

The Role of Human Resources in Enhancing Innovation in Tourism Enterprises

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This paper presents an overview of issues related to the role of human resources in creating innovation in tourism businesses. The main purpose is to identify the level of utilization of personnel in innovative activities of the researched tourism entities. It attempts to verify the research hypothesis: Tourism enterprises, and other entities in this market, don't perceive the human resources key role in creating innovation. This paper presents an overview of the chosen aspects related to innovation in tourism enterprises, located in Poland, in the South Sub-region of Silesia. The presented results indicate that the main drivers of innovation are exogenous factors, and the impact of human resources on these processes is varied. The paper points to the need to change the approach of managers of tourism enterprises, to include roles attributed to employees in finding innovative solutions. For this purpose, companies should develop these resources in terms of their quantity and quality.

Key Words: tourism, innovation, human resources

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Introduction

The growing economic importance of innovation is stressed in the literature and in economic and social practice. Broadly speaking the term 'innovation' comes from a Latin root, where the word 'innovatio' means the creation of something new. Innovation is the process by which a perceived opportunity becomes a new idea, and then finds widespread practical application (Tidd and Bessant 2013, 19). Innovations are created through the process of introducing new ideas to the enterprise, which result in increased performance (Rogers 1998).

There are numerous studies which make use of the definition, and refer to the methodology of European statistics, in the Oslo Manual. As the minimum requirement to treat something as an innovation, this publication states, requires the introduction of sth. At least new to the firm or providing a significant improvement in its activity. In a wider perspective,

innovations must contain a degree of novelty that is not only at the enterprise level. There are three concepts for the novelty of innovations: new to the firm, new to the market, and new to the world (OECD 2005, 57.) The core of successful innovation is putting the novelty into practice, which comes down to the offering of a new product or service on the market. Or, in relation to a new process, organization or marketing methods, to their usage in the current activity of a business (OECD 2005, 59–60). The innovation can be a result of one's own empiric development of a business, co-operation with other businesspeople or institutions, or a result of the purchase of new knowledge (OECD 2005, 66–8).

The literature emphasises that innovation can be regarded both in a broad and narrow sense (Bruhn and Ahlers 2013, 145; Unsworth and Luksyte 2015, 280; Souto 2015). So, taking the broad view first, Porter (1990, 45) uses the concept of innovation broadly, and he includes in innovation: technological improvements, better methods and ways to do the things, changing processes, new marketing efforts and new forms of distribution. Kotler (1991, 342–3) also treats innovation in that way and came to the essence of innovation from the position of marketing. Thus innovation referred to any goods, services and ideas, which is perceived by someone as new. Secondly, the narrow approach of innovation is, according to Freeman (1982, 7) that innovation is the first commercial introduction of a new product, process or system. It implies that not every novelty can be considered as an innovation.

Innovation is an important subject of research in tourism. Hjalager (2010, 2) notes that 'innovation studies in tourism still rely on explorative and qualitative cases where the phenomenon is investigated and explained from a number of angles and where rigid definitions are less prevalent.' The diversity of tourism innovation definitions can be attributed to the different purposes authors have used for examining this phenomenon. Novelty or newness is one of the main interpretations of innovation, when studied in tourism (Kvam and Stræte 2010). Souto (2015) in his tourism innovation research distinguishes between the degrees of innovation novelty, dividing them into incremental and radical innovation. Innovation can take many forms and be classified in different ways. Initially innovations have been identified as mainly based around procedural change and product change, these have been the engine of technological development. Currently, service innovations are becoming the subject of growing interest. Service innovations extend beyond their own sector to affect activities in other areas (Miles 2005, 433). Innovation

implies a possible new solution to problems in tourism services and issues, which involve a change of actual state, and has an important part to play in the development of some fields of the tourism economy, for example: technology, organization, marketing, management, logistics, ecology or cultural, or psychological character (Hjalager 2010). An important field of development in tourism regions is institutional innovations, with such factors as: new directions of public-legal partnership, new forms of support for tourism companies, creation of new organizational solutions, such as co-operative models, like network centers, clusters (Novelli, Schmitz, and Spencer 2006).

