

**Internal and external drivers for quality certification in
the service industry:
Do they have different impacts on success?**

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April 2012

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of a study of hotels that are certified for quality to analyse whether the drivers that led them to seek quality certification, either internal or external, have different impacts on success. The empirical data were collected from a sample of 32 certified Spanish hotels. The study groups hotels according to the importance of their internal reasons for certification, and uses cluster analysis to identify the significant differences between groups of hotels. The findings show that internal and external drivers have different impacts on the application of quality tools, and the resulting internal and external benefits. Hotels certified for internal reasons develop the quality tools better and have better performance levels. This supports the findings related to this issue in other industries and extends the literature on quality management in the hotel industry. The lack of earlier studies of these issues in the hotel industry indicates that the present study of this relationship is timely.

Keywords: quality certification; ISO 9001; Spanish Q quality certificate; quality management; performance; quality tools; hotel industry; Spain.

Introduction

Many manufacturing (Samson & Terziovski, 1999; Kaynak, 2003) and service (Yang, 2006; Lee et al., 2009) organisations, in both the public and private sectors (Bou-Llusar et al., 2009; Rhee & Rha, 2009), benefit from the adoption of quality management systems. In the tourist industry in general, and the hotel industry in particular, organisations may also adopt the quality systems successfully (Nield & Kozak, 1999; Albacete et al., 2007; Wilkins et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2008; Viada-Stenger et al., 2010). The hotel industry is concerned with product and service quality (Kimes, 2001; Ruiz-Molina et al., 2011).

In this context, the effect of quality certification on performance is a recurring topic in the literature. Although the results are inconclusive, in general, the literature shows that quality certification may have a positive impact on performance (Casadesús & Karapetrovic, 2005; Naveh & Marcus, 2005; Terziovski & Power, 2007).

The results from various tourist sub-sectors are similar (Augustyn & Pheby, 2000; Mak, 2011), and hotels conform to this general pattern (Callan, 1992; Walker & Salameh, 1996; Nield & Kozak, 1999; Nicolau & Sellers, 2010). These studies find that certification has positive effects in the hotel industry in terms of operational results, people results, customer satisfaction, and financial performance.

In their analysis of the effects of quality certification on performance, some authors point out that the reasons for certification may be important in understanding the relationship between quality certification and performance. The studies that analyze the effects of quality certification on performance, using motivation as an intervening variable, find different effects of quality certification on benefits (Jones et al., 1997; Terziovski et al., 2003; Naveh & Marcus, 2005). Firms that certify for internal reasons benefit more than those that certify for external reasons (Singels et al., 2001; Boiral & Roy, 2007; Martínez-Costa et al., 2008; Prajogo, 2011).

Manufacturing industry is the focus of most studies of quality certification (Gustafsson et al., 2003) and few studies analyze these issues in services (Lee et al., 2009; Psomas et al., 2010) or in the hotel industry (Wilkins et al., 2007; Viada-Stenger et al., 2010). Also, although many studies examine the impact of quality certification on performance, few analyze the links between type of motivation and benefits (Boiral & Roy, 2007; Martínez-Costa et al., 2008; Nair & Prajogo, 2009) and quality tools. In addition, no studies examine the link between motives and performance and tools in the context of the hotel industry.

Consequently, the literature is unclear about the way in which internal and external drivers may impact differentially on benefits and quality elements (e.g. tools) in the hotel industry. Future studies are needed to examine the factors that influence the decision to implement a quality standard, and how that motivation affects outcomes (Naveh and Marcus, 2005) as well as the case of quality certification in the hotel industry (Viada-Stenger et al., 2010) which deal with these issues.

This means that previous research has left unexamined the questions of whether internal and external drivers have different impacts on success in the hotel industry. The aim of the present study is to analyze whether internal or external drivers for seeking certification have different impacts on success in the hotel industry. First the paper identifies why hotels decide to seek quality certification. Second, it examines whether hotels that certify for internal reasons obtain more benefits and apply more quality tools than those that certify for external reasons. The paper uses certified hotels in Spain as the data source, and factor analysis, cluster analysis, and significant differences as the statistical tools.

The paper starts with a review of the literature about quality certification, and the link between reasons for certification and performance. This examination of the literature leads to the development of the research questions. The paper continues with a description of the

research methods, followed by the results. Finally, the discussion and conclusions section indicates some implications, limitations and future research.

