A study of the effectiveness of training programs in the tourism sector:

The case of the Ishikawa Tourism Creation School, Japan

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the characteristics of effective human resource training programs in the field of tourism, which are implemented in collaboration with universities and government organizations, such as the local federation. In Japan, approximately 70 % of hospitality companies are small and medium sized enterprises without large labor budgets. Therefore, the scope of on-the-job and off-the-job training implemented by each company is limited, making human resource training programs provided in collaboration with local governments and tourism education essential. In this study, we analyzed the case of the Ishikawa Tourism Creation School managed by the Ishikawa Prefecture Tourism Federation. Qualitative data was gathered via semi-structured interviews. The characteristics of an effective program are that it stimulates participants' willingness to contribute to the community, participants gain familiarity with the relationship with the government officials, participants can benefit from interaction with others and enhance their career awareness through cross-boundary learning, and they can gain knowledge about tourism and the hospitality industry through the university's tourism department. The program could be positioned as an additional education to complement human resource development training within companies and education provided by higher institutions such as universities.

Keywords

tourism education, human resource training programs, human resource development, recurrent education, cross-boundary learning

1. Introduction

1.1 Policies for building a tourism-oriented nation

To expand the competitiveness of international tourism, the Japanese government declared its goal of becoming a tourism-oriented nation in 2003 under the Koizumi administration. Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Law was enacted in December 2006, and the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) was established in 2008. Since 2013, the Japanese government has been actively promoting the action program for the realization of a tourism nation and the program for the attainment of the tourism vision. The goal behind the implementation of these programs was to increase the number of foreign visitors to Japan to 40 million by 2020. With an increase in the number of travelers to Japan, the tourism industry has continued to grow.

In addition, with the depopulation, tourism is being promoted as a countermeasure for earning revenue and revitalizing the communities. Simultaneously, the internationalization and rapid development of the tourism industry have encouraged the workforce that was not previously involved in tourism to shift to the industry. For example, the tourism sector of the local government disseminating information could employ more staff to manage their activities. Furthermore, travelers visiting tourist destinations could find employment opportunities in the local travel and tourism industry. Some migrants from urban areas were satisfied with their tourism experiences in the community before they decided to migrate [Ohara, 2020]. For example, tourists who visited Okinawa island to participate in diving activities prefer to stay for relatively longer periods, at their destination and were employed by diving shops [Ohara, 2012]. According to a survey by the Japan Organization for Internal Migration [2017], the most crucial conditions for moving to a rural area are work without time constraints (18.8 %), work for community development (15.6 %), child care (13.8 %), and tourism (12.8 %).

The number of workers in Japan's tourism sector surged in 2014; by 2019, they accounted for 6.57 million, or 10 % of the total workforce [Japan Tourism Agency, 2019]. Although the number of workers in tourism-related industries has increased, there is still a considerable shortage of human resources. According to the survey of the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry [2020], 81.8 % of the lodging and restaurant business operators reported a labor shortage in 2019, and 70.3 % in 2020. Regarding the perception of staffing shortages in the next few years (approximately 3 years), 44.9 % of firms had reported that there would be a shortage.

To address this shortage of human resources in the tourism industry, private companies, local governments, tourism federations, and other relevant organizations have launched programs to develop human resources. They conducted a variety of programs that may not necessarily be relevant to the tourism sector, which implied that most of the programs did not meet the demands of the learners. Therefore, it is important to identify and develop training programs and curricula to specifically target the tourism sector.

Meanwhile, 70 % of the enterprises in the tourism industry are small and medium-sized. Therefore, the scope for on-the-job and off-the-job training programs implemented by these

business is limited. To confront this issue, tourism organizations and federations of each prefecture in Japan organize recurrent training programs. Regardless, the goals of such human resource development programs are diverse, and do not always directly potential participants of the program.

1.2 Framework for tourism human resource development

The JTA was inaugurated in 2008 to formulate and implement robust tourism-related measures, to create a tourism-oriented nation. The JTA recognized the need to develop a framework to provide human resources with the management skills required to create tourism businesses. Hence, the JTA established a framework comprising four levels of the workforce: top management, middle management, workplace, and student level (Figure 1).

