

Effects of Human Resource Management on Health Tourism in Thermal Centers in Kosovo Case study: Centre's of Thermal Tourism in Kosovo

Alberta Tahiri¹, Idriz Kovaçi², Agim Thaqi³, Arta Jashari Goga⁴

Abstract: Proper management of thermal centres through human resource management has enabled the health tourism in Kosovo to be successful. Through training of staff and human resources, communication and working climate, job evaluation and employee motivation, we have achieved positive and satisfying effects on health tourism in Kosovo. This is evidenced by this research, where we find that the key factors that influence high standards are employee training, evaluation, communication and motivation. This was accomplished through the participation of a total of 4 thermal centres in Kosovo, of which there are 12 managers and 75 employees, while the analysis was performed through SPSS (version 25), and the analysis method was regression. On the basis of the results we see that proper human resource management leads to overall sustainability and satisfaction of employees in these enterprises and their performance at work (p value = .000 <1%).

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Health tourism, Thermal centres

JEL Classification: O15

1. Introduction

The research presents the importance of management in the health tourism of thermal centres in the Republic of Kosovo. As a war-torn country, there were many challenges it faced, especially tourism. The sector that requires special attention is Health Tourism, i.e. baths. In this context, special attention should also be paid to

¹ Professor Assistant PhD, Faculty of Tourism and Environment, Tourism and Hotel Management, University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj, Kosovo, Address: Rr. Universiteti, Ferizaj, Kosovë, Ferizaj 70000, E-mail: alberta.tahiri@ushaf.net.

² Professor Assistant PhD, Faculty of Tourism and Environment, Tourism and Hotel Management, University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj, Kosovo, Address: Rr. Universiteti, Ferizaj, Kosovë, Ferizaj 70000, E-mail: idriz.kovaci@ushaf.net.

³ MSc. University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj, Kosovo, Address: Rr. Universiteti, Ferizaj, Kosovë, Ferizaj 70000, E-mail: agim.thaqi@ushaf.net.

⁴ MSc. University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj, Kosovo, Address: Rr. Universiteti, Ferizaj, Kosovë, Ferizaj 70000, E-mail: arta.jashari@ushaf.net.

the management of thermal centres, especially cooperation and management of human resources, as it is considered as the main pillar of any business.

Pender, L. and Sharpley, R. said that tourism is an economic activity of significant importance for development. However, accurate measurement of tourism is not easy, but in this respect different organizations have helped to create a relatively adequate level worldwide, as WTO (World Tourism Organisation) and OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development).

There are various authors who have defined tourism in different forms in general, where according to Mill, R. And Morrison, A., 1998 “tourism is an activity. It is an activity that takes place when, in international terms, people cross borders for leisure or business and stay at least 24 hours but less than one year”.

“Management is a process of setting goals and coordinating employees’ efforts to achieve them” (Tahiri, & Kovaçi, 2017).

Each of them gives a different definition than the others. R. Heller, a well-known author in the field, maintains that any attempt to provide a definitive answer to this question is doomed to failure.

“Every definition of management is right, because each of them fulfils something in this amorphous and ever-changing field” (Daft, 2011).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Tourism Management

According to (Allis, 2008) “understanding that management is a process of consciously orienting human activities towards the achievement of the purpose-set goals, namely the interrelated set of five functions: planning, organization, staff, leadership and control.

The term “management” has many dimensions and definitions, which vary more than the description given to its functions. It represents a social process that is responsible for the effective and economic planning and regulation of an organisation’s operations to achieve a given objective or task (Aronsson, 2000).

According to (Tahiri, &Kovaçi, 2017) the new millennium is bringing innovation in all spheres of life, hence tourism. The international economic integration processes that are taking place through globalization are strengthening the role and giving completely different dimensions to the type of area of particular economic importance, not only within a country’s economy, but also internationally. Global socio-economic flows are creating contemporary international development environments and conditions, whereby tourism is presenting a special sphere in the integration processes between different countries, people, cultures, religions, etc.

Currently, tourism is becoming more and more attractive, not only in the economic field, but also in the lives of mankind in general. So, tourism has now become an integral part of humanity's life, which is directly affecting economic, social, cultural development and so on of the world, and separately for each country.

