

New and Refreshment Training Demand for Vietnam Tourism Human Resources in Tourism Recovery Situation

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the entire social structure, created new tourism trends, and upended the tourism industry's workforce. Many unemployed workers have relocated or changed careers, leaving the industry short of human resources. Meanwhile, professional tourism human resources trainings take a long time. These realities posed a challenge for the tourism industry to find solutions that were suitable for the new situation.

Key words: Vietnam tourism, human resources

JEL codes: Z3

1. Orientation of Vietnam Tourism Development

According to Prime Minister's Decision No. 147/QĐ-TTg on January 22, 2020, Vietnam's tourism has clearly defined its views and goals in the Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2030. As a result, tourism is developing with the following perspectives and objectives:

(1) Developing tourism to truly become a spearhead economic sector, acting as a driving force for the development of other industries and fields, and contributing significantly to the formation of the modern economic structure.

(2) Green growth-based sustainable and inclusive tourism development, maximizing tourism's contribution to the United Nations' sustainable development goals; effectively managing and using natural resources, protecting the environment and biological diversity, actively adapting to climate change, ensuring national defense and security.

(3) Emphasizing cultural tourism development by linking tourism development with the conservation and promotion of heritage values and national cultural identity.

(4) Developing tourism in the direction of professionalism, quality and efficiency; promoting the application of 4.0 industrial revolution achievements; and focusing on the development of high-quality human resources.

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(5) Developing international and domestic tourism concurrently; promoting local exports through tourism; strengthening links to capitalize on benefits of natural and cultural resources; developing a variety of tourism products, extending the market, and improving Vietnam's tourism competitiveness.

6) By 2025, Vietnam will strive to be one of the three leading countries in tourism development in Southeast Asia, as well as one of the 50 countries with the world's leading tourism competitiveness. with all 14 tourism competitiveness criteria increasing in accordance with the requirements of sustainable development. Total tourist revenue: 1,700-1,800 trillion VND (equivalent to 77-80 billion USD), with an annual growth rate of 13-14%; direct contribution to GDP: 12-14%. Tourism generates approximately 5.5-6 million jobs, of which about 2 million are direct jobs, with an annual growth rate of 12-14%.

(7) By 2030, tourism will be a driving force in the economy and sustainable development. Vietnam has emerged as a particularly attractive destination, as one of the 30 countries with the highest tourism competitiveness in the world, fully meeting the requirements and goals of sustainable development. Total tourist revenue reached 3,100-3,200 trillion VND (equivalent to 130-135 billion USD), with an annual growth rate of 11-12%; direct contribution to GDP reached 15-17%. Tourism generates approximately 8.5 million jobs, of which about 3 million are direct jobs, with an annual growth rate of 8-9%.

2. The Tourism Industry Situation and Human Resources After the Two-Years COVID-19

2.1 Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Tourism Industry

The tourism industry has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of international visitors in 2020 was only 3.7 million, down 80% from 2019; domestic visitors reached 56 million arrivals, down 34% from the same period in 2019; and total tourism revenue in 2020 was VND 312,200 billion, down 57.8% from 2019. In 2021, it served estimate 40 million domestic visitors and welcomed about 3,800 international visitors, with total tourism revenue estimated at approximately VND 180,000 billion, a 42% decrease from the same period in 2020.

Table 1 Number of Visitors in 2015-2021 (Million Arrivals)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Domestic visitors	57	60	73.2	80	85	56	40
International visitors	7.9	10	12.9	15.5	18	3.7	0.0038

The number of enterprises applying for revocation of travel business licenses accounted for over 35% of the total number of licensed enterprises, nationwide there were only about 2,000 enterprises with international travel business licenses, of which many businesses were registered. The business is still closed or shut down. Meanwhile, the tourist accommodation establishments, which accounts for 46% of the revenue structure of Vietnam's tourism industry, have been forced to close 90% of their operations, with almost no guests except for the isolation facilities.

Table 2 Total Number of Enterprises With International Travel Business Licenses in 2015-2021

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total number of enterprises with ITBL	1.573	1.59	1.811	2.022	2.656	2.514	2.111

Businesses, in turn, must slash labour by 70-80% in 2020. Employees who still working full-time account for

only 25% of that in 2020, employees who quit or terminate labour contracts account for about 30% of the workforce in 2021, temporary workers account for about 35%, and labourers idle movement account for 10%. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourism industry, with 2.5 million employees, of which 800,000 direct employees lost their jobs. The tour guides, staffs,... working at tourist accommodation establishments, tourist attractions, travel businesses, transportation, cruise ships, other tourism enterprises are the hardest hit

2.2 Tourism Situation Since Re-Opening Until Now

After two months of completely re-opening tourism in Vietnam (March 15, 2022 - May 15, 2022), tourism activities across the country have prospered and become vibrant again after being affected for a long period by Covid-19. Many localities have begun to receive international groups, and domestic tourism have recovered quickly.

Domestic visitors reached 10.5 million arrivals in April 2022, a 16.7% increase over the same period in 2021, with over 6.3 million guests staying overnight at tourist accommodation establishments. Domestic visitors totaled about 36.6 million in the first four months of 2022. The tourism industry served approximately 5 million domestic visitors in just four public holiday days (from April 30, 2022 to May 3, 2022). Meanwhile, 70,000 international arrivals visited Vietnam in April 2022. The total number of international arrivals to Vietnam in the first four months of 2022 was approximately 92,400. After 2 months following re-opening, the number of international visitors to Vietnam increased sharply. The total number of arrivals was 251,681 from March 15 to May 13, 2022. Typical tourists account for approximately 125,000 arrivals, accounting for 49.5% of total arrivals.

