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Strategic Quality and Change Management: Enhancing Operational Efficiency in Tourism

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ABSTRACT

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The article studies a strategic approach to improving the processes of change and quality management in the tourism industry, which is considered a key factor in ensuring the sustainable competitiveness of enterprises in the dynamic environment. It has been determined that the ability of travel companies to adapt to the impact of economic crises, the introduction of technological innovations and changes in consumer preferences is a determining factor in their success. The influence of the integration of modern management solutions, in particular the introduction of innovative technologies and quality standards, on the harmonisation of interaction between a travel company's internal and external systems is analysed. The efficiency level of implementing a systematic approach is determined, which considers the relationship between the management subsystem responsible for strategic management and the managed subsystem that implements the decisions made through operational processes. A model of comprehensive situational analysis has been developed that combines internal and external assessments to identify key areas of development and proposes integrating modern management methods and technologies to achieve sustainable development. A regression model has been created to assess the impact of individual partial indicators on the formation and development of processes in a travel company. The obtained desirability equations provide an instrument for determining the degree of adaptability of a company to changes in the external environment.

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In today's environment of global economic uncertainty, rapid development of digital technologies and growing competition in the international travel market, the issues of effective change and quality management are of particular importance, as these aspects are key factors in ensuring the sustainable development of travel companies and their adaptation to constantly changing external and internal conditions. The travel industry, one of the most dynamic sectors

of the global economy, constantly needs to update business models, introduce innovative approaches to service delivery, and improve management mechanisms to ensure high-quality customer service. It is essential that ensuring effective quality management is becoming a tool for achieving short-term goals and a strategic approach to building long-term competitive advantages, which is critical for travel companies operating in the post-crisis period and seeking to regain their market position (Hall, 2019). In addition, given the growing demands of consumers for the quality of tourism services, it is important to implement comprehensive management strategies based on a systematic approach to change, considering the latest technologies, modern service standards and effective process monitoring.

The article aims to form a component methodological framework for implementing a strategic approach to improving the processes of change and quality management in the tourism industry, with the aim of increasing the level of adaptability of tourism companies in the context of market dynamism.

Literature Review

The lead authors are now addressing the issue of sustainable tourism in protected areas and the importance of integrating local communities into planning processes (Andries et al., 2021; Karatepe & Avci, 2020), which actively demonstrates that local involvement contributes to social acceptance and long-term effectiveness of tourism projects.

Several authors have been actively analysing strategies for the tourism sector's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasising the importance of lessons learned from the crisis (Baloch et al., 2022). The authors emphasise the need for technological innovation, public-private partnerships and resilience strategies to prevent future crises. At the same time, Baum et al. (2020) highlight the changes in the hospitality labour sector caused by the pandemic, which has exacerbated existing problems in human resources management. In turn, Butler (2020), Cave and Dredge (2020) propose the concept of regenerative tourism, which involves the development of local economies through diversification, and Cheer (2020) emphasises the importance of development and quality management in tourism, which can be the basis for transformational changes in the tourism industry (Cheer, 2020).

Higgins-Desbiolles (2020) raises the issue of social and environmental justice in tourism, emphasising the need to rethink the industry with these aspects in mind. Some scholars have studied the behaviour of small tourism firms in the context of sustainability, paying attention to the role of self-esteem and external constraints (Kornilaki et al., 2019). At the same time, other scholars analyse business strategies in the context of environmental research, suggesting integrating environmental initiatives into strategic planning (Kumar et al., 2021). In the context of the innovative cluster approach model, researchers study the competitiveness of tourist and recreational areas, proposing innovative mechanisms for clustering and development (Gössling et al., 2021; Malyuga et al., 2022; Trusova et al., 2020).

Yermachenko et al. (2024) emphasise the importance of sustainable tourism as a key factor in restoring territorial communities. They also stress the need to integrate modern change management strategies into the overall reconstruction process, particularly in introducing new models of tourism development that would meet modern challenges and promote economic growth. The authors highlight that a strategic approach to change management allows not only

the restoration of tourism infrastructure but also the creation of conditions for long-term development, the attraction of investment, and the increase in regional competitiveness.