Tourism has now become a very important economic and attractive area for mankind, which is characterized by massive tourist trips, involving different layers and social groups, for the purposes of scientific research, vacations and recreation, as well as the enrichment of knowledge of their natural beauty, historical, cultural monuments, customs, mentalities, languages, and so on in different countries and peoples of the world. Thus, tourism is becoming increasingly profitable and propulsive. The development of modern technical-technological processes, the development of modern traffic, the internet, and the raising of living standards are all contributing to increased mobility of people, inside and outside their countries. There is no place in the world that is not involved with tourist movements. Tourism development is also affecting the development of other economic areas, such as: development of agriculture, namely crops, road infrastructure, construction, hotel-building of receptive capacities for roads and tourist sites, such as motels, inns, camping sites, setting up professional staff, etc. (Tahiri, & Kovaçi, 2017).

2.2. Health Tourism and its Quality

Kosovo offers tourism resources, but due to the factors that have contributed to the downturn of the economy, the cause that has contributed to the downturn is the war, the outgoing privatization process, lack of investment by foreign donors, of course tourism integrated does not want to go through these unwanted processes when it comes to tourism development. Tourism is a heterogeneous sector and involves public and private sector cooperation to develop the tourism sector. Tourism development in Kosovo is done without any strategic plan, but tourism resources are far from developments compared to other countries (Ramadani, 2017).

In this case, health tourism has not caused tourism resources to develop, but little has been done, and there is still a need for changes and improvements in this sector. People are not the same, we often live and work in isolation, whether knowingly or unconsciously and we are in daily contact with people, and constantly planning, developing, managing, and interrupting people. It all depends on the actions and management of our actions, since from our youth we are taught how to better understand others in different situations, and later we transmit these developments to our work. Dealing with other people is the hardest thing in life because people are complex and no single person thinks, feels, sees, understands and acts the same and all people in general come from culture, nationality, race, different religions, so each of us is unique with these changes, but human values, traits, beliefs, behaviours and efforts are factors that influence the choice of employment. People manage things the way they do, and for their own reasons, so "management cannot simply set

procedures and rules and watch how the weekday goes, managers need to set the time and effort that is involved with the difficulties at work” (Senyucel, 2009, pp. 7-8). Ever since we wake up from bed, we are involved in the living organization, organizations are extremely important in our lives and it is extremely difficult to imagine life without access to any work that is organized like school, university, workplace (Smith, & Puczko, 2008).

2.3. Kosovo and Health Tourism

Tourism and catering today face a number of challenges that make the tourism market particularly sensitive, complex, dynamic and highly competitive. Among them, globalization and internationalization of economic processes have a significant impact.

This process of globalization contributes to economic, political and cultural development as well as directly contributing to the growth of tourist trips to new, unknown and distant destinations outside the borders of their countries. Kosovo, as a new state, after the difficult economic and political processes it has faced in the past century, the first decade of this century found it facing a number of difficulties in the fields of economy, health, education and tourism. It emerged very late in the tourist market due to the position of Yugoslavia and the lack of an adequate road network. Following the construction of the Adriatic Highway after 1971, Kosovo has begun to be affirmed as a potential tourist market. Until that time, tourism in Kosovo was not developed. The basic concept then was to develop local tourism. The lack of tourism has affected its economic and social development. Problems have also existed in urban areas with regard to hotel and accommodation facilities. In 1970, exploration of opportunities for tourism development, construction and modernization of the road network as well as construction of material tourism base began in Kosovo. The main criterion for increasing interest in tourism development is the impact that the tourism trade has or should have on the number of employment and income generated (Tahiri, & Kovaçi, 2017).

Research conducted so far shows that in addition to Kosovo’s advantages as a tourist destination of many natural and cultural values, with a positive attitude of the population towards tourism, gastronomic services with numerous traditional food offerings, opening of private colleges and universities in the field of tourism, tourism and catering, involvement in projects of international organizations to increase the capacity and quality of staff in the field of catering and tourism, there are also a number of disadvantages or unfavourable positions. The main disadvantages are: lack of awareness of the population about tourism and catering as a source of well-being and career development, lack of a national tourism development program, poor quality of hotel and tourism services, lack of specialized staff and trained as well as lack of competence of management staff in the field of tourism and catering (Tahiri, & Kovaçi, 2017).