Another aspect of tourism innovation research is the newness level, the area where the solution is an innovation. Krizaj, Brodnik, and Bukovec (2014) propose to measure tourism innovation on several levels: firm, region, country, group of countries (e.g. EU), continent and world. Another area of innovation measurement uses subdivided criteria: tourism segments (e.g. accommodation sector), size, age and type of enterprise.

An important aspect of innovation research is to analyse the key sources of innovation, and classify them as exogenous and endogenous (Cassiman and Veugelers 2006; Skibiński and Sipa 2015). Hidalgo and D'Alvano (2014, 702) state that 'managers should seek an appropriate balance between the development of internal and external innovation activities,' but on the other side, although managers are faced with many opportunities for improving innovativeness, they cannot involve them in their enterprises, because of limited resources for their implementing (Oke, Walumbwa, and Myers 2012, 273). The results of Nieves, Quintana, and Osorio (2014) research show that one of the important resources needed in innovation processes in tourism enterprises, is human capital. According to the authors human resources are important in achieving product innovation, especially in the tourism sector. A high level of intensive inter-action between employees and clients is conducive to the implementation of the innovative ideas created in this type of interaction.

The results presented in this paper are taken from research conducted between November 2012 and March 2013 in Poland. The research was undertaken, in part because of the clear impact of tourism on Poland. According to the WTTC report, the contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in Poland in 2014 amounted to: a direct contribution of 1.7% and a total contribution of 4.4% (World Travel and Tourism Council 2015, 3). The direct tourism and travel sector generated 1.7% of total employment,

but overall this sector generated 4.3% of total employment (World Travel and Tourism Council 2015, 4).

According to the European Innovation Scoreboard, Poland belongs to the group of 'moderate innovators,' and in 2015 its position in the rank has improved, but less than others, thus it is still below the EU average, and now Poland is 5th position from the bottom among EU countries (European Commission 2015, 5), and performing relatively badly. Poland has many problems to resolve in this field, it must improve its innovativeness in almost all the areas analysed in this index, except the few listed here: non R&D innovation expenditures, community design, youth upper secondary level education, population with completed tertiary education and employment fast – growing firms innovative sectors. In these areas results were over the EU average (European Commission 2015, 65).

Regarding the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) for 2013, the World Economic Forum ranked Poland 47th of 140 countries, but before, in 2011 it was worse, in 49th place (World Economic Forum 2013, 10). When analysed via the different subindexes, there are wide variations, Poland has a relatively high rank (32th place) in 'T&T human, cultural and natural resources' (World Economic Forum 2013, 31), but analysing the dimensions (in this report called pillars) which underly this sub-index, Poland was rated relatively high (18th place) in the dimension of 'cultural resources' (World Economic Forum 2013, 40). However, it holds lower places in other sub-indexes, for example: 'business environment and infrastructure' (58th place) and 49th place in 'T&T regulatory framework' (World Economic Forum 2013, 31).

A team of researchers from Jagiellonian University in Krakow, under the leadership of Professor Bednarczyk completed a study 'Management Innovative Regional Tourism Chains' in 2012 in South Poland, which is related to the issues covered in this paper. The results of this study indicate that 'the evaluation of knowledge transfer and knowledge management factors in tourism enterprises, as only average is a signal to the urgent need for strengthening them. [...] This suggests the need to improve governance' (Bednarczyk 2014, 225).

In sum, this study has several objectives. First to review the literature that analysed the role of human resources in the development of innovation. Second to examine the level of utilization of internal sources, in particular of personnel in innovative activities, of the researched tourism entities. Third to identify the direction of developing innovations in tourism enterprises, with discussion and proposals for future research.

Importance of Human Resources in the Development of Innovation

Endogenous sources of creativity and innovation in services can be observed in a combination of main factors of management. The most important is ability to develop new products – relative to competitors. The key predictors of firm innovativeness drivers indicate Gomezelj Omerzel and Smolčić Jurdana (2015): entrepreneurial characteristics, networks, technological development and the company external business environment. Several researchers have focused on two important management aspects of improving innovation performance: strategy of innovation and innovation-focused human resources management (Oke, Walumbwa, and Myers 2012; Beugelsdijk 2008). Oke, Walumbwa, and Myers (2012, 274) define innovation strategy execution, as the way, in which innovation become a priority in an enterprise and selection of ‘the specific actions or plans taken by the firm to promote innovation.’ They also introduces the concept ‘innovation-focused HR policy,’ defined as the specific way of adoption ‘people-focused policies,’ which include: recruitment and selection of creative employees, involving proinnovative methods of evaluation and motivation systems. All this elements should foster the development of innovation.