Many reviewed papers focus on theoretical aspects and do not always provide empirical evidence of implementing change management strategies. Finally, there is insufficient coverage of innovative tools, such as sustainability tools, which could significantly change the approach to quality management in the tourism industry. Further research should analyse the impact of innovative management strategies on the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of tourism companies, particularly in a dynamic external environment.

Method

The systemic approach is used to analyse a travel company as a complex open system that constantly interacts with the external environment, which is characterised by a high level of dynamism and uncertainty. The introduced approach made it possible to identify the key relationships between the main subsystems of a travel company, particularly the managing one, which forms strategies and makes management decisions, and the managed one, which is responsible for their practical implementation through operational processes. Situation analysis is used to assess the variability and instability of the external environment, identify the main factors affecting the activities of travel companies, and determine the critical points that require managerial intervention. The method is utilised as an adaptor of management decisions to specific conditions and to ensure maximum efficiency in implementing changes, taking into account the peculiarities of the interaction of a travel company with the market environment.

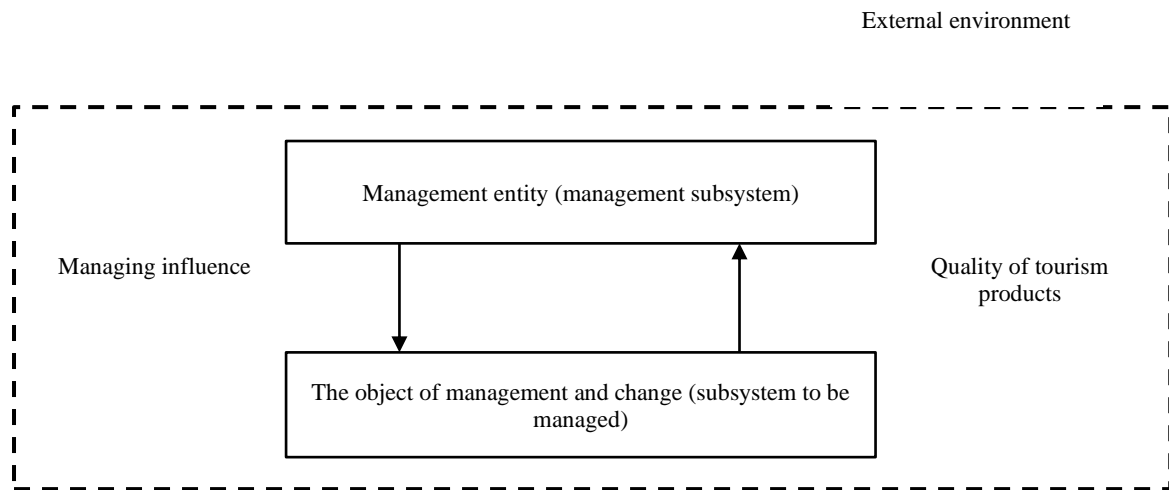
Results

The ability of tourism companies to adapt to changes in the external environment is becoming a crucial factor in their success, especially in times of turbulence caused by economic crises, pandemics or rapid technological change. A strategic approach to improving the change and quality management processes in the tourism industry requires a systematic analysis of the interaction of a tourism company with its external environment since the success of transformation processes depends on a deep understanding of this interaction (Sharpley, 2020). In the current study, we have determined that the boundary between a travel company as a system and the external environment is not static but changes depending on the extent to which it integrates new parameters or aspects of management into its business processes (Sugiarti et al., 2021).

By the systems approach, a tourism company can be considered a complex system consisting of two main interdependent subsystems: a) a management subsystem responsible for developing strategies and making management decisions, and b) a managed subsystem that implements these decisions through operational processes. This model allows for a clear structuring of management activities and identifies how strategic initiatives aimed at improving change and quality can affect the functioning of the entire company (Figure 1) (Schilirò, 2019).

