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THE SOCIAL LEGITIMACY OF GOLF TOURISM: AN APPLICATION TO THE GOLF COURSES OF ANDALUSIA

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ABSTRACT

Today, respect for the natural environmental is a variable that plays an important role when it comes to configuring a tourist destination or product, particularly since this is an industry for which the location is irrevocably fixed. Andalusia, in particular, has become well-established as a major golf tourism destination. It has more golf courses than any other of the 17 Spanish Autonomous Regions. This has stimulated a debate on the environmental impacts of sporting facilities of this type, with attention consequently focused on the need of these tourism companies to achieve and maintain social legitimacy. In the work described here, the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique is applied to analyse the impact of the institutional context on the implementation of environmental practices and the achievement of social legitimacy by these organisations.

KEYWORDS

Golf Tourism; Natural Environment; Institutional Theory; Partial Least Squares.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today it is unthinkable to consider a tourist destination or product that is not associated with favourable environmental and natural parameters like good climate, beautiful landscape, clean beaches, etc. Bosch et al. (1998) state that "the high

quality of the tourist product or service in a strict sense is not sufficient: the environmental quality must be added to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty". A destination's natural environment is now recognised as constituting an essential part of its appeal for tourism activities, particularly for those specific activities and experiences that would be impossible to enjoy if a different physical location were substituted. Tourism is not like a conventional industry where suppliers could seek to transfer specific products and services to different places in other countries with more flexible and permissive environmental requirements.

Moreover, like any economic activity, tourism has impacts on the natural environment of the surroundings in which it is set. Following Dowling (1992), we can differentiate four phases over the course of the last four decades in the evolving relationship between tourism and the natural environment.

-The first phase covers the decade of the 1950's. At that time, the most widespread idea was that relatively limited tourist flows did not necessarily have to affect the natural environment in a negative way.

-The decade of the 1960's brought with it a phenomenon not previously known, mass tourism. It became recognised that this kind of tourism did increase the negative effects on the natural environment. These years also saw an increase in people's awareness of environmental topics, which contributed to generating the belief that conflicts would arise between the expectations of future growth of tourism and its possible negative effects on the natural environment.

-The third phase spanned the 1970's and 1980's, when a wide debate took place on the relationship between the environment and tourism. In those years the first research papers analysing those impacts began to be published; one article worth emphasising is that of Mathieson and Wall (1982), in which a comprehensive description was given of the positive and negative impacts of tourism, including its environmental impacts. The tendency in this period was to find a symbiosis in which tourism and the environment had mutually beneficial effects.

-The last phase is the period framed by the 1990's. It was in this epoch when the relationship between tourism and environment begun to be studied under an integrated approach within the paradigm of sustainable development (Ayuso, 2003). Attempts were made to make tourism activities compatible with the natural

environment in such a way that the negative impacts are minimised and the positive impacts maximised.

It has given rise to an entire tourism industry revolving around golf, and Andalusia has become the leading Autonomous Region of Spain in the reception of tourists of this type, with the consequent increase in the number of golf courses. We are speaking, consequently, of an activity that produces some very important synergies for the economy of the region. Hosteltur (1) tells us that, in the year 2009, Andalusia was visited by 360,000 golf tourists, whose expenditure generated income to a value of some €500 million, half of the total generated in Spain by this "product". These golf tourists are principally from Britain and Germany; the average length of stay was more than 9 days; and their average daily expenditure per head was 92 euros, some 12 euros more than that of conventional tourists. But at the same time, a wide social debate has been generated on the environmental impacts of this type of tourism, an activity that requires facilities of a very particular type.

The present study is based on the Institutional Theory, and aims to identify and describe the influence on golf courses (and the companies that own and manage them) exerted by the various different pressures argued by the proponents of classic Institutional Theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; North 1990; Scott 1995). The organisations responsible for golf tourism form part of a broader and important sector of industry, tourism, to which this theory is hardly ever applied. Equally, previous studies on institutional pressures have normally been centred on institutions belonging to the public sector. Therefore this work represents a new approach to the study of Institutional Theory in organisations of the private sector subject to market forces.

