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ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND EMPLOEE EMPOWERING INCREASING TOURIST DESTINATION PERFORMANCE

Ivanka Vasenska
South West University "N. Rilski", Bulgaria
ivankav48@gmail.com

Abstract:
Every employer wants employees who are motivated, satisfied, and engaged—or at least they think that's what they are aiming for. Regardless, one knows that one wants them to be productive and effective. Employers make a fair attempt to measure levels of employee satisfaction, but their "employee satisfaction survey" doesn't tell you what they really want to know—how engaged are the employees in what they are doing? Do they do more than show up? Do they bring their hands, minds, and hearts to the job? The answer will be employers need employees who not only brought their hands to their work, but their minds and hearts as well.

As we make the turn into the 21st century, a new society is emerging. Peter Drucker calls it the "knowledge society," one that is drastically different from the "industrial society," and one in which acquiring and applying knowledge will become key competitive factors. Organizational learning is an area of knowledge within organizational theory that studies models and theories about the way an organization learns and adapts.

Innovation, growth and productivity gains do not result from separating task in the workflow of a knowledge intensive operation, but rather from integrating and combining knowledge in order to develop new ideas and jointly develop solutions in problem solving processes.

The last few years were challenging years the history of world tourism industry. However, recent studies of the World Tourism Council show that neither political upheaval or economic insecurity and natural disasters have affected the industry's direct contribution to global GDP. Visitor expenditure on accommodation, food and drink, local transport, entertainment and shopping, is an important contributor to the economy of many destinations, creating much needed employment and opportunities for development. In 2011, both emerging and advanced destinations reported significant increases in receipts. For some 85 countries, receipts from international tourism were over US$ 1 billion in 2011. For destination countries, receipts from international tourism count as exports and cover transactions generated by same-days well as overnight visitors. However, these do not include receipts from international passenger transport contracted from companies outside the travelers' countries of residence, which are reported in a separate category (International Passenger Transport). The export value of international passenger transport is estimated at US$ 196 billion (euro 141 bn) in 2011, up from US$ 170 billion (euro 131 bn) in 2010. As such, total receipts from international tourism, including international passenger transport, reached US$ 1.2 trillion (euro 841 bn) in 2011. In other words, international tourism contributes US$ 3.4 billion (euro 2.4 bn) a day to global export earnings (Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism 2012: Summary, World Travel & Tourism Council.)

The purpose of the current paper is to demonstrate haw the tourism and hospitality sector and respectively the tourist destinations through organizational learning and employee empowering managed to strive true the turbulence of the current economical, social and political reality. The paper will discuss the impacts of learning tourist destination (organization) and employee empowerment in terms of increased productivity, employee retention (satisfaction), and service recovery.

Keywords: organizational learning, employee empowering, tourist destination performance and development.

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Taking account of its direct, indirect and induced impacts, Travel & Tourism's total contribution in 2011 was US$6.3 trillion in GDP, 255 million jobs, US$743 billion in investment and US$1.2 trillion in exports. This contribution represented 9% of GDP, 1 in 12 jobs, 5% of investment and 5% of exports. In 2011, 98 million jobs were directly created in the Travel & Tourism industry worldwide.

In 2011, international tourism receipts reached a record US$1,030 billion (euro 740 bn), up from 927 billion (euro 699 bn) in 2010. This represents a 3.9% growth in real terms (adjusted forex change rate fluctuations and inflation), while international tourist arrivals increased by 4.6% in 2011 to 983 million. This confirms the strong correlation between both indicators, with growth in receipts tending to lag slightly behind growth in arrivals in times of economic constraints.

By region, the Americas (+5.7%) recorded the largest increase in receipts in 2011, followed by Europe (+5.2%), Asia and the Pacific (+4.4%) and Africa (+2.2%). The Middle East was the only region posting negative growth (-14%) (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, World Tourism Organization, 2012).

Europe holds the largest share of international tourism receipts(45% share), reaching US$ 463 billion (euro 333 bn) in 2011,followed by Asia and the Pacific (28% share or US$ 289 billion /euro 208 bn), and the Americas (19% share or US$ 199 billion /euro 143 bn). The Middle East (4% share) earned US$ 46 billion (euro 33 bn) and Africa (3% share) US$ 33 billion (euro 23 bn).

