

Employee Engagement and Commitment, Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals

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Abstract:

In this research undertaking, results of the research findings about the Employee Engagement and Commitment, Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals in Cairo, Egypt are presented regarding its extent, how commendable are their communication skills, and the extent of their Talent Management Competencies (TMC), and further looked into whether or not there are significant correlations between and among the independent variables.

The tourism professionals who were the respondents of the study comprised of the Travel Agents, Academic Professionals, Hotel Managers, Tour Operators, Event & Conference Organizers, Tour Guides, Executive Chefs, and PR Managers in Cairo, Egypt. The research method used in this research undertaking is descriptive correlational; a questionnaire was used as a data collection method which was distributed to tourism professionals, and utilizing the SPSS statistical software with the Mean to determine the extent, to determine the *significance of correlation* between and among the paired variables, Pearson r was used, to determine the *significance of difference* between the dependent and independent variables, Mann *Whitney U Test* and *Kruskal-Wallis Test* were used.

The conduct of this research investigation is an important issue, and was considered by the researchers as very meaningful and important to explore internationally and specifically in Cairo, Egypt in particular, since the findings of this research study may lead to the introduction of new programs and curriculum for Tourism and hospitality industry, the encouragement of professional staff to enhance the purposes of work in tourism, the human resources potential management into companies, enabling continuous professional training and employees to advance in their careers and to create careers in the field of tourism and hospitality industry.

Moreover, the results of this research endeavor will be very essential for tourism professionals considering Tourism's contribution to global trade and economic growth, its contribution in promoting socioeconomic growth and development, sustainable tourism development, advancing tourism's contribution to poverty reduction and development, promoting employment through fostering knowledge, education and capacity-building, and in creating synergies and partnership across tourism sectors.

The result showed a *great extent* on the identified indicators, except on Talent management competencies; the independent variables, when correlated, showed that they do not influence each one's extent, except between Engagement and Commitment and their Communication Skills; which may imply that the tourism professionals maybe more engaged and committed if they have commendable communication skills as they work in the tourism industry to accommodate their clients.

On the other hand, no significant differences exist in the Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment (EC), Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies (TMC) when categorized in terms of their educational qualification, marital status and sector where they are employed.

Conclusively, results of this research undertaking will provide information and research data for leaders and managers, human resource managers and/or human resource specialists working in the human resources department of selected tourism industries, agencies, and organizations concerned to design programs and activities to increase interest in Tourism Labor and cope with the challenge of overcoming the uncertainties towards tourism employment, most specifically on socio-cultural issues, create a strong coordination with curriculum specialists to embed in their tourism curriculum an emphasis of the possibilities of employment in the industry for young school-leavers, the working conditions, career opportunities, diversity, international exposure, remuneration, and other factors.

For future research directions, the researchers recommend future researchers to look into the evaluation of professional management techniques that are used in the hospitality sectors with focus on Hospitality and

Customer Satisfaction, Tourism and Hospitality Marketing, Hospitality Management, Marketing and Service Quality Management, Foodservice Consumer Choice and Services Strategies, Strategic Management in the Hospitality Industry, Hospitality Marketing and Service Experience and Human Resource Management.

Keywords: *Tourism Professionals, Engagement, Commitment, Communication Skills, Talent Management Competencies*

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1. Introduction and Conceptual Background of the Study

“Tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification. It has become one of the fastest growing and most important economic sectors in the world, which has benefited so many destinations and communities worldwide”, as cited in the Tourism Economics Summary written by Larry Dwyer and Ray Spurr.

In the International level, tourist arrivals worldwide have grown from 25 million in 1950 to nearly 1.2 billion in 2015, where this sector represents an estimated 10% of the world’s GDP and 1 in 10 jobs globally. As an economic activity, Tourism generates the largest number of jobs, as the success and results of work in tourism, for the most part, depend on human resources. It has been considered to consider quality and professional workforce which will be motivated to work and will contribute to success and competitiveness of the organization. As cited in many articles on tourism, tourism has implications on the economy, on the natural and built environment, on the local population at the destination and on the tourists themselves. Due to these multiple impacts, the wide range and variety of production factors required to produce those goods and services acquired by visitors, and the wide spectrum of stakeholders involved or affected by tourism, there is a need for a holistic approach to tourism development, management, and monitoring.

Various administrative approaches were utilized to enhance the performance of tourism human resources, especially for tourism professionals. These approaches and terminologies include among others the engagement and commitment of tourism professionals, their communication skills and competencies in talent management.

Considering that Tourism is considered as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes, Tourism Professionals, are people referred to as visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure.

Several data on tourism-related employment has considered tourism as a people’s sector in all its aspects and dimensions, however, there were documents that are still incomplete and lacks quality and international comparability.

Researches are required to enhance the quality and comparability of tourism employment statistics that are expected to significantly improve the monitoring of tourism labor markets as well as promote productive activities, and the proactive use of qualified labor, that are considered as the principal factor in ensuring sustainable tourism development, with due consideration to its contribution to economic growth and employment.