2. <u>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</u>

The great majority of institutional theorists are agreed that the three pillars or systems supporting this theory are: the regulatory, normative and cognitive systems. From each of these the framework of this theory is constructed; consequently, we now proceed to analyse each of these components.

2.1) *THE REGULATORY SYSTEM*

Scott (1995) states that all institutions involve the regulation of behaviour by means of explicit regulatory processes such as standards, controls and sanctions. In this behavioural framework, all the parties involved pursue their own particular interests; therefore coercive mechanisms are the principal means of control used (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). In this system, which is a constituent part of the institutional theoretical framework, the predominant factors are force, fear and convenience.

In many situations, the presence is required of an agent who sets rules. Economic historians attribute this role to the State, which must also serve as the source of reference for the rules and must ensure compliance with them (North, 1990). This coincides with the line defended by the political institutionalists, who presume that the agents, including the State, have natural interests that they pursue rationally through a cost-benefit logic of utility. Thus, the rules are obeyed because, for the agent in question, they are a means for serving the agent's own interests, taking into consideration the possible rewards and sanctions that exist in this respect.

2.2) *THE NORMATIVE SYSTEM*

The main feature of this pillar is a set of normative rules or standards of behaviour; these bring in a dimension of prescription, evaluation and obligation. Both standards and values are included in normative systems. For Scott (1995), values are conceptions of the agent's preferences or wishes, together with the construction of standards that can be used to compare and evaluate existing structures and behaviours. Standards, however, specify how things should be done, and define the legitimate methods for pursuing specified values. By these means, the normative system will specify not only the goals or objectives but also the means to use in order to achieve them.

Whereas some values and rules are applied to the collective group as a whole, others are only applied to a particular type or class of individuals. Therefore, limited

roles appear. Berger and Luckman (1967) state that "all institutionalised behaviour implies roles", which can arise formally or informally.

2.3) *THE COGNITIVE SYSTEM*

The principal proponents of this system are anthropologists and sociologists such as Geertz, Berger, Meyer, Zucker, Powell and DiMaggio (Navarro, 1997). These authors stress the cognitive elements of institutional organisation and behaviour; that is, the rules that constitute the nature of reality and the formulas by which meaning is derived. These rules and formulas become integrated in the cognitive dimension of the individual who has dealings with the institution. They state that what mediates between the external stimuli and the response of an individual is the interaction of a series of symbols, which determine the meaning that we attribute to objects and actions (D´Andrade, 1984). These meanings arise from individuals' interactions, and then various behaviours are associated with them.

It is significant that these rules imply the construction of typifications; in other words, specific and subjectively unique rules are incorporated in their individualised application.

2.4) *SOCIAL LEGITIMACY*

Jennings and Zanderbergen (1995) are the principal authors cited in the scientific literature with respect to the use of Institutional Theory to explain the influence of the natural environment, in all its aspects, on organisations. With these authors, King (1995) is another pioneer in presenting principles of institutional theory as a means to explain practices in respect of the natural environment, that can be extrapolated to present-day organisations.

Hoffman (1999) is another significant author in the application of this theory, studying how the environmental factor has evolved in organisations (2). His postulates were reinforced by Basal and Kendall (2000), who pointed to the search for legitimacy as the principal motivation for the adoption of these practices. For Bansal and Clelland (2004), legitimacy is the principal factor of pressure, because a

loss of legitimacy as a result of environmental sanctions causes an increase in risk associated with the company, this being a negative factor in its valuation.

For Meyer and Scott (1983), legitimacy is the ultimate objective of all organisations, under the institutional approach. Companies need to be accepted socially in their fields of activity, according to Ashford and Gibbs (1990). These authors state that legitimacy is a status conferred on an organisation by the corresponding social actors. It will be the search for legitimacy that leads organisations to adopt particular structures or policies (Schuman, 1995).

According to Scott (1995), legitimacy can be defined as "*the condition that reflects social alignment, normative support or conformity with relevant rules and laws".* For this author each pillar of the institutional theory generates a source of legitimacy. Thus, in the case of the regulatory system, organisations strive to be legitimate by adapting to the legal obligations imposed by the regulating institutions. According to the normative pillar, a legitimate organisation will be one that takes actions out of a perceived moral obligation, and thus complies with the standards expected of it. Lastly, for the cognitive pillar, a legitimate organisation will be one that tries to adopt forms of behaviour accepted as rational and correct, behaviours that have been called "rational myths" (Scott, 1995).

