

IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCES TRAININGS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN TRAVEL AGENCIES

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Abstract: The main purpose of this paper is to identify the impact of training and development on service sector. In the methodology of this paper we used the quantitative and qualitative method conducted with respondents in travel agencies. The questionnaire was structured with types of training and training needs for service sector employees, the research refers the level of trainings that are conducted in the travel agencies. Introduction of the information technology and different application programmes has increased the need of trainings of travel agency workers. The simple random technique is used to collect data from targeted travel agencies. The T test and correlation matrix is used to see the impact of training to employee's performance. As a strategic activity, the training is related to the mission of the travel agency and its long-term objectives and is a major contributor to the development of skilled, flexible and dedicated employees while providing training in combination with other human resource management functions. In businesses that are in service sector that have experience in their field professional consultants - people who have the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the training, are responsible for staff training. However, in terms of transferring practical knowledge, managers are much more efficient. Their practical experience and skills, knowledge of their company, network of business contacts, and personal knowledge of the human resources of their organization make them qualified than the professional trainers, responsible for human resources. Training can be developed on the job and of the job depending on the organisation needs and employees skills, while communication skills are usually needed in travel agencies this is one together with use of software packages are the most important trainings that were identified in our research.

Keywords: Training, performance, service sector, transfer of knowledge, travel agencies

1. INTRODUCTION

As Kosovo is moving into a market economy, matching its human capital needs is growing in order to lead to more capable participants in the labour market to match market needs. This paper aims to show the main factors of trainings in travel agencies and importance of knowledge sharing to other employees. Trainings present a crucial role in competitive market of qualified service businesses of travel agencies. There are constantly new offers of travels and tourisms with the very competitive market and new standards of quality, more skills and highly qualified staff is crucial. According to Lather et al (2008) travel agencies need human resources that have more specific skills consumer and information oriented since they have to operate and manage different areas of consumer services starting with travel information, reservations of the hotels and tickets, planning of possible tours of their destinations, information and designing different itineraries, when needed organizing of the conferences and seminars information's, as other specific duties that are connected with those specific issues as they have to have knowledge in sales in marketing and in finance. There is a need for further knowledge for employees in travel agencies as foreign languages, time management, and other customer oriented soft skills. "To meet the changing demand, businesses countries competing for tourists are forced to spend considerable efforts on training and retraining their staff, in the tourism sector" Garg (2007). The learning process in the organization is closely related to employee training and development. The literature emphasizes that training and development are an essential part of the HRM function and play an important role as they provide employees with the opportunity to improve their performance and the opportunity to better understand the strategic direction of the organization.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In general, human resource practices can create standard templates or behaviors to examine and learn the knowledge gained about the work of its operations and it does so through training. The training also helps to develop good and quick reaction skills, as well as the development of situational expertise.

Whilst, Lin (2010) explored the opinions of website travelers and suggests that travel agencies should have also an updated website with as much information about the travels since customers will usually actively visit the website in order to have as much information as they can. Providing relevant content, current and reliable information and a practical functionality are particularly important since users will likely be actively involved in searching and gathering travel-related information on the travel web site. The need for skills, knowledge and vision is being felt

more and more today. With new offers and services emerging in tourism and an increasing emphasis on quality, the need for adequately qualified staff becomes even more critical. Thus, training and development plays an important role in developing professionalism in the business of tourism and travel agency operations Garavan et al. (2021). Successful enterprises through training want to clarify their vision of the employee. To support and develop that vision employees must have sufficient knowledge which is certainly different from what is learned in formal education, knowledge which is supplemented through non-formal education – training.

Training Process Model - Considered as a five-stage problem solving tool, analyzing and responding to organizational and employee needs rationally, logically and strategically, is seen as a way of delivering the desired input for each stage and thus as a tool for providing a high-value output for the organization's investment in training, the most important part is identifying the needs of the trainings and evaluating their impact on employees performance. It is important to note that the output of each initiative phase is examined in the input of each subsequent phase. This is one of the training models most valued by various authors and is termed as an open system model where training is achieved through a series of successive and integrated processes, promising to provide maximum return on investment of tourist agencies in this function. And can be considered as a possible solution to performance problems Sels (2002).

