



Hospitality Human Capital Process Model in Crisis Management: Managing Human Capital and Revealing Employees' Hidden Capabilities

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Abstract

According to recent studies, crisis management is currently becoming a global trend in hospitality research. Such unpredicted events as the COVID-19 pandemic, wars, and lack of economic stability require a lot of flexibility and the ability to predict and adapt to constantly changing conditions. As the hospitality industry is extremely human-dependent, proper human capital management is the key for hospitality businesses to deal with these challenges and become resilient in the long-term perspective. The purpose of this study is to verify Hospitality Human Capital Process Model in the context of crisis management. The authors adjust the model concerning two phases of a crisis. Additionally, we expand the model by showing what values for the business emerge from human capital management practices. As a methodology, the authors used semi-structured interviews conducted with restaurant owners or managers who experienced the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The obtained results were analyzed using content analysis. Our findings reveal what managerial actions concerning human capital may result in quick and successful adaptation to new and unknown conditions. Moreover, we uncover the hidden and unique capabilities of restaurant employees that, if properly managed, may become a huge additional value for the business and enhance its competitive advantage. The study may be food for thought for all practitioners in the hospitality industry, especially in restaurant SMEs that are under-researched part of the industry. Our findings also fill the gap concerning human capital and crisis management frameworks in hospitality.

Keywords: competitive advantage, human resources, crisis phases, Scandia process model, restaurant management