Within the broad field of institutionalism, numerous authors have written about legitimacy; the more notable among these are Brint and Karabel, 1991; DiMaggio, 1991; Galaskiewicz, 1991, Elsbach, 1994. But without any doubt, the definition that has been considered most relevant within this approach is that proposed by Suchman (1995); this author defines legitimacy as "*a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, convenient or appropriate within a socially constructed system of standards, values, beliefs and definitions".*

However, legitimacy is an attribute that has been developed more theoretically than empirically, given the difficulty in measuring it. In the line of empirical studies that have set out to measure legitimacy, that published by Deephouse (1996) is significant; this author proposed that it is possible to measure the legitimacy of an entity by examining the level of acceptance or evaluation made of it by two main social actors: the government and the general public.

In our research model we take into account the social actors proposed by Deephouse (1996) in the following way. On the one hand, among the *stakeholders* whose sensitivity is considered in the model below, we include the regulatory agencies (the State); and on the other hand, within the concept of the general public, we include the entity's clients, suppliers, shareholders, employees, ethical management, associations and groups of ecologists, citizens and communications media.

3. RESEARCH MODEL PROPOSED

From a review of the literature on the Institutional Theory we have proposed a structural model that relates the pressures on institutions to respect the natural environmental, with the application of environmental practices, and the securing of social legitimacy.
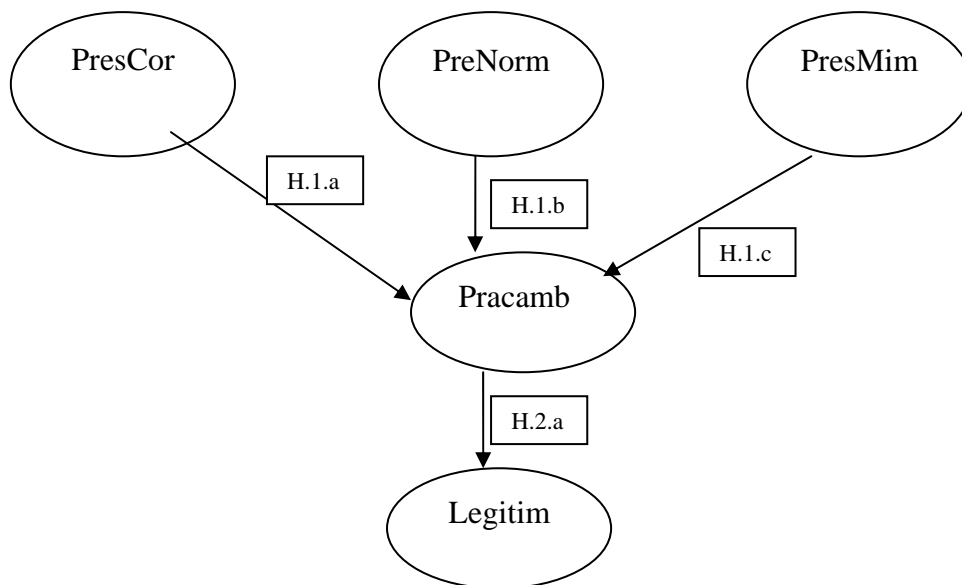

Figure 1. Research model proposed

In which: PresNorm = Normative pressures. Prescor = Coercive pressures. PresMim = Mimetic pressures. Pracamb = Application/implementation of environmental practices. Legitm = Social legitimacy.

158

The model that we have tested contains 5 constructs (or latent variables) and 34 indicators (or observable variables), with relations of the reflective type; the model is not altered a priori by sample restrictions, given that the number of observations complies with the heuristic proposed by Chin (1998).