Travel agencies need tourism professionals specializing in different operational and managerial functions – tour planning and itinerary designing, travel information, reservation and ticketing services, destination counseling, sales and marketing, finance and accounts, conferences and conventions, visa and travel insurance, foreign exchange services etc. Therefore, a company's recruitment policy may not be only to focus on functional expertise but on attitudes and approaches that fit their corporate goals and culture. Unfortunately, the employee turnover is very high in the tourism industry – especially in travel agencies and tour operation business. Georgiadis & Pitelis (2016) found that trainings of employees had the higher positive effect in efficiency, productivity and financial incomes than those of the managers. Showing the distinction between the trainings for managers and employees is important since in theory there is none. There are many employees who are unwilling to share their knowledge they have (Chow, Deng, & Ho, 2000). They added that this phenomenon happens is because the employees scared of the loss of valuable knowledge. Although many organizations apply technology to support knowledge sharing behavior, the problem still exists. According to Alam, Abdullah, Ishak, , & Zain, (2009). Firms culture their rewards systems are important elements to develop a sharing of knowledge behavior between the employees. Feiertag, & Berge, (2008) Learning is the process through which an individual acquires new knowledge, habits and skills, while training is an instrument that an organization can undertake to foster the learning process. The training can be performed both during the employee orientation phase and during all the time he is employed in the organization. Having fully qualified employees in the organization is not easy, however any organization can offer opportunities to improve employee skills through effective training and development programs. Johnson, Park & Bartlett (2018). Studied and explored employees' perceptions of service orientation and customer service training and the relationships these may have with employee engagement in hospitality. Service orientation, service leadership, HRM had a positive effect on customer service training. When employees' perceptions of service orientation are positive, they show higher motivation for customer service training, recognize training support from colleagues and are more engaged at work. According to Chadha (2018) there is a positive correlation between trainings and employees engagement, and that training from the current employees and managers is more appreciated from the employees than , and outsourced trainer from other organizations . When it comes to trainings related to travel agents there is a need for special skills as ticket reservations, itinerary for the travelers, visa procedures, and lately very important health and safety issues and procedures. Therefore we can say that traditional ways of developing the businesses will make the competition travel agencies win the market. These are all the skills that the employees need, which can be delivered through special trainings or on the job trainings which is more practical, and can be delivered from the senior staff.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DATA AND INTERPRETATION

The research method used the system approach method, the analysis method on what are the needs of travel agents for further developing their, skills, and there was a visit to some of most successful travel agencies for interviews. From the interviews we have developed a questionnaires' that were distributed to travel agents throughout of Kosovo, and we had a reply from 86 of them. In order to realize the objectives of this study, hypotheses and research questions have been raised, which in an interrelated way help to structure the analysis and findings of this study. Also in the data analysis was used the research method and the method for presenting the research results the statistical method, methods that we used for testing the hypothesis correlation matrix and the T test to test the hypothesis and research questions

From the literature review and interviews with travel agents in Kosovo we have found that their training needs are skills needed to work in this service sectors as a travel agent and our findings are :communication and verbal skills,

customer service skills , there is need for foreign language (English, Turkish, German etc) , skills to use different software's but most common that is used is Kosovo is software Amadeus and in few of them IATA for booking , and reserving travelers tickets , hotel rooms, rent-cars , there is a need for administrative skills as (finance and archiving) . And one of the questions that is asked is there a culture of knowledge sharing in their travel agency. From this information we have developed the main hypothesis which is:

H0: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the type of training activity and the increased performance of employees

Research Questions:

- 1) Do communication and customer service skills trainings increase performance?
- 2) Do administrative trainings increase performance?
- 3) Does trainings in software used in your travel agencies have an impact in performance?
- 4) Does trainings in foreign languages increase your performance?
- 5) Does the knowledge sharing from senior employees and trained workers help your performance?

