Sustainable Human Resource Management Practices for Cultural Differences: Investigation on the tourism and hospitality industry of the Republic of Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

The role of leadership in a multicultural environment is an important factor that can direct employees in a way that satisfies the organisational operations. The solutions and implementations that are decided by managers should meet the key objectives of an organisation. The decision of an organization to be active in the field of hospitality and tourism should include correct decisions related to cultural diversity through the examination of the social culture in which they operate. The understanding and respecting of cultural diversity can affect the achievement of goals of an organization.

The purpose of this article is to present the design and methodology has been used to examine this topic, and describe the findings and implications of the results in order to support the organisations and its staff who are employed in the hospitality and tourism industry, and therefore, regarding the cultural diversity and the effects it has on tourists as human beings. This research, analyses the implication of strategic actions by organisations that influence cultural differences in the hospitality and tourism industry. There was found that some gaps appear in relation to the available literature on cultural differences and the effects on hospitality and tourism industry. Two of the main concepts in a very competitive environment, are managers as effective leaders, and leaders as effective managers. The article presents a real empirical study of research related to the local hospitality and tourism industry in the Republic of Cyprus, and analyses some sustainable solutions and implementations that currently exist in the tourism and hospitality sector of the Republic of Cyprus which can create profitability to the stakeholders.

Keywords: Hospitality Management: Tourism; Cultural Diversity; Leadership; Human Resource Development; Multicultural Management; Sustainability; Innovation; International Development;

1. INTRODUCTION

This research critically analyses the implication of strategic organisational leadership actions that influences staff in the tourism industry. It also presents existing and under development strategic plans prepared by leaders. The strategic planning in an international complex internal and external environment must be well prepared in order its implementation in practice to be successful, profitable for the stakeholders and create sustainability in the tourism sector of the Republic of Cyprus. The current global business environment creates the need for more competitive organisations in order to achieve their goals and survive. Business and economic challenges are pushing organisations to develop sustainable innovative solutions and modern strategies that can create a competitive advantage. The use of suitable tourism methods, strategies, practices, at a complex working environment are very important for organisations to survive, and create the need for further development by deciding sustainable and innovative strategic implementations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Management and Leadership are two different but close related definitions which have a very strong role in business. Both are associated with effective managers and leaders in organisations, who need to earn the necessary knowledge and skills in order to succeed in a managerial position and situation. Leadership and management are nearby: "the development of people to think, write and speak effectively and creatively; the development of an appreciation of and respect for social, moral, and ethical values as the foundation of one's relationship to others and one's responsibilities to the community; the development for analytical, decision-making and communication competencies, self-reliance, responsibility, integrity and self-awareness (French, 1999)". The role of a leader to communicate effectively by decoding and transferring the right messages of the management to the team is facing a serious challenge. Some leadership communication methods include speaking, writing, and electronically transfer the message (Northouse, 2013). According to Ralph Stogdill, as it stated in the book of Huczynski (2007), "leadership is an interactive process that targets the organizations' goals, and plays a very important role into the overall organizational effectiveness". Zeugarides (1997) argues that "leadership is the process that a person influence other group members in order to act in a specific way". It is also a process that "specific people give motives to the group in order to control and drive them to a specific direction for success" (Myers, 1999).

The PESTEL analysis is a strong tool for a modern international tourism organisation to create sustainable strategies. Modern management styles such as coaching, mentoring, empowering and team leadership are connected to PESTEL conditions of a country. Any decisions of tourism and hospitality management must be implemented by leaders who are looking for a successful long term growth. Leaders must build a team spirit which is a matter of managerial succession and continuity. Strategic planning include concentration on what line managers have to do as leaders in order to play their vital and immediate part in increasing levels of engagement. Any new strategy should therefore include the steps required to improve performance and be effective to increase commitment of employees on implementing leadership decisions, in order to survive. The organisations' productivity is based on final actions of a leader in practice at the working environment. "Actions are based on commitment, trust, innovation, and respect of the different opinions" (Astin et al 2000; Wielkiewicz et al 2005). It has been established that rudeness in the workplace reduces performance effectiveness and creativity, and increases worker turnover, which is costly for the organisation. Politeness also varies with the type of the relationship (among strangers, friends, and intimates). Culture, personality and professional training influence the degree of politeness and the modality of expressing it".