Analysis of the literature points to many important sources of innovation related to human resource management and its role in innovation activity. Amongst those the most prominent are: consistency of leadership (Mumford et al. 2002), allocation of resources (Nohria 1996), use of knowledge (Zahra and George 2002; He and Wong 2004), market orientation (Lee and Tsai 2005; Laforet 2008) and an ability to co-operate (Hardy, Phillips, and Lawrence 2003).

Consistency of leadership should result from the style used by the management leader, and consequently the way they behaves towards the employees. Leaders who are innovative in their actions, as well as properly communicating their vision for the organization, can gain credibility among employees and count on their support in the implementation of changes. An important requirement of this process is the consistency of communication and activities within the organizational culture – and its consequent acceptance by the employees (Cha and Edmondson 2006). Consistency of leadership within the ‘model of creative practice’ leads to greater creativity amongst the company’s staff (Jung, Chow, and Wu 2003).

Strategies of innovative enterprises should allow rapid resource allocation. Complying with this requirement often involves leaving 'loose resources' in the company. 'Loose resources' are a pool of 'spare' resources that exceed the minimum necessary requirements to ensure the organization of the output at the required level (Damanpour 1991). Leaving these extra free resources – human, material, financial, organizational – is conducive to creating innovative solutions by enabling experimentation and knowledge transfer, as well as financing new and costly innovative processes.

One of the key enterprise' resources is knowledge, and its skilful use becomes an important direction of innovation development. An important aspect of knowledge management is to minimize the gap between implicit and explicit knowledge (Hildreth and Kimble 2002). Companies can minimize the differences between the acquired and utilised knowledge through encouraging employees to share knowledge.

Finally, innovative enterprises must be market oriented, increasing their knowledge about consumers, their needs and desires, as well as environmental trends (economic, social). The opening of a company to market forces, requires closer co-operation between employees of the company and its environment. The result of such co-operation could be 'open innovation' (Chesbrough 2006).

Another specific aspect of innovation internal policies is a proactive environment at work, a positive climate in the organization. Ekvall (1993) noticed that climate is a determinant of success in business, for an innovation. He identified the factors which are friendly for innovations in organizations, such as: the right of free determination about the way of carrying out work, time needed to think about an activity, building confidence and receptiveness amongst workers, frequent meetings, and debates on the problem undertaken, as well as taking risk.

Tidd and Bessant (2013, 115) emphasize the need to build organizational structures conducive to the emergence of innovative ideas. The structures must be suitable for the required tasks. Especially, the less planned and imprecise tasks (typical of the early stages of creating innovation) should be accompanied by a greater degree of flexibility of the organizational structure. Innovation should be generated in all organizational units, and not limited to the R&D departments. This is much easier to implement in the case of open, flexible organizational structures.

Employees are a key resource of the enterprise, but employees should not only be effectively trained to provide services at a high level, but also

should be fully involved in the innovation process. This task is not easy to implement, because it requires the complex processes stimulating creativity to operate. According to Amabile (1998) the creativity which exists in every organization is a function of three elements: expertise, creative thinking and motivation. The sources of knowledge can be diversified: ranging from open knowledge, gained in the cycle of formal education, to implicit knowledge sources that arise from experience (e.g. interaction with other professionals using creative thinking in the work place). Motivation is the integrative, causative element, so a worker must be eager to use his knowledge and creative thinking.

The key sources of motivation should not only be material instruments. Workers can be motivated by the sense of fulfilment, respect for their superiors, colleagues and partners, and frequent communication amongst leaders and workers. This 'internal' motivation of creative workers may be much more successful than explicit processes. Organizations can support creativity through building an environment, with conditions to use and carry out all three of the above-mentioned factors, arranging training sessions (e.g. techniques such as: brain storms, problem solution, lateral thinking), or the mobility of workers – leading to an increase in worker experience.

It is vital that the proper 'climate' in enterprise builds employees motivation, resulting in the easy approval of innovative changes. In other words 'breaking resistance,' through making staff believe that a change will lead to an advantage, and encouraging activation of many participants in creating innovation, both in planning and implementation. The key components of the innovation climate are also: encouraging the creation of innovative ideas, facilitation of mutual relationships in organizations, toleration of failure, establishing clear goals and guaranteeing freedom in achieving them. Finally, respecting effort.