From the Table 1 below Where we can say that these two variables are highly positively correlated at 0.01 level (2-tailed) and we can interpret that communication and customer service skills trainings increase performance and is positively Correlated 286** and Travel agencies software training is positively .301** and Knowledge sharing 375** , while administrative skills and foreign languages are not correlated which might be due to skills that employees have from their educational back ground and , for languages the travel agencies expect that employees would have that skill before employment , or can be developed further in their own time .

Table 1 Correlations Matrix

		Performance Efficiency	customer service skills	Administratio n skills	Software Training	Foreign languages	Knowledge sharing
Performance Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.286**	.188	.301**	.064	.375**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008	.083	.005	.561	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Communication & customer service skills Training	Pearson Correlation	.286**	1	.578**	.290**	.050	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008		.000	.007	.648	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Administration skills.(finance ,archiving) Training	Pearson Correlation	.188	.578**	1	.419**	.115	.303**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.083	.000		.000	.293	.005
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
software (Amadeus, IATA) Training	Pearson Correlation	.301**	.290**	.419**	1	-.015	.273*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.007	.000		.888	.011
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Foreign languages Training	Pearson Correlation	.064	.050	.115	-.015	1	-.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.561	.648	.293	.888		.623
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86

Knowledge sharing	Pearson Correlation	.375**	.521**	.303**	.273*	-.054	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.005	.011	.623	
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

For further analysis we have also conducted the One sample T test Estimation results suggest that the ‘employees’ training’ has a sizeable positive and statistically significant

95% Confidence Interval of the Difference – These are the lower and upper bound of the confidence interval for the mean difference. A confidence interval for the mean specifies a range of values within which the unknown population parameter, in this case the mean, may lie

Since the value of test t is Communication & customer service skills $t = 40.469$ and Administration skills.(finance ,archiving) $t=29.039$ software training and $t=44.592$ and Foreign languages $t= 26.372$ and Knowledge sharing $t=31.688$ are which are all very significant Sig. (2-tailed) The corresponding two-tailed p-value is 0.000 . from this it is shown that the variables are evaluated as significant towards the implementation Of the Null hypothesis and we can say that trainings have a positive impact in increase in the efficiency of employees

Table 2. One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
HRM efficiency	29.183	85	.000	2.360	2.20	2.52
Communication & customer service skills	40.469	85	.000	2.558	2.43	2.68
Administration skills.(finance ,archiving)	29.039	85	.000	2.326	2.17	2.48
software (Amadeus, IJata	44.592	85	.000	2.686	2.57	2.81
Foreign languages	26.372	85	.000	2.128	1.97	2.29
Knowledge sharing	31.688	85	.000	2.500	2.34	2.66

From the above table we can say that the p-value is the two-tailed probability computed using the t distribution. It is the probability of observing a t-value of equal or greater absolute value under the null hypothesis. If the p-value associated with the t-test is small p is $0.00 < 0.05$ there is evidence that the mean is not different from the hypothesized value and we accept the null hypothesis .that there is a significant relationship between the type of training activity and the increased performance of employees.

4. CONCLUSION

The importance of human resources and their consideration as a market capacity is important to achieve high product performance. In this context we can say that the workforce in an enterprise cannot be measured by the number of employees it serves, but by the amount of knowledge and information they possess and are able to put at the service of the enterprise. The number of trained persons positively affects the relationship between the training process and job performance, so responsibilities seem to motivate the individual more to be more productive in this process. There is a positive relationship between employee training and organizational performance. Numerous studies show that employee engagement can positively or negatively affect financial performance and consequently increase or decrease business performance and success. From our research we found that transfer of knowledge from senior staff and managers is especially important in travel agencies. From the correlation data we can see that customer service and communication skills are really correlated with increased efficiency, as well as the trainings in the software package that travel agencies in Kosovo use, most common of which is Amadeus package . Whilst Administrative skills as finance and foreign languages are not significant this might be since it is expected that those are learned during the formal education , and when it comes to foreign languages employees are expected to

know foreign languages when they work in travel agencies, since it is not usually typical for travel agencies to provide them this training .

There are limitations to this results since the sample is only 86 respondents, although results are as expected and this can be explored further , since there is a very little research in this service sector .

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