In terms of tourism professionalism (cf. Smith and Westerbeek, 2004), pointed out that there is a scarcity of articles and studies conducted to describe what tourism professionalism is and a lack of consistency in its use and meaning. The unifying factor throughout the literature of studies conducted shows that human factor in tourism, professionalism ultimately impacts on the innovation, competitiveness, destination development, growth and success of the tourism industry. (Sundbo et al., 2007; Esichaikul and Baum, 1998; Braun and Hollick 2006).

Research literature which have been reviewed emphasized that professionalism as a concept “has not commonly been addressed and, when it has, it has usually been concerned with broad assumptions and sociological interpretations”, as cited in the works of (Smith and Westerbeek, 2004: 39), with a similar work in this field on dimensionalizing professionalism which was done by Hall (1968).

Hall (1968) developed an instrument to measure professionalism which assessed the following five traits, especially in a tourism context: (1) use of the professional organisation as a major referent group, (2) belief in public service, (3) belief in self-regulation, (4) sense of calling to the field, and (5) a feeling of autonomy. From

this work of Hall, the paper discussed the relevance of each of these dimensions for the addition of the following dimensions in a conceptualization of professionalism in a tourism context: (1) a body of knowledge requiring extensive education and/or socialization, (2) a concern for quality service, (3) a code of ethics, (4) development of specialist skills, and (5) professional identity (self-awareness based on reflective practice. Hussey, Jennifer, and Holden, Mary. T and Lynch, Patrick (2011)

The Institute of Travel and Tourism (ITT) members came up with how they defined a professional in travel and tourism, and cited the main themes of tourism professionals, as follows: Honesty, integrity, principled, an expert in their field, dedicated to customer service, a seeker of perfection in both of the above, relevant tourism related qualification, time served experience in travel, decision-taking power within job, holds recognized qualification, and belongs to relevant associations, with sound knowledge base, ethical position, keeps up to date, listens to others and always willing to learn, visionary, action-oriented, intellectual, possess knowledge, experience and commitment to the industry.

In terms of Education, experience, competence, tourism professionals have experience, commendable personality, with the strategic grasp of an entire industry, have a good understanding of the market, with dedication, training, adventurous, and creative.

The SWOT analysis on the Latvian Tourism Marketing Strategy 2010-2015 which was carried out by the Tourism Development Agency in 2010, the lack of skilled labor force in the tourism and hospitality, as well as the low level of the professional qualifications are mentioned as one of the potential threats. (Tourism Development Agency, 2010).

As further reflected in the article which aimed to explore the theoretical aspects of the term of professional competence-building of the future hospitality specialists, professional competences are the competencies that are defined in the research literature as a readiness and ability to solve tasks and problems purposefully and systematically on the base of the subject knowledge and skills, including evaluation of the results.

In terms of Employee Engagement& Commitment, Engagement is a state of mind about individuals' satisfaction with, pride in and commitment to his job and organization. Academicians consider this as a positive connection which one has with his work; the level to which employees commit to something in their organization and for how long they will stay in the organization as a result of that commitment (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). If considered in terms of the organization, organizational commitment shows attachment and belief in values of an organization and the desire to stay; the degree to which employees identify themselves with their organizations, as cited in Khalid, A., et al,2015.

Moreover, Employee engagement is the positive attitude held by the employee toward the Organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization, whereas Commitment is a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his actions and beliefs that sustain his activities and his own involvement.

The impacts of employee engagement on organizational commitment, has been found that when engagement level increases the level of organizational commitment increases as well and, moreover, enhances job satisfaction, higher performance and reveals a greater demonstration of personal ideas, higher attendance and lower turnover rates, improved health and security, proactive behavior and learning motivation.

In the study conducted by Vance, R, in 2006, employees who are engaged in their work and committed to their organizations give companies crucial competitive advantages including higher productivity and lower employee turnover. Organizations of all sizes and types have invested substantially in policies and practices that foster engagement and commitment in their workforces, where the process starts with employer practices such as job and task design, recruitment, selection, training, compensation, performance management and career development, where such practices affect employees' level of engagement as well as job performance. Performance and engagement then interact to produce business results.

Tourism Professionals, just like any other employees, manifest a certain degree of employee engagement, which may have effects on their Organizational Commitment, as cited in the Survey on Junior Executives Working in the Private Sector of Bangladesh, Management Development by Shamsul Alam, A, 2017.

In this study, he pointed out that managers should consider the 3 C's of employee engagement: Career, when individuals join an organization, they expect to build a career with it; Competence which is all about the ability to grow. Regular workshops and training sessions must be held in order to help employees acquire a higher level of skills and competencies. The focus should be on developing for marketable skills and Care which is regarded as the finest art of the managers by which they can make employees feel an indispensable part of their organization.

In terms of Communication skills, this is importantly emphasized and the most used of all competencies and skills that are expected for tourism professionals in the hospitality and tourism industry. Managers or anyone working in tourism-related fields spend the largest portion of their time and work exposure in verbal or written communications with their employees or outside parties, or any person who is into the business of tourism industry. Since Tourism is one of the industries with the fastest growing importance in the nowadays globalized world, tourist professionals are facing different challenges on daily basis. There is a need for the acquisition of skills in a worldwide context to enhance employability.