3.1) *HYPOTHESES OF THE MODEL*

Based on these arguments, we have formulated the following hypotheses, which will be verified in the empirical part of the present work:

H.1a: *Coercive pressure, resulting from the laws and other regulations applicable, has a positive influence on the adoption of sustainable environmental practices.*

H.1b: *The acceptance of values and standards that are derived from normative pressures has a positive influence on the adoption of sustainable environmental practices.*

H.1c: *The imitation of environmental practices applied by other organisations perceived as successful has a positive influence on the adoption of sustainable environmental practices.*

These hypotheses are justified on the basis that the different institutional pressures on the organisations under study promote different kinds of motivation for the adoption of the models of behaviour under study. Thus, Kostova and Roth (2002) state that the regulatory, normative and cognitive components that give rise to the coercive, normative and mimetic pressures, respectively, have the effect of involving an organisation in its institutional context, and so promote the adoption of changes in policy. Hence the organisation may voluntarily adopt new practices in response to pressures on it to adapt to the accepted standards, or it may adopt them involuntarily, under the threat of sanctions, in response to the coercion of authoritative institutional forces (Scott, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Tolbert and Zucker, 1996; Barringer and Milkovich, 1998).

The testing of these hypotheses will reveal which of the three institutional mechanisms exerts the most pressure on the environmental behaviour of the golf courses of Andalusia.

According to Bansall and Kendall (2000), the search for legitimacy in the institutional context is the principal argument that explains the behaviour of organisations towards environmental sustainability. Thus, according to the arguments presented in section 2.4 of this paper, we put forward the following hypothesis is respect of the concept of social legitimacy:

H.2a: *The implementation of practices for protection of the natural environment is motivated principally by the search for social legitimacy.*

4. *SPECIFICATIONS OF THE SAMPLE*

A structured questionnaire was used to measure the different variables; this was first submitted to a pilot test in four golf courses (that were not included in the final sample), and administered between December 2008 and February 2009; it was mailed three times and followed up by telephone. Details are given in Table I.

Research field	Golf courses located in the Autonomous Region of Andalusia.
Geographic location	Andalusia.
Methodology:	Structured questionnaire, Likert-type scale from 1 to 5.
Universe:	96 golf courses in Andalusia.
Size of the sample	Sample = universe, 96 golf courses.
Valid responses	31
Responses rejected	2
Software for data treatment:	SPSS 15.0, Visual PLS, Microsoft Office Excel 2003 and SAS.
Period of data collection	Pretest: September 2008. First mailing: December 2008. First re-mailing: January 2009. Second re-mailing: February 2009. Treatment of data: February and March 2009.

Table 1: Specifications of the research model

The scales used to measure the different constructs have been adapted from scales fully validated in previous studies. In particular, the scales used to measure the institutional pressures (coercive, normative and mimetic) are those proposed by Kostova and Roth (2002) and Llanas (2005). In the case of the application of environmental practices by golf courses, the scale used is that proposed by Romero

(2005); and to measure social legitimacy, the scales applied are those used previously by Deephouse (1996), Fernández (2001) and Llanas (2005).

5. <u>ANALYSIS OF DATA USING PLS</u>

We have used the Visual-PLS software package for estimating the path coefficients, the composite reliability, the average variance extracted (AVE), R^2 and Stone-Geisser, applying the bootstrap technique for this. The reasons for using this method are that it is orientated towards prediction but, at the same time, it allows us to analyse models of a certain complexity and to perform an exploratory analysis; it can also be used in the confirmation of a particular theory.

The PLS technique is based on an iterative combination of principal components analysis and regression analysis, with the principal object of explaining the variance of the constructs in the model (Chin, 1998). The path coefficients and the loading of the item in the context of the model proposed are estimated simultaneously, thus avoiding biases and inconsistency in the estimation of the parameters, while enabling the iterations to be checked (Chin et al., 2003).

To evaluate the overall goodness of the model, Tenenhaus et al. (2005) propose employing the *Goodness–of-Fit* (GOF) indicator that utilises both the geometric mean of the AVEs and the mean R^2.

5.1) *ANALYSIS OF THE MEASUREMENT MODELS*

In this part we determine whether the theoretical concepts are measured correctly by the observed variables, and for this, we study their validity and reliability. In a PLS model the individual reliability of the item, the internal consistency and the convergent and discriminant validity are analysed (Chin, 1998).