Literature review

Quality certification

Some studies show that quality certified firms do not perform any better than those that do not have such certification (Singels et al., 2001; Tsekouras et al., 2002). Others argue that certified firms have better financial performance (Heras et al., 2002; Chow-Chua et al., 2003; Singh, 2008).

Although in general terms the literature shows mixed results, quality certification may have a positive effect on performance in the following areas (Casadesús & Karapetrovic 2005): financial results, operational results, customer results and people results.

Research on certification has also been carried out in the hotel industry, although not as frequently as in manufacturing. For example, Callan (1992) finds that quality certification reduces staff turnover and waste. Walker and Salameh (1996) show that quality certification may result in positive changes in employee turnover, enthusiasm, cooperation, communication, operational factors, and customer satisfaction. Similarly, Birdir and Pearson (1998) find that quality certificates can be a tool to promote and improve a firm's image, both internally and externally. Nield and Kozak (1999) show three categories of benefits: operational, marketing and people benefits. Finally, Nicolau and Sellers (2010) show that, on average, a firm's market value reacts positively to being awarded quality certification.

Despite these internal and external benefits, the literature also identifies a number of disadvantages (Brown et al., 1998; Singels et al., 2001; Yahya & Goh, 2001). These disadvantages have also been found in the tourism industry and include the cost, the time involved, and the difficulty in finding consultants with experience in the tourism industry.

Internal and external drivers for seeking certification and performance

First, various scholars suggest a range of specific reasons for seeking quality certification. The most common reasons are customer demand, improving efficiency, increasing market share, developing quality awareness, increasing competitiveness, process standardization, improving service quality, and customer satisfaction (Carlsson & Carlsson, 1995; Jones et al., 1997; Brown et al., 1998; Huanng, 1998; Escanciano et al., 2001; Singels et al., 2001; Gotzamani & Tsiotras, 2002; Posinska et al., 2002; Terziovski et al., 2003; Singh et al., 2006; Lo & Chang, 2007; Jang & Lin, 2008; Magd, 2008). The reasons may be either internal or external (Jones et al., 1997; Escanciano et. al., 2001; Yahya and Goh, 2001; Jang and Lin, 2008).

Internal reasons relate to processes, procedures and people within an organisation. Internal reasons include improving efficiency, product/service quality, processes and procedures, developing quality awareness, and reducing incidents and complaints. External reasons include competitive advantage, increasing market share, customer demand, pressure from customers, and direct entry into new markets.

According to literature, most organisations are motivated by external factors (Carlsson & Carlsson, 1996; Jones et al., 1997; Lee, 1998; Martínez-Costa et al., 2008) although some organisations are primarily motivated by internal factors (Boiral & Roy, 2007; Casadesús et al., 2010).

Research question 1: Is the main motivation for seeking quality certification in hotels internal or external?

Second, some scholars show that the reasons for certification have an influence on performance (Escanciano et al., 2001). Several scholars use motivation as the intervening variable to analyze the effects of ISO 9001 quality certification on benefits (Jones et al., 1997; Brown et al., 1998; Abraham et al., 2000; Yahya & Goh, 2001; Singels et al., 2001; Yeung et al., 2003; Terziovski et al., 2003; Naveh and Marcus, 2005; Prajogo, 2011). They find that organizations seeking quality certification for internal motives achieve clear internal benefits (e.g. lower waste and/or lower costs). Similarly, some scholars report better quality (Jones et al., 1997; Browne et al., 1998; Abraham et al., 2000; Singels et al., 2001) and mixed results are found for other benefits such as higher sales/market share (Jones et al., 1997; Brown et al., 1998; Singels et al., 2001) or profitability (Singels et al., 2001). These studies also find that there are no internal or external benefits from quality certification when internal motives are absent. This indicates that the positive effects depend of the existence of internal motives to develop quality practices (Dick, 2009).

Firms seeking certification for internal reasons encounter fewer difficulties in implementing ISO 9001 (Yahya & Goh, 2001) and obtain higher profits than those that have external reasons (Jones et al., 1997; Singels et al., 2001; Yahya & Goh, 2001; Terziovski & Power, 2007).