The aviation industry is increasing its capacity to serve tourists. Vietnamese airlines continue to restore domestic routes and expand international routes as international tourism recovers. Vietnam Airlines: As of March 27, 2022, it operated 55 routes, a 16-routes increase over 2019. The airline has completely resumed international flights to 15 traditional markets (except China and Myanmar); beginning May 15, increasing the frequency of flights on eight routes connecting Vietnam, Japan and Korea; and beginning June 1, restoring three air routes to Korea. Vietjet Air has reopened all routes and increased the frequency of routes connecting key tourist destinations (Nha Trang, Da Lat, Vinh, Phu Quoc ..). Bamboo Airways launched many new routes, including Hanoi-Melbourne (Australia) and Ho Chi Minh City - Bangkok (Thailand) flights began on April 28, Ho Chi Minh City - Singapore flights began on April 29, and Hanoi - Singapore flights began on May 4. In terms of railway: A total 25 trains have been added, with a focus on routes from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to provinces such as Hai Phong, Binh Dinh, and Thua Thien-Hue.

2.3 Human Resources Demand Following The Pandemic

Tourism human resources are among the most important issues facing the tourism industry because, after all, tourism is a service economy that provides services between people. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, tourism human resources were always considered the "critical" issue of Vietnam's tourism industry. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the already scarce and inadequate tourism human resources.

The growth in international and domestic tourists over the last two months of re-opening indicated that Vietnam's tourism is strengthening. The huge number of tourists throughout the holidays, summer vacations, and the international tourist high season at the end of the year, on the other hand, will put a lot of pressure on localities with limited resources. Vietnam's tourism industry is facing challenges in terms of human resources. The situation of labour movement to the other industries pushed the tourism industry into a human resources crisis. After two

years of COVID-19, the state budget, capital sources of businesses, and resources of organizations and individuals were almost been exhausted. The contents of practicing and practical training at tourist destinations were interrupted, causing difficulties for learners and teachers; facilities, equipment and skills for teaching and learning are lacking, especially in some training institutions with limited or non-standard practice rooms; technological equipment for teaching at tourism training institutions to adapt to the new form is still lacking, failing to meet the requirements. Admissions to the tourism businesses are likewise expected to be difficult.

3. Training and Refreshment Solutions for Vietnam Tourism Human Resources

First and foremost, localities and tourism businesses must develop policies to attract tourism human resources who have left their jobs and return to work in the tourism industry. Organize trainings and refreshments for all tourism professionals in the localities for those who are returning to work, ensuring the quality of tourist services. Meanwhile, a new supplemental training plan has been developed to ensure sufficient human resources shortage as a result of recent job transfers or dismissals of tourism personnel, which may attract personnel from other fields who have not been trained in tourism. Schedule for fostering, quick training of tourism personnel; prioritise recruitment and training of locals.

Second, a long-term strategy for Vietnam's tourism human resources is required. Training high-quality tourism human resources, adapting to the context of digital transformation, 4.0 technology networks; improving tourism industry competitiveness; and meeting the requirements of turning tourism into a spearhead economic sector.

Third, the tourism training industry/specialization/occupation must be reviewed and developed because the COVID-19 pandemic has created new tourism trends that require professional positions, and meeting the needs of tourists. Therefore, a list of industries and occupations suitable to the practical needs of the tourism industry will need to be reviewed, adjusted, and built.

Fourth, improve the capacity of other educational institutions that provide tourism trainings. Continue to promote the diversification of schools, classes, centers, tourism trainings, and fostering institutions, with an especially focus on training middle and senior human resources in businesses to tailor their actual needs. Tourism education institutions must upgrade their facilities and training equipment; improve the capacity of teachers and lecturers (through training and retraining to raise their qualifications); update and renovate for the advanced tourism training programmes and curricula to ensure regional and international integration; and develop a training programme for tourism human resources, ensuring the minimum standards of knowledge and skills, as well as professional independent qualifications are met according to the output standards. In particular, focus on practicality in training and maximize practicing time from the first year of the studying programme.

Fifth, in order to to strengthen cooperative activities in training tourism human resources, collaboration in training and development of tourism human resources must be identified as a key priority. Collaboration in the training of tourism human resources among localities in the same region, between tourism enterprises and training institutions, and with international organizations.

The global tourism industry has been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. After the pandemic, Vietnam's tourism faces difficulties and challenges in competing with destinations in the region. Human resources are considered as one of the aspects that influence the quality of services and image of tourist destinations in Vietnam. Vietnam's tourism businesses must capitalise on the current "golden" opportunity by focusing on training new and

retraining tourism human resources to meet market demands, thus making an important contribution to the tourism industry's recovery. Vietnam tourism, step by step, transform to a spearhead economic sector, sustainable development, and particularly appealing attractive destination, joining group of 30 countries with competitive tourism potential by 2030 in the world, meeting all the requirements and goals of sustainable development. Tourism is a driving force in fostering the recovery and development of other industries and fields, as well as restructuring and renewing the economic growth model, in line with the potential and expectations of the Party, State and Government and people.