The individual reliability of each item for constructs with reflective indicators is evaluated by the PLS model, by examining the loading, or simple correlation, of each indicator with the construct to be measured. The value of the standardised loadings must be equal to or greater than 0.505, according to Falker and Miller (1992). In the scales employed, the majority of the indicators present loadings higher than 0.505.

However, after successive re-specifications of the model, we are left with 21 of the 34 items that comprised the initial scale.

The reliability of a construct allows us to check the internal consistency of all the indicators when measuring the concept; in other words, an evaluation is made of how rigorously the manifest variables are measuring the same latent variable. To measure this parameter we must look at the composite reliability, given the advantages that it presents over the Cronbach's Alpha. For this we follow Nunnally (1988), who suggests 0.7 as a sufficient level for the reliability in early stages of research.

The convergent validity is analysed by the AVE, which gives the amount of variance that a construct obtains from its indicators in relation to the amount of variance due to the measurement error. For this, Fornell and Lacker (1981) recommend values higher than 0.5, since this level guarantees that at least 50% of the variance of the construct is due to its indicators. The following table 2 presents the AVE values obtained in the research model proposed.

CONSTRUCT	ITEM LOADS	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY	AVE
PRESCOR		**0.696860**	**0.537728**
Conoley	0.649000		
Orgregul	0.808900		
PRESNORM		**0.802909**	**0.580300**
Obligmor	0.619800		
Congrval	0.865700		
Normsoci	0.779300		
PRESMIM		**0.710043**	**0.574898**
Imipac	0.488200		
Conoexit	0.954700		
PRACAMB		**0.914991**	**0.576083**
Numgrup	0.794100		
Porpact	0.845300		
Costemed	0.695000		
Emplefor	0.833200		
Horafor	0.761000		
Provecert	0.759400		
Compcert	0.761000		
Diflogro	0.592600		
LEGITIMI		**0.8744580**	**0.543700**
Recosoci	0.829600		
Valorg	0.777400		
Clielegi	0.749700		
Asoclegi	0.639800		
Proflegi	0.513200		
Realgurp	0.857300		

Table 2: Evaluation of the measurement models

To evaluate the discriminant validity we check whether the average variance extracted (AVE) of the construct is greater than the square of the correlations between that construct and the rest that make up the research model (Fornell and Lacker, 1981), which tells us that one construct is different from any other. To make the calculation simpler, we perform the inverse procedure, that is, we calculate the square root of AVE, which must be greater than the correlations presented with the rest of the constructs. These values are given in table 3 below, in which the elements of the diagonal correspond to the square roots of the AVEs.

Constructs	PresCoer	PresNorm	PresMlm	Pracamb	Legtimi
PresCoer	0.733				
PresNorm	-0.379	0.761			
PresMlm	-0.052	0.295	0.758		
Pracamb	-0.418	0.455	-0.329	0.759	
Legtimi	-0.339	0.657	-0.338	0.499	0.737

Table 3: Discriminant validity of the constructs of the research model

5.2) *ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURAL MODEL*

The following figure (3) represents the results of the operation of the structural model. Together with the arrows showing the causal order, the standardised path coefficients and the value of the corresponding Student-T test are shown. For this the Bootstrap re-sampling technique is employed; this allows us to verify the significance of the relationships represented by the hypotheses.
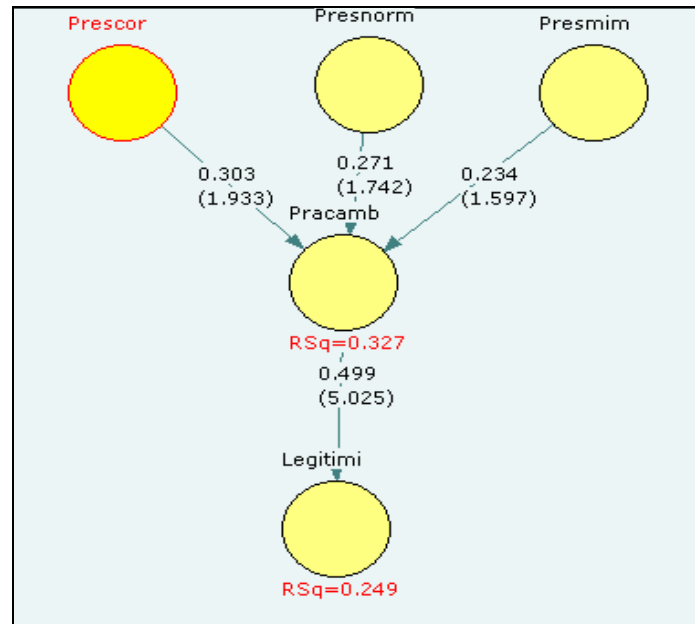
Figure 3: Result of the structural model

Levels of significance: *P<0.1; **P<0.05; ***P<0.001 (based on $t_{(499)}$ of (two tails).

