Chapter 6

Knowledge Management in Tourism Services: A Literature Review and Case Study – The Case of INATEL

Sérgio Jesus Teixeira
University of Madeira, Portugal & University of Beira Interior, Portugal

ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to discuss the knowledge management in the travel services, since it has mobilized a variety of fields that seek to uncover the complexity of the process and the application contexts. In the era of globalization in which we live, the main factors that differentiate the companies and organizations depend increasingly on the quality of human capital management and knowledge management quality. This chapter analyzes how an organization of tourist services manages its knowledge. The methodology used was a qualitative analysis by applying an interview to a case study.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this work is to study the concept of Knowledge Management (KM) in tourism services, some of its aspects and the specificity of this theme for the tourism sector. This theme is of increasing importance in the tourism sector, since this concept is associated with more efficient and competitive management practices that can improve the overall performance of an organization in its relationship with tourists. Knowledge is now recognized as a fundamental asset in the survival and affirmation of organizations. It is, therefore, a current topic in all literature specifically.

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in management and organizational strategy. The importance of this asset corresponds to the need for its internal management in order to create and sustain competitive advantages. This is, however, a complex task that involves not only knowledge within organizational boundaries but also its relation to external knowledge.

This work is divided into three different sections. In a first phase we will concentrate on the two main concepts (tourism and knowledge management) studied in this work and make a general framework of both. After this general framework, of the two main concepts, we intend on making a bibliographical review of the services by the second chapter of the paper to, in a first part in general and then applying the services to the tourism sector. Finally, in the last chapter we will make the interconnection between the first two sections, namely the interconnection of the concepts of tourism and knowledge management with tourism services.

The methodology used was based on academic research for the first part of the work and a face-to-face research carried out the case study. We consulted existing bibliography in the Library of the University of Beira Interior and in the Library of the University of Madeira, Library of the Regional Archive of Madeira, as well as using several databases, from Scopus, Web of Science, Scienc Direct, b on, EBSCO host, among others.

In carrying out this work, it was found that the concept of knowledge management in tourist services is very recent and the existing bibliography when compared with other topics is still very limited, since few authors write about the connection of both topics.

FRAMEWORK

The Concept of “Knowledge Management”

The Knowledge Management (KM) is considered in the academic world as an interdisciplinary field, which involves several theories and techniques of different fields of knowledge and preferably uses technology as an ally in the process of capturing, storing and transferring knowledge. There are many authors who study this concept, and the definitions presented by these are different.

Marcovitch (1997) considers that KM is not restricted to the management of knowledge assets, since this concept also involves the management of the processes that act on these assets. On the other hand, Terra (2007) states that Knowledge Management in the organizational world essentially depends not only on the understanding of the characteristics and the demand of the competitive environment, but also on the understanding of the individual and collective needs associated with the learning processes.
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