2.4. Human Resource Management

Referring to various authors who had modern management theories as the subject of the study, the group included: process treatment, systems theory, case (situational) treatment, strategic management treatment, Japanese management treatment and treatment of excellence.

Koontz, H. & Bradspies, R. W. (1972) had published the article in which they concluded that there was a “Jungle of managerial theory”. They acknowledged that each of the approaches identified had something to do with management theory. Koontz, argued that: “Human resources and quantitative approaches were tools rather than management approaches...until the process approach sees management as a process of getting and doing things through and with individuals who operate in organized groups. He added that: managers’ activities (planning, organizing, leadership and control) are continuous and repetitive”.

Bernard, Ch. (1939) is described as the originator of the concept of management systems. In his classic work “The Functions of the Executive” he described all organizations as cooperative systems. According to him, “the cooperative system is a complex of physical, biological, personal and social elements, which have a specific relationship by cooperating two or more persons for one or more specific purposes”. These systems are classified into open systems and closed systems.

Bertalanffy, V. (1970) is the most popular of systems theorists, he described that the “system” consists of the parts interconnected together to form a whole in which the coordinated and combined effect of subsystems creates synergy. He continued that “systems theory describes the behaviour of organizations at home and abroad. Internally, it shows how and why people within the organization perform their individual and group tasks. Externally, it integrates transactions with other organizations and institutions”.

The approach has been proposed by organizational theorists. Lawrence (1968) attempted to implement a variety of concepts from other approaches. They found that the effectiveness of their techniques varied from situation to situation. Their organizations and subsystems proved to be unique. This provided the basis for designing and managing organizations individually. This approach emphasizes the need to evaluate and analyse the entire managerial environment within the organization in order to determine what work, technology, personnel and organizational designs should be considered as appropriate for particular circumstances. Each company is divided into levels or management structures that have almost the same functions for the role assigned to them, but they differ in the weight of the responsibilities, the nature of the activities and the scope of activity they perform. These changes are expressed in management functions, where depending on the managerial position or hierarchy are also the levels of responsibility, decision making and risk.

Below is a breakdown of management functions by levels. The main purpose of the organizational management structure is to enable the organization to function properly, efficiently and effectively. In general, we distinguish three levels or categories of management of an enterprise, namely: 1) high level of management, 2) middle level of management and 3) low level of management (Koontz, & Bradspies, 1972).

3. Research Methodology

The research belongs to the quantitative type of research and analyses the impact of human resource management from the perspective of managers and workers in health tourism in thermal centres in Kosovo. The survey involved a total of 4 thermal centres in Kosovo, of which 12 are managers and 75 employees.

3.1. Research Instruments

The research instrument in this paper is the structured questionnaire, which is divided into several chapters. The first part presents demographic questions (gender, age, place of residence, level of education), then the second part contains the initial data such as (job, company position and recruitment methods). Then there are the five sets of questions like (job satisfaction and performance, organization training, job evaluation, communication and motivation).

