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SUSTAINABILITY AS A NEW APPROACH FOR THE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN TOURISM SECTOR

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Abstract. *The challenges related to human resource management and human resource development in the tourism sector can be defined as: low-skilled employees, inexperienced employees, shortages of seasonal workforces, a lack of staff motivation, and the frequent rotation of employees, in addition to various other issues. In the face of the above-mentioned challenges, the application of the sustainability approach into human resource development is discussed. Sustainability cannot only be treated as a paradigm for environmental management and social sustainability, but should also be applied in the development of human resources. The purpose of this article is to investigate the theoretical assumptions of sustainability as a new approach for human resource development in the tourism sector. Theoretical analysis, synthesis, and generalisation were the scientific methods used in order to achieve the stated purpose. Sustainable development can be considered at different levels: societal, organizational, and individual. Sustainable development of human resources can lead to the broader development of the organization and society. Different parties such as tourism companies, governments, public institutions, educational institutions, and international organizations take part in the sustainable development of human resources in the tourism sector. Inter-organizational collaboration can contribute to the sustainable development of human resources in the tourism sector.*

Raktažodžiai: *darnus žmogiškųjų išteklių vystymas, planavimas, turizmas.*

Keywords: *sustainable human resource development, planning, tourism.*

Introduction

The tourism sector belongs to the service industry, where the main value is often created by the human resources (HR) of the organization. The tourism sector can also be described as being very dynamic. Companies in the tourism sector face common problems regarding human resource management and human resource development that include: low-skilled employees, inexperienced employees, a shortage of seasonal workforce, a lack of staff motivation, and the frequent rotation of employees (Úbeda-García et al. 2012). Human resource development, professionalism, and career satisfaction tend to improve customer service, so human resource development must be one of an organization's priorities (Drucker 2004). The present situation in the tourism labour market is influenced by a number of factors. When analysing the sustainability of organizations, traditionally a lot of attention was paid to the environmental aspects, however not enough attention was paid to the human resource aspects. A lack of evidence, and theoretical assumptions towards sustainability and human resource development are taken as research problems. The purpose of this article is to investigate the theoretical assumptions of sustainability as a new approach for human resource development in the tourism sector. The objectives of the article are: i) to analyse the importance of sustainability for human resource development; ii) to provide the theoretical assumptions of sustainable human resource development; and iii) to explain the importance of the planning of sustainable human resource development in the context of inter-institutional collaboration. Theoretical analysis, synthesis, and generalisation will be the scientific methods used in order to achieve the stated purpose. The aforementioned methods helped to summarize pertinent studies in an attempt to provide a contextualized understanding of sustainability and human resource development issues.

Significance of the sustainability for human resource management issues

The word "Sustainability" comes from the Latin word "sus-tenere", which means 'to sustain'. According to Ehnert (2009, 8), sustainable development can be treated as the ability to develop on the different levels of societal, organizational, and individual. It is essential to develop the resources which could be important in the future, and one of these resources can be defined with certainty as human resources. According to Kira and Frieling (2005, 4), "development of one contributes to the development of all". Plainly, development of an employee contributes to the development of an organization, where development of employees of an organization then contributes to the development of a society. Boudreau and Ramstad (2005, 134) stated that human resources have an important role to play in sustainability. The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development extended the recognition of sustainable development with its report, defining it as: "Development that meets the needs of the present and without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987, 43). Scientists Docherty (2002), Pfeffer (2010), Wilkinson et al. (2001) continued discussing the idea that sustainability cannot be treated only as a paradigm for environmental management and social sustainability,

but adding that it should also be applied in human resource management (Ehnert et al. 2014). Scientists Brewster and Larsen (2000), Barney (2002), Martin (2003), Dyer (2004), Shuler and Jackson (2006), and Helfat (2007) discussed the nature of human resources: demonstrating that it is not like other resources as it is able to react, has needs, and cannot be owned by an organization – and so therefore can't be treated in the same way as other resources. Ehnert (2009) has generalized the main conceptual approaches linking sustainability and HR: sustainable work systems, sustainable human resource management, sustainable resource management, and strategic human resource management. In these terms, linking sustainability and HR, focus narrowed on different aspects that included: working conditions, work-life balance, the harmonious co-existence of employees, corporation and society, and labour shortage, amongst others. The linkages between sustainability and human resource meanings are diverse.