To continue with the propositions argued by Barclay et al. (1995), Tenenhaus et al. (2005) and Henseler et al. (2009), we consider that this analysis should be strengthened with the *cross-validated redundancy index* (Q^2) or Stone-Geisser test (Stone, 1974; Geisser, 1975). In this way we can complement the evaluation of the level of significance of the relationships between the constructs and the evaluation of the R^2 tests.

Q^2 is a type of cross-validated R^2 between the manifest variables of an endogenous latent variable and all the manifest variables associated with the latent variables that explain the endogenous latent variables; the estimated structural model is used for this (Tenenhaus et. al., 2005). The Stone-Geisser test gives us a measure of goodness with which the values observed are reconstructed by the model and its parameters (Chin, 1998); it is generally accepted that a model has predictive relevance when Q^2 is greater than zero (Pinto Jiménez et al., 2006; Hensler et al., 2009). Q^2 can be measured utilising procedures of the *blindfolding* type (Tenenhaus et al, 2005) and is only applicable to latent variables that are incorporated in a reflective measurement model (Hensler, 2009), as in the model presented in this paper. In our case the values of Q^2 are slightly higher than zero, as shown in the

164

following table 4; this indicates that the model has some predictive capacity or relevance, albeit weak.

Endogenous constructs	Q^2
Pracamb	0.012
Legitmi	0.004
Desemp	0.008

Table 4: Stone-Geisser test for the latent variables of the model.

In any case, the values presented by Q^2 in our work are not negative, which would have indicated that the model lacked any predictive power (Henseler, 2009). We agree, however, with what Barclay et al. (1995) state: they argue that the objective of the PLS analysis is to explain the variance in a sense of regression; thus R^2 and the level of the path coefficients are sufficient measures that are indicative of how well the model performs. In our case, acceptable levels in both measures are obtained, so we can conclude that the model does have predictive capacity.

Our last task is to evaluate the goodness of fit of the model. Principally because the PLS technique lacks an index that could provide a validation of the model, authors such as Tenenhaus et al. (2005) propose a global criterion for evaluating the overall quality of the model. Specifically we apply the *Goodness-of-Fit* (GOF) indicator, which values both the quality of the measurement model of the latent variables with reflective indicators, utilising the mean of the AVEs for this, and the quality of the structural model, utilising the mean of the R^2 values. In our case the GOF value is 0.56, which is above the limit of 0.36 proposed for this indicator by Chin (1998). Therefore we can state that our model possesses a sufficient predictive quality.

6. *CONCLUSIONS*

From the analysis of the information obtained in respect of the golf courses of Andalusia we can draw conclusions of relevance on the relationship existing between

the institutional context in respect of protection of the natural environment, and the achievement of social legitimacy by the organisations that own and manage these facilities.

Of the set of four relationships of causal order included in the research model, two are confirmed and the other two are rejected. Therefore, we can state that the pressures of coercive character are those that exert the greatest influence on the application of environmental practices by the golf courses of Andalusia. This conclusion differs from those reached in other studies of so-called green institutionalism; in this line, Jennings and Zandebergen (1995) state that normative pressure has the greatest impact on the dissemination of concepts and practices related to sustainability. However, there are numerous studies that have reached the same conclusion as ourselves on the strength of the coercive pressures on the implementation of practices for the protection of the natural environment; notable among these are the studies of King and Lenox (2000), Palmer and Richard (2001), Timothy and Rodney (2005), and Vargas and Riquel (2010). In the case of the golf tourism sector of Andalusia, the coercive pressures are the leading protagonist in the configuration of the institutional setting, due principally to the existence of numerous regulatory authorities that supervise these practices.