But more than twice as many jobs, 2.5 million, were created as a result of total Travel & Tourism activity – not just jobs directly in the industry, but also those in supply sectors and jobs created by the spending of industry employees. In 2012, a further 2.3 million direct jobs and 5.2 million total (direct/indirect and induced) jobs are expected to be created, resulting in a 2% growth in the industry's contribution to employment over the year. By 2022, the industry is expected to directly generate 120 million jobs, with total Travel & Tourism employment worldwide projected at 328 million jobs (nearly 1 in 10) (Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism 2012: Summary, World Travel & Tourism Council.).

1. EMPLOYEE EMPOWERING CONTRIBUTING TO TOURIST DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

As the real value of an organization shifted from tangible assets (buildings, machines, vehicles, property, equipment, etc.) to intellectual assets (know-how, customer relationships, proprietary information, etc.), what existed in people's minds and hearts was becoming more valuable. Nowdays, the ability to learn, change, and adapt isincreasingly becoming the greatest sustainable competitive advantage. Today's workforce faces daunting challenges to cut costs, improve quality, increase production, and develop new products and services at a faster speed. While some tourist destinations struggle or fail, others are able to cope with the increasing demands. Because of these global trends, the value of human capital is even greater now than ever before. A key factor in tapping this capital is engagement.

Empowerment is an idea which includes many disciplines and areas of study such as economics, community development, education, psychology, and studies of social movements and organizations, among others. According to the definition of The World Bank, empowerment is providing individuals or groups with enough knowledge to allow them to make educated choices so that the result of those choices leads to responsible decision making. Hopefully these decisions will not only benefit the individual making them but also the organization or company which allows the use of this empowerment.

Engagement occurs when Satisfaction, Motivation, and Effectiveness intersect. While each of these factors is important on its own, it is only when all three are present simultaneously that true engagement occurs. The confusion comes when we begin to use these words—motivation, satisfaction, effectiveness, and engagement—synonymously. When we explore them from a practical perspective, we see that each is actually a distinct and unique concept, and that all of three are required components of engagement.

1.1. Three Scenarios

Take, for example, a housekeeper who is satisfied with her job. Her job means steady employment. She feels satisfied with her pay (at least it's better than most of the jobs she could find down the

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street). She starts at 7:00 in the morning and gets off in time to pick up her seven-year-old from school. It meets her needs, but she is not engaged. She would not say that she looks forward to coming to work each day, nor is she motivated by her work environment to perform at her best. It's a job.

Her co-worker enjoys coming to work each morning because she has recently been given the responsibility to ensure that the rooms are cleaned up to the standard. She is motivated by this challenge, and has been able to meet, and even exceed, effectiveness targets. Yet her manager rarely recognizes her for this effectiveness, and her pay is not reflective of her contribution. In fact, she is so dissatisfied with her pay and lack of general recognition that she has recently interviewed for a similar position with a competitor.

Upstairs in the main office is a friend of both of these employees. She is an administrator that has recently joined the company ranks. Lack of motivation is certainly not an issue, as she has been excited to come to work each day and to put into practice the skills she recently learned in college. She's very satisfied with her job. She considers herself fortunate to have landed such a good job straight out of school. Yet, every day she runs into the same problem—the one that her boss has been telling her (since the day she began) would be taken care of as soon as the budget request came through. Her computer does not run the applications she needs in order to effectively use her time. In fact, she estimates that as much as half of her day is wasted. She is not effective. While each of these women possesses two of our factors, a critical third is missing which prevents them from being engaged.

As each one of the elements feeds on the others, their level of contribution at work will suffer, and could eventually deteriorate to the point of losing commitment. It is also possible that they could even become actively disengaged. A perceptive manager would notice the situation, assess what is critically missing, and create the conditions that would help engage each one of these women.

In Organizational development, learning is a characteristic of an adaptive organization, i.e., an organization that is able to sense changes in signals from its environment (both internal and external) and adapt accordingly. (see adaptive system). OD specialists endeavor to assist their clients to learn from experience and incorporate the learning as feedback into the planning process.

1.2. Characteristics of employee empowerment and how it works

The concept of empowerment can sometimes raise suspicions among mangers since it requires them to change the way they think and do their jobs. This concept requires them to give up a portion of their control and authority while at the same time being accountable for their 8 actions and decisions. They must learn to trust their employees with some of their power and develop a respect for the decisions the employee makes. At the same time these managers must be willing to accept their new role and perhaps a decrease in their authority (Sternberg, 1992, Feb).