In difficult business situations all actions are demonstrating the potential to grow by mastering skills in organizational leadership as well as entrepreneurial leadership to develop teambuilding and effectiveness in self- managed teams and take leadership roles. However, "leadership is based on the interaction between the employees by creating a specific culture for the organization" (Wielkiewicz et al 2005). Northhouse (2013) argues that "Leadership behaviour is not something that is going to be created at the beginning, but it can be easily recognised and get developed… A leader have to demonstrate an ability to identify, structure, and solve management problems using formulate organisational strategies in a daily, complex and new business environmental situations". "Each person is different and the leadership behaviour is separated in two major types: the task and the relationship. A leader should develop those skills by taking, maybe, some additional training seminars for personal development and improvement" (Northouse, 2013). The role of a leader can also bring a chaotic situation back to normal by using managerial and leadership techniques and decisions

as a part of the overall strategic planning. According to DeVito (2007), "Language cannot be used without carrying meaning and referring beyond itself. Meaning is an active process created in cooperation between sender and receiver, speaker and listener, writer and reader. Meaning is constructed out of the messages you receive combined with your own social and cultural perspective". "Messages occur in clusters and may reinforce one another or contradict one another. Before the meaning of any act of behaviour is identified or guessed, the entire package or cluster should be considered… All parts of the message system, including verbal and nonverbal behaviours, work together to communicate a unified meaning" (Literat, 2008). Literat (2008) also argued that "in the business world politeness is now recognized as an important part of interpersonal interactions. "Leaders and managers have to gain the necessary skills in order to make effective decisions concerning organisational resources, goals, and strategies" (Northouse, 2013). A leader should find solutions in order to create those circumstances in which the employees can create their motivation toward achievable goals. A leader should also try to motivate older and new employees to participate based on the same logic (reasons of performance). It is very important to realize that everyone is different and every individual in an organization is motivated by something different. According to Northouse (2013), "the leadership style assessment also gives you a good idea of a person's strengths in order to be a leader. As a person by knowing your leadership style it may help you understand why you lead the way you do, and whether by changing your style and performance will be beneficial for the future". Leadership style questionnaires or leadership style assessments in general, are the first impression of an employee to an organisation (Northouse, 2013). During the completion of an assessment the employee has the opportunity to examine whether it would be possible to be a leader in the organization. On the other hand an organisation by giving a style questionnaire has the opportunity to see whether and who is going to be the right person to hire for the 'leadership position'.

Motivation can be regarded as a broad concept which includes preferences for particular outcomes, strength of effort (half-hearted or enthusiastic), and persistence (in the face of barriers). There are those factors that leaders have to appreciate in order to motivate employees to behave in organisationally desirable ways and create the culture of the organisation. Some researchers have examined the concept of motivation, and even it looks like a simple word their observations were actually showing a much more complicated meaning. Leaders who motivate with 'encouragement', control their vision and passion succeed only if they achieve to energize their employees with the 'power of motivation' which was found by Maslow in 1954. Leaders, around the world, have recognized the 'power of motivation' and different people can have quite different motivators. The most successful way to motivate somebody is to find what the other person needs. It is the key to change the feeling of employees that hates their job by just sitting there and do it badly all day. It is the cognitive decision-making process through which goal-directed behaviour is initiated, energized, directed and maintained. "The overall culture of an organisation is nothing more than management's and leaders' decision in motivating other people to work hand either individuals or groups" (Armstrong, 2008). In order to help an employee to get motivated, leaders' influences can assist to achieve organisations' needs. Leaders try to motivate staff in order to behave in such a way that will achieve group's goals - 'the motivation to lead'. This power of leadership skills can create organization culture. According to Armstrong (2008), "there are two types of leadership which can be used to motivate: the 'assigned leadership' and the 'emergent leadership". The 'assigned leadership' appears from the person's position with an organisation- for example departmental head, team leader or director, whether 'emergent leadership' is acquired through the support and acceptance of others. Both 'assigned leadership' and the 'emergent leadership' might give either positive or negative

approaches to motivate people. The 'negative' might include for instance fear and threats. Armstrong (2008) argues that 'equal opportunities' and 'managing diversity' are both part of an overall organization strategy that can improve the effectiveness of an organizational culture. The role of a leader is to create and develop a 'new' working environment that will drive to commitment and trust by the employees. Any visible or non-visible differences, if they are taking seriously from an organization can create a valuable team in a productive environment.