As per the JTA's framework, the top management level aims to manage international competition in tourism-related industries. Therefore, productivity is improved by utilizing data-based management and marketing, along with the need to strengthen management capabilities in Japan's tourism industry. In 2018, an MBA in tourism program was launched in Kyoto University and Hitotsubashi University. The curricula include management strategy, accounting, finance, marketing, and so on. The workplace level conducts the day-to-day tasks and interacts with the customers. The student level pertains to tourism education from elementary to high school. The Ministry of Education has revised the guidelines, and a new subject, tourism business, has been introduced in high schools.

The aim of the middle management level is to cultivate core human resources at the regional level. Tourism-related industries tend to rely on instinct and experience. Therefore, it is imperative to have well-trained human resources at the management level. The challenge is to improve and strengthen
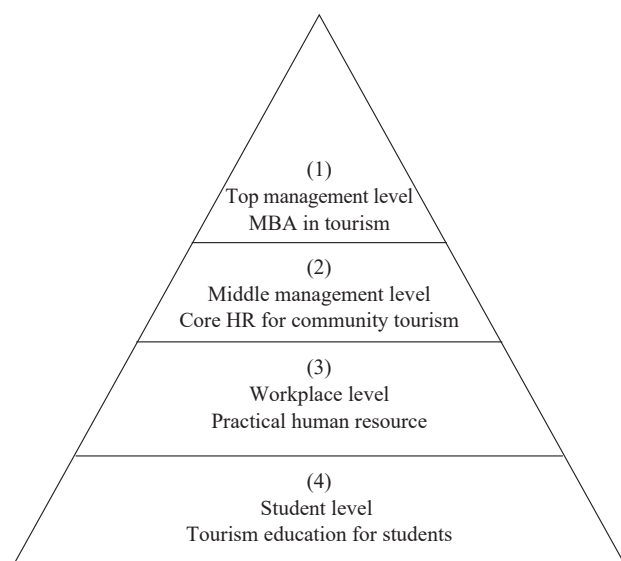
management capabilities. To increase the number of personnel at this level, 14 universities in Japan are providing human resource programs to facilitate relearning. The Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (JAIST), Wakayama University, and others have launched courses for the development of human resources in the tourism industry.

The JTA, local governments, and tourism-related organizations are subsidizing and implementing tourism human resource development programs throughout Japan. Management is the key focus of the program. There are several reasons for this. First, employees of hospitality enterprises need to be engaged in multitasking. Second, digital transformation is offering more backstage works. Third, developing management skills allows workers to see the entire company. However, the objectives and content of the programs may not be aligned to the potential audience.

2. Background of the research

This section presents a review of tourism education and life-long learning.

2.1 Tourism education

Tourism education in higher education institutions of Japan was initiated during the 1960s, with the introduction of the first course in Toyo University Junior College in 1963. In 1967, the Hotel and Tourism Course at Rikkyo University, newly established by its Department of Sociology, became the first four-year tourism education and research program in Japan. The number of universities offering specialized courses in tourism has increased in recent years. Currently, over 50 universities offer undergraduate and graduate courses pertaining to tourism.

Institutional tourism education began in Japan at around the same time as in other countries. For example, Michigan State University started its tourism course in 1963, which was most probably the first university course related to tourism in the US [Jafari, 2003]; in the UK, tourism education began in 1972 with the introduction of two postgraduate programs at the universities of Strathclyde and Surrey [Airey, 2005a]. In Australia, tourism-related courses and programs at the higher education level were not initiated until the mid-1970s, initially in Victoria and Queensland, and subsequently during the late 1980s and early 1990s in other states and territories [King and Craig-Smith, 2005]. In China, full-time tourism education started in 1978. In October 1978, the Jiangsu Tourism Technical School (now Nanjing Tourism School), a secondary vocational school, was founded. In October 1979, China's first tourism institution for higher learning—the Shanghai Institute of Tourism—was established [Zhang and Fan, 2005].

In most countries, tourism degree programs were highly vocation-oriented, having close links with the tourism industry and focused on the practices and operations of the industry [Airey, 2005b]. In Japan, the curricula of tourism courses consisted of 35 % humanities and social sciences (cultural an-

Figure 1: Outline of Initiatives for Human Resource Development in Tourism

Source: Japan Tourism Agency [2021].

thropology, geography, history), 23 % community development (urban engineering, regional policy), 23 % hospitality (hospitality education and certification), and 19 % business administration. Compared to other countries, business administration was found lacking in Japan's curricula. The curricular areas of tourism courses have developed uniquely and differently from those in other countries. As a result, less than 30 % of undergraduate students majoring in tourism at universities in Japan enter the workforce in the tourism industry after graduation. Hence, lack of human resources with adequate tourism education is a serious issue [Japan Tourism Agency, 2010].