According to Page and Czuba (1999), the concept of empowerment has two parts. First, the group with the power can change. In other words, power can be shifted from one group to another. If the group with the power cannot change then of course you can't have any empowerment. When you can shift power from one group to the other then it is possible to implement the concept. Second, the concept of empowerment depends upon the idea that power can grow. This means that we shift power from one group to another and there will always be enough so that it can be shared among different groups so that empowerment can be effective. Generally empowerment often does not occur because managers are unwilling to give up their power. In fact, the more they give up power, the more they get back in return, so empowerment enhances power. An empowered employee feels a sense of loyalty to manager who gave them power.

Importance of empowerment to operations
Through the use of empowerment, hotel operations can help not only improve guest satisfaction, but it can also help increase employee productivity and efficiency. Employee empowerment can also provide employee satisfaction and help to retain the best employees. Mallak and Kurstedt (1996), perhaps more articulately, express this sentiment when they write, "Managers who understand how empowerment integrates with organizational culture are motivated to lead employees…and help them internalize the values and traditions [of empowerment]. These managers help create a work

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environment where employees take action 9for intrinsic reasons more so than for extrinsic reasons." (p. 8). Mallak and Kurstedt (1996) explained in their research how important the organization's culture is to the successful implementation of empowerment. So if an organization values and respects their employees, they will be able to implement various forms of empowerment because of the trust built up among team members. On the other hand if the organization operates on a culture of secrecy and distrust, empowerment will not work. Shipper and Manz (1992), describe how important empowerment is in the W.L. Gore and Associates' case study. Employees all have the same title and each one is provided with a person who can mentor and train them. When it is time to consider advancement and pay raises, they all can confer with a compensation committee. Even if an employee decides to look for a new job in the company they are encouraged so they feel they can advance and not be stuck in the same position. While these methods go much further then what other companies who are interested in empowering their employees might do, it does show what was successful at Gore and Associates. These ideas which have been instilled in this company come from its founder. Schein notes, "Founders usually have a major impact on how the group defines and solves its external adaptation and internal integration problems." (Schein, 1985, p. 210). Founders of companies can be so important that they can influence how the company operates long after they are gone. The struggle for many employees is that they do not know what to do when empowered, since they have made very few decisions in their lives (both workplace and personal life). Therefore, some employees when given the chance to make decisions for themselves, are not able to see it as empowerment. They see it as an additional responsibility or burden. However, when these employees are given the proper tools and training needed to make decisions first, it can result in a positive experience with empowerment.

2.   MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING CONTRIBUTING TO EMPLOYEE EMPWERING AND TOURIST DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Argyris and Schön (1978) were the first scholars to attempt proposing a models that facilitate organizational learning. Afterwards, others have followed in the tradition of their work: Argyris & Schön (1978) distinguished between single-loop and double-loop learning, related to Gregory Bateson's concepts of first and second order learning. The single-loop learning is a type of learning when the organization adjusts its behavior to the changes in its environment. This adjustment of the organization is a reactive response, rather than proactive, meaning that the changes within the organization occur after the changes outside of the organization occurred. In single-loop learning, individuals, groups, or organizations modify their actions according to the difference between expected and obtained outcomes. In double-loop learning, the entities (individuals, groups or organization) question the values, assumptions and policies that led to the actions in the first place; if they are able to view and modify those, then second-order or double-loop learning has taken place. Double-loop learning happens when an error is detected and corrected in ways that include alteration of the organization's underlying values, policies, objectives… Moreover, this method questions the underlying values, policies etc. Double-loop learning is a process which comprises of two stages: discarding the old and adopting new behavior, views, opinion, action etc. As a result of this, radical changes occur. This kind of learning is most often related to organizations that operate in fast-changing industries. Double loop learning is the learning about single-loop learning.

Kim (1993), integrates Argyris, March and Olsen and another model by Kofman into a single comprehensive model; further, he analyzes all the possible breakdowns in the information flows in the model, leading to failures in organizational learning; for instance, what happens if an individual action is rejected by the organization for political or other reasons and therefore no organizational action takes place?

Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) developed a four stage spiral model of organizational learning. The authors point out that there are two types of knowledge: explicit knowledge, contained in manuals and procedures, and tacit knowledge, learned only by experience, and communicated only indirectly, through metaphor and analogy. U.S. managers focus on explicit knowledge. The Japanese, on the other hand, focus on tacit knowledge. And this, the authors argue, is the key to their success--the Japanese have learned how to transform tacit into explicit knowledge.

To explain how this is done--and illuminate Japanese business practices as they do so--the authors range from Greek philosophy to Zen Buddhism, from classical economists to modern management gurus, illustrating the theory of organizational knowledge creation with case studies They started by differentiating Polanyi's concept of "tacit knowledge" from "explicit knowledge" and describe a process

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of alternating between the two. Tacit knowledge is personal, context specific, subjective knowledge, whereas explicit knowledge is codified, systematic, formal, and easy to communicate. The tacit knowledge of key personnel within the organization can be made explicit, codified in manuals, and incorporated into new products and processes. This process they called "externalization". The reverse process (from explicit to tacit) they call "internalization" because it involves employees internalizing an organization's formal rules, procedures, and other forms of explicit knowledge. They also use the term "socialization" to denote the sharing of tacit knowledge, and the term "combination" to denote the dissemination of codified knowledge. According to this model, knowledge creation and organizational learning take a path of socialization, externalization, combination, internalization, socialization, externalization, combination . . . etc. in an infinite spiral. Recently Nonaka returned to this theme in an attempt to move this model of knowledge conversion forwards (Nonaka & von Krogh 2009) in the case of a team-based work integrated learning project involving an educational institution (the contractor) and an industry partner (the client). Bontis, Crossan & Hulland (2002) empirically tested a model of organizational learning that encompassed both stocks and flows of knowledge across three levels of analysis: individual, team and organization. Results showed a negative and statistically significant relationship between the misalignment of stocks and flows and organizational performance.

Flood (1999) discusses the concept of organizational learning from Peter Senge and the origins of the theory from Argyris and Schön. The author aims to "re-think" Senge's The Fifth Discipline (Senge 1990) through systems theory. The author develops the concepts by integrating them with key theorists such as Bertalanffy, Churchman, Beer, Checkland and Ackoff. Conceptualizing organizational learning in terms of structure, process, meaning, ideology and knowledge, the author provides insights into Senge within the context of the philosophy of science and the way in which systems theorists were influenced by twentieth-century advances from the classical assumptions of science.

Watson, Bruce D., 2002 argues that organizational learning has proven to be a somewhat elusive concept to grasp and therefore its practical implementation has also been difficult. There are various positions on what "learning" is understood to be and there is a lack of synthesis of theoretical and empirical investigations. He argues that the conception of "learning" in the organizational learning literature has received insufficient attention and that this has largely contributed to the lack of clarity in the concept of organizational learning. It is proposed that cognitive science, especially connectionism, provides a model of individual learning that is capable of incorporating implicit and explicit elements of learning and knowledge. Connectionist models of learning mimic the physiological neural processes of the brain and connectionism demonstrates the capacity to combine cognitivist and constructivist theories of learning. To accomplish the transition to an explanation of collective cognitive processes as occur in organizations, and while continuing to recognize the individual neural processes that must be involved, it is proposed that the theory of situated action is united with connectionism. On the basis of such, a reconceptualisation of organizational learning and a new framework to guide management practice is proposed.

Imants (2003) provides theory development for organizational learning in schools within the context of teachers' professional communities as learning communities, which is compared and contrasted to teaching communities of practice. Detailed with an analysis of the paradoxes for organizational learning in schools, two mechanisms for professional development and organizational learning, (1) steering information about teaching and learning and (2) encouraging interaction among teachers and workers, are defined as critical for effective organizational learning.

Common (2004) discusses the concept of organizational learning in a political environment to improve public policy-making. The author details the initial uncontroversial reception of organizational learning in the public sector and the development of the concept with the learning organization. Definitional problems in applying the concept to public policy are addressed, noting research in UK local government that concludes on the obstacles for organizational learning in the public sector: (1) overemphasis of the individual, (2) resistance to change and politics, (3) social learning is self-limiting, i.e. individualism, and (4) political "blame culture." The concepts of policy learning and policy transfer are then defined with detail on the conditions for realizing organizational learning in the public sector.
Bontis & Serenko (2009a), and Bontis & Serenko (2009b) proposed and validated a causal model explicating organizational learning processes to identify antecedents and consequences of effective human capital management practices in both for-profit and non-profit sectors. The results demonstrate

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that managerial leadership is a key antecedent of organizational learning, highlight the importance of employee sentiment, and emphasize the significance of knowledge management.