2.1 Theoretical Framework of Strategic Directions in the tourism industry

According to Ralph Stogdill, as it stated in the book of Huczynski (2007), leadership is an interactive process that targets the organisations' goals, and plays a very important role into the overall organizational effectiveness. Zeugarides (1997) argues that leadership is the process that a person influence other group members in order to act in a specific way. It is also a process that specific people give motives to the group in order to control and drive them to a specific direction for success (Myers, 1999). The productivity of the final actions by a leader of an organisation, can be examined in practice at the working environment, based on commitment, trust, innovation, and respect of the different opinions (Astin et al 2000; Wielkiewicz et al 2005). However, leadership is based on the interaction between the employees by creating a specific culture for the organization (Wielkiewicz et al 2005). In difficult business situations all actions are demonstrating the potential to grow and become an effective leader by mastering skills in organizational leadership as well as entrepreneurial leadership and develop teambuilding and effectiveness in self- managed teams and take leadership roles. A leader have to demonstrate an ability to identify, structure, and solve management problems using formulate organisational strategies in a daily, complex and new business environmental situations. Leadership behaviour is not something that is going to be created at the beginning, but it can be easily recognised and get developed. Each person is different and the leadership behaviour is coming from inside of each person. Leadership behaviour is separated in two major types: the task and the relationship. A leader should develop those skills by taking, maybe, some additional training seminars for personal development and improvement (Northouse, 2013). Strategic leadership factors should concentrate on what line managers have to do as leaders in order to play their vital and immediate part in increasing levels of engagement in the tourism industry of Cyprus. Any new strategies should therefore include the steps required to improve performance and be effective to increase commitment of employees on implementing strategic directions and leadership decisions, in order to save tourism industry from the bankrupt.

2.2 Tourism Leadership and Management in the Republic of Cyprus

In business, two of the main concepts in a very competitive environment, are managers as effective leaders, and leaders as effective managers. "Leaders and managers have to gain the necessary skills in order to make effective decisions concerning organisational resources, goals, and strategies" (Northouse, 2013). A leader should find solutions in order to create those circumstances in which the employees can create their motivation toward achievable goals. A leader should also try to motivate older and new employees to participate based on the same logic (reasons of performance). It is very important to realize that everyone is different and every individual in an organization is motivated by something different. According to Northouse (2013), "the leadership style assessment also gives you a good idea of a person's strengths in order to be a leader. As a person by knowing your leadership style it may help you understand why you lead the way you do, and whether by changing your style and performance will be beneficial for the

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Leaders are often overstressed in such a complex environment, so in the digital economy, leadership needs to be more "updated" and use collective competence and intelligence in their organisations. "Leaders should not push too hard and dump all traditional management tools… Effective leaders are always response on the achievement of corporate goals and create change in order to gain a competitive advantage for an organisation… Leaders are very important for organisations in order to achieve goals and missions as their actions could affect the quality and functional values of an organisation. Effective leaders should find the ways to increase the effectiveness of employees in order to create organisation culture… The creation of an organisation culture should reach management's goals and achieve a human value for employees (North, 2018). All organisations are operating in a very complex environment with dynamic and fundamental changes. "In an age of acceleration, managers have to juggle with different options and be agile"... "A very important aspect of these changes is the use of new technologies. This dynamic and complex environment can also lead to new leadership challenges" (North, 2018). According to Ahlquist (2014) "Leaders requires reflection on online self-awareness and congruence, grappling with the controversy that comes with cyber civility and how to be a digital citizen prepared to inspire positive social change…There is currently a gap in developing competent digital leaders capable of leading change with the use of social media".

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives of Research

The *objectives of this research* are:

- to examine the role of leadership in current hospitality and tourism organisations,
- to examine the concept of digital tourism development without entering in complex technical methods of information technology,
- to examine the role of a sustainable strategy and direction to assure the quality and the functional values of information,
- to critically present decisions of management who were decided in order to create change in the tourism sector.
- to critically present invested strategies on creating innovate organisations,
- to evaluate implementations of internal communication to bridge different levels of employment and the gap of the learners.

3.2 Scope of Research

The *scope of this research* was to find answers on the following questions:

a) "How transformation of a leader's actions could change the way organisations are operating?",
b) "How the transmission of leaders' messages could help to change the methods the way stakeholders behave?",
c) "What are the fundamentals to create strategic directions from leaders for an organisation's effectiveness?",
d) "What are the requisites that a leader should have to effectively satisfy the needs of an organisation?",

e) “Does the transmission of messages need any specific skills by leaders to be effective?”,
f) “Are there any specific skills that a leader should have to transform messages effectively?”.

3.3 Research Design

Qualitative and quantitative methods of study can find answers to the above research questions. A research design leads to analysis the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, usually in the form of quality analytical numbers and techniques. According to Saunders (2019), “there are three layers: research strategies, research options and time horizons. These three layers can be considered to be the focus of the research design process, to transform the research question into a research program" (Robson, 2002). The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore the reasons why strategic directions in the tourism sector are used with multigenerational work forces in Cyprus. The sample targeted population from the tourism and hospitality industry like Human Resource managers and leaders as well as employees. “The implication for positive social change includes the potential to identify benefits to the organisation and its employees” (Nwankpa, 2015).