Table 1. Conceptual approaches linking sustainability and HR issues (Ehnert 2009, 49)

Approach	Sustainable Work Systems	Sustainable Human Resource Management	Sustainable Resource Management	Strategic Human Resource Management
Research problem	Work-related health problems; "intensive work".	Labour shortage of supply with skilled motivated people in several European countries. Stress related absence of employees. Human resource consumed instead of being developed.	Labour shortage of supply with skilled, motivated people despite high joblessness rate in Germany. Joblessness, HR shortages, burnout of employees.	Talent shortage. Externalities of HR deployment and retrenchment, downsizing. Enhancing social legitimacy. Assumption that HR practices need to be more "sustainable".

Human resource development can be characterized as a creative combination of strategies, structures, systems, technologies, and people in ways that promote the individual and organizational learning that creates and maintains the organization's effectiveness (Dilworth 2003). It is suggested by Ehnert (2009) that sustainable human resource management can be treated as an extension of strategic human resource management. According to Hulsmann, sustainable perspective and strategic management have both an orientation towards the long-term perspective, and strategic goals on economic, ecological, and societal levels in common. It can be stated, then, that human resource development is a part of human resource management, so sustainable human resource development is a part of sustainable human resource management (Ehnert 2009). Sustainable human resource management was described by Muller-Christ and Remer (1999) as "what companies themselves have to do in their environments to have durable access to skilled human resources" (Ehnert 2009). In the context of a changing business environment, more attention is paid to the learning and development of the human resource, intending to modify the capability of the human resource to meet the challenges influenced by change.

Extending existing skills and competencies can retain the competitive advantage of a company, at the same time as stabilizing societies both economically and socially. Hirsig, Rogovsky and Elkin discussed the idea that an organization must include human resource development into the strategies of the organization (Ehnert et al. 2014). The abovementioned scenario creates the so called “win-win-win” situation for societies, organizations, and individuals. To be able to cope with the change and develop innovative ways of working, organizations need to nurture and aid people, thus allowing them to learn and generate new ideas. Sustainability will have to become a main aspect of their strategies so that the innovation and development is people focused and is closely linked to wider aspects of society and environment (Klein 2004). It was stated by Baum (2006) that sustainability in human resource terms implied a commitment to the individual potential for growth and development. It is crucial to align an organization’s strategies and goals with the knowledge, skills and competencies of their employees.

**Table 2. Conceptual approaches linking sustainability and HR issues
(adapted and extended from Hulsmann, (Ehnert 2009, 35)**

Period	Concept	Sustainability application
Approx. 2006	Sustainability as a concept for human resource development and HR planning	Sustainability as a tool to plan and ensure the skilled and motivated human resources in the future (Baum 2006; Ehnert 2009)
Approx. 2000	Sustainability as a concept for human resource management	Sustainability as an ethical, moral value (“social responsibility”) (Boudreau and Ramstad 2005; Kira 2003)
1990s	Sustainability as a corporate concept	Sustainability as the balance of resource consumption and resource reproduction (Muller-Christ and Remer 1999)
1987	Sustainable development as a societal concept	Inter- and intra-generational justice: “Meet the needs of the present without compromising future needs” (WCED 1987)
1980s	Sustainability in the context of Strategic Management	Sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Grant 1991; Porter 1980)
1970s	Sustainability as an ecological and development aid concept	Link between economic growth, environmental problems and human development (Club of Rome: “Limits of growth”) (Meadows et al. 1972)

Obviously, sustainability was adopted by environmentalists in the 1970s under the environmental politics discussion, regarding the over-exploitation of natural resources and human resource development. Today’s interest in sustainability is mostly related to the report of the United Nation’s World Commission on Environment and Development, where sustainable development was asserted on the societal level. Sustainability visibly appeared in management in the context of corporate responsibility in 1990s, where human resources were also included. Sustainability as a concept for human re-

source management appeared in approximately the year 2000, where both HR created value and social responsibility were emphasized. In the context of changing business environments, particular attention was paid to human resource development and gaps in human resource planning, in order to have motivated and skilled employees in the future.

Assumptions of sustainable human recourse development in tourism sector

In recent decades there have been a lot of changes in the tourism sector as well as in human resource development. In the light of trends, organizations must adapt quickly to change (Taylor and Finley 2009). Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the global economy. In 1950 there were 25 million fixed international arrivals in the world, and by 2005 this figure increased to 75 million. By 2017, there were 1.3 billion international arrivals, and this figure continues to increase. It wouldn't be possible to fulfil the needs of the rapidly growing number of tourists without the human resources employed in the tourism sector (UNWTO highlights).