In the service sector, especially in tourism services, human resources are the source of values for innovation. However, one ought to bear in mind, that employees not only have to be successfully trained in new services, but also they have to understand, support and be fully engaged in new innovative services. Weidenfeld, Williams, and Butler (2009) emphasize that the absorptive capacity of tourism organisations is influenced by organisational structure, human capital and management practices. Nieves, Quintana, and Osorio (2014) suggest that enterprise developing innovation need at least three important knowledge-based resources: (1) employee knowledge, skills and abilities, (2) organizational collective

knowledge and (3) ability of managers to build external social relationships in order to obtain external knowledge. Souto (2015) states that 'human resources play a prominent role in knowledge generation, assimilation, and application.' That's why employees with a high level of education and inter-organisational training program create an environment, which stimulates innovation.

The growing role of employees in the growth of innovative enterprises is identified, in The Global Innovation Index (Cornell University, INSEAD, and WIPO 2014). This report was dedicated to the human factor in innovation, in 2014. The report's authors define human resources, as 'new sources of growth' (Cornell University, INSEAD, and WIPO 2014, 3) and in their opinion 'it is particularly important that the traditional technology and product-oriented perspective on innovation, evolves into a more holistic one in which the key role of people and their working conditions is acknowledged' (Cornell University, INSEAD, and WIPO 2014, 6).

The above aspects of human resources management are not easy to embed in tourism enterprises. Thus, it requires the implementation of the whole process of learning and creativity. Hjalager (2010, 5) emphasis that knowledge is a critical factor of innovation and 'human relations and inter-organisational structures are considered particularly important.' Internal sources of knowledge are important because innovations based on external sources might be easily and quickly imitated (Souto 2015).

Research conducted by Ottenbacher (2005) among 184 German hotel managers, identify the factors, including the elements of innovation, which result in the success of a hotel. The research showed that these are not innovations generally understood as the 'technological' ones, but modern, successful methods of management of human resources and training of employees, that are the essential element of the hotel's success. Following the respondents, the success of a hotel depends mainly on the involvement of workers. The respondents pointed out that, that it is obvious for innovations to be a distinguishing element on the target market, but the success of enterprise in hotel services also relies on efficient marketing communication and public relations, which should support the success of innovation.

However, on the other hand involving employees in innovation processes in tourism enterprises is not easy. Two things impact on this situation: the character of the job in tourism enterprises and the outlook and attitude of the leader or tourism entrepreneur, especially in small enterprises. Hjalager (2002) give three reasons for difficulties in applying hu-

man resources effectively in innovative activity: (1) employees in tourism enterprises don't receive or receive only minimal industry-relevant training, (2) there is a high personnel turnover in tourism, because of seasonal fluctuations, (3) a career in the tourism enterprises is often very different to a career in other industries. Najda-Janoszka and Kopera (2014) confirm that 'also in Polish enterprises to the key innovation barriers belong human resources issues, particularly: insufficient skills, competencies and low formal qualifications, as well as motivation to engage in innovation processes.'

In connection with the considerations above the following hypothesis is formulated: Tourism enterprises, and other entities in this market, don't perceive the human resources key role in creating innovation.

Methodology and Data Collection

The research area was a mountainous region in Poland, situated within the administrative boundaries of the Silesia province. The area has also been called the Southern Sub-region of the Silesia Province. Although average tourism rates in Poland are not high, in this area, there are many tourism opportunities, and high concentrations of firms and other organizations which provide tourism services. These factors had an impact on the choice of the region researched.

The aim of the study was to identify the level and methods of utilization of people working in innovative activities within the researched tourism enterprises. Also to consider people working in other entities which support the development of tourism. The results presented in this paper are taken from a broader study, which included the conditions required for innovation management in tourism. The paper thus presents the results of the author's own empirical research. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in the studies.

The first research technique applied a diagnostic survey method, using questionnaire techniques. The study was conducted on a random sample of tourism enterprises and related entities, taken from tele – address lists, from which units were randomly selected for the research. The population unit list was based on Internet databases.