Similarly, some interesting works have also been published on the impact of the the reasons for ISO 14001 certification on performance or on the benefits that the firms experienced with the certification. Despite both certifications focus in different aspects of the management —ISO 9001 on the quality management and ISO 14001 on the environmental management—, many authors have underlined their similarities in terms of structure and process of adoption (e.g. Corbett & Kirsch 2001; Corbett 2006; Albuquerque et al., 2007). Gavronski et al. (2008) in a survey of Brazilian companies from the chemical, mechanical and electronic industries concluded that the perceived internal motivations had a strong relationship with the perceived internal benefits, and external motivation correlated with external outcomes. Moreover, Heras-Saizarbitoria et al. (2011) evidenced for a sample of Spanish companies form different sectors of activity that the internal drivers to implement and certify the ISO 14001 standard have a degree of influence on the benefits that was significantly higher than external ones, irrespective of the size of the company and the sector of activity.

These studies focus on manufacturing and service certified firms in general terms and do not analyze differences between industries. That is, their results are valid for organisations in general.

In tourism enterprises (Augustyn & Phebby, 2000) and in service organizations (Psomas et al., 2010) scholarly find that the most critical factors for the effective adoption of quality certification are internal motivation factors such as commitment and support of senior management, efficiency improvement, and continuous improvement of process and product.

Overall institutional theory may explain why firms are motivated by external reasons and the resource-based view explains the importance of internal reasons (Martínez-Costa et al., 2008; Nair & Prajogo, 2009; Prajogo, 2011).

Institutional theory suggests that social and environmental factors play an important role in creating an isomorphic effect which influences the adoption of certain practices, such as quality standards, in organisations that seek legitimacy (Nair & Prajogo, 2009). If such a company is driven by external pressures, the organisation conforms only at an administrative or surface level (Martínez-Costa et al., 2008) and fewer improvements derive from the quality system (Brown et al., 1998).

If the motives for quality certification are more internal, an organisation may create valuable resources, because the activities linked with the quality standard would be part of the

technical core (Martínez-Costa et al., 2008). Consequently, if quality certification is seen as a means of improving internal efficiency, the outcome is more likely to be a workable system.

Therefore, when firms implement quality certification for institutional reasons, such implementation is only superficial, and in practice implies more costs than benefits for the firm. If an organisation is certified for internal reasons, it may mature in its implementation of quality certification by developing practices beyond the mere letter of the guidelines and by internalizing the spirit of the standard and making changes in its quality practices. As a result, those certified firms that score high on internal motivation will have higher levels of performance than those with lower internal motivation (Boiral & Roy, 2007; Martínez-Costa et al., 2008).

Consequently managers committed to internal drivers adopt quality certification with a proactive approach and then differences in success can appear depending on whether the drivers are internal or external.

Research question 2: Do those hotels that certify for internal reasons obtain more benefit than those that certify for external reasons?

As firms that certify for internal reasons experience less difficulty in satisfying the elements of quality certification than those that certify for external reasons (Yahya & Goh, 2001), they possess a more fully developed culture of quality management than firms that certify for external reasons (Jones et al., 1997).

Therefore, firms that are more committed to internal reasons are likely to have a higher degree of implementation of components of quality management (Ahire et al., 1996; Rao et al., 1999; Rahman, 2001), namely quality management practices and tools.

Research question 3: Do those hotels that certify for internal reasons implement quality tools to a greater extent?

Method

This paper uses quantitative data to answer these research questions. The study population includes all two through five star hotels in the region of Alicante (Spain) that have been certified under the Spanish Q for Tourist Quality Mark certification of the Spanish Tourism Quality Institute, ICTE (from now on the Q certificate). The basic document of this certification, in the case of hotels, is the UNE 182001 Standard Tourist hotels and apartments of AENOR, the Spanish Association for Standardization and Certification.

Many hotels in Spain are currently certified according to the ISO 9001 or the Q certificate, and some even have both of them, but the Q certification is the more common certificate in the Spanish hotel industry.

The Q certification aims to achieve minimum quality standards, depending on the administrative category, type of service, and type of establishment, although individual organisations are free to establish higher standards (Casadesús et al., 2010). Although the Q Standard is based on ISO 9001 and is similar to ISO 9001, there are some differences:

- The ISO systems do not set service criteria or standards. The Q Standard includes all the service quality specifications in the standard itself.
- The ISO system applies to any industry or organization, whereas the Q System applies only to the tourism industry.

The ICTE maintains a register of certified hotels which the author used. The register includes a total of 33 certified hotels in Alicante, Spain.