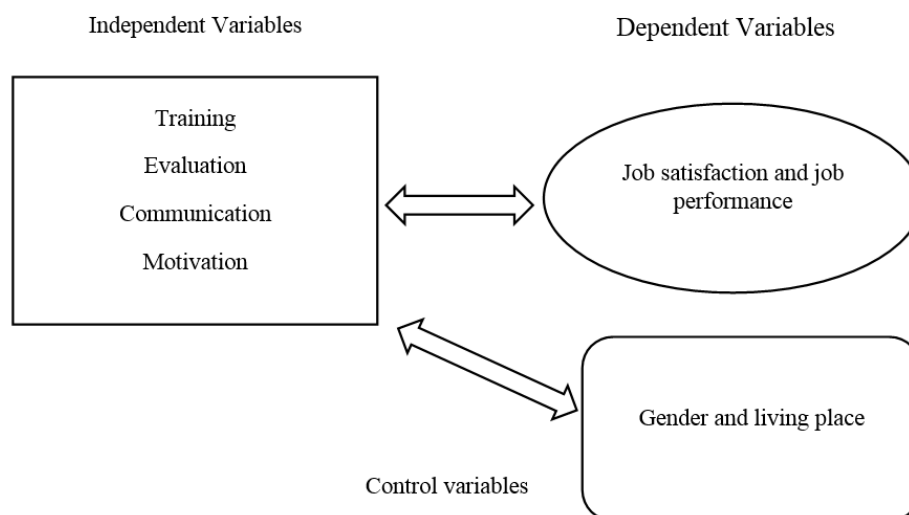
3.2. Samples

Managers from Kllokot, Dobërqani, Peja and Malisheva health tourism centres participated in the research. The number of cases was intentional, with 3 managers of different levels selected and 75 employees in total from the four health tourism centres, respectively from 18 to 19 employees from each spa. The sample was random within 1 calendar month of 2019.

3.3. Specifications of the Research Data

Statistical parameters such as mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data, and for the hypothesis validation, Alpha Cronbach's reliability test, Kolmogoroc-Smirnov & Shapiro-Wilk test was first performed. Whereas after normality test the data were found to have abnormal distribution and multiple linear regression test was used for this.

3.4. Logical research concept and model



3.5. Data Model

The first main hypothesis and the four sub-hypotheses will be tested using the linear regression model, presenting as independent variables employee training, evaluation, communication, and motivation, and dependent on job satisfaction and job performance, according to the following formula.

$$Y_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{TRAINING}_{i,t} + \beta_2 \text{EVALUATION}_{i,t} + \beta_3 \text{COMMUNICATION}_{i,t} + \beta_4 \text{MOTIVATION}_{i,t} + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

4. Empirical Research Findings

4.1. Managers and Employee Results - Demographic Results

The survey involved a total of 12 managers, from 4-5 star hotels in the Republic of Kosovo, of which 9 were male or 75% and 3 were female or 25%. Of those 2 were 18-25 years old or 16.7%, 3 were 26-35 years old or 25%, 5 were 36-45 years old or 41.7% and 2 were over 45 years old or 16.7%. 2 of them had a high school education or 16.7% and 10 had a bachelor's degree or 83.3%. Whereas among the employees the total number of participation in the research was 76, out of which 60 were male or 78.9% and 16 female or 21.1%, 10 of them were 18-25 years old or 13.2%, 43 were 26-35 years old or 56.6%, 16 were 36-45 years old or 21.15 and 7 were over 45 years old or 9.2%. Secondary education was 50 employees or 65.8% and 26 with bachelor or 34.2%.

	Manager		Employee	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Male	9	75.0%	60	78.9%
Female	3	25.0%	16	21.1%
Age	N	%	N	%
18-25 age	2	16.7%	10	13.2%
26-35 age	3	25.0%	43	56.6%
36-45 age	5	41.7%	16	21.1%
Over 45 age	2	16.7%	7	9.2%
Level of education	N	%	N	%
High School	2	16.7%	50	65.8%
Bachelor or Master	10	83.3%	26	34.2%

4.2. Other Results of Managers and Employees

From head office were 6 managers or 50% and 6 from company local offices or 50% of them, while 13 employees were from company headquarters or 17.1%, 50 employees from company local offices or 65.8% and 13 from field or 17.1%. Of the managers, 2 were from senior management (top manager) or 16.7%, 8 were from second level (sector) management or 66.7% and 2 were senior management (administration) or 16.7%, and 76 employees in total. There were 2 managers or 16.7% employed with online management vacancies, 7 were employed by third party recommendations or 58.3%, 2 were self-employed or 16.7% and the other 1 or 8.3%, while 27 employees stated that they were employed through vacancies online or 35.5%, 39 according to recommendations or 51.3%, 6 were self-employed or 7.9% and the other 4 or 5.3%.

