Developing a conceptual framework of strategic talent management for hospitality organisations.

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1. Introduction

In Ireland, tourism is one of the country's most important economic sectors and has significant potential to play a further role in Ireland's economic renewal (Department of Transport, 2015), it is a key player in the Irish economy. The industry has been valued as contributing between 1.5% - 2.3% of Ireland's Gross Domestic Product (Deloitte, 2020). The Irish hospitality industry is experiencing a crisis, there is a chronic shortage of staff, which is heavily impacting the recovery of the industry post pandemic. The industry needs to attract and retain suitably skilled employees, which is one of the key functions of the human resource department in hospitality organisations. This study demonstrated the urgency for a change in approach by both academia and industry, to drive social value collectively through active collaboration.

2. Research question and research aims:

This study addresses the question 'How can talent management play a strategic role in addressing the skills gap in the Irish hospitality Industry?' The aims of this study are:
- o To evaluate how talent management could play a strategic role in the Irish hospitality Industry
- o To understand the social value of industry and academic collaboration
- o To create a conceptual framework of strategic talent management for hospitality organisations.

3. Importance of the research

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the largest, rapidly growing industries in the world, creating employment and driving exports in many countries. (Johnson Karen, Huang, & Doyle, 2019; Nolan, Garavan, & Lynch, 2020). The market size of the global industry pre-pandemic in 2018 was USD2,750.7bn; and the World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019, have forecast this to grow by 3.7% pa to USD13,085.7bn by 2029 (11.5% of GDP). It is predicted that the sector is expected to create almost 126 million jobs within the next ten years (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2022). Despite the impact of the pandemic the industry is on track to recover fully

4. Literature review

The industry is regarded as being very labour intensive, due to the high levels of human interchange required to provide the service (D'Annunzio-Green & Teare, 2018; Lin, Chiang, & Wu, 2018; Mill, 1989), it is one of the main sources of employment in many economies (Altin, Ridderstaat, Lelo de Larrea, & Köseoglu, 2020; Liu, 2005). A supply of human resources is therefore critical for such economies, and is essential in order for the industry to survive and grow (Elshaer, 2020). In the current labour market a strategic approach to human resource management is required, which would involve creative thinking and innovative methods of managing employees (Dannunzio-Green & Teare, 2018). Nachmias, Walmsley, and Orphanidou (2017) state the hospitality industry needs to adopt "a more robust approach to credentialing and training its workforce" (Nachmias et al., 2017, p142), which would strengthen the industry's image. The improvement of human resource practices within the industry, acknowledging the value and potential of the employees may require an organisation to reengineer its approach to people management.

5. Theoretical basis for this research

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) was used in this study as the lens to identify factors influencing intention to participate in work-based learning initiatives and perceived barriers and enablers to participating in work-based education programmes. The TPB provides a framework for the qualitative data collection in this study and will be used to understand and evaluate participation in

hospitality work-based learning programmes. The central factor in the TPB is the individual's intention to perform a certain behaviour. The model identifies factors influencing intention to engage in a certain behaviour. The factors proposed by Ajzen (1991) are attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. The TPB model as depicted by Ajzen (1991) can be seen in Figure 1. below.
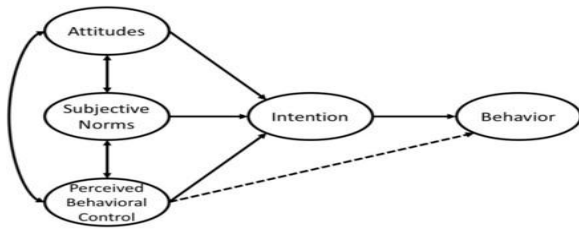
(Ajzen, 1991)

Figure 1.

Attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control are three distinct conceptual constructs (Ho, Tsai, & Day, 2011). Attitudes towards the behaviour are the beliefs held by an individual about the behaviour, their personal feelings, favourable or unfavourable towards the behaviour (Ho et al., 2011). Subjective norms refer to the social environment and the pressure or not to engage in the behaviour. The individual perception that those close to them or important to them will have opinions as to whether or not the individual in question should be partaking in the behaviour (Fishbein, 1975). Perceived behavioural control refers to the anticipated ease or otherwise of performing the behaviour. The individuals perception as to their own capability and the availability of necessary resource to support the behaviour (Ajzen, 2002). In situations where personal beliefs and norms surrounding the behaviour are positive, there are other salient factors which may positively or negatively impact the potential behaviour. Such factors could include the level of support from other key players and the availability of resources. This research examines the behavioural intentions of hospitality employees and managers to engage in workplace training initiatives.

6.   Research design

The research data was collected via a qualitative study carried out in seven hotels within the West and Northwest of Ireland, over two phases. Phase one comprised of semi-structured interviews conducted with participants who were part of a pilot study in an industry-based education and training initiative, which included: 7 hospitality human resource managers, 8 academic staff, and 12 hospitality employees. Phase two involved semi-structured interviews with 11 managers to investigate their opinions and attitudes toward collaborating with academia to deliver industry-based training programmes. The data was analysed through thematic analysis Braun and Clarke (2006) and triangulation (Saunders, 2019) to ensure validity and reliability.

7.   Findings

The following extracts from the findings are the basis upon which a conceptual framework was designed:
- Work-based learning initiatives are a key tool for recruitment and retention of staff and an excellent opportunity for employee development.
- Effective talent management has the potential to benefit the organisation and the employee.
- Talent management is of strategic importance to hospitality organisations.
- Identifying potential is pivotal.
- Employee development may be utilised as a motivational tool and ensures a pipeline of suitably skilled staff for sustainable hospitality.
- Collaboration is beneficial for the employer, the employee and academia.

8.   Relevance and practical importance of this study

This study evidences the benefits of collaboration between industry and education and provides valuable insight and offers a robust practical solution to address the skills gap, recruitment, and retention

challenges in the Irish hospitality industry. The development of a talent management framework also addresses key areas of concern for hospitality employees such as job insecurity and career development. The research offers valuable recommendations to educational institutions, which will provide them with a framework upon which to build relevant education and training programmes. Based on the findings HR practitioners and hospitality employers can gain valuable insight on how to address the main challenges identified, namely; recruitment, retention, intention to quit, job insecurity and skill shortages through adopting the conceptual framework of strategic talent management for a sustainable hospitality industry.

9.   References

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