Communication Skills are very necessary for communicating with Customers, and most specifically in the Marketing of Tourism, as recently, more and more people have access to an unlimited access to information on travel destinations worldwide. Majority of travel decisions are made by people who have never seen or been to the place they're traveling to, which makes marketing and media coverage crucial to the strength of the travel industry, and that this marketing is through the following forms of communication:

Social media sites allow users to share their travel experiences through pictures, videos, and posts, the Travel guidebooks offer detailed information about a particular destination; Television travel programs highlight various locations and give viewers tips and tricks on how to have the best travel experience; Advertising campaigns via brochures in the mail, TV ads, and website pop-up ads, continue to remind us of the benefits of traveling, and travel review sites such as TripAdvisor, allow users to review hotels, restaurants, and attractions in every country in the world.

Tourism professionals need to possess enhanced Communication skills as these create great impacts on Tourism. There is unlimited access to information has led to tens of thousands of people traveling to a destination every day. The increase in tourism can have economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts on both local communities and entire nations.

Communication skills have Economic Impacts, as tourism creates jobs in various industries such as retail, restaurant, transportation, as well as the tourism industry. Small businesses benefit greatly from a strong tourist economy, and even schools, housing, and hospitals are aided by taxes on transportation and hotels. It is estimated that each year, the tourism industry contributes approximately \$7 trillion to the global economy and supports about 10% of all jobs worldwide. increased tourism can carry with it the need to improve infrastructures, such as roads and hotels. Governments usually have to pay for this by increasing taxes, which can be a burden on residents and small businesses.

It was also cited in the study conducted by The University of Mississippi, 2001, Skilled communicators take time to make good decisions about what information to give and to whom at the best time. They tell the truth, clarify misconceptions, and work to ease feelings. Skilled communicators listen with both their head and heart. They listen to understand, not to judge or to defend. They speak to share information needed by others. They know that the best outcomes are the result of clear, honest, and focused exchanges of ideas and information.

Organizations understand that effective communication at all levels of the organization improves organizational success and employee relations. Communication has been studied with regard to performance and job satisfaction, but the relationship with employee attitude and happiness has not been done in a higher education setting. The decision to be happy and have a positive attitude has been the subject of hundreds of books, articles, speeches, studies, and workshops. The value of communication in an employee's choice to be happy is explained as it affects the individual, team, and overall organizational culture.

There is no denying the importance of communication in the workplace, considering the fact that in an organization people belonging to different social and professional backgrounds come together to work for the same goals. Often it is seen that administrators do not realize the importance of communication at work and thus do not convey their ideas, organizational goals, vision, etc. very clearly. When administrators in an organization are unable to create an environment, which promotes open and clear communication, it can have negative

repercussions on the work culture and the employee productivity. The importance of effective workplace communication is discussed below: (Adu-Oppong, A. and Agyin-Birikorang, E., 2014)

If the work environment is friendly where the subordinates are encouraged to communicate their ideas to their administrators regarding work-related issues, and their feedback is given due consideration, it motivates the employees to work better and makes them feel valued in the organization. Thus, effective communication in the workplace helps in building loyalty and trust which eventually attributes to greater job satisfaction. It also creates lesser conflicts because open communication in the workplace can help prevent and resolve many conflicts. Workplace conflicts are easily resolved through open and clear communication and mutual discussions; this can lead to personal and professional growth and may increase productivity as effective communication at work is the most important issue for the success and failure of an organization. In like manner, Open communication, whether between the employees and administrators or between the management and employees, leads to the formation of better personal and professional relationships. This makes the employees feel genuinely cared for and valued for, and they are more likely to remain loyal to the organization. This creates a friendly environment and promotes a better working relationship which is conducive to the work.

Mahajan, R., in his article on The Key Role Of Communication Skills In The Life Of Professionals, posited that Communication is the key to success in business. Business communication is the ability to build solid relationships based on the effective and efficient exchange of information between two or more parties. Listening, speaking, reading and writing these four techniques really help to improve communication. Many reputed companies always arrange listening skills training sessions for their employees because listening skills can lead to better customer satisfaction, greater productivity, innovations, and creativity, The art of speaking skills at workplace wherein wherever you work, whatever the position but time and again you need to give oral presentation or speech as you may be asked to talk with your colleagues, clients, suppliers, or general public. One needs to be efficient in meetings, group discussions, seminars, workshops, and presentations. The ability to speak effectively and powerfully is very important in public to get several advantages.

Leaders and other senior professionals of this business era; put more emphasis on the business nitty-gritty. While hiring a manager good communication skill are considered to be the most imperative skills a manager must have. For an effective manager, it is obligatory to ensure persuasion, responsibility, premeditated association, creating and managing value system and to provide support and motivation to his teams. A manager is capable to accomplish all this by effective leading, sound planning, monitoring and communicating. These were discussed in the article of Luthra, A., and Dahiya, R., on Effective Leadership is all About Communicating Effectively: Connecting Leadership and Communication, which was published in the International Journal of Management & Business Studies, Vol. 5, Issue 3, July - Sept 2015.