Questions	Manger		Employee	
	N	%	N	%
Place of working				
Centre office of company	6	50.0%	13	17.1%
Local office of company	6	50.0%	50	65.8%
Field work (employee, we don't have office)	-	-	13	17.1%
Position in company	N	%	N	%
Top level manger	2	16.7%	-	-
Sectorial level of management	8	66.7%	-	-
Third level of management	2	16.7%	-	-
Employee	-	-	76	100%
How did you recruit in your organization where you work now?	N	%	N	%
Online competition	2	16.7%	27	35.5%
With recommendations	7	58.3%	39	51.3%
Self employed	2	16.7%	6	7.9%
Other	1	8.3%	4	5.3%

4.3. Comparative Analysis

From the results below we find that average satisfaction is 4.73 for managers and 0.45 for standard deviation, while for employees we average 4.18 and standard deviation 0.51. In training, we have a mean of 4.70 and a standard deviation of 0.48, while for workers we have a mean of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.54. In the evaluation we have average of 4.78 and standard deviation of 0.38, while in employees we have average of 4.28 and standard deviation of 0.57, in communication managers have average of 4.75 and deviation of 0.39, while employees have average of 4.28 and standard deviation of 0.56, whereas in motivation we have a manager average of 4.73 and a deviation of 0.43, while in workers we have a mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.59.

Group	Manager		Employee	
	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation
Satisfaction	4.73	0.45	4.18	0.51
Training	4.70	0.48	4.27	0.54
Evaluation	4.78	0.38	4.28	0.57
Communication	4.75	0.39	4.28	0.56
Motivation	4.73	0.43	4.30	0.59

Source: Authors

While the second part of the table presents the data for the reliability test which shows a high level of reliability in the case of managers and employees, respectively, managers have average Alpha Cronbach = .922, while employees have average Cronbach's alpha = .833 which implies that the data have a high level of reliability.

Group	Manager	Employee
	Alpha Cronach's	
Satisfaction	0.959	0.721
Training	0.976	0.789
Evaluation	0.879	0.915
Communication	0.915	0.820
Motivation	0.977	0.925
Mean	0.922	0.833

Source: Authors

From the following results we find that our data have abnormal distribution even after attempting to retrieve the data, as a result we will use non-parametric statistical tests to confirm the hypotheses.

Group	Manager		Employee	
	Kolmogoroc-Smirnov	Shapiro-Wilk	Kolmogoroc-Smirnov	Shapiro-Wilk
Satisfaction	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001
Training	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Evaluation	0.124	0.024	0.000	0.000
Communication	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Motivation	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: Authors

4.4. Hypothesis results

To analyse the importance of human resource management from a managerial and employee perspective, we have put forward 4 hypotheses through which to present the statistical significance of the research.

The main research hypothesis is:

H01. Proper human resource management leads to the overall sustainability and satisfaction of workers in these enterprises and their performance at work.

H01.1. In-service training has a positive impact on employee satisfaction with the workplace and activity in the organization.

H01.2. Performance appraisal in the organization has a positive impact on employees' job satisfaction and performance in the organization.

H01.3. Proper communication in the organization has a positive impact on employee satisfaction with the workplace and activity in the organization.

H01.4. Employee motivation in the organization has a positive impact on employee satisfaction with the workplace and activity in the organization.

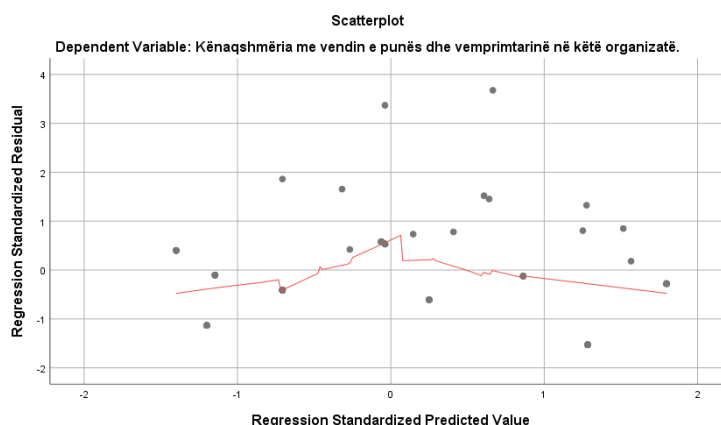
To prove the above hypothesis I used multiple linear regression to see that in the first case the training ($\beta = -0.899$, $p = .001$) which is significant at 1% confidence level, then, evaluation ($\beta = 4.622$, $p = .000$) which is significant at 1% confidence level, communication ($\beta = 0.890$, $p = .000$) significant at 1% confidence level, and motivation ($\beta = -3.903$, $p = .000$) which is significant at 1% confidence level. Statistically we see that proper human resource management, through training, continuous evaluation, communication and employee motivation, has a significant impact on the overall sustainability and satisfaction of employees in these enterprises and their performance at work. Whereas we have correlation ($\rho = 0.989$), regression ($R^2 = 0.807$) and significance (p value = 0.000) which is significant at 1% confidence level.