The above surveys indicate that even if a student opts for tourism course at un university, they do not learn about tourism from the business perspective, quite contrary to the students taking business or management courses. Therefore, recurrent education is needed to learn tourism knowledge and strategies directly related to business.

2.2 Trends in recurrent education in Japan

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) pointed out that structural changes in the Japanese economy and society at large have eroded the importance of traditional employment practices, such as lifetime employment, seniority wage schemes, and regular graduate recruitment rounds. The adult learning system in Japan has been considerably impacted by these changes. In fact, under the lifetime employment system where adult learning was primarily provided by firms, a new segment of the population will be requiring learning opportunities outside the organization. From an international perspective, low participation in human resource training in Japan has been observed and is mostly organized by employers for the employees. Relatively fewer adults engage in structured training activities on their own [OECD, 2021].

In Japan, recurrent training began in the 1970s after initiatives by UNESCO and OECD were introduced. The concept of lifelong education transformed into lifelong learning in the 1980s. The Lifelong Learning Promotion Law was enacted in 1990 [Ogden, 2010]. The Japanese government then began to focus on recurrent education. Many firms in Japan prompted their employees to reassess their careers, and the public sector initiated recurrent training and lifelong education for employees.

Changes in the work environment have required workers to have new knowledge and skills. Meanwhile, international competition has also intensified. Companies need to be innovative. However, innovation could not be achieved through in-house training alone, and companies sought to create something that they did not previously have by engaging with outside organizations. This can be achieved through cross-boundary learning.

3. Literature reviews

3.1 Cross-boundary learning

As recurrent education gained public attention, cross-bound-

ary learning became popular. Cross-boundary learning is used as part of employee training and education. It takes place outside the company. Employees from different companies form a team and work on a given task. In the process, participants are likely to face conflicts. They overcome them and accept the others. The participants of the cross-boundary learning program tend to realize that there are different ways of thinking.

Ishiyama [2018] point out that cross-boundary learning is a key factor in developing new ideas. Cross-boundary learning is defined as going back and forth between the organization in which one belongs (home) and other situations (away) [Ishiyama, 2018]. Nakahara [2021] defines it as learning and introspecting the content of one's work and duties while going back and forth between the boundaries of the organization to which the individual belongs.

Ishiyama [2018] examined the benefit of cross-boundary learning and found that it breaks down assumptions and stereotypes, besides, it is also useful for individuals and organizations, leading to growth. Additionally, Tateno [2017] reports that cross-boundary learning plays an important role in promoting innovation.

Araki [2021] revealed that knowledge workers' participation in external communities of practice, where various people interact and learn from each other, contributes to their career development. The results showed that participation in the community promoted career establishment, which led to introspection.

Previous studies have shown that cross-boundary learning leads to innovation [Ishiyama, 2018; Tateno, 2017] and career development [Araki, 2021]. The program conducted break through stereotypes by solving a given problem through collaboration with people from diverse enterprises. Those experiences facilitate individual development such as acceptance of diverse ideas, creation of new ideas, reflection, and thinking about careers.

3.2 Clear the problem

As already discussed, human resource management and tourism education in Japan have developed differently as compared to other countries. On-the-job training was the mainstay of the hospitality industry. The curriculum structure of universities comprises a small percentage of management-related courses, so it is necessary to study the principles of tourism after entering the tourim industry. There are many human resource training programs provided in collaboration with local governments and the universities.

A critical issue related to these kinds of courses is that, the programs seldom last more than three years due to expiration of subsidies and support by local governments. Furthermore, the skills of persons in charge cannot be honed since local government officials are often transferred after a few years. Thus, collection and analysis of data pertaining to the skills of participants that need to be developed to help them operate these programs is required.

