

Impact of Human Recourses in Tourism Management

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examines human resource (HR) management constraints in the tourism industry and proposes strategic actions to address these challenges. **Method:** Utilizing a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews with eight HR managers from large hospitality firms, the study reveals four key issues: recruitment of talented staff, high turnover rates, safety and welfare risks, and inadequate training infrastructure. **Result:** The difficulty in attracting skilled employees, frequent staff departures, workplace hazards, and limited professional development opportunities significantly impact organizational stability, service quality, and industry sustainability. Analyzing these challenges through the strategic HRM framework, the study underscores the critical role of human capital acquisition, retention, and development in tourism sector performance. The research introduces a framework linking HRM practices with workforce sustainability, emphasizing the importance of recruitment and retention strategies aligned with organizational goals. **Novelty:** Findings highlight the urgent need for public and private investment in tourism education, enhanced workplace safety standards, and company-led training programs. Addressing these HRM constraints through policy reforms and targeted development initiatives can strengthen workforce stability, reduce turnover, and improve service quality. By providing insights into innovative HR strategies, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on sustainable tourism workforce management, particularly in developing economies where HR challenges remain prevalent.

INTRODUCTION

The characteristics of tourism highlight a number of characteristics that have important consequences for people in this sector and the role that human resources development plays in supporting improved efficiency and quality at all levels in organizations, destinations and countries:

1. Tourism is a “multi-product” industry and different sectors of tourism offer a wide range of occupations with diverse human capital requirements;
2. Tourism is characterized by duality, where large multinational corporations coexist with SMEs and microenterprises (and tourism is numerically dominated by small businesses).
3. The realities of human resource development (e.g. availability of training budgets or plans, skill levels, career progression opportunities and work motivation) are very different for large and small, even micro-businesses;
4. Multiple product characteristics create diversity in tourism but are also built on significant sartorial interdependencies built around the tourist destination

concept, which often replaces individual business components within it for most visitors.

5. Unlike individual business management in tourism, destination management creates challenges and problems in terms of ownership and leadership.

Tourism businesses are increasingly adopting HR strategies that align with their environmental and social responsibility goals. Ethical hiring practices, such as fair wages, local hiring, and gender equality, help make sure that employment opportunities benefit local communities and contribute to their economic development. Also, eco-friendly policies are becoming more and more important every day for various HR practices. Therefore, management is giving emphasis to carbon footprints and the need to promote green behaviors within organizations. By promoting sustainable hospitality and tourism through environmentally conscious choices, businesses can align themselves with the growing eco-tourism trend.

Seasonality in structuring how tourism operations are organized and people are managed. Stochastic demand patterns create challenges for tourism businesses in an operational, marketing, financial and, above all, human resource management sense. Tourism is a fragmented and diverse industry within the economy and is further characterized by diversity in organizational, ownership and operational terms. Indeed, many commentators question the validity of using an inclusive term such as “industry” to capture the characteristics of a sector which contains such a wide range of operations within the public, private and voluntary domain. This heterogeneity is one of the defining features of the sector and impacts upon all aspects of operations, marketing, finance and, indeed, human resource management.

A feature of tourism is represented by the withdrawal of labor surplus from other sectors and indirectly reducing unemployment, and in this way its role in the national economy is valued [1]. The relationship between tourism and the use of workforce manifests itself directly or indirectly, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

It is widely argued that people are vital to the successful delivery of tourism services, and as a result, employees in tourism are portrayed as a critical dimension in the successful operation of businesses in the sector.” The story of successful tourism businesses is largely about people – how they are educated and trained, how they are valued and rewarded, and how they are supported throughout the process of continuous learning and career development. “None of this happens by chance” [2].

Szivas [3] argues that “only competent and motivated employees can provide high quality service and gain competitive advantage for their companies and tourist destinations.”

The numerical increase in the number of people involved in organizing and solving trips and providing services to tourists, the number of people traveling, the departure distances, the time spent on vacation, etc. is an effect of a significant increase.