Figure 1

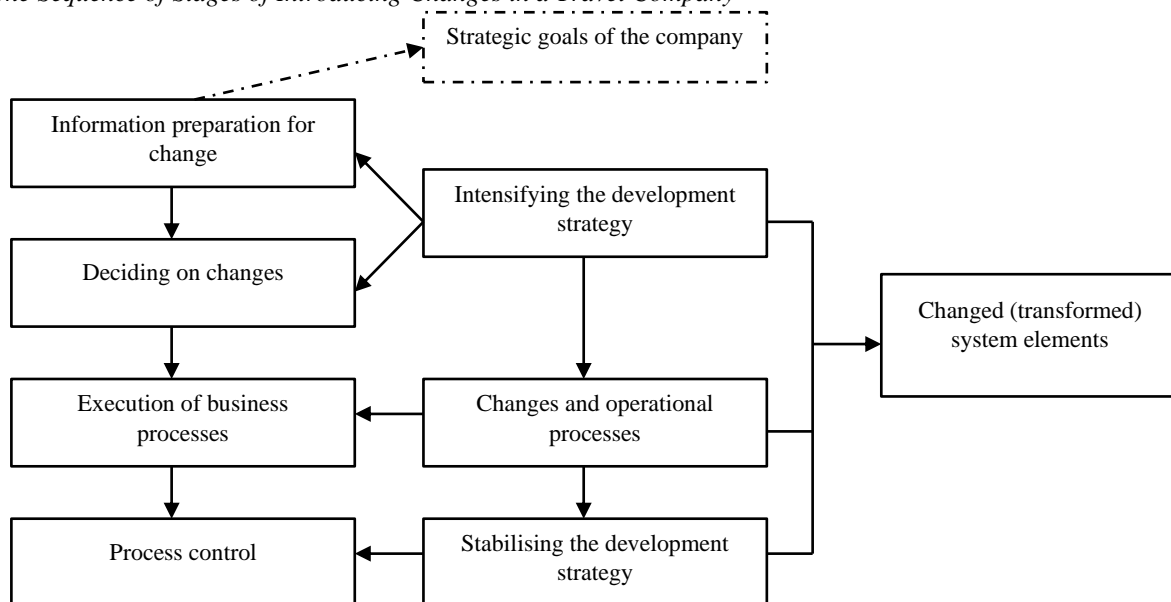
A Cybernetic Generalisation of the Travel Company's Work System



Firstly, in the context of a strategic approach to improving change and quality management processes in the tourism industry, special attention should be paid to the effective organisation of project management aimed at implementing organisational changes since the success of transformation processes depends on the proper coordination of the actions of the participants. Secondly, at the initial stages of the project, consultants must spend a significant part of their working time with the travel company's specialists, paying attention to training and transferring practical knowledge that will form the basis for further successful implementation of changes. Thirdly, an important element of the project is regular meetings with the entire working group under the leadership of the project administrator, which will facilitate coordination of actions, discussion of intermediate results and adjustment of plans by the dynamics of change (Figure 2).

Figure 2

The Sequence of Stages of Introducing Changes in a Travel Company



We define a strategic approach to managing organisational change in the tourism industry as a close integration of external experts and internal specialists of a tourism company aimed at systematic process improvement, effective implementation of innovative methods and improvement of the overall quality of management (Bytyçi et al., 2023).

The traditional management concept for many travel companies is often ineffective in today's market realities, where supply exceeds demand and forms the so-called "buyer's market." The modern, or "new," concept of business management is based on a systematic approach, according to which any travel company is viewed as a complex open system. Within this system, a travel company ensures the functioning of the external environment by transforming resources ("inputs") and services received from it ("outputs"), which are returned to the environment (Olshanska et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2021). This creates a logical chain of cause-and-effect processes:

- 1) A travel company must meet the requirements of the external environment at any given time to remain competitive.
- 2) The external environment is dynamic and uncontrollable for a travel company, which requires flexibility in management.
- 3) Since the external environment cannot be changed, an organisation must adapt by implementing changes in its structure and business processes.
- 4) Organisational changes should reflect and consider the dynamism of the external environment, which implies continuous improvement.