3.4 Scope of Study

The *scope of this study* is to explore the gaps related to the tourism industry in Cyprus. Researchers use qualitative methodology to seek for ‘how’ or ‘why’ answers, rather than explain a phenomenon or outcome (Yin, 2014). In quantitative methodology the researcher uses descriptive and inferential statistics, in order to describe the population and infer the sample results to the broader population (Orcher, 2014). Therefore, for in this case as a researcher, a qualitative study looks more appropriate.

3.5 Conceptual Framework of Study

The user participation theory is the conceptual framework for this study. Effective managers must understand generational characteristics of employees and assure that their leaders would support employees to understand and respect each other’s differences. Zhang et al. (2011) noted that transformational leaders develop obliging team goals as well as encourage team members to develop a common identity, common tasks, integrated roles, personal relationships, and shared reward distributions that reinforce cooperative goals. They also promote intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (…) to improve task structure and a cooperative climate in the virtual environment (Kahai, Huang, & Jestice, 2012). In addition, transformational leaders may seek to empower their employees with positive enforcement and encourage solutions to problems with creative thinking. This qualitative study examines the use of leadership strategies in relation to each generational differences based on three conceptual framework topics: (a) communication, (b) motivation, and (c) organizational change.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The issues of ‘confidence’ and ‘confidentiality’ during an interview and the completion of a questionnaire by participants must be taken very seriously by researchers. Participants must remain anonymous as the main target is to examine given answers and not accuse or reward them. Interviews can show reactions and emotions as well as tone of voice, facial expressions and any hesitations. Questionnaires are also very important since the researcher has the opportunity to receive in writing important and useful information about the field of research. However, by asking in depth questions about the research topic, it might acquire in-depth knowledge and data, which should be carefully protected, and destroyed

information given which could hurt the participant. Some examples include a list of completed questionnaires and a recorded interview. Furthermore, the use of any bibliography and references during a survey review should be carefully presented on the final assignments, as authors' work might be taken as interception of other's primary data. All primary data is a copyright of the examiner author, and should be borrow with respect.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The degree to which a strategic leadership factors can be implicated with development and become successful are based on the encouraged engagement and positive discretionary behaviour of employees. The motivation of staff to achieve a strategic leadership development is also very much depend on the ways in which employees can lead and manage others. A successful leader should also have excellent communication skills and working experiences from different organizational sizes, but the idea of designing and developing a strategic personal development plan for achieving a strategic leadership development is arising based on the goals that have been set by each leader individually. A person with an unsatisfied need will do whatever is possible and behave in a way that believes will satisfy the need. It is very important for workplace leadership to understand the needs of its employees for satisfaction in order to pursue higher-level motivators. To update a personal development plan and direct leadership development is important to identify those skills that need to be improved, devise activities to improve those skills, identify the resources to perform those activities, identify the measures to record progress, and work out a timeline because without all these elements it is not possible to make an impact on leadership development. The research found that men continue to be victims of gender role stereotyping, and many perceive a highly restricted range of occupational alternatives due to their gender. There is clear evidence that there continues to be discrimination particularly against gay men, men of colour, immigrant men, men living in poverty, and men making non-traditional career choices (Heppner & Heppner, 2001; O'Neil, 2008). Research on occupational stereotyping in adolescents and adults typically asks participants about their explicit beliefs about occupations. For example, participants may be given a list of occupations and asked which occupations require masculine or feminine traits. This type of methodology has been criticized as highly subject to socially desirable responding. For example, individuals who hold stereotypic views of occupations may not express them if they believe that responding in such a manner is either socially unacceptable or illegal (e.g., Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII).

6. CONCLUSION

Everyone is motivated either intrinsically (by nature), by which an individual implementation of actions will perform in a 'natural' way that help others, or extrinsically (by rewards) by which the external environment and result of the activity are of greater importance due to competition and reward or incentive plans. It's up to a leader and its management to understand how each person responds to several requests based on their nature and appeals to their desire for rewards during the designing of an organisational culture. The role of communication has also evaluated and analysed as a necessary tool in an everyday situation, as well as in relation to culture and an overall strategic organizational plan to create sustainability and change. The effectiveness of Strategic Human Resource Management in Tourism and Hospitality industry in achieving advancement of professional leadership practices in organizations is a complex situation that needs personal evaluation and knowledge on topics like "motivation", "culture", "communication", "ethics" and equal opportunities".

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