



Human Resource Training in Tourism Towards Sustainability in Ho Chi Minh City – Lessons from Bali

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Abstract. Through the two consecutive Indonesian events held in Bali island - a popular tourist destination - in the third quarter of 2022: the 17th G20 Summit and World Tourism Day 2022 themed “Rethinking Tourism” as well as the real experience in teaching, operating tours in the Bali - Indonesia market recently, the author raises the issue of human resource training in tourism at training institutions in Ho Chi Minh City in the context of ASEAN integration and post-Covid-19. The article includes two main points: (1) The status of human resource training in tourism in Ho Chi Minh City and (2) Solutions and lessons learned from human resource training in tourism from Bali (Indonesia).

Keywords: Human resources in tourism · human resource training · Bali

1 Introduction

If we exclude the Covid-19 period from the end of 2019 to the end of 2021, tourism will always be one of the economic sectors playing a particularly significant role, making a great contribution to the overall economic growth of the country. Tourism is important in connecting countries and territories worldwide, specifically in regional and global integration. It is also important for a deeper understanding of cultures.

The international integration of Vietnam in tourism over the past time has been carried out by promoting the signing and implementing of bilateral, multilateral cooperation agreements at governmental and sectoral levels, enlisting the cooperation and support of other countries via specific programs and projects and commitments of opening and liberalization of the commercial and tourism services under WTO, ASEAN, APEC, ... However, in the context of Covid-19 and the economic recovery plan after the pandemic, tourism in Vietnam faces the same situation as regional and global tourism - the problem of human resources in tourism, especially high-quality ones with the capacity, bravery, and professional competence to support tourism businesses, contribute to the breakthrough development of Vietnam’s tourism, enhance competitiveness, bridge the gap in tourist attraction than regional countries performing the goal of economic recovery after the pandemic. Moreover, it is possible to actualize the roadmap of Southeast Asia unification and gradually “export” these skilled human resources to the markets

of ASEAN countries. This also meets the increasingly diversified demands of domestic and international tourists and tourism businesses [1].

The G20 Summit was hosted by the Republic of Indonesia, namely Bali - a tourist paradise. For the first time in history, Indonesia was honored to host the 42nd World Tourism Day Celebration on September 27, 2022. This will be an important and strategic incentive for Indonesia to realize its development programs, such as quality and sustainable tourism. Under the theme “Rethinking Tourism”, tourism-related stakeholders unite their visions and missions through innovative ideas geared to ‘human’ and ‘planet’ to bolster recovery and keep tourism from the consequence of natural disasters. Since the pandemic hit the world, all stakeholders have found that it is critical to strengthen the two essential foundations of tourism: Nature (maintaining environmental sustainability and natural resource abundance) and human (preparing high-quality, superior, and more competitive human resources). Accordingly, we also would like to rethink human resources in tourism in Ho Chi Minh City - a dynamic, creative city attracting many international visitors before Covid-19 [2].

2 Status of Human Resource Training in HCMC Tourism

In 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic, Vietnam had over 2.5 million tourism employees, more than 860,000 direct ones. Of these 860,000 workers, there were 45% trained in tourism, 35% trained in other specialties, and 20% untrained. The tourism labor working mainly in accommodation establishments makes up around 70%; travel (including the guides) and transportation account for 10%; other services fill 20% [3].

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the operation of the tourism industry. Most travel businesses took a temporary operational pause; hotels were closed due to the lack of guests and offered for sale. According to VNAT, Vietnam’s tourism industry was severely affected in 2020. Nearly 60% of workers were out of jobs or laid off; hotel room capacity was only 10–15%; virtually 90% of international travel businesses shut down. Most of the labor force was unemployed or had changed their jobs. Moving from tourism to other fields leads to a severe loss of human resources for this sector. In 2021, due to the more complicated developments of the Covid-19 pandemic, the indicators of Vietnam’s tourism continued to fall than in 2020 and could be said to have “bottomed out.” Hundreds of thousands of workers received unemployment compensation and supportive policies, which can limit this ongoing problem and help the industry overcome the crisis of lacking human resources. Besides the drastic fall of primary human resources after the pandemic, the new ones were also influenced by their inadequacy of hands-on experience. In detail, Ho Chi Minh City advantageously has a system of the country’s largest tourism-majored universities, colleges, and vocational schools. Here is a tourism-related human resource training center for the South with 24 universities, 20 colleges, and 19 vocational schools. Every year, there are about 12,000 people who are trained in tourism on average. Nonetheless, in the past two years, students specializing in tourism have primarily received theoretical training but have not had many opportunities to practice and rub against reality. Hence, the output quality is also adversely affected [3, 4].