The study itself was conducted using diverse techniques. Firstly the author sent questionnaires by postal mail, then used e-mail and finally direct research at the premises of some of the researched entities. The study subjects included: hotel facilities and other enterprises providing accommodation services, catering companies, travel agencies, tourist transport

companies, entities managing tourism attractions, and organizations that support the development of tourism, such as: promotion offices, tourist information offices, associations and groups undertaking initiatives of public-private partnerships.

191 tourism companies and other related entities, that support the development of tourism in the region were chosen for the survey, which represented 29.4% of the population. 121 correctly completed questionnaires were received, which was 63.4% of the original research sample.

Amongst the respondents, tourism businesses accounted for the vast majority of private tourism enterprises (89.3%), whilst public institutions supporting the tourism sector, accounted for 9.1%, and the remaining 1.7% represented the initiatives of public-private partnerships. Among the respondents 62.8% had implemented innovations in the period of 3 years before this research study. According to the methodology of the Oslo Manual, these subjects can be referred to as innovative.

In the second step the author applied a qualitative research technique, using narrative enquiry and partially structured interviews. 10 interviews were undertaken, covering innovations implemented over the past three years, and experience in managing tourism business.

In Summary: For the purpose of this paper and verification of its hypothesis, the author analysed these aspects of the research: The sources of implemented innovations, and their effects, the influence of components of the internal environment, on the innovation of surveyed tourism enterprises, the factors affecting the success of the researched entities, as well as proposed directions for their further innovative actions.

Results

Analysis of the sources of innovative activities, shows that the majority of respondents indicated that the suggestions of customers were the main source of innovative activities undertaken (86.8%). The readiness for usage of external sources of financing (68.4%) was a major inspiration for undertaking innovative solutions. European Union programmes, in which 59.5% of respondents declared their participation, gave rise to this increase of innovative interest.

The research results emphasize that in the vast majority of cases, the sources of innovation come from outside the business – only 31.6% of respondents recognized the efficient management of human resources, as the internal source of implemented innovations.

However, the implemented innovative changes did not influence the

TABLE 1 The Influence of the Internal Environment Components on the Innovation of Surveyed Tourism Enterprises

Specification	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
An appropriate atmosphere for innovation (encouragement, acceptance, tolerance of failure)	9.21	35.53	47.37	7.89
Pro-innovative motivation system	6.58	34.21	48.68	10.53
Sharing of responsibilities	13.16	28.95	40.79	17.11
Clear, transparent communication	3.95	22.37	53.95	19.74
The ability to use knowledge, skills and personal qualities of employees	3.95	22.37	52.63	21.05
Building good relationships at work	0.00	26.32	44.74	28.95
Knowledge of employees	0.00	19.74	44.74	35.53
Honesty, keeping of promises	3.95	23.68	35.53	36.84
Respect for alterity /acceptance of new ideas	1.32	15.79	46.05	36.84
Creative employees, willing to change	0.00	17.11	39.47	43.42
An adequate level of human resources, measures and information	1.32	5.26	42.11	51.32

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) not relevant, (2) less important, (3) important, (4) very important. In percent.

motivation of staff – the involvement of employees increased only in a third of tourism firms. This tendency is also noticeable in the answers to the question referring to the impact of particular components of human resource management on innovation (table 1).

The distribution of answers shows that the surveyed companies focus more heavily on attention to the proper level of human resources, means and information (51.3%), also creativity (43.4%) and the knowledge of workers (35.5%, while they perceive sources of innovation in their systems of managing these resources as significantly less important. Only a medium level of importance in the development of innovation, was attributed to pro-innovative, motivational systems and internal climates – in both answers only 48%. The answers show that the subject companies pay more attention to the quality of human resources, than to the systems of their management. This may, in the longer term, impair the transfer of knowledge inside the internal structures of the surveyed entities. The analysis of answers to this question indicates that very little attention is paid to knowledge, its codification and diffusion, in the project companies.

