

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

TALENT MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES IN THE TOURIST SECTOR IN ANDALUSIA

José Luis Sánchez-Ollero

University of Malaga

jlsanchez@uma.es

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0834-8493>

Francisco Sánchez-Cubo

University of Castilla La-Mancha

francisco.scubo@uclm.es

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0556-7239>

Elisa del Cubo-Arroyo

University of Málaga

eidelcubo@uma.es

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4589-7256>

INTRODUCTION

The importance of tourism as an economic driving force worldwide, and especially in countries like Spain, is unquestionable. This allows the development of regions such as Andalusia, the territorial and political unit chosen to carry out this work, lacking other productive factors such as industries or R & D & I centre. In this context, a more active, effective and synchronized participation of all the public and private agents involved is crucial, in order to consolidate tourism activity in increasingly competitive environments and with more demanding consumers. This scenario highlights the importance of human resource management as a strategic axis that promotes competitiveness, efficiency and acts as a differentiating element between the diverse services offered by this market.

Consequently, it is essential to have versatile, transversal people, capable not only of coexisting with immediacy and meet the demands of the tourist market but of continually adapting to it. This panorama not only affects the basic workforce but also the entire business hierarchy (both private and public) and institutional, with the figure of managers becoming particularly relevant to enhance the talent of their workers within the strategic framework of the company/institution. Therefore, it is at this point where one of the greatest efforts should be made: to generate and retain the talent of its human resources as a valuable asset of the institution.

In this sense, the public sphere is little studied despite its importance in the tourism sector as a regulatory body, but also as an active agent in the management of the development of tourism activity in its territory. That is why we consider essential the exploitation of their capacities in pursuit of the tourist success of the Andalusian territory, although they

are characterized by the rigidity of both their structure and their procedures, something clearly inverse to what the current tourist context requires.

This line of research is novel since the vast academic literature in relation to talent management is scarce in the public sphere. However, the Theory of Value developed by Sparrow and Makram in 2015, as the result of an analytical and simplified compilation of the main philosophies on Talent Management, is made up of four phases Value Creation, Value Capture, Value Leverage and Protection of value— that works as a single mechanism to build and distribute a broader capacity around the organization. This model can be applied in any field, including the public sector, which is why it has been adopted as the theoretical basis for this paper.

OBJECTIVES

This piece of work seeks to know the structure of public employees in the tourism sector in Andalusia, as well as its access and promotion system to analyse and propose a tool, around its regulatory, innovative and applicative framework of Talent Management.

METHODOLOGY

In this work, two different methodologies are used. First, an estimation is made for the number of public employees in tourism in Andalusia. After that, an exploratory questionnaire, which measures what public sector employees think about Talent Management and its applicability to their jobs, is prepared and assessed.

To estimate the number of public employees in the tourism sphere in Andalusia, the figures collected in the publicly available “Job Lists” (Relación de Puestos de Trabajo - RPT) are taken, whenever possible. In the case of the Ministry, the Vice Ministry, the General Secretariat of Tourism and the General Directorate of Quality, Innovation and Promotion of Tourism, the Provincial Councils and the Chambers of Commerce, these data are exact. In the cases of the Territorial Delegations, they are called Territorial Delegations of Tourism, Regeneration, Justice and Local Administrations and the Public Company for the Management of Tourism and Sports in Andalucía, SA, the “Job Lists” (RPT) are available but include personnel not directly related to tourism, so those who are obviously not employed in the tourism area were deducted. The largest inferences have been made for employees of the smallest municipalities, assigning weighted values based on the few data available in the “Job Lists” (RPT) and the tourist capacity of the municipalities - based on accommodation capacity, a well-known tourist indicator. Similar criteria have been used with respect to the Tourist Offices, Visitor Centres and Information Points of all the Administrations, assigning a multiplier to the number of existing offices.

Next, an exploratory questionnaire, which measures what public sector employees think about Talent Management and its applicability to their jobs, is prepared and assessed. This questionnaire, lined with the theoretical framework developed, aims to open a field of work little analysed so far. In it, short questions and questions have been raised, with simple language, avoiding redundancies and excessive open fields, of reduced length (21 questions on a Likert scale from 1 to 5) in order that it is short in duration (5 minutes) so

it would not cause excessive rejection among the population under study. The survey was conducted through stratified random sampling from March 12 to 21, 2019 and was sent electronically to a reduced group of 500 public employees, obtaining 116 responses from which 100 valid were selected out of an estimated total of 3,300 subjects, according to our estimations. The final sample is small but in line with the recommendations for pilot questionnaires to confirm their reliability and validity. In addition to the information strictly related to Talent Management problems, socio-labour information was also collected with the aim of achieving a better understanding of the group of public employees. For the validation of the questionnaire, it was necessary to evaluate the consistency and internal coherence of each of its items, for which a psychometric reliability study was carried out using the SPSS software. The determination of validity and reliability has been carried out through three complementary processes: Cronbach's alpha coefficient —0.886—, a composite reliability analysis —only three variables present a value lower than 0.3— and the mean extracted variance (AVE) —0.57868023—.