In terms of Talent Management Competencies which is one of the research issues of this paper, DÜREN, A., discussed in the Journal of Naval Science and Engineering, Vol. 6, No.2, 2010, pp. 89-99; that Globalization forces organizations to face new adaptive challenges. That is the main driving force behind the witnessed restructuring and re-engineering efforts by organizations. To achieve the change and adaptation forced by the new global setting, organizations need managers who also have the ability to lead and transform the organization. Managers who also have leading skills are very rare, but the experience has amply demonstrated that most leading skills can be developed. Organizations started to employ “talent management” as a tool to nurture the leaders vital for their survival in the global make up. The study underlines the increasing need for leadership in contemporary organizations and argues how talent management can help to develop this vital resource called leadership.

In today’s global business environment, talent management becomes one important source of competitive advantage that creates value for all companies. Hence, leaders in any organization work very hard to attract, hire, develop and retain talent. Because they believe that people are the only assets that innovate in any organization and innovation is the only path to sustain performance, therefore, managing talent will give some advantage to their company. Furthermore, managing talent must be continuously reviewed, so that the company can capitalize on its talented employees to grow, find the best fit, and expand into new markets. Therefore, talent management needs to be given great effort in every organization and its psychological outcomes need to be debated in order to optimize employee’s performance.

Talent Management has been defined by educators as “the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of those individuals who are of particular value to an organization, either in view of their ‘high potential’ for the future or because they are fulfilling business/operation-critical roles”.

Talent Management has been embedded with Talent strategy and considers the reality that its implementation will vary, depending on what definition is chosen. One that applies to those at the top of the organization and those defined as high potentials, for example, is very different to one in which all employees are regarded as talent regardless of role or organizational level. There are implications for individual development, performance enhancement, workforce planning, and succession planning.

The concepts from the NHS Leadership Academy, Talent, and Talent Management Insights: Insight Defining Talent and Talent Management, which was published in 2014 discussed that almost all the organizations use talent management system, but they may not be aware of what they do exactly in the talent system.

Various definitions were provided about talent management and in different ways: some defined talent as the high-performance employees or potential people in the organization; others consider high skill and knowledgeable people as talents, while other groups believe that the organization itself can make their talented people with succession planning.

Talent management as described by Rani, A. and Joshi, U.,(2012) refers to the process of developing and integrating new workers, developing and retaining current workers, and attracting highly skilled workers to work for a company. Talent management in this context does not refer to the management of entertainers. The term was coined by David Watkins of Soft cape published in an article in 1998. The process of attracting and retaining profitable employees, as it is increasingly more competitive between firms and of strategic importance has come to be known as "the war for talent."

In terms of Talent Management and its relationship to Employee Engagement, the Talent Management practices and policies that demonstrate a commitment to human resources result in more engaged employees and lower turnover. (Dhanalakshmi, R. and Balanaga Gurunathan, 2014) Employee Engagement has a substantial influence on employee productivity and talent retention. Employee Engagement and Talent Management combined can make or break the bottom line (Lockwood, 2006).

Gardner pointed out that at present days, the land, capital, and fixed assets are no longer key resources for the organizations to be highly competitive in the current economy (Gardner, 2002). Human capital is a key resource to adapt the organizations to the worldwide competition. That is why there are organizations who are competing against each other to acquire and retain talents in order to maintain their operations and continue to grow (Gardner, 2002). Kehinde likewise cited that in order to increase the effectiveness of a firm, several resources can be used to achieve this, which includes money, men and machines; of these resources, the most important of them all is the people (Kehinde, 2012).

From various articles, proponents have cited that determinants of talent management include; talent attraction, talent retention, learning and development, and career management; each of these processes must be designed to fit the strategic requirements of the business as well as integrate with each other. (Lyria, R., 2013).

Furthermore, getting the right people with the right skills into the right jobs, a common definition of talent management is the basic people management challenge in organizations. While the focus of talent management tends to be on management and executive positions, the issues apply to all jobs that are hard to fill which has made talent management one of the most pressing issues. The challenge of talent management has two facets to it.

Firstly, how to find new people and secondly, is how to retain the present workforce, where each of the challenges has to be tackled in the most efficient way possible so that the organization can achieve its objectives. (Naik, S., 2012).

Talent management (TM) is the process by which businesses and organizations identify and develop talented people who can have a positive impact on their organizations. It has become a key component of human resource management, with TM strategies being developed in line with the particular needs and structure of the business and industry.

World Tourism Day (WTD) on 27th September 2014 has been celebrated around the world under the theme Tourism and Community Development - focusing on the ability of tourism to empower people and provide them with skills to achieve change in their local communities.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2015), declining youth demographics, baby boom generation retirement, rising female labor market participation, general shift towards more highly skilled (in terms of education) labor supply as older, less skilled workers retire, and the potential for reverse migration back to fast-growing emerging economies, are the most important trends that will influence the future talent supply in the tourism sector.