Human resource management challenges affecting the developing tourism sector in many countries through an in-depth qualitative study. The results will reveal key problem areas and priorities that need to be addressed by a variety of stakeholders,

including tourism firms, government agencies, industry associations and workforce development programs.

Some mentioned activities are wholly or partly embedded in the structure of the tourism industry, making it difficult to accurately assess the number of people employed in tourism; Most of these jobs are seasonal or part-time, so tourism's contribution to full-time employment is relatively small compared to hourly paid jobs. We should also note that the coverage area of the tourism industry varies noticeably from country to country, indicating/highlighting the difficulties of proportioning from this sector, [4]. Jobs are often created in areas where employment alternatives are few. It's worth remembering that many of these workplaces attract people who want to work during the season, such as students looking for work as resort/spa representatives during the summer or property owners who rent their homes during the summer.

It is clear that the number of jobs is higher for countries that are important receiving destinations or have a strong domestic tourist demand. On the balance sheet, tourism as a form of employment is economically beneficial, but efforts need to be made to create more full-time jobs in this sector.

Tourism is a labor-intensive industry where human interaction, hospitality and services constitute the core tourism product, ALmasoodi and Rahman, Basendwah et al. Therefore, effective human resource management (HRM) is essential for tourism businesses to develop capabilities, align staff with strategic goals, promote quality services, increase productivity and manage costs associated with high employee turnover [3]. However, characteristics specific to tourism operations such as seasonality, a typical work schedules, high work intensity with lean staff, high guest contact, and dependence on emotional labor can increase certain HRM challenges, Piwowar-Sulej.

Previous research has revealed that human resources management plays a vital strategic role in the labor-intensive tourism industry, Hervie et al.. However, the industry faces well-documented recruitment, skills, training, working conditions and other HR challenges globally due to inherent occupancy fluctuations, cost pressures and job design issues, Liu-Lastres et al. Studies focusing particularly on emerging and developing tourism markets highlight the exacerbation of problems associated with limited educational infrastructure, talent pool constraints and low policy support. For example, a study on the growing Rwandan tourism sector found that a lack of skilled workers as well as over-reliance on expatriate managers amid rapid growth threatens sustainable growth [4]. Additional research highlights that in countries, a lack of adequate education and training results in suboptimal performance among service providers, especially in fields that are highly reliant on human interaction, such as the tourism industry [5].

Argue that the effective deployment and management of people as critical resources in tourism will not occur without planning, development and support considered at business, destination and country levels [1]. Various actors and institutions from both the public and private sectors can take the lead and play important roles in ensuring that the tourism sector recruits, manages and develops its human resources in

the most appropriate way. The key players in this process are often local, national and transnational governments and their institutions.

Riley, points to the characteristics of employment in these conditions in terms of recruitment, education and occupational status, and notes that, not surprisingly, many areas of tourism business typify weak internal labor market characteristics. In addition to this assessment, trends in most developed countries and economic regions such as the European Union point to the erosion of the power elements of the labor market and the general weakening of workplace conditions.

Although the development of the tourism industry creates new employment opportunities, critics argue that tourism employment predominantly provides low-paid and low-skilled degrading jobs, Riley. Negative aspects of tourism employment focus on the physical demands of the job, poor working conditions, job insecurity, low pay, long working hours, high labor turnover and lack of training, Riley.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research study employs a qualitative technique to provide comprehensive, contextualized insights into the human resource management difficulties confronting tourism enterprises in Iraq. Qualitative approaches are consistent with the examination of complicated phenomena within specific real-world situations, Price. This methodology can capture industry viewpoints in participants voices using flexible, discovery-oriented methods.

Tourism is an activity offered by people and is a sector where productivity tends to be low and increases in tourist activities lead to the creation of new jobs. Despite progress in the reorganization of the production process of tourist services, accelerated by the application of new technologies, opportunities for additional and better and more diverse professions can be expected, especially in countries with potential but a less developed tourism sector.