The main aspects of the "new" concept that ensure its compliance with modern challenges are analysed in detail and systematised in comparison with the traditional management model (Table 1). This concept opens up new opportunities for tourism companies in the industry, allowing them to improve the efficiency of change and quality management and achieve sustainable development in a highly competitive and changing market environment.

Table 1

The Concept of Traditional and Modern Approaches to Change and Quality Management in the Tourism Industry (Feng et al., 2021; Karyono, 2022)

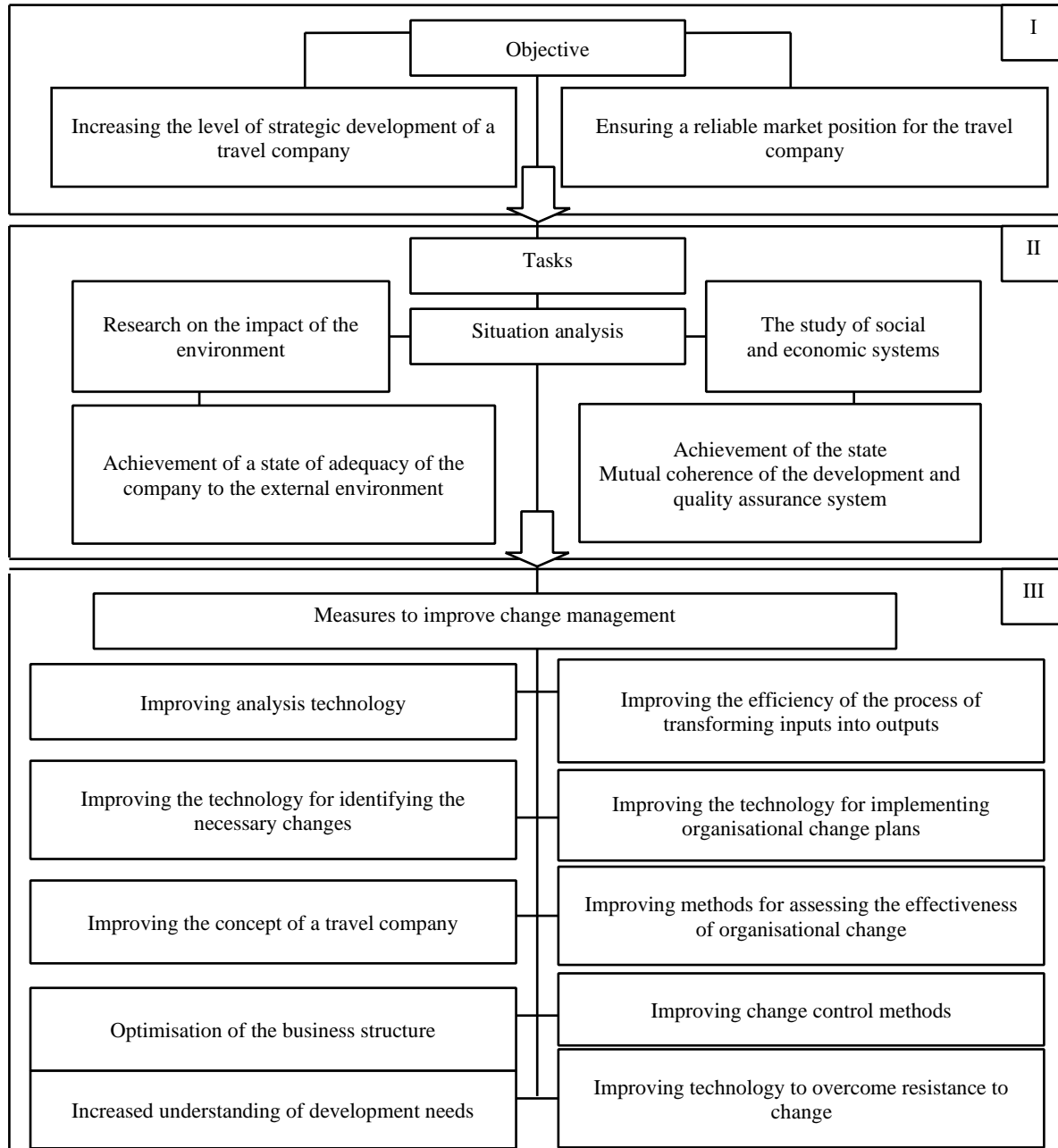
Concept / Component	Traditional ("old")	Modern ("new")
External environment and technology	Stable, simple, defined	Dynamic, unpredictable
Impact on the environment	It manifests itself as a set of constraints when choosing a particular tactic and strategy for providing tourism services	The travel company effectively influences a set of constraints
State of the market	Under-saturation. Demand exceeds supply	Saturation and oversaturation. Supply exceeds demand
The role of the consumer	Acts as an integral part of the source of constraints	He is an active participant in shaping the development programme
Style of behaviour of a travel company in the market	Reactive – based on the principle of "event-reaction"	Active – based on the principle of "analysis – forecast – anticipation"
Management of a travel company	Technocratic	Strategic
Location of the main success factors of a travel company	Inside the travel company	Outside the travel company
Areas for ensuring market success	Rational organisation of tourist services. Development of market specialisation. Reducing costs.	Situational analysis. Adaptation to the external environment. Timely recognition of threats to existence. Creating an internal flow of resources to travel companies as a response to external influences