Talent management in the specific context of the hospitality and tourism sector in Egypt also highlights the benefits of talent management implementation in this sector and specifies the talent management processes used by tourism organizations.

Organizations and managers in the tourism and hospitality industry face real challenges in recruiting, developing and maintaining the committed, competent, well-managed and well-motivated workforce focused on offering a high-quality 'product' to the increasingly demanding and discerning customers.

Tourism has a great importance and is considered one of the fastest growing sectors, and one of the world's biggest employers, representing approximately one in eleven jobs which have contributed to the enormous increase of international trade in services. Finding talented people is a global concern for the hospitality and tourism industry.

Thus, this paper purports to determine the Engagement and Commitment, Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals in Cairo, Egypt.

Statement of the Research Problems

This research investigation aims to determine the Engagement and Commitment, Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals in Cairo, Egypt.

Moreover, this endeavor further intended to address the following specific research questions:

1. What is the extent of Employee Engagement & Commitment (EC) of tourism professionals?
2. How commendable is the Communication Skills (CS) of Tourism Professionals?
3. What is the extent of the Talent Management Competencies (TMC) of the Tourism Professionals?
4. Are there significant correlations between and among the independent variables, when paired as follows:
 - (a) The Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment and Communication Skills;
 - (b) The Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment and Talent Management Competencies;
 - (c) The Tourism Professionals' Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies?
5. Are there significant differences in the Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment (EC) if they are categorized in terms of their educational qualification, marital status and sector where they are employed?
6. Are there significant differences in the Tourism Professionals' Communication Skills (CS) if they are categorized in terms of their educational qualification, marital status and sector where they are employed?
7. Are there significant differences in the Tourism Professionals' Talent Management Competencies (TMC) if they are categorized in terms of their educational qualification, marital status and sector where they are employed?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this research undertaking:

Ho1. There are no significant correlations between and among the independent variables, when paired as follows:

Ho1.a. The Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment and Communication Skills;

Ho1.b. The Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment and Talent Management Competencies;

Ho1.c. The Tourism Professionals' Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies.

Ho2. There are no significant differences in the Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment (EC) when categorized in terms of their educational qualification, marital status and sector where they are employed.

Ho3. There are no significant differences in the Tourism Professionals' Communication Skills (CS) if they are categorized in terms of their educational qualification, marital status and sector where they are employed.

Ho4. There are no significant differences in the Tourism Professionals' Talent Management Competencies (TMC) if they are categorized in terms of their educational qualification, marital status and sector where they are employed.

II. Research Methodology

A. Methods

The research method used in this research undertaking is descriptive correlational.

A questionnaire was used as a data collection method which was distributed to tourism professionals through their leaders/managers, human resource managers and/or human resource specialists working in the human resources department of selected tourism industries, agencies, and organizations concerned.

The data gathering instrument was a questionnaire which were collected within one month of being distributed to the respondents at their workplace, while some were gathered from friends and acquaintances of the researchers who are in the field of tourism. A number of questionnaires were invalidated due to some incomplete responses; the results of the final set were evaluated, tallied and its numerical data were subjected to statistical analyses.

To interpret and ascertain the Employee Engagement and Commitment, Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals, the following numerical descriptors and scales were used in the questionnaire:

Numerical Value	Verbal Interpretation
5	Excellent Extent (EE)
4	Very Great Extent (VGE)
3	Great Extent (GE)
2	Poor Extent (PE)
1	Negligible Extent (NE)

B. The Respondents

The organizations that were involved in this study are the various sectors in the field of tourism industry. Tourism professionals were chosen by the researchers on the basis of people who were known to the researchers and who manifested willingness to take part in the research undertaking.

The participants to this research undertaking are the Tourism Professionals in Cairo, Egypt who are working and/or employed in various fields as: -

(a) *Travel Agents* who do research, plan, and book trips for individuals and groups. These are tourism professionals who help with flight bookings, hotel selection, transfer arrangements, and holiday activities; and some were considered Travel consultants.

(b) *Academic Professionals:* Ph.D. and master holders who are working in tourism educational institutions like universities and higher institutes.

- (c) *Hotel Managers* who oversee all aspects of running a hotel – from housekeeping and general maintenance to budget management and marketing of the hotel and are responsible for the daily running of the hotel, including recruiting, training and supervising staff; managing budgets; planning maintenance work; dealing with customers' complaints; overseeing reservations; promoting and marketing the hotel; and ensuring that the hotel complies with health and safety regulations.
- (d) *Tour Operators*, who typically combines tour and travel components to create holiday packages, and will deal with various service providers, including bus operators, airlines and hoteliers.
- (e) *Event & Conference Organizers* who help with the finer details of planning an event where the role is hands-on and often involves working as part of a bigger team, coordinate every detail of meetings and conferences, from the speakers and meeting locations to the printed materials and audio-visual equipment.
- (f) *Tour Guides* who work in the travel industry and give guided tours to groups of visitors/tourists. Tour Guides have expert knowledge of specific areas, including natural features, historic sites, museums, and other tourist destinations. Guides may give walking tours, bus tours, or even boat tours.
- (g) *Executive Chefs* – those in charge of a restaurant's kitchen and is responsible for managing the kitchen staff, planning the menu, sourcing the freshest ingredients, and making sure that food hygiene is maintained throughout the restaurant.
- (h) *PR Managers* manage a brand's reputation and will plan, develop, and implement specific strategies to build and maintain the overall brand and reputation. In the Tourism and Hospitality environment, a PR Manager work for a hotel chain, a cruise company, or a game reserve whose involve writing and syndicating positive press releases about the brand, arranging events at the hotel (including press conferences, exhibitions, open days, and tours) and connecting with relevant influencers in the industry.