Van Niekerk & Von Solms (2004) Compares and discusses organizational learning models for information security learning within organizations. Double-loop learning, as presented by Argyris & Schön (1978) is compared to outcome-based_education, and information security specific standards published by the National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST), to determine its suitability for the fostering of an information security culture.

Bushe (2001, 2009a, 2009b)[1]}Defines organizational learning as an inquiry into the patterns of organizing among two or more people that leads to new knowledge and a change in those patterns of organizing. Arguing that since everyone creates their own experience, in every interaction everyone is having a different experience, and so learning from collective experience is a lot more difficult than simply discussing what happened in the past to decide what people want to do in the future. Bushe argues that many of dysfunctional patterns of organizing are sustained by sense-making processes that lead people to make up stories about each other that are more negative than the reality. Through an "organizational learning conversation" people come to understand their own experience and the experience of others which often allow them to revise their patterns of organizing in positive ways. Hsu and Fang (2009) studied intellectual capital and new product development performance by investigating on the mediating impact of organizational learning capability. Riahi-Belkaoui (2003) investigated intellectual capital and firm performance of some US multinational firms.

Sonnier et al. (2007) investigated the relationship between profitability and disclosure to investigate the impact of intellectual capital. Organizational learning was an important source of contributing to firms' intangible assets. Organizational learning was built when each member understands the difference between optimal and present results and tries to resolve problems. Therefore, conventional method and scientific management are not able to use staff's capabilities. Effective implementation of staff is essential and organizational leadership needs reaching the necessary skills.

Valaski et al. (2012) executed an investigation on how anthologies were being used in the organizational learning process. They determined 353 papers from 11 different databases and after applying the exclusion criteria, the set was limited to 11 works, which clearly fitted to the criteria described for review process. They classified them based on the structure and level of the anthologies. Yu Yuan Hung et al. (2010) utilized a survey information from a Taiwan high-tech industry to introduce an integrative framework of dynamic capability. They stated that although organizational learning.

Organizational learning is a social process, involving interactions among many individuals leading to well-informed decision making. Thus, a culture that learns and adapts as part of everyday working practices is essential. Reuse must equal or exceed reinvent as a desirable behavior. Adapting an idea must be rewarded along with its initial creation. Sharing to empower the organization must supersede controlling to empower an individual.

Clearly, shifting from individual to organizational learning involves a non-linear transformation. Once someone learns something, it is available for their immediate use. In contrast, organizations need to create, capture, transfer, and mobilize knowledge before it can be used. Although technology supports the latter, these are primarily social processes within a cultural environment, and cultural change, however necessary, is a particularly challenging undertaking.

Employee Engagement is a pressing topic present in every industry, especially in the service industries. Engaged employees have a direct correlation with an organization's bottom line. Employee engagement is responsible for improved financial results, increased customer satisfaction rates, higher productivity, and better employee retention rates.

Companies can no longer choose whether or not to engage employees; it is simply an imperative element not only for survival but for growth and competitive advantage as well. Leading Hospitality corporations and tourist destination managing companies (Kempinski Hotels & Resorts, Marriott International, etc.) successfully develop their organizations combining the organizational learning with the employee empowerment in order to increase competitive strength and accumulate sustainable profits and development. Innovation, growth and productivity gains do not result from separating task

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in the workflow of a knowledge intensive operation, but rather from integrating and combining knowledge in order to develop new ideas and jointly develop solutions in problem solving processes.

2.1.   The importance of employee engagement

The enterprise must go beyond catchy slogans and shallow efforts to keep employees on-target. True employee engagement not only requires, but demands a comprehensive, strategic approach that creates positive, lasting results when implemented effectively. Employee engagement encourages productive and dedicated team members with vested interest in the company, managers motivated by positive results and a bottom line that benefits from increased employee retention and efficient operations.

Simply stated, employee engagement is vital to building and maintaining a successful organization.