Out of the 33 hotels, 1 (3.03%) is a 2-star hotel, 11 (33.33%) are 3-star hotels, 19 (57.58%) are 4-star establishments and 2 (6.06%) are 5-star hotels.

The study includes a structured questionnaire with closed questions. A panel of four experts, one researcher who specialises in quality and hospitality management, two quality experts from the hotel industry and one quality expert from the ICTE, reviewed the questionnaire in a pre-test. The support of the person responsible for the ICTE in Alicante, who was in contact with the hotels in the population, facilitated communication and made it possible to obtain a good response to the questionnaire.

In a meeting between the ICTE and all the quality managers from Q-certified hotels in the region of Alicante, the person responsible for quality at the ICTE distributed the questionnaire and encouraged the hoteliers to fill it in. The researchers followed this initial distribution up with an e-mailed version of the questionnaire, accompanied by an introductory letter, sent to all the managers of the 33 hotels. At this stage, only 7 hotels returned completed responses (21.2%). Later the researcher sent another copy of the questionnaire to the hotels that had not answered, which led to 7 further responses. Finally, the researcher telephoned all the hotels that had not answered. In this way, 32 hotels responded, a rate of 97%. The hotel which did not answer was a 3-star establishment.

Measures

Reasons for seeking Q certification. The questionnaire included the eight most frequently cited items from the literature, covering both internal and external drivers (Carlsson & Carlsson, 1996; Jones et al., 1997; Brown et al., 1998; Bryde & Slocock, 1998; Singels et al., 2001; Claver et al., 2006) (See the Appendix for details of the items).

Benefits from Q certification. The questionnaire uses eight items (see Appendix), that are consistent with the literature review and include both internal and external benefits (Powell, 1995; Jones et al., 1997; Brown et al., 1998; Samson & Terziovski, 1999; Singels et al., 2001; Kaynak, 2003; Claver et al., 2006).

Tools used for Q. The Appendix lists the items used. The author initially identified a number of common quality techniques and tools, but after the pre-test he eliminated some tools because, according to the experts who took part in the pre-test, they were not in common use in the hotel industry. Data collection sheets, histograms, Pareto diagrams, cause and effect diagrams, stratification, correlation diagrams and statistical process control were among the tools that were eliminated.

All the items used were measured on a 5-point scale.

Analytic procedures

The paper first develops a factor analysis with the set of eight items to identify the most important reasons for seeking Q certification. Then, it uses cluster analysis to classify the hotels according to their reasons for certification, and Kruskal-Wallis tests to analyze the differences between the groups in relation to their use of quality tools and levels of performance.

Results

Research question 1: Reasons for certification

The analyses included a principal component factor analysis of the answers given to the eight items related to reasons for seeking certification. The analysis excluded factors with loads lower than 0.40, which is usually taken as the cut-off for factor loading in empirical research (Huarng et al., 1999). It is difficult to interpret the initial solution, so a rotation was performed (varimax rotation). The analysis revealed three factors, explaining 80% of the total variance. The analysis was an adequate one: the sampling adequacy test with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

measure is 0.58 and the Bartlett's sphericity test is 139.031 (gl=28, p=0.000).

Factors 1 (formed by the process standardization, customer satisfaction and service quality items) and 3 (formed by the improved efficiency and creating quality awareness and culture items) clearly refer to internal reasons, whereas Factor 2 relates to external reasons. Because of the apparent similarity between Factor 1 and Factor 3, the researcher decided to restrict the analysis to a two factor solution. The result shows that although 66% of the variance is explained, which is a lower percentage than in the previous analysis, the two factors that remain are clearly and intuitively linked to internal and external reasons respectively (see Table 1). In this second analysis, Factor 1 incorporates items of Factors 1 and 3 from the previous analysis, while Factor 2 coincides with Factor 2 from the previous analysis.

Table 1. Rotated factor matrix of the reasons

Items	Factors	
	Internal reasons	External reasons
Customer demand		0.791
Increased efficiency	0.774	
Developing quality awareness and culture	0.589	
Increasing market share		0.853
Increasing competitiveness	0.425	0.683
Process standardization	0.817	
Improving customer satisfaction	0.869	
Improved service quality	0.844	
Eigenvalue	3.358	1.958
Percentage variance explained by factor	41.970	24.471
Percentage total variance explained	41.970	66.441
Alpha	0.85	0.69

Source: prepared by the authors.