Many changes in society influence the habits of tourists, which in turn affect tourism services and tourism business in general. Devised changes should, first of all, be adopted by employees, and these include innovations such as: new reservation systems, new sales channels, changing tourist profiles, languages, tourist flows during the high season etc. In order to create favourable conditions for employees in the tourism sector, and to cope with the above-mentioned challenges, investments into the development of human resources are needed. Sustainable human resource development will encourage continuous education and learning by elaborating long-term resource development strategies and company knowledge and information systems (Garavan and McGuire 2010). "In this sense, sustainable development can be interpreted as the ability of a society, an organization, or an individual to maintain, strengthen, and to develop itself (its resources, capital etc.) from within" (Ehnert et al. 2014, 8). In the context of global sustainable development, scientists started analysing human resource development through the prism of sustainability. "The adoption of human resource development strategies and practices that enable the achievement of financial, social, and ecological goals, with an impact inside and outside of the organization and over a long-term time horizon while controlling for unintended side effects and negative feedback" (Ehnert et al. 2014). From this definition, it is obvious that sustainable human resource development can be analysed from different perspectives. The main guideline being: taking the right decisions in human resources development in order to develop the financial, social, and ecological wellbeing broadly on the company level.

One can assert that investment in human resource development by tourism companies (those that provide tourism services or create tourism products) can influence the following three levels: employee, organization, and society.

According to Kira and Lifvergren, the purpose of a sustainability approach in professional life is to encourage employees' wellbeing and development, which then has the potential to make a positive influence on the socio-ecological and economic environment (Ehnert et al. 2014). Human resource development is becoming sustainable via a

positive and long-term influence in the aforementioned areas. Changes created via the development of human resources firstly make a positive influence on the individual who becomes more capable to meet the changes at work. This positive attitude is then transferred to the organizational level and to the family (or broader society) level.



Figure 1. The Influence of Sustainable Human Resource Development (compiled by author)

Discussion about the importance of sustainability in the tourism sector, and the influence of human resources in the tourism sector, is diffused broadly. When combining these two mentioned aspects (the importance of sustainability in the tourism sector and the importance of human resources in the tourism sector), the question of why these two aspects are usually analysed separately arises. According to Baum, more confidence in the individual is needed: “Belief in the individual: sustainability goes beyond a perspective on the factors which motivate employees in the workplace and reflects upon the way in which managers and supervisors view the potential for development and the capacity for growth of those with whom they are working. The traditional human resources model sees people in the specific context of the job that needs to be done” (Baum 2006, 300). It can be stated that the old human resource management model is more focused on short term objectives, whereas the human resource development paradigm is focused on long term objectives. Therefore, it can be assumed that the earlier formed, short-term human resource perspective affects the position towards human resource capability in the long term. It is important to mention that when the main dimensions of sustainability are discussed, it is surprising that the individual dimension is missing.

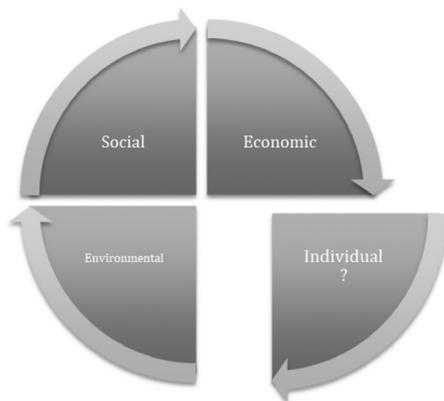


Figure 2. The main components of sustainable development (compiled by author)

According to Zink's explanation, the definition of "social" can have different interpretations regarding its societal, social, or/and human dimensions (Ehnert et al. 2014). In 1992, during the United Nations Conference in Rio de Janeiro, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was issued, which stated that "Human beings are the centre of the concern for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature" (UNCED). It may be concluded that unintentionally sustainable human resource development became one of the main aspects of the sustainable approach.

