

Future of sustainable work in tourism and hospitality: implications for youth

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Article

Sustainability and the Tourism and Hospitality Workforce: A Thematic Analysis

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Tourism as we know it.....

**AN INDUSTRY
OF YOUTH?**

Neglect of workforce themes in tourism and sustainable tourism debate

- **2% of all articles published in 4 leading tourism journals addressed workforce themes (2005-14)**
- **Hospitality journals are better (17%)**
- **Just 4 of over 600 papers published in JoST over that timeframe address workforce/ employment topics**

Sustainable HRM Framework (after Mazur)

Sustainable HRM Framework

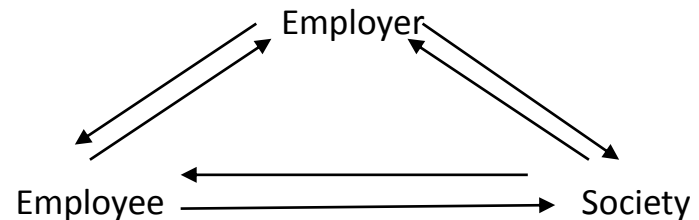
Psychological Perspective

Focus what drives motivates employees

- Sense of worth
- Engagement and belonging (employer, industry)
- Passion and care

Sociological Perspective

Explicit connection between the interests of



Strategic Perspective

HR's contribution

Long term focus of the organization:



- Recruitment/ selection
- Rewards, benefits and welfare
- Development and opportunity

Responsible Perspective

- Natural environment
- Social and cultural environment
- Respect for others
- Impact on diversity – gender, minorities, children, disability

Barbara Mazur (Politechnika Białostocka) – **3 elements of sustainable HRM**

1. Sustained supply of future employees

Ehnert (2009) - scarce human resources and their threatened long-term exploitation are a contemporary (and largely unrecognized) challenge to HRM, especially in tourism

(see also Solnet et al, 2014; Solnet et al, 2015)

- Demographic change
- Skills and technological change
- Old work, new work

2. *Good treatment of employees – “decent work” in ILO terms*

Decent work is at the heart of the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda. Goal 8 aims to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

BUT:

Hospitality work is largely exploitative, degrading, poorly paid, unpleasant, insecure and taken as a last resort or because it can be tolerated in the light of wider social and economic commitments and constraints (Wood, 1997).

3. Engagement of employees in CSR practices

“The idea is that if the management of a company hires capable people and treats them well, then those employees will be more inclined to take better care of the planet”

(Liebowitz, 2010).

**To which I would add a fourth dimension
in the context of tourism:**

*4. Working within the constraints of the demand
cycle – very important in Croatia*



Impact of seasonality on HRM – barriers to sustainability

- **Upsize in season, downsize off-season**
- **Annual recruitment, frequently of untrained, inexperienced workforce**
- **Median, demand-line recruitment**
- **Minimal, functional training, no further development**
- **Peak periods – unrealistic demands**
- **Limited/ no commitment by either party (staff, management)**
- **Annual termination of employment**

Responsibility of public authorities: Recognising the links between sustainable tourism planning and positive employment outcomes



- **Focus on value over volume in tourism planning**
- **Resists downward pressure on pricing and quality**
- **Allows businesses to make long-term commitments to their employees**
- **Enables employees to make long-term commitments to businesses**
- **Supports ‘decent work’**

Indicators of unsustainable HRM in tourism

- **Perceptions of low skills**
- **Low productivity**
- **Open entry routes – in and out!!**
- **Uncompetitive pay**
- **Challenging working conditions**
- **High labour turnover**

**But: these are not always a ‘problem’
(Seasonality)**

Is youth any different when it comes to sustainability in the workforce?

- **Industry has high dependence on youth**
- **Especially true in seasonal locations – flexibility, availability, able/ willing to accept lower wages/ benefits**
- **Short-term life and career objectives but also need to gain work experience credits**
- **Seeking to meet lifestyle objectives**
- **Easily bored in repetitive employment**

Youth sustainable HRM paradigm

- **Accept notion of a short-term relationship**
- **Look for win-win business and life benefits for young employees and employers**
- **See the potential in all young people and invest in them accordingly**
- **Provide development and opportunities both for a future within and external to the business**
- **Look to a future relationship, not just for the short-term**

Discussion?

Hvala ti

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