In the context of a strategic approach to improving change and quality management processes in the tourism industry, the central element of a tourism company's development is the effective management of organisational change, which should be based on a thorough situational analysis using a systematic approach (Figure 3).

The key block of the methodological and instrumental framework is the block of goals (I), which aims to achieve the travel company's main strategic goal of ensuring its sustainable long-term success in the market.

Figure 3

Model for Improving Organisational Change Management for the Development of a Tourism Company



Two interrelated sub-objectives are envisaged to achieve this goal. The first sub-objective is to maximise the volume of sales of services, which allows the travel company to achieve the required level of profitability (Kaikara, 2020).

The second sub-objective is to create a strong desire among consumers to continue using a travel company's services, which creates the basis for long-term loyalty and repeat business (Buffa et al., 2018).

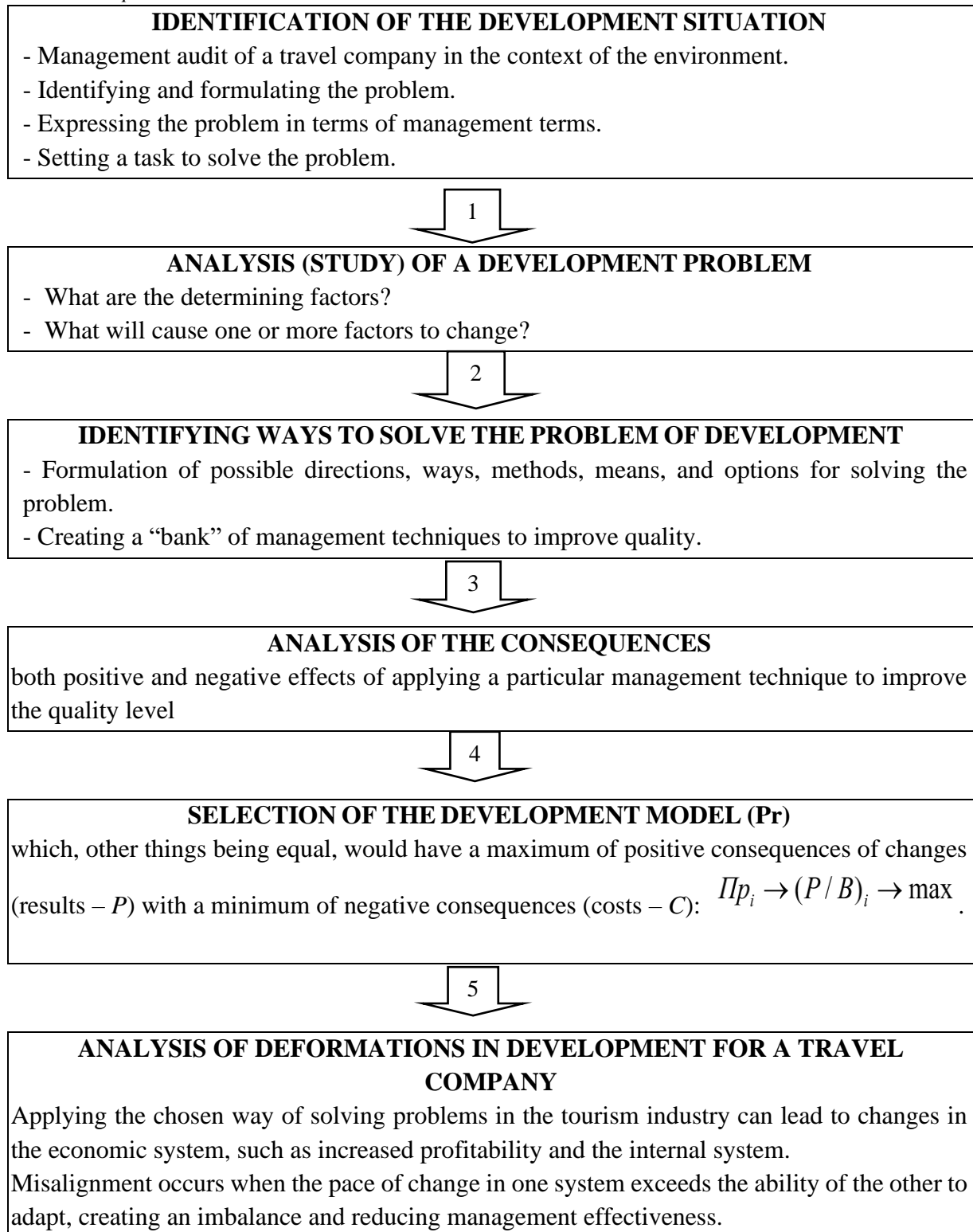
Block of tasks (II) defines the key areas of action that ensure the achievement of the set goals. The main task of this block is to ensure constant compliance of the tourism company's activities with the conditions of the external environment, which is characterised by a high level of instability. The third block (III) aims to improve the management of organisational change implementation, including identifying the objects of management attention. This approach allows for effectively setting priorities and improving management decisions' overall effectiveness (Yu et al., 2021). The developed methodological and instrumental framework creates a platform for further detailed elaboration of directions and tasks related to organisational change (block II), which further opens up the possibility of targeted improvement of development management.

The strategic approach to improving the change and quality management processes in the tourism industry is based on the need for an integrated approach to optimising the organisational change management system, which includes not only improving the forms and methods of analysing the external environment of the tourism company but also ensuring that the data obtained is adequately reflected in the strategies for planning and implementing changes (Makedon et al., 2024). The situational analysis technique, which is used to solve change management problems, should be based on existing methodological tools and provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the problems and their causes. Usually, each analysis method allows to diagnose only a particular aspect of the problem, so they are often one-dimensional (García-Fernández et al., 2022; Pane, 2024). In order to move to a more integrated approach, which permits obtaining a synthetic picture of the state of the tourism company, it is advisable to use situational analysis in two planes: complex and elemental.