This analysis groups the data into a more manageable and significant two-factor structure, showing two kinds of reasons for certification:

- Internal reasons reflect the desire on the part of the hotel to use Q certification as a means to improve efficiency and create quality awareness among employees, in addition to improving process standardization and the quality of the service offered, which in turn results in improved customer satisfaction.
- External reasons indicate the importance of customer demand, market demand and improved competitiveness as basic reasons for seeking certification.

Overall as was also the case with the ISO 9001 standards, hotels seek Q certification for both internal and external reasons. The main reasons leading these hotels to seek Q certification are the following, in order of importance:

- Developing quality awareness and a quality culture in the hotel (mean=4.25; standard deviation=0.67)
- Achieving process standardization (mean=4.06; standard deviation=0.61)
- Improving customer satisfaction (mean=4.03; deviation=0.69).

The three reasons with the lowest score are increasing market share (mean=2.78; standard deviation=0.87), customer demand (mean=2.84; standard deviation=1.11) and improving competitiveness (mean=3.34; standard deviation=0.82). The mean value for the internal reasons factor is 4.04 (standard deviation=0.55) and for Factor 2 (external reasons), 2.99 (standard deviation=0.74).

These results show that the most important reasons for seeking Q certification are internal, although hoteliers also consider that customer satisfaction is an important consideration that supports the decision to seek Q certification.

Research question 2: Impacts of internal and external drivers on benefits

The paper uses a two-stage cluster analysis to identify groups of hotels according to their reasons for seeking certification. It applied both hierarchical and non-hierarchical cluster procedures. In the hierarchical analysis, the use of Ward's method and the square of the Euclidean distance minimize the differences within the cluster, analyzing the dendrogram and the change in the agglomeration coefficient.

The application of different methods makes it possible to establish the final number of groups. Thus, when the analysis is conducted with two groups, performing a k-means analysis and validating it through the variance analysis of one factor, the second factor proved not to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level. When the analysis is repeated with three groups, both factors are statistically significant. Therefore, the paper adopted an analysis based on three hotel groups, and this solution was validated by the existence of significant differences between the hotel groups on the factors (see Table 2).

Group 1 consists of only three hotels, which state that their reasons for certification are both internal and external, and the two types of reasons are equally valued. Hotels in Group 2 have less concern for internal reasons than hotels in Group 1, although it is still high, and much less concern for external reasons. Hotels in Group 3 have little concern for internal issues and hardly any concern for external issues, indicating that they are least motivated towards Q certification of all the groups.

Table 2 shows the results of comparing these groups answering research questions 2 and 3, using variables relating to benefits and quality tools.

Regarding benefits quality can influence performance in two complementary ways. It can have internal impact through processes, and it can have external impact through the market (Brown et al., 1998; Lee, 1998; Singels et al., 2001; Yahya & Goh, 2001; Claver et al., 2006). Internal impacts on performance are related to the internal functioning of organisations (e.g. increase in productivity, improvement in motivation, reduction in costs and waste). External impacts on performance have to do with the effects of quality on customer satisfaction and increased demand (e.g. increasing sales and market share, sustaining tourism relationships, finding new tourists, and achieving higher tourist satisfaction levels and an improved image).

Table 2 highlights significant differences between the three groups. First, the results show that the three groups do not perceive the same level of benefits from certification. Indeed, the results show an increase in benefits associated with the level of motivation. The first and second groups are more concerned with internal reasons and seem to have more positive benefits, while the third group note significantly fewer benefits. Therefore, it seems that motivation is significantly associated with the benefits of certification. When the Q certification is implemented for internal motives, internal benefits, such as employee motivation, productivity, costs ($p < 0.05$), innovation and optimization ($p < 0.10$), are higher. When internal motives are low internal benefits are also low. This indicates that hotels seeking certification for internal reasons function better at an internal level, due to improved efficiency

and greater quality awareness. This implies better internal impact on performance. Similarly, the customers of these hotels are more satisfied, although there are no significant differences regarding external image or increased sales (external benefits). This is why there are significant differences between internal benefits ($p=0.004$) and external ones ($p=0.011$), related to improved customer satisfaction.

