management focuses on social aspects that are linked to respect for human dignity, quality of life, and the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage.

In the **prosperity** pillar, business profitability and value generation for society and the environment are considered. It covers four aspects: economic performance, responsible marketing, stimulating the Mexican economy and business ethics.

The successful model on which the management of this national company is based has given business relevance to the Mexican national economy. Thus, from a macroeconomic point of view, the economic importance of tourism can be measured by looking at the proportion of revenue generated by international tourism in relation to GDP.

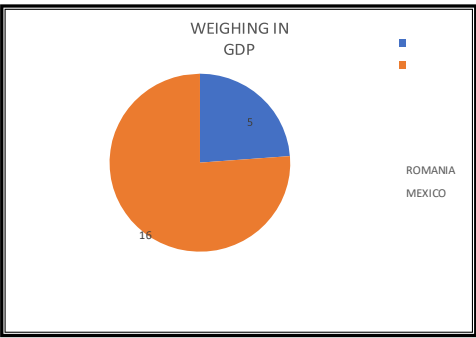
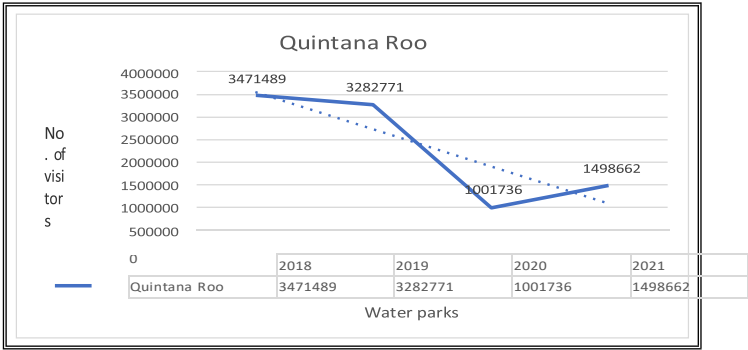


Fig. 1. Share of tourism in national GDP

While in Romania tourism contributes about 5% of GDP, in Mexico it accounts for 16% of Mexican GDP and 13% of employment in the tourism sector.

Statistics show a steep decline in the number of visitors to water parks in 2020 due to global pandemic conditions, which has had a strong impact on the leisure industry. In the following table we have shown the development of visitor numbers over the period 2018-2021, with a slight recovery from 2021 onwards.

Evolution of visitor numbers 2018-2021



Source: own processing based on data from [www. https://www.estadisticas.inah.gob.mx/](https://www.estadisticas.inah.gob.mx/)

By presenting the natural and man-made tourism potential offered by Mexican xenoteos, some of them organized in water parks, we wanted to highlight their potential to contribute to a country's GDP and to increase tourist satisfaction.

Table 1

Number of visitors to the main amusement parks in 2013

Ranking	Amusement park names	Location	No of visitors
1	Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World Resort	Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA	18,6
2	Tokyo Disneyland at Tokyo Disney Resort	Tokyo, Japan	17,2
3	Disneyland at Disneyland Resort	Anaheim, California, USA	16,2
4	Tokyo DisneySea at Tokyo Disney Resort	Tokyo, Japan	14,1
5	Epcot at Walt Disney World Resort	Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA	11,2
6	Disneyland Park at Disneyland Paris	Marne-la-Vallée, France	10,4
7	Disney's Animal Kingdom at Walt Disney World Resort	Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA	10,2
8	Disney's Hollywood Studios at Walt Disney World Resort	Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA	10,1
9	Universal Studios Japan	Osaka, Japan	10,1
10	Disney California Adventure at Disneyland Resort	Anaheim, California, USA	8,5
11	Islands of Adventure at Universal Orlando Resort	Orlando, Florida, USA	8,1
12	Ocean Park Hong Kong	Hong Kong	7,5
13	Hong Kong Disneyland	Hong Kong	7,4
14	Lotte World	Seoul, South Korea	7,4
15	Everland	Yongin, Gyeonggi-Do, South Korea	7,3
16	Universal Studios Florida at Universal Orlando Resort	Orlando, Florida, USA	7,1
17	Universal Studios Hollywood	Universal City, California, USA	6,1
18	Nagashima Spa Land	Kuwana, Japan	5,8
19	Sea World Orlando	Orlando, Florida, USA	5,1

20	Europa Park	Rust, Germany	4,9
21	Walt Disney Studios Park at Disneyland Paris	Marne-la-Vallée, France	4,5
22	SeaWorld San Diego	San Diego, California, USA	4,3
23	Tivoli Gardens	Copenhagen, Denmark	4,2
24	Efteling	Kaatsheuvel, Netherlands	4,2
25	Yokohama Hakkeijima Sea Paradise	Yokohama, Japan	4,1
26	Quintana Roo	Yucatan	2,13

Source: John Robinett, 2013, The Global Attractions Attendance Report, Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) Publishing, Los Angeles

Although it is a relatively recently built theme park, the management model applied and the strong orientation towards satisfying visitors' aspirations towards leisure activities, making use of the unique resources of the natural potential, the Xcaret by Mexico Group's business places Xcaret Park at the top of tourists' preferences, ahead of the Eiffel Tower in Paris and the Vatican Museum in Rome. (report by the global travel company Orbitz, leader in online tourism marketing, year 2014).

CONCLUSIONS

The global pandemic situation, which was declared on 11.03.2020 by the World Health Organization as an emergency requiring immediate action, has hit hard the hospitality industry worldwide. For Mexico's hotel and leisure industry it has meant a paralysis of activity, job losses and a substantial decrease in revenue. Given the Mexican tourism sector's large share of GDP, losses of US\$192 billion have been estimated.

Supported by a vast natural and man-made tourism potential, the Mexican tourism sector has proven to be an important benchmark for sustainable economic development and a relevant generator of Mexican GDP. While in Romania tourism contributes around 5% of GDP, in Mexico it accounts for 16% of Mexican GDP and 13% of employment in the tourism sector.

"The difference between a rich country and a poor one is its management (and managers)". (Prof. Richard Farmer).

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