Additional weight for this present study can be found in the conclusions of Bansal and Kendal (2000), who state that the search for legitimacy in the institutional context is the principal argument that explains the environmental behaviour of organisations.

The following table summarises the results of testing the hypotheses of the model:

Hypotheses	Constructs	β coefficients	Student-T test (bootstrap)	Level of significance and testing
H.1a	PresCoer->Pracamb	0.303	1.933*	**Accepted** for **a level of significance of P<0.1.**
H.1b	PresNorm>>Pracamb	0.271	1.742	**Rejected**
H.1c	PresMim>>Pracamb	0.234	1.597	**Rejected**
H.2a	Pracamb>>Legitmit	0.499	5.025***	**Accepted** for a level of significance of P<0.001.

Table 5: Testing the hypotheses of the model

In function of these results we can state that, although each pillar of institutionalism generates a source of legitimacy, as put forward by Scott (1995), in the case of the golf courses of Andalusia, it is the regulatory pillar that carries the greatest weight in the achievement of social acceptance. The principal reason for this is that the managers of organisations of this type try to adapt to the legal requirements imposed by the various governmental authorities. In the case of Andalusia, there is a fairly comprehensive set of laws, and the regulation imposed in environmental matters is especially onerous. This is due to two possible factors. One possibility is that the authorities understand that playing golf is an activity representing a major tourist resource important for the sector as a whole, and they also understand that the natural environment in Andalusia represents a significant value added and a competitive advantage over other tourist destinations. The other possible explanation for the high degree of regulation lies in the actual characteristics of this type of facility: in the south of Spain, according to the data of our sample, some 85% of golf courses form part of a broader offer of leisure and tourism associated principally with, hotels, resorts and leisure complexes. This would necessitate the golf courses complying with more extensive legislation.

We can state, therefore, that today, in the scientific literature on the economics of the company, the influence that the company has on the natural environment is fully accepted. Hence it is essential to introduce protection of the environment as a variable in any analysis claiming support from Organisational Theory. In other words,

the change of economic paradigm, in which the classic conception has now become the environmental conception, has also reached the company. These environmental responses strengthen the institutionalisation of organisational sustainability while, at the same time, helping to legitimise the company or organisation in the face of society's demands for a new concept of the company, in which the traditional financial-economic approach is complemented with more emphasis on the socio-economic approach. Within this new approach, the protection of the natural environment acquires major significance.

Therefore, there is today an evident trend towards socially-responsible companies and, in particular, towards environmentally-sustainable companies: the companies of the tourism sector have not been exempt from the process described in the preceding conclusion. In the Autonomous Region of Andalusia, where the tourism sector is the principal generator of wealth, a product-concept combining tourism and golf has been developed, and this has been gaining increasing weight within this sector. Andalusia offers unrivalled climate conditions for this almost universally-popular sporting activity, which has favoured the commercial take-off of golf tourism. And in line with the growth of this type of tourism, there has been a parallel increase in concern over the environmental impact generated by the construction, maintenance and management of golf courses.

We can state that the present paper responds to the appeal made by authors such as DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Scott (1995) and Tolbert and Zucker (1996), regarding the need for empirical studies that would help to consolidate the Institutional Theory. In this context Tolbert and Zucker (1996) claim that there is little consensus on the research techniques and methodologies that are most appropriate for the institutionalist approach. With this study we have provided a statistical methodology for the theoretical framework of institutionalism that is valid for testing its principles.

However, the study presented also has certain limitations that should be made clear. The possibility of making generalizations from the conclusions obtained is limited not only by the small size of the sample and its restricted geographic and sectoral scope, but also by the possibility that subjective viewpoints have conditioned the responses by the persons interviewed (course managers and green-keepers).

Hence the application of other more confirmatory techniques would be justified and advisable.

In recognition of this last limitation, the authors propose a future line of research using such techniques, complemented with the expansion of the sample, the performance of multigroup analysis, and the incorporation of other theoretical approaches to complement the reference frame.

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Endnotes:

(1) http://issuu.com/hosteltur_2010/docs/especial_golf_hosteltur_2010

(2) His work considered the chemical industry in the United States.