Table 2. Factor averages and statistical tests verifying the differences

Factors	Mean			Kruskal-Wallis	
	Cluster 1 n=3	Cluster 2 n=19	Cluster 3 n=10	Chi-square	Sign.
Internal reasons	4.53	4.21	3.58	7.352	0.003
External reasons	4.55	3.05	2.40	17.814	0.000
<i>Benefits</i>	3.58	3.54	2.86	9.439	0.001
<i>Internal benefits</i>	3.67	3.59	2.86	10.901	0.001
Increased motivation	4.33	4.00	3.10	6.986	0.002
Increased productivity	4.00	3.42	2.50	10.284	0.003
Reduction in non-conformity costs	2.67	3.47	3.00	7.240	0.037
Favours innovation in tourist product	3.00	3.37	2.50	4.222	0.077
Favours process optimization	4.33	3.68	3.20	5.322	0.084
<i>External benefits</i>	3.44	3.46	2.87	3.896	0.011
Improved customer satisfaction	4.00	4.11	3.20	7.487	0.001
Improved external image	4.00	3.79	3.30	0.995	0.161
Increased sales	2.33	2.47	2.10	0.832	0.328
<i>Quality tools</i>					
Quantification of non-conformity costs	2.00	3.37	2.40	0.9411	0.005
Mystery guest	2.00	3.00	2.20	1.995	0.132
Internal audits	4.00	4.26	3.50	6.781	0.015
Customer satisfaction surveys	4.33	4.42	4.10	0.103	0.513
Flow charts	4.00	3.05	2.50	5.900	0.128
Quality and procedures manual	4.33	4.05	3.50	4.406	0.044
Complaints register	4.33	4.16	3.40	4.860	0.040
Data statistics	4.00	4.26	3.60	2.927	0.024
Minutes from meetings	3.67	3.58	3.30	3.054	0.347
Incident register – internal communication	3.00	4.05	3.40	3.402	0.088
Internal training	4.00	4.26	3.30	7.164	0.012

Source: prepared by the authors.

Therefore, those hotels that are more committed to internal drivers obtain higher levels of benefit because this has internal impacts on their processes and produces higher customer satisfaction (external impact).

Research question 3: Impacts of internal and external drivers on quality tools

The hotels that had the highest level of concern for internal reasons had significantly higher scores for seven tools (Table 2): cost, audits, quality manual and procedures, complaints register, data statistics, internal training ($p<0.05$) and incident register ($p<0.10$). This means that hotels seeking certification for internal reasons use these seven tools more frequently. Also, there are no significant differences regarding the use of a mystery guest, customer surveys, flow charts, or minutes of meetings.

These results indicate that a greater concern for internal factors may facilitate the use of certain tools. In turn, a greater use of these tools may generate positive impacts, for example, on employee motivation (e.g. internal training), improved efficiency (e.g. internal audits and flow charts), and customer satisfaction (e.g. dealing with complaints).

Therefore, those hotels that are more committed to internal drivers implement several quality tools to a greater extent.

Discussion and conclusions

This paper identifies the reasons for seeking Q certification and examines the different impacts of internal and external drivers on benefits and the use of quality tools. The reasons for Q certification in hotels are both internal and external, as was the case for the ISO 9001 standard (Jones et al., 1997; Zaramdini, 2007; Jang & Lin, 2008), but the most important reasons are internal. This result does not coincide with those found by the studies of the ISO 9001 standard, where, as a rule, firms seek certification mainly for external reasons (Jones et al., 1997; Martínez-Costa et al., 2008). In this respect, 81.3% of the respondents do not consider that having Q certification is an important reason for a customer to choose their hotel, while the remaining 18.7% do believe that it is a criterion used by their customers. Although some customers may use the Q award as a criterion for selecting a hotel, most do not choose a hotel because it possesses a Q award. These considerations may explain why internal reasons are more important. Even though hotel managers are interested in the image of the firm and in improving customer satisfaction, the main motivation for seeking Q certification is internal. The pressure from customers in the hotel industry is much less than that exerted by customers in other sectors, which might explain the emphasis on external drivers in firms in other sectors that seek quality certification.