C. Statistical Treatment

To facilitate the computation of the test statistics, the data was interpreted using the data analysis instrument through a Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS).

1. To determine the Engagement and Commitment, Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals, the *weighted mean* was used. The interpretation of the values of the Mean was based on the following scale:

Mean Score	Verbal Interpretation
42.10 – 50.00	Excellent
34.10 – 42.00	Very Great
26.10 – 34.00	Great
18.10 – 26.00	Poor Extent
10.10 – 18.00	Negligible Extent

2. To determine the *significance of correlation* between and among Engagement and Commitment, Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals, Pearson r was used, considering that *Pearson r correlation* is the most widely used correlation statistic to measure the degree of the relationship between linearly related variables. (<http://www.statisticssolutions.com/correlation-pearsonkendall-spearman>.)

3. To determine the *significance of difference* between Engagement and Commitment, Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals and the variables educational qualification (*with high and low educational qualification*, and marital status (*single and married*), Mann *Whitney U Test* was used.

4.To determine the *significance of difference* between Engagement and Commitment, Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals and the variable sector where they are employed (*private sector, government sector and semi_ government sector*), *Kruskal-Wallis Test* was used.

III. Results and Discussions of Research Findings

The Respondents' Profiles

Table 1. Dichotomy of variables in terms of Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Percentage of Respondents
Bachelor's degree holders	38%
Master's degree holders	39%
PhD holders	23%
Total	100%

As seen in the table, data showed that 38 % of the respondents are bachelor's degree holders, 39% Master's degree holders, while only 23% are PhD degree holders.

Table 2. Dichotomy of variables in terms of Marital status

Marital Status	Percentage of Respondents
Single/Divorced	43%
Married	57%
Total	100%

In terms of the dichotomy of variables on Marital status, the table shows that there were 43% Single tourism professionals, (including the Divorced), and 57% are Married among the Tourism professionals in selected agencies of Cairo, Egypt.

Table 3. Dichotomy of variables in terms of sectors where the tourism professionals are employed

Marital Status	Percentage of Respondents
Government	36%
Semi-private	7%
Private	57%
Total	100%

The table shows the data regarding the variables sectors where the tourism professionals are employed: 36% of them were from the Government sector, 7% from Semi-private while there was a total of 57% from the Private sectors where tourism professionals are working or affiliated with in Cairo, Egypt.

Research Problem 1. What is the extent of Employee Engagement & Commitment (EC) of tourism professionals?

Table 4. *The Employee Engagement & Commitment (EC) of Tourism Professionals*

Mean score	Verbal Interpretation
25	Great Extent

As seen in the table, the *Employee Engagement & Commitment (EC) of Tourism Professionals* obtained the main score of 25, which is verbally interpreted as a great extent. This result showed that in terms of the engagement and commitment of tourism professionals in the various agencies in Cairo, Egypt, is neither to an excellent extent, but not to a poor extent as well.

The above results illustrate, in a way, the influences of the numerous attempts to educate and train people for the tourism and hospitality industry.

Research Problem 2. How commendable is the Communication Skills (CS) of Tourism Professionals?

Table 5. *The Communication Skills (CS) of Tourism Professionals*

Mean score	Verbal Interpretation
31.32	Great Extent

Table 5 showed that the mean score representing the *Communication Skills (CS) of Tourism Professionals* in selected agencies in Cairo, Egypt is 31.32 which is verbally interpreted as a great extent.

Over-all, this result is already commendable which shows that the language or Communication skills programs formulated by their respective sectors to explore the communication skills and language proficiency of its professionals, in enhancing their Language Skills are to a commendable state.

Research Problem 3. What is the extent of the Talent Management Competencies (TMC) of the Tourism Professionals?

Table 6. *The Talent Management Competencies (TMC) of Tourism Professionals*

Mean score	Verbal Interpretation
23.5	Poor Extent

The mean score of 23.5 is verbally described as a poor extent of Talent Management competencies.

Talent management is a recruitment, retention and development of the best of the best people, so it is an important element in developing successful organizations and a strategic priority for businesses. However, if the mean result is used as bases, this may not imply a positive implication for the competencies of tourism professionals.

As pointed out in the research work conducted by Poorhosseinzadeh, M. and Subramaniam, D., Talent Management Literature Review, “almost all the organizations use talent management system, but they may not be aware of what they do exactly in the talent system. Each of them defines talent management in a different way.” In a way, the result may imply that the competencies of those in tourism industry are not given due importance, others may feel that these will just be taken for granted especially, since others define talent as “the high performance employees or potential people in the organization; the others consider high skill and knowledgeable people as talents, and another group believes that the organization itself can make their talented people with succession planning”.

