Book Review

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Building Human Capital in Tourism and Hospitality:
Perspectives from theory and practice
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As the Tourism and Hospitality industry faces significant disruption from automation, labour shortages, and post-pandemic uncertainty, the book titled '*Building Human Capital in Tourism and Hospitality: Perspectives from Theory and Practice*' offers a detailed examination of the industry's most challenging issues: the development and sustainability of its workforce. The authors present a policy-relevant compilation that frames human capital as the cornerstone of tourism competitiveness and recovery. The book is divided into three parts: Talent Development and Human Capital Management Challenges, Human Capital in Times of Uncertainty and Best Practices and Policies of Tourism and Hospitality.

Part 1: Talent Development and Human Capital Management Challenges

The opening chapter sets the tone through a bibliometric assessment of human capital research in tourism. Emerging key thematic clusters identified include leadership, technological competence and sustainability, calling for comparative, cross-regional analyses. Chapter 2 shows how internships enhance employability and satisfaction, while Chapter 3 demonstrates that workplace recognition and supportive leadership significantly help in reducing burnout across hospitality workplaces. The remaining chapters of Part 1 (Chapters 4–6) address the dynamics of leadership and talent retention through Emotional Intelligence, posed as a key managerial capability. At the same time, small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are urged to adopt cooperative talent development models and structured career paths in supportive environments to mitigate turnover and sustain long-term engagement.

Part 2: Human Capital Management in Times of Uncertainty

Chapter 7 delves into learning systems in hotels, highlighting the effectiveness of top-down strategic direction and bottom-up feedback. Chapter 8 captures the post-pandemic shift toward soft skills: flexibility, adaptability and communication, in an

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era of rapid interest decline from youth in tourism careers. Chapter 9 analyses travel agents and tour operators, finding that although formal education is limited, experiential knowledge supports crisis resilience. Finally, Chapter 10 explores virtual hospitality and digital customer service in luxury tourism, illustrating how technology enhances service quality but introduces new emotional and mental health challenges for employees.

Part 3: Best Practices and Policies for Tourism and Hospitality

The final part of this book proceeds from analysis to application. It begins with Chapter 11, which outlines 13 HR policies to address labour shortages, poor work-life balance, and minimal career development. Although the context is based on case studies (6) from Portugal, it can serve as a practical framework for policymakers. Chapter 12 investigates Green Human Resource Management Practices (GHRM) in luxury resorts and how these correlate with work engagement and job satisfaction. The final chapter (13) focuses on the modernisation of craft education to enhance employability while preserving cultural heritage and supporting tourism innovation.

The book's strength lies in its coherence and policy relevance. Its structure – moving from conceptual foundations to crisis management and best practices – mirrors the cyclical nature of workforce development in tourism. The chapters follow a nice flow and balance between empirical validation and theoretical discussion, with various methodological approaches; from bibliometric to qualitative and quantitative. The geographical focus spans countries in Europe (Austria, Portugal, Romania, and Bulgaria), providing a diverse comparative lens that broadens the applicability of theoretical conceptualisations by offering insights from various tourism labour markets.

The book aligns with the journals' mission to promote research by linking theory and practice in tourism policy while focusing on tackling global challenges related to UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals; SDG 4: Quality Education(UNESCO, 2015) and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (United Nations, 2015). The evidence-based recommendations in each chapter make the book especially relevant to policymakers seeking practical strategies to enhance tourism's human resource base.

References

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