TABLE 2 The Influence of the Success Factors on Surveyed Tourism Enterprises

Specification	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Location	46.3	34.7	18.2	0.8
Raising the standard and quality of services	39.7	30.6	13.2	16.5
Prices adequate to the quality	36.4	51.2	8.3	4.1
Diverse, but constant offer	35.5	41.3	19.0	4.1
The uniqueness of the environment, natural resources, anthropogenic	32.2	43.0	22.3	2.5
Innovations in services	28.9	32.2	20.7	18.2
Innovations in the sphere of marketing	28.1	34.7	20.7	16.5
Technological innovations – associated with using the Internet to distribute and promote the services	24.8	25.6	37.2	13.2
Purchase of new appliances, equipment, technology	18.2	53.7	24.0	4.1
Cooperation with other organizers of tourists stay	16.5	36.4	24.8	21.5
The ability to acquire information	13.2	43.8	19.8	23.1
Organizational innovation – introducing the new management methods	10.7	22.3	40.5	24.8
efficient system of human resources management	9.1	29.8	41.3	19.8
Using the knowledge of external institutions (universities, associations, experts)	1.7	12.4	49.6	36.4

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) key importance, (2) average importance, (3) little importance, (4) not relevant.

Application of these important factors of knowledge transfer techniques could be better achieved by the sharing of responsibilities, or the formation of clear, transparent communication techniques and processes. Respondents recognized both of these factors only as moderately significant, suggesting that they are not fully utilized in innovative processes. Meanwhile the simultaneous usage of both sources of innovative ideas – internal and external – should significantly raise the innovation levels of tourism enterprises.

Respondents, when asked about the factors that affect the success of tourism enterprises (table 2), pointed primarily to aspects related to location. For 46.3% of them the location of the activity in this area was a key influence on the prosperity of their businesses. In particular, much attention was given to parameters such as tourism services, raising the standard of services (39.7%) and the setting of prices appropriate to their quality (36.4%). Amongst the various types of innovation, respondents

TABLE 3 Directions of the Future Development of Innovation

Specification	(1)	(2)	(3)
In environmental efforts	47.11	42.15	10.74
In the internal management processes	37.19	47.11	15.70
Cooperation with other participants of the market (cooperation chains, clusters)	27.27	50.41	21.49
In the field of human resources	25.62	49.59	22.31
Building relationships with customers	19.83	38.84	40.50
In the area of service offer	19.83	27.27	52.89
In the area of infrastructure	8.26	33.88	53.72
In the marketing activity	7.44	31.40	61.16

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) less important, (2) secondary importance, (3) most preferred fields.

most often pointed to innovation in services (29% of respondents said this was of key importance). Ranked lower, were innovations in the sphere of marketing (28.1%), followed by technological innovations – these were associated with using the Internet to distribute and promote their services (24.8%).

Against the background of this data, a small percentage of respondents attributed the highest importance to the efficient system of human resource management (9.1%), and less than 30% of respondents indicated that these resources have only a secondary importance in achieving success of tourism entities.

It is essential to understand in which fields, one could conduct and expand studies in innovative activities, in order to properly estimate the levels of innovative efforts of projected enterprises and organizations (table 3). Knowledge of the issue is the key to understanding present and future results of these activities. Service offers were one of the most popular fields for expansion of innovation for the respondents – for 52.9% of subjects it had a top ranking. A high percentage of respondents (53.7%) would like to improve the situation of their companies through infra-structural innovations.

Amongst recommendations of important directions for innovative development of subject companies, one should point to innovations in the field of marketing activity, and building relationships with customers (40.5%). Implementation of innovation in the area of human resource development, for the majority of the respondents, was of secondary im-

portance (49.6% of subjects), while up to 25.6% of the respondents did not think it mattered. Less respondents perceived the need for development of innovation in the area of internal management processes – for up to 37.2% of the respondents it was of negligible importance as a direction for innovation. This indicates a probable under-utilization of internal pro-innovative resources in the future.

Similar trends were observed by analysing the results of interviews conducted in the first quarter of 2013, in selected tourism businesses. The perceived importance of staff participation in innovation actions, and the impact of the changes on employees in these units, was varied. In answer to the question about whether respondents see a source of competitive advantage in human resources, as well as in the value of main asset creating innovations, representatives of the surveyed enterprises do not confirm this valuation.

The important exception was the statement by the tourist office's owner. He saw a market advantage in employees knowledge about tourism destinations and customers, as well as the diffusion of knowledge amongst them. It is clearly evident from his comment: 'I always send inexperienced tour guides out with the best ones, to teach them well and to ensure that the client was not disappointed with the level of services.'