Planning sustainable human resource development in the tourism sector

Today's human resource problems in the tourism and hospitality sector -- e.g. the lack of employees, the rotation, low skills etc. -- relate to the old, short term objectives based on the HR model. According to Baum (2006, 304), "the sustainable human resource paradigm within tourism, hospitality and leisure focuses upon the planning needs in this area at all levels, whether relating to a small company expanding or diversifying its markets or to a city or region planning to re-orientate its economic and employment structure in the direction of tourism and hospitality from other, possibly declining, areas of activity." This attitude seems not to have changed, according to Baum (2006, 301), as training and development are seen as a wasted investment for staff in tourism and hospitality due to the belief that employees will use their new-found skills as bargaining tools in the search for better employment elsewhere. However, from the perspective of strategic human resource management, having skilled and motivated employees in the future is important to ensure the regeneration and development of staff, creating these conditions from within the organization. From an economic perspective, investment

into human resource development is time-consuming and creates benefits only in the long-term, which is often not taken into consideration by employers (Aragon-Sanchez et al. 2003). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, every 10th employee globally is employed in the tourism sector (UNWTO highlights). It should be noted that not only the quantity but also the quality of jobs became important. In 1999 the International Labour Organization (ILO) published a report where a definition of “decent work” was produced: “not just the creation of jobs, but also the creation of jobs of acceptable quality.” In the report was an outline of the notion that decent work lies in the heart of social progress, and therefore has to become one of the major strategic policy concepts. In 2006 an aim of the European Commission was: “Promoting decent work in the world”, and in June of that year the European Council endorsed the Commission’s proposals to strengthen EU policies aimed at promoting decent work both inside and outside of the EU. According to Baum (2006, 304), sustainable human resource planning is also an important factor in ensuring that a community’s true potential, in terms of skills and related attributes, is fully recognized.

The European Commission declares that “Skills are a pathway to employability and prosperity. In a fast-changing global economy, skills will to a great extent determine competitiveness and the capacity to drive innovation.” (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu>). Seeking to reduce the mismatch between the skills people are taught and the skills needed by the service sector and the manufacturing industry, on 10 June 2016 the European Commission adopted the New Skills Agenda for Europe. One of the main strands of the Agenda is to make skills and qualifications more visible and comparable. In the case of tourism as a global and fast changing sector, it is crucial to analyse the main tendencies of the required skills in the tourism specialists’ education and if they fit the reality of the market. Tourism can be described as one of the key forces of the global and the EU economy, with approximately 2.3 million enterprises belonging to the sector creating 9.7 million jobs. (Eurostat.org) Tourism is a multidimensional sector which consists of different subsectors, where different and similar skills and competencies are required. Requirements regarding the skills of the employees in the mentioned context are changing, and therefore the educational institutions providing the degree in tourism are changing/should change as well. The bridging function between the sector and the employee often belongs to higher education institutions. For higher education institutions preparing tourism specialists, it is important not only to keep track of changes in the tourism sector but also to respond to these changes. In this regard, Schuler and Jackson (2006) pointed out that when talking about human resources, present and potential employees should be taken into consideration. It can therefore be stated that the planning of sustainable human resource development should be based on Inter-organizational collaboration. In the Lithuanian Tourism Development Programme of 2014-2020, one of the goals is “to improve the skills of professionals working in the tourism sector and to improve entrepreneurial skills in the field of tourism.”



Figure 3. Levels of Sustainable Human Resource Development (compiled by author)

It is important to ensure the planning of sustainable human resource development on all levels: international, national, organizational, and individual.

The role of inter-institutional collaboration in the planning of sustainable human resource development in the tourism sector

In the sustainable development of human resources in the tourism sector, different parties are involved: tourism companies, government, public institutions, educational institutions, international organizations etc. (Úbeda-García et al. 2012). It is important to ensure that the planning of sustainable human resource development operates on the all aforementioned levels. Inter-organizational collaboration can contribute to sustainable human resource development in the tourism sector. According to Lloyd and Payne (2004), Stiglitz (2002), and Richter (1985), the state is working on the economic activity, which is directly related to the well-being of individuals, and so the main question for today is not whether the government plays a role in the human resource development, but what kind of role it plays. Likewise, in the context of tourism education, Baum et al. (1997) note that “One of the difficulties for tourism and hospitality education is that it is expected to dance to the tune of a fragmented and heterogeneous sector where there are few commonly defined needs at a technical or knowledge level. The requirements of major airlines, hotel companies or heritage sites are diverse in themselves but are also significantly different from the needs of SMEs across the sector. One of the consequences of a fragmented public and private sector interest in tourism and hospitality is that there is rarely a clear, single authority with responsibility for the management and direction of education, training and development initiatives in support of the sector.” This position shows the extent to which human resource development is of national interest. In this case Inter-organizational collaboration also plays the leading role, as the curriculum of tourism study programmes and tourism training, due to the changes in the industry,