Research Problem 4a. Are there significant correlations between and among the independent variables, when paired in terms of the Tourism Professionals’ Engagement and Commitment and Communication Skills?

Table 7. Significance of Correlation in the extent of Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment and Communication Skills

Paired Variables	p-value	Interpretation
Engagement and Commitment and Communication Skills of Tourism Professionals	0.022	*Significant
*@.05 level of significance		

Table 7 shows the Pearson r value for the statistical analysis addressing Research Problem 4a.

As shown in the table, the r value between and among the independent variables, when paired in terms of the Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment and Communication Skills, of 0.022, is interpreted to mean that there is a *significant correlation* between the paired variables.

This may imply that the extent of employees' commitment to the activities of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, writing, or behavior of Tourism professionals. In this instance, *H₀₁* is rejected.

Research Problem 4b. Are there significant correlations between and among the independent variables, when paired in terms of the Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment and Talent Management Competencies?

Table 8. Significance of Correlation in the extent of Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment and Talent Management Competencies

Paired Variables	p value	Interpretation
Engagement and Commitment and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals	0.068	*Not Significant
*@.05 level of significance		

On Research Problem 4b which assessed if there are there significant correlations between and among the independent variables, when paired in terms of the Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment and Talent Management Competencies, the *p-value 0.068*, which when set at *05 level of significance* is interpreted to be not significant.

This implies that the Engagement and Commitment of Tourism Professionals is not in any way, influenced by their Talent Management Competencies, thus the hypothesis is *accepted*.

This result may further mean that the activities involved in by the tourism professionals, inclusive of everything done to recruit, retain, develop, reward and make people perform as part of their talent management competencies, and their capability to employ strategic workforce planning.

Research Problem 4c. Are there significant correlations between and among the independent variables, when paired in terms of the Tourism Professionals' Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies?

Table 9. Significance of Correlation in the extent of Tourism Professionals' Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies

Paired Variables	p -value	Interpretation
Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals	0.757	*Not Significant
* @.05 level of significance		

To address research problem 4c, as to whether or not there are significant correlations between and among the independent variables when paired in terms of the Tourism Professionals' Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies, the results are shown in Table 9. As shown in the table, the p-value is 0.757 which is set at @.05 level of significance.

Research Problem 5. Are there significant differences in the Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment (EC) if they are categorized in terms of their educational qualification, marital status and sector where they are employed?

Table 10. Significance of Difference in the extent of Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment (EC) and Selected variables

Paired Variables	p-value	Interpretation
<i>Engagement and Commitment (EC) and Educational Qualification of Tourism Professionals</i>	0.421	*Not Significant
<i>Engagement and Commitment (EC) and Marital Status of Tourism Professionals</i>	0.255	*Not Significant
<i>Engagement and Commitment (EC) and Sector where the respondents are employed of Tourism Professionals</i>	0.359	*Not Significant
*@.05 level of significance		

The result may further indicate that the positive attitude held by the tourism professionals toward the organization and its values, their being aware of business context, and working smoothly with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization, and the extent to which they are motivated to contribute to organizational success, and are willing to apply discretionary effort (extra time, brainpower and effort) to accomplishing tasks that are important to the achievement of organizational goals, is not significantly different even as Tourism professionals are categorized according to highly qualified in the field of *Educational Qualification, marital status and the sector* where the tourism professionals are affiliated and/or employed.

Research Problem 6. Are there significant differences in the Tourism Professionals' Communication Skills (CS) if they are categorized in terms of their educational qualification, marital status and sector where they are employed?

Table 11. Significance of Difference in the extent of Tourism Professionals' Communication Skills (CS) and Selected variables

Paired Variables	p-value	Interpretation
Communication Skills (CS) and Educational Qualification of Tourism Professionals	0.549	*Not Significant
Communication Skills (CS) and Marital Status of Tourism Professionals	0.223	*Not Significant
Communication Skills (CS) and Sector where the Tourism Professionals are employed	0.440	*Not Significant
*@.05 level of significance		

Table 11 showed that the values between Communication Skills (CS) and Educational Qualification of Tourism Professionals is 0.549 which is interpreted as *not significant*; Communication Skills (CS) and Marital Status of Tourism Professionals 0.223 which is likewise not significant.

Research Problem 7. Are there significant differences in the Tourism Professionals' Talent Management Competencies (TMC) if they are categorized in terms of their educational qualification, marital status and sector where they are employed?