The diffusion of knowledge within the company also occurs amongst entrepreneurs and employees. An interviewee stated that he thought about 'who will take over the reins of the company in the future,' and to this end he intends to change the legal form of the enterprise to a limited company and transfer shares to key employees.

In the case of other tourism enterprises, evaluating the contribution of human resources on innovation processes is not straightforward. The representative of the sanatorium stated that the 'guaranteed package provided to workers during the privatization, prevents the implementation of a motivation system.'

In the case of a big hotel, the manager assigned a significant role to the professionalism of staff, but it is reflected mainly on improving the quality of its services. In the case of small accommodation facilities the owner clearly assumes the role of innovators, and employees are hired to direct services for tourists, because the number of employees is subject to large seasonal fluctuations.

The respondents' answers show that a large part of small tourism enterprises did not attribute significant attention to the stability of employment, but valuing this could contribute to the growth of innovation.

Recommendations and Limitations

The activities of entities that are engaged in the creation of innovations in tourism can be shaped into three sectors: the private, public, and the sector of institutions which support the development of tourism in the region. Although the creation of innovation in the field of tourism is a goal for many, tourism companies play the most important role. It is assumed that the development of innovation should be based upon human resources, co-operation and research activity, access to capital, and also the infrastructure for innovation. These suggested directions of actions inter-penetrate, each having a direct influence on the innovative process which aimed at the success of tourism in the region. The cycle of actions, thus, has an influence on enterprises and their environment.

In the area of human resources, the subject of this study, it should be noted that HR is a field of management which has a significant influence on innovation. On one hand it can be treated as a factor of the innovation 'formation,' and on the other hand, as a factor of knowledge popularisation. Every employee whose creative abilities are accepted, and who is motivated to creativity, contributes to the development of the business through innovations. This assumption is based on the fact that human capital cannot be treated as only 'collecting' knowledge, as innovations also result from the creation, spreading and acceptance of new values.

The transformation of public awareness, especially amongst entrepreneurs preparing employees to function in a knowledge-based economy, is important. Therefore, entrepreneurs should pay special attention to the education and skills of staff, both at the stage of recruitment as well as once in employment. It is essential a system of continuous improvement of knowledge and skills for staff. So, it is important to undertake development activities such as training, seminars or competitions for the most creative employees. Other areas in need of support are personal training, organising the exchange of personnel between enterprises and the R&D sector (especially within tourism clusters), joint creation of training programs and the promotion of creativity.

The research developed in this paper has some limitations. One of these is the generalisation of the results and conclusions. The research was undertaken in one sub-region, therefore there is danger in making generalisations for the whole region or country. Secondly, the presented results are part of a broader study, therefore here not all aspects of HR management in innovation development are represented. There are only limited

results related to tourism enterprises innovation in Poland and consequently in the researched region, which makes it impossible to make full, direct comparisons of presented results.

The implications for future research of the foregoing analysis are twofold. Firstly, a greater representation of the issues concerned with the internal sources of innovation and role of human resources, in the development of innovation, should be involved in the undertaken research. Secondly, such studies should be conducted in all of the country and possibly internationally. International studies will allow make comparison of Polish tourism enterprise innovation with other countries, including more developed countries.

Conclusions

The changes occurring in modern tourism economies have a powerful impact on functioning for both regions and tourism enterprises located in their area. In modern society, oriented to the development of new information techniques, innovations have more and more meaning in creating preferences in the tourism market. Therefore, one should undertake activities which aim at the successful implementation of innovations. The possibility of creating innovation in tourism is dependent both on external and internal factors. The results show that in the vast majority of cases, sources of innovation in the researched entities come from the outside.

This study analyses the role of human resources in innovation activities of tourism enterprises. Analysis of the available literature indicates that the impact of human resources on innovation activity in tourism enterprises should be high. The results show that in most researched enterprises, human resources are not treated responsibly, in terms of innovation processes. Respondents mainly perceive employees through the lens only of their operational activity. They have paid significant attention to the quality of human resources and personal characteristics conducive to innovation. However, less important for them is taking actions to boost pro-innovative skills of human resources, such as creating an internal climate for innovation, and pro-innovative motivational systems.

The hypothesis established in the introduction is confirmed, subject to the limitations described, which are connected to, and limited by the scope of the research. Although human resources are one of the important source of creating innovations, tourism enterprises, and other entities in this market, don't perceive the human resources key role in creating innovation.

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