Levels of employee engagement
According to the Gallup Organization, employees fall into one of three levels of engagement:
Actively Disengaged - employees who are fundamentally disconnected from their job. Disengaged employees are not only unproductive, but their attitudes and perceptions spread through the company, resulting in poor performance, lowered job satisfaction and decreased productivity from others.

Not Engaged Employees - employees who simply come to work for a paycheck and complete their perceived job or function for the company. Day in and day out, these employees are not cheerleaders for the company or its objectives; however, they are not obstacles either. In some instances, these employees are referred to as the "blind followers" or "sheep". Who will they follow?

Actively Engaged - employees who stand out among the others. Actively engaged employees are strongly aligned with the organization's objectives and goals and care about the company's success. They are always looking for ways to improve the company, as well as themselves.

Elements of empowerment
1. Role description: The first thing that people need is a definition of the responsibilities they will assume.
2. Boundary conditions: What should be the parameters within which people fulfill their responsibilities? These include:
    - Expectations/results can be qualitative orquantitative.
    - Non-negotiables define givens or limits that cannot be crossed in fulfilling a responsibility.
    - Authority is the level of autonomy that one has in carrying out a task. There are five levels of authority, and how much authority one has depends upon their experience and capability.
Level 1: Act when directed
Level 2: Act after approval
Level 3: Act after consultation
Level 4: Act and report
Level 5: Act autonomously
    - Time guidelines are any and all time constraints that guide the task (milestone events, project completion, length of time a person assumes a role, etc.).
3. Knowledge and information: People within the organization must have knowledge, access to information and empowering tools if they are to take on additional responsibilities.
4. Skills: People also need additional training and skills to be successful with new responsibilities. For example, they may need to learn how to read a budget or enter data into a computer.
5. Resources: These can include tools and equipment as well as reports, technical experts, etc.
6. Support: Support is emotional and psychological. It is letting people know hat you trust their ability to handle a task. It is okay for them to make mistakes; and you will be available to talk with them as necessary.

As described in these examples, people are engaged when they are satisfied, motivated, and effective at work. Engagement occurs when all three components are simultaneously present. Employees are engaged when their jobs attract and hold theirattention, and they are deeply involved in their work. But what is the impact of engagement at work? Significant! Organizations with genuinely engaged employees have higher retention, productivity, customer satisfaction, innovation rates, and quality.

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They also require less training time, experience less illness, and have fewer accidents. Simply put, engaged employees deliver more than the average employee, and cost less.

The value of being engaged at work is a mutual benefit to the worker, the employer, and the customer. To the employee, engagement means a more rewarding job. To the employer, engagement translates into retention and productivity. The customer experiences employee engagement through better quality and service. Each of us brings unique talents and skills to our work. When we use our strengths at work, we tend to be more successful at what we do. When we choose to give - to really invest ourselves in the work we do - we become fully engaged.

2.2.   Employee Engagement Model

While the concepts of systems thinking, learning organization, and learning regions are vital for understanding the necessity of organisational learning, they do not in themselves provide much guidance on implementation. A practical framework including a set of effective tools and procedures is needed in order to span the gap between vision and practice. This is in particular important in the context of tourism destinations as they possess some unique characteristics.

Firstly, tourism destinations often develop dynamically. During the life cycle of a tourism destination, the stakeholder mix changes continuously and drastically from, for example home stay and second-income businesses with primarily inexperienced hosts and employees to highly specialised and competitive tourism businesses. For the learning tourism destination this means that the traditionally established collaboration and naturally grown networking structures of a rural community supporting home stay tourism have to be replaced by more business or goal-oriented and regulated networks.

Secondly, many tourism destinations face a massive influx of tourists and seasonal employees on a short-term or seasonal basis. These people are transitory, that is, they only stay for a short period and do not necessarily come back. Thus training and information programs, in order to be effective, have to be designed to be more flexible than those in industrial LOs where the population is less transitory.

Thirdly, the tourists as clients of tourism destinations have an immediate impact on the product and the location itself. The same holds true for the associated manufacturing or service infrastructure (i.e. resorts, accommodation facilities, access roads, transport, etc.). Overdevelopment and overcrowding of tourism destinations accompanied by environmental and social impacts destroy the very basis of the original tourist attraction. Thus, the inclusion of the client/tourist in the learning system as well as the assessment of environmental and social impacts by planners and developers is a fundamental requirement if the destination is to be sustainable.