1. Comprehensive situational analysis aims to study the organisational and management structure, management system, and economic activities of a tourism company using various methods to identify systemic problems in its work. For this purpose, an algorithm of actions is proposed (Figure 4), which is a synthesis of three approaches: systemic, situational, and socio-economic (Metelenko et al., 2019; Sereda et al., 2024).

Figure 4

The Process of Implementing Comprehensive Changes in Terms of Quality Improvement and Development for Tourism Companies



2. Element-by-element situational analysis, which complements the integrated approach, is aimed at a more detailed study of individual components of the tourism company’s activities, such as management processes, business processes that affect the quality of services, which creates further exits not only to identify the problem but also to find specific ways to solve

them, taking into account the impact on the overall development strategy (Akanmu et al., 2020). Moreover, the functional relationship between individual indicators of development processes for a tourism company can be determined using a unique function $y(a_i)$, which reflects the elemental dependence between them through the corresponding mathematical equation.

$$y = b_0 + b * a_i , \tag{1}$$

Where:

$$b = \frac{n \sum y * a_i - \sum a_i \sum y}{n \sum a_i^2 - (\sum a_i)^2} \tag{2}$$

$$b_0 = \frac{\sum y \sum a_i^2 - \sum a_i \sum y * a_i}{n \sum a_i^2 - (\sum a_i)^2} \tag{3}$$

n is the number of periods corresponding to the life cycle stages.

In the context of a strategic approach to improving the processes of change and quality management in the tourism industry, the assessment of the development indicators of a tourism company is carried out taking into account key trends that allow to determine the current state and predict future changes (Fosso Wamba et al., 2024). Thus, the modelling should use set values of indicators, such as $y = -2, y = 4$, which are chosen arbitrarily, but considering the overall dynamics of development. A regression equation is used to calculate the linear dependence of the process parameters:

$$b_0 = -1.73 * b = 1.13, \tag{3}$$

$$y = -1.73 + 1.13 * a_i \tag{4}$$

This equation determines the boundary of desirability of a partial indicator reflecting the level of financial crisis processes of a tourism company, forming an analytical basis for the development of adaptive management decisions as described by the equation.

$$d_j = \exp[-\exp(-(-1.73 + 1.13a_i))] . \tag{5}$$

The calculations of the desirability limits and development assessment coefficients presented in Table 2, 3, 4 are performed to assess and model the critical indicators of the tourism company’s development. They are based on regression equations that allow determining the relationship between the variables that affect the change management process and quality.

Table 2

Calculation of the Coefficient of Resource Support for the Development of a Travel Company

y	a_i	$y * a_i$	a_i^2
-2	-24	48	576
-1	-23.2410	23.241	540.1441
0	-5.11462	0	26.15934
1	-1.27925	-1.27925	1.636481
2	-0.5754	-1.15078	0.331072
3	1.0	3	1
4	2	8	4
Together	-51.2103	79.81097	1149.271

$$b_0 = 2.24 * b = 0.17, \tag{6}$$

$$y = 2.24 + 0.17 * a_i , \tag{7}$$

$$d_j = \exp[-\exp(-(2.24 + 0.17a_i))] \tag{8}$$

The limit of desirability of a partial indicator is a mathematical model that reflects the function of desirability for partial indicators and can determine a travel company's level of adaptability to changes, taking into account the degree of influence of various factors.

The coefficient of the financial component allows for measuring financial support, which is critical for implementing changes. The modelling results help to understand how changes in financial parameters affect the effectiveness of strategic initiatives (Table 3).