Independent variable	Model 1			
	B	S.H.	β	Sig.
Training	-0.482	0.133	-0.899	0.001
Evaluation	2.540	0.260	4.622	0.000
Communication	0.451	0.084	0.890	0.000
Motivation	-1.861	0.188	-3.903	0.000
R	0.989			
R ²	0.807			
ΔR^2	0.796			
F	74.089			
ANOVA (Sig.)	0.000			

Dependent variable: Satisfaction of employees in the enterprise and their performance

Source: Authors

So, we accept the main hypothesis and all the sub-hypotheses raised which are of great importance for the sustainability of enterprises, namely in health tourism in Kosovo. Therefore, proper human resource management is statistically significant which contributes to the overall sustainability and satisfaction of workers in these enterprises and their performance at work.



5. Conclusions and Recommendations

From the results of the research we find a high level of satisfaction of both managers and employees, and through the following hypotheses we have found the important factors that influence the sustainability and performance of employees.

The first results of the research show that the main factors of health tourism management, as we mentioned in the analysis, such as training, employee evaluation, communication with human resources and employee motivation have shown statistically significant impact (p value = .000) which implies that in my case,

tourism enterprises have a satisfactory level of human resource management which has influenced this management to satisfy employees, thus achieving overall sustainability and employee satisfaction and has directly contributed to enhancing the performance of employees them.

We conclude that human resource management in health tourism in thermal centres in Kosovo is directly dependent on the trainings organized with their employees, the approach managers and owners have with human resources, their communication and motivation for work. This should be a very important element for other types of enterprises in Kosovo as well, which is a very productive picture of work and professionalism. What we can ask for in the future is a direct visit to Health Tourism for the purpose of analysing these companies directly, by observing these companies in order to achieve a Kosovo Health Tourism brochure or index. Finally, we say that health tourism in Kosovo is on the right track and presents opportunities for economic development of our country.

References

- Ramadani, A. (2017). *Human Resources in Health Tourism-Thermal Spa Center of Peja*. Tirana: University of Tirana.
- Allis, E. (2008). Building Nepal's private sector capacity for sustainable tourism operations: A collection of best practices and resulting business benefits. *UNEP publications*. Nepal.
- Aronsson, I. (2000). *The Development of Sustainable Tourism*. London: Continuum Avelini Holjevac.
- Bernard, Ch. (1939). The Functions of the Executive. *Southern Economic Journal*, pp. 248-250.
- Daft, L. R. (2011). *The leadership experience, 5th ed.* Thomson South-Western, Mason.
- Tahiri, A. & Kovaçi, I. (2017). *Management in Tourism, Theoretical Managerial Approach*. Research Center. Peja.
- Koontz, H. & Bradspies, R.W. (1972). Management through retrospective control. *Business Horizont*, pp. 24-38.
- Lawrence, (1968). Organization and Environment: Managing Differentiation and Integration. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, p. 180.
- Pender, L. & Sharpley, R. (2005). *The Management of Tourism*. SAGE Publications. London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi, pp. 27-28.
- Mill, R. & Morrison, A. (1998). *The Tourism System: An Introductory Text*, 3rd edition. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co.
- Smith, M. & Puczko, L. (2008). *Health and Wellness Tourism*. Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 219-323.
- Bertalanffy, V. (1970). General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications. *American Sociological Review*, pp. 543-545.