

Rethinking Human Resources in Tourism: Toward a Sustainable and Competitive Future

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Abstract

While a well-recognized topic, human resources in tourism have not received the scholarly and practical attention they deserve. This paper underscores the critical importance of human resources in the tourism sector and explores its multifaceted dimensions. Human Resource Management (HRM) is pivotal, enabling managers to effectively plan, recruit, select, train, develop, remunerate, and retain organizational members. As a fundamental component of the tourism industry, human resources play a vital role in shaping a country's image as a premier tourism destination. Key personnel, including tour guides, travel agents, tour operators, airport staff, restaurant workers, retailers, and hotel employees, collectively form the backbone of the tourism and hospitality sector. The tourism industry is inherently dynamic and fast-paced, often characterized by high turnover rates that pose significant challenges to businesses. Empirical studies consistently highlight that the tourism sector and its subsectors exhibit some of the highest turnover rates across industries. Issues such as employee dissatisfaction, burnout, and high turnover have profound negative economic implications for tourism enterprises. A critical oversight in tourism planning has been the neglect of key stakeholders, particularly tourism workers, whose well-being is essential for sustainable growth. To address these challenges, enhancing resilience and reducing the vulnerability of human resources are imperative for ensuring the long-term viability and sustainability of tourism businesses. Strategic investments are needed in the following areas:

- **Training and Development:** Implementing robust training and development programs to enhance employee skills and create career advancement opportunities.
- **Competitive Compensation:** Offering competitive salaries and benefits to attract and retain top talent.
- **Positive Work Environment:** Fostering a supportive and collaborative workplace culture to boost employee morale and engagement.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Introducing flexible work options, such as remote work or compressed workweeks to improve work-life balance.
- **Equitable Policies:** Enacting fair and just laws and policies to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of the workforce.

By addressing these areas, the tourism industry can build a more resilient and sustainable workforce, ultimately contributing to the sector's long-term success and global competitiveness.

Keywords

Tourism workers, sustainable tourism, vulnerability, resilience in tourism.