Table 12. Significance of Difference in the extent of Tourism Professionals' Talent Management Competencies (TMC) and Selected variables

Paired Variables	P values	Interpretation
Talent Management Competencies (TMC) and Educational Qualification of Tourism Professionals	0.435	*Not Significant
Talent Management Competencies (TMC) and Marital Status of Tourism Professionals	0.268	*Not Significant
Talent Management Competencies (TMC) and Sector where the Tourism Professionals are employed	0.315	*Not Significant
*@.05 level of significance		

The Talent Management Competencies (TMC) of Tourism Professionals is not significantly different when grouped according to *educational qualification*, with the *p-value* of 0.435; with *marital status*, the *p-value* is 0.268 while the significance of difference with the sector where the Tourism Professionals are employed is 0.315. All these p-values showed no significance. These results may imply that the competencies of tourism professionals in terms of recruitment, retention and development of the best of the best people is not significantly different even when differentiated in relation to the selected variables.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Conclusions

The results of this research undertaking has manifested that the Employee Engagement & Commitment (EC) of tourism professionals is great; there is the overarching challenge which may not be related to the contents of the courses but the inability to ensure regular, planned and consistent training delivery for tourism professionals, the actual willingness to take-up employment even after training, and providing education and training efforts to strongly encourage the would be professionals working in tourism to create interest in the tourism industry; their Communication Skills (CS) of Tourism Professionals in selected agencies in Cairo, Egypt is to a commendable extent, however, their Talent Management Competencies (TMC) is to a *Poor* extent; implying that the Talent management competencies of the professionals practicing in this field in terms of recruitment, retention and development of the best of the best people, developing successful organizations and a strategic priority for businesses is *poor*. Tourism Professionals' Engagement and Commitment is highly influenced by their Communication Skills, the extent of employees' commitment, work effort, and desire to stay in an organization is significantly correlated or influenced by the skills or competencies of conveying information for the purpose of creating a shared understanding, by the tourism professionals; their Engagement and Commitment and Talent Management Competencies, is not, in any way, correlated with their talent management competencies; which are linked to strategizing in business, to function more appropriately, do not significantly correlate not affect their Engagement, Commitment and identification with the organization, their pride to go to work, and their abilities to put best effort into their duties in the field of tourism.

The communication skills, which is specifically the skills that professionals need to utilize and to deal with individuals, small groups, large groups and with organizations, a point of view confirmed by Dainty, Murray, and Moore (2006); does not influence nor affect the Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals, those which may include their anticipation of required human capital for an organization and the planning to meet those needs in the field of tourism industry.

Educational Qualification, Marital Status, and Sector where the Tourism Professionals are employed, make no difference on the Employee Engagement and Commitment, Communication Skills and Talent Management Competencies of Tourism Professionals. These findings, however, differ if other cultures are considered, and other variables may also be correlated.

Tourism professionals with varied educational qualifications: bachelor's degree, masteral or PhD degrees maybe exposed to a curriculum that encompass the needs of individuals who are influenced by their respective communities and can affect the development of tourism as designed by their respective ministries or communities.

B. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research work, the following are recommended:

1. Provide training and manpower development for language programs in English, French, German, Spanish, Turkish, Hebrew, and other pertinent languages,
2. Design programs and activities to increase interest in Tourism Labor and cope with the challenge of overcoming the uncertainties towards tourism employment most specifically on socio-cultural issues,
3. Emphasize the possibilities of employment in the industry for young school-leavers, the working conditions, career opportunities, diversity, international exposure, remuneration, etc., the tourism professionals' educational preparation; those with appropriate knowledge and skills, workers must be job-ready, and be successful in making a smooth transition into the industry.
4. Alignment of Curriculum requirements with the general educational goal to prepare students for key managerial roles in the tourism industry, prepare students to develop and impart quality service, for those working in academic institutions,
5. Coordinate with academic institutions and related agencies in proposing programs for student-intern to apply for resort industry entry: training, apprenticeship; or for school leavers so they can be provided with work exposure which will eventually be a source of livelihood,

6. For Institutions of higher learning, to design an appropriate tourism curriculum that will address three criteria; [1] ensuring a better service delivery and creating an improved tourism industry, [2] responding to the development challenges of the tourism environment and community development and [3] reflecting the key concerns of the tourism environment.

7. Designing a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the goals and objectives of tourism and hospitality agencies to enrich the tourism programs in exploring challenges on the part of those in talent management to present a training and research studies for the various sectors,

8. Enriching Talent Management Competencies to show more importance to the high-performance employees or potential people in the organization; identify indicators for high skill and knowledge management with succession planning”.

C. Recommendations for Future Research Directions

The following issues and concerns are recommended for future research directions:

1. Evaluation of professional management techniques that are used in the hospitality sectors with focus on research areas in Hospitality and Customer Satisfaction, Tourism and Hospitality Marketing, Hospitality Management, Marketing and Service Quality Management, Foodservice Consumer Choice and Services Strategies, Strategic Management in the Hospitality Industry, Hospitality Marketing and Service Experience and Human Resource Management.

2. Assessing the impact of Tourism Management concerns with the planning and management of travel and tourism on the research areas in Cultural Tourism, Tourism Education, Tourism Labor and Employment, Tourism Planning and Development, Transportation and Travel and Tourist Behavior and Psychology.

3. Impact Assessment of Tourism Economics and Financial Management that comprise planning, organizing, directing and controlling finance for travel and tourism, with emphasis on research areas in Tourism Demand, Forecasting, Tourism Impact Assessment, Competition Issues in Tourism and Financial Management for the Hotel and Tourism Industry.

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