RESULTS

First, to get an overview of the set of employees, the public sector employee archetype is displayed using the collected socio-labour graphical data. She is a woman (67%) over 45 years old (45.9%), a university graduate or more (79.8%) who has been working in the Tourism area for 10 to 20 years (32.1%) as staff permanent or temporary, not as a career civil servant (76.2%) and who has not been able to promote (67.3%). The age of the staff is remarkable even though, in general, they are younger than at the state level, whose percentage of employees over 45 is 58.47%. It should also be noted that only 32.7% of the employees surveyed have been promoted even though 32.1% of them have been working in the same job for 10 to 20 years and 17.4% of them have been working for more than 20 years. It could be a consequence, according to their own comments in the survey, of the lack of promotional routes.

The results of the survey regarding job performance and the perception of talent management show that, in general, the surveyed employees report feeling quite satisfied with their job performance and consider themselves very competent to carry out their tasks. However, when asked about certain aspects of performance, their opinions differ slightly. Therefore, most of them argue that their jobs require initiative and creative performance is needed, as well as their employments allow them to improve their professional skills. However, there are fewer employees who consider that they have autonomy and freedom while carrying out their tasks, even fewer believe that they can grow personally in their jobs and, others think that they do not have good internal training.

Next, the surveyed employees were asked about their perception of human resource management in their area. This battery of questions starts by asking their opinions about the current selection process model through the Public Job Offer. Opinions on this are widely divided. However, the worst score within this battery of questions is attributed to the internal promotion process: only 2.71 out of 5, which is probably influenced by the scarce promotion possibilities mentioned above and the lack of an adequate professional

career through from the Tourism area. On the other hand, a very low rating is also given to job design: only 2.75 out of 5.

Finally, they do consider a performance evaluation necessary in the terms established by the EBEP and consider it quite important to establish a strategic focus for their work. Finally, when asked about their job satisfaction, they declare, in general, that they are very satisfied.

CONCLUSIONS

To put the Theory of Value into practice, a battery of actions has been proposed, which links the theoretical basis of Talent Management with the results obtained in the pilot questionnaire carried out on a sample out of all public workers in the tourism sector in Andalusia. The organizational radiography achieved through the approach to the real number of workers, the examination of its structure and the collection of information on the perceptions of its workers about the management of human resources through a questionnaire could be the starting point to delve into the role of public sector employees in different areas, regardless of whether, in this piece of work, it has only been applied to tourism.

Although the main objective of the questionnaire was its validation, some interesting conclusions have been reached. In particular, those related to the way they feel in their jobs if they can grow personally and professionally and if they can develop their skills. In this sense, the main concerns of the public sector employees surveyed were: training, the access system and the design of jobs, key stages in the generation and retention of value. Likewise, more actions have been proposed in other areas such as performance evaluation or promotion, as we understand that Talent Management policies cannot be carried out independently as if they were independent areas, having to be considered as an integral strategy to improve the competitive advantage of an organization.

In this regard, the need to make changes in access methods has been emphasized as a first step to attract and select talented people. It has also been considered necessary to take care of public employees through the consideration of incentives based on positive results in the performance evaluation or trying to motivate those with negative results to change their job by compulsory participating in internal competitions. Similarly, it is proposed to strengthen retention by introducing economic and non-economic rewards, considering them from the perspective of improving the well-being of employees and as a way to retain them with the institution.

Therefore, it is a matter of urgency to implement Talent Management policies effectively in public sector organizations as a way to face the typical dynamism of sectors such as Tourism and considering their direct and indirect impacts on the economy of regions like Andalusia. It is necessary to eliminate the problem of inflexibility, poor performance and unproductiveness within the Administrations. We consider that now is the time to do so given that, in the medium term, there will be an important generational changeover and the labour market and the Public Administration must be prepared to face successfully a new unstable and dynamic reality.

Finally, two limitations have been detected from the application of the pretest: 1) imbalance, between the theoretical framework and the elaboration of questions, related to family reconciliation and rotation; 2) the online submission of the questionnaire has not been sufficiently active or motivating to obtain complete answers, which is why it had to be addressed by telephone, especially in small rural areas. However, thanks to this small-scale test, we are able, in future research, to approximate the needs and preparation of interviewers, the costs of fieldwork and the inclusion of the two dimensions of the theoretical framework; as well as adding qualitative techniques such as discussion groups as a complementary measure to the exploratory study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

F. Sánchez-Cubo, benefits from a predoctoral contract for training researcher staff within the frame of the I+D+i Plan of the University of Castilla-La Mancha, co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).