

Chapter 10

Evaluation Guide for the Institutional Academic Management of an Educational Hospitality Program Based on the Soft System Methodology (SSM)

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ABSTRACT

The chapter looks at the Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) as an alternative that is oriented to analyzing the subject of the study in situations with a high level of human involvement, such as education and hospitality, with the aim of evaluating them with a transformative approach and a holistic foundation. Based on the use of this methodology, furthermore, the chapter focuses on a proposed evaluation guide on the academic and administrative management of institutions that educate in the field of hospitality considering the following components: a) academic profile – teacher work program; b) teaching – learning process; c) supporting infrastructure and equipment; d) director management; e) students; f) entailment to the labor sector; g) efficiency terminal; and h) recognition program.

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INTRODUCTION: GENERAL SYSTEMS THEORY

Contemporary world is a society composed of organizations, which are made by individuals, as well as several subsystems that work in a coordinated manner, so that the man himself is a system which is immersed in other systems that interacts in multiple ways.

The Systems General Theory (SGT) is an oriented paradigm to find common properties to entities which arise in all levels of reality, but are traditionally object from different academic disciplines. Its origin is attributed to the Austrian biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who coined the name in the middle of the 20th century.

In this sense, the central term of this theory is the system, which is defined as a whole unit organized, composed of two or more parts, components or subsystems that are interdependent, and delineated by identifiable environment limits or supra-systems.

Ergo, a system is a set of elements that interact and have at least one objective in common, as well as it has a series of functions, steps or procedures that obtain, describe, and analyze the information.

As mentioned by Checkland (1997), the concept of system encompasses a group of elements connected to each other, forming a whole, showing properties at all and not only properties of its components, so that the objectives of the SGT are:

- Analyze how specific elements are related to and what they are related (research from the elements, to discover the objective, the system and the environment) and,
- Determine which components are required and how they are interrelated to produce specific results (research through an objective which is known, to discover the system that produces it).

Although the SGT emerged in the field of biology, contributions began to be used in different disciplines, as well as influenced the emergence of new ones. Thus it has been constituting the broad field of systems Sciences, with specialties such as Cybernetics, the information theory, game theory, and the theory of chaos.

The emergence of the systems approach has its origin in the inability of science to deal with complex problems. The scientific method, based on reductionism, repeatability and refutation, is unable to very complex phenomena for several reasons:

1. The number of variables that interact is greater than which occur and control in the scientific method, so it is not possible to carry out real experiments;
2. The possibility of those unknown factors influencing observations is much higher;
3. As a result, the quantitative approach is limited because it only considers the existence of objectively measurable elements.

Thus, the phenomena of complexity is especially evident in social sciences since a large number of factors, economic, human, technological and natural are extremely interlinked. In this case the difficulty is multiplied by the impossibility to carry out experiments and the intervention itself of man as subject and object (rational and free) research.

So, most of the problems with those who treat social sciences are evaluation, management, organization, planning, control, problem-solving and decision-making. Currently these problems arise at any time as hospitality, is the Administration, industry, economy, defense, health, education, among others.

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