Most countries are well developed in terms of tourism-related businesses and should be able to cope with future challenges. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement to overcome the constraints that often prevent tourism-related businesses in many countries, especially UBBs, from taking advantage of these market-favorable perspectives. These include:

1. Insufficient strategic information on tourist demand and its operational use.
2. Inadequate use of qualitative quality control and management techniques in tourist service production, marketing, and provision.
3. Insufficient recognition of Europe's diverse attractions as potential sources for new products and destinations.

Meeting tourists' increasing demand for personalized, high-quality tourism services is often difficult as some tourism sectors lack qualified personnel and often suffer as a result of a shortage of high-class personnel due to the unattractive nature of the tourism working environment, Piwowar-Sulej.

Due to the low barrier to entry for tourism entrepreneurship, microbusinesses (those with fewer than ten employees) dominate the sector. Some business owner-managers have serious deficiencies in management skills, especially financial management and human resources management. This affects the survival of small tourism businesses as well as their capacity to offer an attractive career package to ambitious staff.

Global research has identified significant issues with recruiting and skill gaps within tourist organizations, particularly in filling technical roles, managerial positions, and new digitally-oriented occupations [6]. Unfavorable career perspectives, job insecurity, a scarcity of skilled recruits, and a failing training infrastructure are among the reasons, Parsons et al. This manifests as difficulties in attracting and retaining people, as well as a reduction in service quality.

Braun and Clarke's, approach is used to evaluate data inductively through thematic analysis. Interview transcripts were thoroughly reviewed to find code-capturing components pertinent to the research question. Related codes were cross-referenced, checked for redundancy, and organized into coherent groups. These categories were then consolidated into broad themes indicating important HRM challenge areas using a synthesis of the gathered material. The investigation aims to extract significant problem characteristics directly from participant narratives. Several measures improved analytic rigor, including peer debriefing on new discoveries and establishing an audit trail that documents crucial decisions, Byrnes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the qualitative study highlight the critical role of human resources in ensuring the competitive advantage of tourism organizations. Employees are a vital component in delivering high-quality services and sustaining operational excellence in the tourism sector. However, significant challenges persist, as revealed by semi-structured interviews with eight HR managers from large hospitality firms. The study identified four primary problem areas: recruiting skilled talent, excessive workforce turnover, safety and welfare risks, and inadequate training infrastructure. These challenges align with strategic HRM theory, emphasizing that deficiencies in acquiring, motivating, retaining, and developing human capital can hinder organizational growth, productivity, and service quality.

Further analysis uncovered the complex, bidirectional relationship between tourism and human capital. Tourism growth offers opportunities to reintroduce the workforce and drive regional development. However, the availability of skilled human resources significantly influences the pace of tourism development. The reliance on seasonal or part-time employment in tourism adds complexity, as such positions often lack stability and long-term career prospects. Additionally, the heterogeneity of the tourism industry – spanning large corporations to microbusinesses – amplifies disparities in HR practices, training availability, and career progression opportunities.

Practical implications emphasize the importance of strategic investments in formal tourism education, robust safety standards, and company-level employee development programs, particularly in developing countries. These actions aim to address HRM constraints and improve workforce capabilities, fostering sustainable growth in the tourism sector. Moreover, ethical hiring practices and the integration of eco-friendly policies are increasingly recognized as essential for aligning HR strategies with broader sustainability goals, supporting both environmental conservation and community well-being.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The tourism industry's success heavily relies on the quality of its employees. The sector faces a significant challenge in recruiting and retaining skilled staff with proper knowledge and work attitudes, particularly outside larger organizations. **Implication :** Investing in training programs, including on-the-job modules and soft skills development, is essential to enhance employee performance and foster their commitment to the industry. Utilizing engaging training platforms linked to modern HR tools can make these programs more effective. **Limitation :** Despite the focus on training, smaller businesses often lack access to qualified personnel or advanced HR practices, leading to a disparity in employee quality and operational efficiency between large and small organizations. **Future Research :** Further studies should explore innovative HR strategies tailored to small businesses, including scalable training solutions and methods for integrating expertise from other industries into the tourism workforce.

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