Table 3

Calculation of the Coefficient of the Financial Component of the Development of a Travel Company

y	a_i	$y * a_i$	a_i^2
-2	0.25	-0.5	0.0625
-1	0.373906	-0.37391	0.139806
0	0.4048	0	0.163845
1	2.4665	2.466453	6.083391
2	3.9855	7.970993	15.88418
3	4	12	16
4	4.7	18.8	22.09
Together	16.18063	40.36354	60.42372

$$b_0 = -1.43 * b = 1.05, \quad (9)$$

$$y = -1.43 + 1.05 * a_i \quad (10)$$

$$d_j = \exp[-\exp(-(-1.43 + 1.05a_i))] \quad (11)$$

The critical change coefficient is used to assess the impact of critical changes on a tourism company's development by identifying key points at which changes are necessary to increase adaptability and ensure long-term success (Table 4).

Table 4

Calculating the Coefficient of Critical Changes in the Development of a Travel Company

y	a_i	$y * a_i$	a_i^2
-2	0.5	-1	0.25
-1	0.373906	-0.37391	0.139806
0	0.4048	0	0.163845
1	3.985497	3.985497	15.88418
2	2.4665	4.932906	6.083391
3	2.7	8.1	7.29
4	2.9	11.6	8.41
Together	13.33063	27.2445	38.22122

$$b_0 = -1.06 * b = 1.08, \quad (12)$$

$$y = -1.06 + 1.08 * a_i, \quad (13)$$

$$d_j = \exp[-\exp(-(-1.06 + 1.08a_i))] \quad (14)$$

The resulting elementary model becomes the basis for assessing the closeness of the relationship between the key indicators of the tourism company's development and the processes of improving change and quality management. The elementary regression equations show what will happen to the financial or operational results when the input parameter of "changes" a_i increases by one, the final value of y reflects an increase of 1.13 units, which indicates a direct positive impact of the relevant factor on the overall state of current changes within the travel company. The exponential function of desirability d_j can determine how adaptive the company is to external changes and provide an analytical component for developing management decisions to improve quality and development components. Thus,

when $a_i = 2$, the desirability function is $d_{(j)} \approx 0.85$, demonstrating a high adaptation level. Thus, the presented regression model is a practical tool for strategic management to increase the adaptability and quality of processes in the tourism industry. The use of the model contributes to making informed decisions for long-term development.

The study's results have shown that the functional relationship between the individual indicators of tourism company development processes can be determined using a mathematical regression equation. This model allows one to evaluate the interdependence of variables that affect the effectiveness of change and quality management and predict their impact on the development of tourism companies.

Discussion

The strategic emphasis on aligning change management processes with the specific needs of the tourism industry has shown the importance of using a systematic approach that forms an interconnected system where all operational processes depend on each other, emphasising the need to synchronise organisational changes with market requirements and internal resource capabilities. The study results show that such synchronisation significantly increases the ability of travel companies to adapt to rapid changes in the external environment, strengthening their competitive position. Integrating modern quality management models, adaptive strategies for change management, and innovative technologies is a prerequisite for ensuring the sustainable development of tourism companies in the face of modern challenges. A comprehensive approach to improving business processes combines high-quality standards and flexibility in responding to changes and technological innovations, creates new competitive advantages, improves customer experience, and ensures business sustainability in the market. The travel industry, which focuses on implementing these tools, has every chance to adapt to the current environment and lay the foundation for long-term success.

Conclusion

In the format of a strategic approach to improving the processes of change and quality management in the tourism industry, the key components that form the basis of the market success of tourism companies are identified, and a methodological and instrumental framework for their effective development is developed. This framework includes several methods and tools organised in the form of cause-and-effect relationships to ensure a continuous travel company development process.

To ensure the effectiveness of organisational change management, a procedure for using situational analysis has been proposed based on integrating two main areas – internal and external analysis. Internal analysis involves allocating a travel company's key functional areas of activity and identifying the main factors that affect their efficiency. On this basis, it is proposed to create a comprehensive system of activities that allows focus on optimising internal processes that are of strategic importance for improving the quality of management. A regression model for evaluating the impact of partial indicators on the formation of development processes of an individual travel company has been proposed. The obtained desirability equations provide an opportunity to determine the level of adaptability of a travel company to external changes, which is critical in today's dynamic environment.

Declarations

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