3 Solutions and Lessons Learned from Bali (Indonesia)

Solutions to develop the human resources in tourism in the trend of integration and industrial revolution 4.0 with mechanisms and policies to prioritize human resource training in tourism: Implementation of Resolution No. 08-NQ/TW dated January 16, 2017, of the 12th Politburo on boosting tourism into a spearhead economic sector; Conclusion Notice No. 469/TB-VPCP dated October 6, 2017, of the Government Office on the human resource training in tourism [5, 6]. On that basis, the Ministry of Education and Training issued Official Letter No. 4929/BGDDT - Higher Education on October 20, 2017, which guides the specific mechanism of human resource training in tourism at the university level in the 2017–2020 period toward better meeting the requirements of the labor market and international integration such as:

Firstly, encouraging the pursuit of second-degree training in tourism; encouraging training institutions to flexibly open the faculty of human resource training in tourism relying on the needs of the labor market and international integration; creating conditions to attract human resources of marketing, business and finance sectors to participate in tourism operations; training institutions that actively cooperate with businesses are entitled to autonomously determine enrollment targets by expanding the scale of training in tourism; training based to the orders of businesses through short-term intensive courses in each branch of tourism; analyze the job satisfaction of tourism-majored graduates, training institutions determine enrollment targets, adjust training programs to suit the labor market of tourism.

Secondly, changing the training objectives comprehensively at training institutions, standardizing human resources in tourism based on regional and international criteria: Having highly qualified academic staff with professional qualifications to teach theory and instruct learners to practice and improve their skills, Using foreign lecturers to enhance students' foreign language abilities; building up and carrying out the base training program for career application, with additional updates when approaching progressive programs and suggestions from employers; updating practical changes regularly into the training content to help students can grasp the latest information in their field; quickly applying for regional and world standard training programs, training in a relaxed way to exploit potentials from tourism businesses; effectively implementing cooperative relationships between schools and businesses.

Thirdly, training institutions must actively exchange and seek advantages to closely cooperate with businesses, especially tourism businesses, to forecast labor demand, build output standards, and train students with skills to meet industry requirements. Businesses support professional training operations and also are the employers of both short-term and long-term training institutions; are the place of practice of the training institutions; use facilities, equipment, software, etc. of the businesses for practical training (training time at businesses is at least equal to the total practice time of the training program and not less more than 50% of the total time to implement the training program, businesses send experts to teach, guide practice, assess students' learning results...); upon this foundation, train human resources in tourism to meet the needs of tourists according to regional and international standards; developing human resources in tourism with the ability to use and apply science and technology, develop smart tourism, and skills in using audio and video recording equipment.

Fourthly: innovating university training programs and contents in a streamlined, modern, practical, and appropriate way, strongly converting the educational process mainly from equipping knowledge into comprehensively developing skills of learners with abilities and qualities, learning through hands-on tasks, the theory is linked to practice; consider lowering the standards to become an International Instructor from colleges to vocational schools; Regularly build short-term training programs in the way of high practicality for international students to join Vietnamese students and students.

Concurrently, keeping renewed methods and forms of university-level teaching vigorously, quickly standardizing academic staff.; promoting international cooperation in education and training, creating a favorable environment and conditions to attract talented, experienced teachers and scientists from foreign countries and overseas Vietnamese to participate in the process of scientific and technological training and research programs at Vietnamese higher education institutions; continuously sending Vietnamese students abroad to study, train and foster; implementing a combination of support policies from the state budget with mobilization of social resources; calling for foreign investment, attracting international-class universities and vocational schools to operate in Vietnam.

4 Conclusion

In the trend of integration and rushing development of the industrial revolution 4.0, the need to train and use high-quality human resources in tourism is decisive in turning tourism into a leading economic sector with international economic integration. Currently, the training of human resources in tourism in our country has achieved important achievements, forming a system of human resource training from elementary to university and postgraduate levels. Nevertheless, it is necessary to constantly adjust according to the trend of tourism training of countries in the region and the world.

Through the message on the occasion of World Tourism Day on September 27, 2022, themed “Rethinking tourism”, the representative of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) said that the global tourism industry must rethink its operations, for it is impossible to return to the way it worked before the Covid-19 pandemic. In the message sent, Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, UNWTO Secretary-General, emphasized: “World Tourism Day is always an occasion to celebrate together the diverse and rich achievements of the tourism industry. During the past four beautiful decades, we have honored the tremendous growth of tourism, covering size, scope, and importance. In 2022, we again recognized the opportunities tourism has brought. Especially this year, we notice that we cannot do the same way as how we worked. We have to rethink tourism.” Opinions from practical experience through jobs such as teaching, tourism training, guiding, operating, and tour management, we hope to contribute more voices to enhance the quality of human resources in tourism in the new context – post-pandemic economic recovery and digital transformation.

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