should become key for public and private sector collaboration that aims towards the appropriate development of the tourism sector. In proposing to educate, attract, and maintain a skilled and motivated workforce to the tourism sector, it is very important to ensure that the government engages in mitigating the impact of exploitation and abuse that can take place within weak labour market employment, particularly in sub-sectors of tourism such as hospitality (Lucas 2004). There is also a visible interest on the international level: within the United Nations World Tourism Organization, human resource development in the tourism sector has become a priority area, as demonstrated through the work of the UNWTO Education, Training and Knowledge Management Department and the Themis Foundation (Baum and Szivas 2008). No consensus yet exists regarding the sustainable human resource development in the tourism sector model in terms of what the impact of the state should be or how collaboration with the tourism sector and higher education institutions should look. It can be assuredly stated, however, that well educated and developed human resources are the key for the successful tourism development. Scientists Hall (2000), Liu and Wall (2006) expressed this position, pointing out that the question of human resource development lacks recommendations to situate it in the planning framework for tourism (Baum and Szivas 2008). When talking about human resource development on a national level, the integrated approach should be used. The mentioned integration should take a number of different forms. Firstly, as stated by Baum and Szivas (2008), it should include a holistic view of tourism and the integration of interests of all sub-sectors of tourism. Secondly, it should involve an inter-institutional approach between the public and the private sectors. The, finally, it should integrate a dynamic partnership between education, training, and industry. At the same time, there is a need to develop an applied research agenda that monitors and evaluates the role of the state in HRD within tourism in a variety of national and local contexts (Baum and Szivas 2008). Tourism planning and policy should incorporate HRD considerations, as examples from the past demonstrate that projects and products cannot succeed without consolidated efforts to attract, develop, and retain high-quality human resources.

Conclusions

1. The study found that sustainable human resource development can lead to a broader development of the organization and society, which can be simplified by saying that the development of one leads to the development of all. Investment in human resource development influences three dimensions: individual, organizational, and societal. Human resource development is becoming sustainable via long-term influence on these dimensions. Sustainable human resource development can be treated as composing an essential part of sustainable human resource management, applied in the environment of permanent and dynamic changes. In the context of the dynamic tourism industry environment, more attention is paid to the learning and development of human resources.
2. The study aimed to investigate the theoretical assumptions of sustainability as a new approach for human resource development in the tourism sector. Sustainable

development can be interpreted as the ability of a society, an organization, or an individual to both maintain and develop itself. The extension of the sustainable approach from the natural to societal in the tourism industry had a positive influence on sustainable human resource management and sustainable human resource development.

3. Sustainable human resource development should be incorporated into the strategies of tourism organizations. In the context of the fast changing and dynamic tourism industry, successful development depends on the development of human resources. The discussion regarding the quality of jobs appeared in different governmental and international initiatives.
4. To sum up, different parties participate in the sustainable development of human resources in the tourism sector, including tourism companies, government, public institutions, educational institutions, and international organizations. It is essential to ensure that the planning of sustainable human resource development involves the mentioned parties. Inter-organizational collaboration can contribute to sustainable human resource development in the tourism sector.

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Darnumas kaip naujas požiūris į žmogiškųjų išteklių vystymą turizmo sektoriuje

Anotacija

Šiame straipsnyje siekiama išnagrinėti teorines darnumo prielaidas kaip naują požiūrį į žmogiškųjų išteklių vystymą turizmo sektoriuje. Darbe pateikiamos teorinės darnaus žmogiškųjų išteklių vystymo prielaidos. Autorė analizuoja darnaus žmogiškųjų išteklių vystymo planavimo svarbą turizmo sektoriuje. Kaip moksliniai metodai naudojami: teorinė analizė, sintezė ir apibendrinimas. Iššūkiai susiję su žmogiškųjų išteklių valdymu ir vystymu turizmo sektoriuje galimi būti apibūdinami kaip: žemos kvalifikacijos darbuotojai, darbo patirties stokojantys darbuotojai, darbo jėgos trūkumas, darbuotojų motyvacijos stoka, dažna darbuotojų kaita. Darnus žmogiškųjų išteklių vystymas gali paskatinti organizacijos ir visuomenės vystymąsi. Įvairios suinteresuotos šalys, pavyzdžiui, turizmo įmonės, vyriausybė, viešosios įstaigos, švietimo įstaigos, tarptautinės organizacijos ir kt., dalyvauja darniame žmogiškųjų išteklių vystyme turizmo sektoriuje. Tarpinstitucinis bendradarbiavimas gali prisidėti prie darnaus žmogiškųjų išteklių vystymo turizmo sektoriuje.

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