The paper also shows that the internal drivers have different impacts on benefits and the use of quality tools compared with external drivers. It classifies hotels into three clusters, showing that hotels in the first cluster consider that the Q certification meets a strong internal as well as an external need, and they are the most convinced of the relevance of the Q certification. This group corresponds to the group of “quality enthusiasts” described by Boiral and Roy (2007) in their study of the ISO 9001 standard. The second cluster includes those hotels which adopt the standard mainly for internal reasons (which would correspond with the “ISO integrators” described by Boiral and Roy, 2007). The third cluster corresponds to Boiral and Roy’s (2007) “dissident group”, because it includes hotels with relatively weak internal and external motivation, which are the most inclined to contest the standard’s legitimacy. Based on this classification, the results show that hotels seeking certification with a greater concern for internal reasons attain better internal benefits and customer satisfaction than those showing less concern for internal reasons. This result supports the findings from previous studies of the ISO 9001 standard (Singels, et al., 2001; Boiral & Roy, 2007; Terziovski & Power, 2007; Prajogo, 2011) and extends these results to the case of the Q certification in the hotel industry.

In addition, this paper shows that hotels with greater concern for internal reasons for certification are those that develop certain quality tools to a greater extent. This result confirms the findings of studies that show that firms that use ISO certification for internal reasons may develop the quality management components more widely (Ahire et al., 1996; Rahman, 2001), and extends these results to the Q certification in the hotel industry.

Based on these ideas, part of the benefit that hotels derive may be due to a greater interest in achieving the Q certification. Those hotels seeking certification for internal drivers will be more motivated to meet the requirements of the Q certification, and will make more frequent use of certain quality improvement tools. This may lead them to obtain clearer internal benefits and improve customer satisfaction, and therefore, to profit more fully from the process of Q certification and to achieve better levels of performance.

The contribution of this paper to the literature is that it extends the results of previous studies of quality certification to a specific type of certification, namely the Q certification, and extends the results on the impacts of internal and external drivers on performance to the hotel

industry. The results confirm the findings of previous studies of quality certification among manufacturing organisations. Those earlier studies show that more internally driven companies have better performance outcomes, for both internal and external performance (Martínez-Costa et al., 2008). In addition, this paper complements the work of Boiral and Roy (2007), extending the results of their study of ISO 9001 to the Q certification in the hotel industry.

The managerial implication is that a commitment to internal drivers facilitates the correct application of the Q certification, producing advantages that outweigh any possible disadvantages. In this context, the internal drivers for seeking certification may lead to a better application of the standard, and thus generate greater internal benefits and customer satisfaction. As ISO 9001 and the Q certification seem to behave in very similar ways in these respects, it is reasonable to conclude that ISO considers the Q certification as the basis for the development of a standard that is similar to ISO 9001 specifically for the tourist industry. Such a new standard will allow tourist organizations to obtain benefits similar to those related to the ISO 9001 standard, so long as the firm's concern for the quality award is more internal than external. This should reinforce the ISO's continuing efforts to develop an international ISO standard applicable to the industry, along similar lines to those that have already been successfully applied in Spain.

Finally, several limitations of the present study should be noted. The present study is based on cross-sectional data drawn from 32 hotels. Also, the findings of the study are specific to the hotels in a specific region in Spain. The study was undertaken to comprehend better the nature of the problem, since very few studies have considered quality certification in the hotel industry. Consequently, future research could use a larger sample of Spanish hotels to analyze these issues.

Acknowledgements

This contribution was developed and finished during a research leave of prof. Heras-Saizarbitoria and prof. Tarí in Kent Business School (University of Kent). These express their deepest gratitude to Kent Business School and, more specifically, to Prof. Gavin Dick for his hospitality and support. Moreover, prof. Iñaki Heras-Saizarbitoria thanks the financial support from the Department of Education, Universities and Research of the Basque Government (Programs for the upgrade and mobility of researchers 2011).

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Appendix

Please rate the reasons which led your establishment to seek Q certification, on a scale from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (extremely important).

Customer demands and requirements
Increasing the efficiency of your services and staff
Developing quality awareness and culture in the hotel
Increasing market share
Increasing competitiveness
Process standardization
Improving customer satisfaction
Improved service quality

Please rate the benefits which your hotel has experienced through Q certification, on a scale from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (extremely important).

Improved customer satisfaction
Increased employee motivation
Increased productivity
Reduction in non-conformity costs
Improved external image of the hotel
Increased sales
Favours innovation in tourist product
Favours process optimization

Please rate the usage of the following quality tools within your hotel, on a scale from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (extremely important).

Quantification of non-conformity costs
Mystery Guest
Facilities and/or corporate internal audits
Customer satisfaction surveys
Flow charts
Quality and procedures manual
Complaints register
Data statistics – indicators comparisons - continuous improvement
Minutes from meetings
Incident register - internal communication
Internal training