Furthermore, tourism destinations vary in scale from whole countries and states to small tourism sites and resorts. The chosen model of an learning tourism destination will influence its effectiveness. Setting boundaries too large, for instance at country or state level, could be problematic because issues are too diverse and complex, whereas boundaries that are too narrow (e.g. resorts, hotels, individual tourism sites) do not allow the maintenance of adequate learning and networking infrastructures. Hence a suitable outline for the learning tourism destinationcould be a destination under a local authority or municipality, through which regional planning, management, and regulation are carried out.

3.   CONCLUSION

What does it mean to say that an organization learns? Simply summing individual learning is inadequate to model organizational learning. The following definition outlines the essential difference between the two: A learning organization actively creates, captures, transfers, and mobilizes knowledge to enable it to adapt to a changing environment. Thus, the key aspect of organizational learning is the interaction that takes place among individuals.

A learning organization does not rely on passive or ad hoc process in the hope that organizational learning will take place through serendipity or as a by-product of normal work. A learning organization actively promotes, facilitates, and rewards collective learning.

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Creating (or acquiring) knowledge can be an individual or group activity. However, this is normally a small-scale, isolated activity steeped in the jargon and methods of knowledge workers. As first stated by Lucilius in the 1st century BC, "Knowledge is not knowledge until someone else knows that one knows."

Capturing individual learning is the first step to making it useful to an organization. There are many methods for capturing knowledge and experience, such as publications, activity reports, lessons learned, interviews, and presentations. Capturing includes organizing knowledge in ways that people can find it; multiple structures facilitate searches regardless of the user's perspective (e.g., who, what, when, where, why, and how). Capturing also includes storage in repositories, databases, or libraries to ensure that the knowledge will be available when and as needed.

Transferring knowledge requires that it be accessible to as needed. In a digital world, this involves browser-activated search engines to find what one is looking for. A way to retrieve content is also needed, which requires a communication and network infrastructure. Tacit knowledge may be shared through communities of practice or consulting experts. Knowledge needs to be presented in a way that users can understand it, and it must suit the needs of the user to be accepted and internalized.

Mobilizing knowledge involves integrating and using relevant knowledge from many, often diverse, sources to solve a problem or address an issue. Integration requires interoperability standards among various repositories. Using knowledge may be through simple reuse of existing solutions that have worked previously. It may also come through adapting old solutions to new problems. Conversely, a learning organization learns from mistakes or recognizes when old solutions no longer apply. Use may also be through synthesis; that is creating a broader meaning or a deeper level of understanding. Clearly, the more rapidly knowledge can be mobilized and used, the more competitive an organization. An organization must learn so that it can adapt to a changing environment. Historically, the life-cycle of organizations typically spanned stable environments between major socioeconomic changes. Blacksmiths who didn't become mechanics simply fell by the wayside. More recently, many Fortune 500 companies of two decades ago no longer exist. Given the ever-accelerating rate of global-scale change, the more critical learning and adaptation become to organization relevance, success, and ultimate survival.

Through the use of empowerment, tourist destination operations can help not only improve guest satisfaction, but it can also help increase employee productivity and efficiency. Employee empowerment can also provide employee satisfaction and help to retain the best employees. The struggle for many employees is that they do not know what to do when empowered, since they have made very few decisions in their lives (both workplace and personal life). Therefore, some employees when given the chance to make decisions for themselves, are not able to see it as empowerment. They see it as an additional responsibility or burden. However, when these employees are given the proper tools and training needed to make decisions first, it can result in a positive experience with empowerment.

The implementation of empowerment cannot begin without building trust between employees and management. Furthermore, employees must understand that they are responsible for how they use empowerment in each and every situation that arises at the destination operations. Moreover, management must be willing to give up some of their authority if empowerment is to work effectively, because, empowerment when used properly can lead to tremendous benefits for the property. This includes long term benefits such as repeat business, improved operating procedure and employee engagement. Indeed, in the real business world, the cost of training new hires is significant. Empowerment which leads to improved employee engagement can significantly reduce these costs. All hospitality employees must keep in mind that since they already are knowledgeable in their own areas of expertise, it is important to coordinate this knowledge by engaging all the people in the organization. Again the tourism business is all about the people.

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