Cross-boundary learning involves solving a given task through collaboration with people outside the organizations, and participants are likely to experience various conflicts. Through interaction with others, growth is expected to break through stereotypes that one has. It is the learning that encourages innovation and aids in advancement of one's personal career. Prior studies have shown it to be an effective learning. It has been evaluated mainly with employees working in companies. Does this apply to industry-academia-government programs in the tourism sector? The effectiveness of cross-boundary learning can be useful for developing human resources in the tourism sector.

3.3 Purpose of this study

This study aimed to identify the characteristics of effective human resource training programs in tourism that are implemented in collaboration with industries, universities, and local governments, such as prefectural offices and municipalities.

In this study, the authors attempted to investigate the case of the Ishikawa Tourism Creation School (ITCS). The participants were highly satisfied with the program. Table 1 depicts the number of participants and post-ITCS satisfaction survey responses. Figure 2 describes the satisfaction survey result of ITCS.

ITCS started in 2017 and has been conducted in collaboration with the Ishikawa Prefecture Division of Tourism, the

Ishikawa Prefecture Tourism League, and JAIST. We discuss this case because it is an appropriate example of the alliance between academic and governmental organizations.

The case examined in this study is from one of the fourteen universities selected by the JTA. It pertains to middle management level core human resource for community tourism. Therefore, the findings of this study can be applied to other universities or organizations.

As of 2021, 111 participants had completed this program, which is acknowledged as a lifelong education program. Lifelong or recurrent education, as practiced in the ITCS, can be pursued by going back and forth between one's own company and the university. Therefore, it can be seen as a form of cross-boundary learning. It is necessary to verify whether a program has broken stereotypes, led to innovation, and career establishment.

4. Methodology
4.1 Overview of ICTS

Ishikawa Prefecture has many tourist attractions and hot springs. Kanazawa, the prefectural capital, is known as an ancient capital along with Kyoto. With the opening of the Hokuriku Shinkansen line in 2015, it takes 2.5 hours from Tokyo to Kanazawa, and the number of tourists visiting the place have grown at a steady pace until 2019. Therefore, the Ishikawa Prefecture Tourism Federation is promoting tourism by training tourism leaders through the ITCS. The administration section is located at the Ishikawa Prefecture Tourism Policy Planning Section and is operated by the prefectural officials. The curriculum is provided by JAIST. The instructors consist of university lecturers and hospitality industry professionals.

The ITCS program has two major purposes. First, it aims to revitalize the local community and enhance the local tourism business by developing human resources that can be involved in the industry. Second, it aims to develop the participant's leadership skills to seek new business opportunities and engage in innovations through creation of brand-new business or

Table 1: Satisfaction Survey response of ITCS

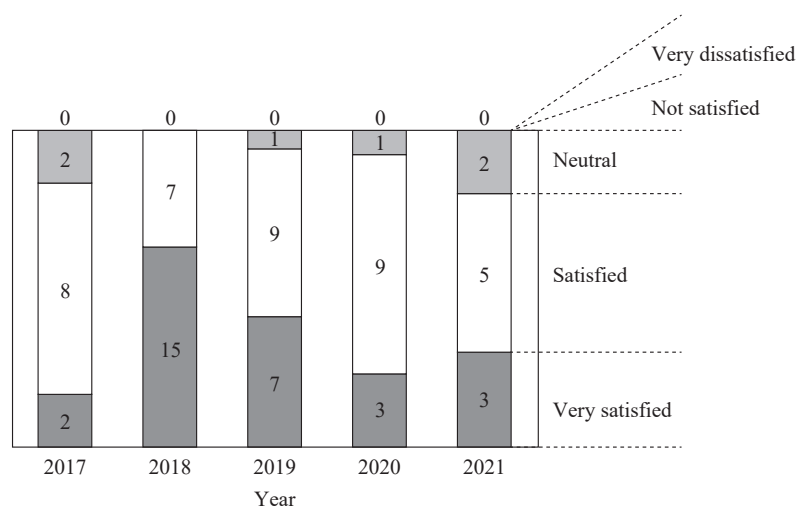| Year	No. of participants	Response	Response rate (%)
2017	17	12	70.6
2018	26	22	84.6
2019	28	17	60.7
2020	23	13	56.5
2021	17	10	58.8
Total	111	74	66.7

Figure 2: Satisfaction Survey result of ITCS

business procedures [ITCS, n.a.].

The ITCS aims at educating younger workers in tourism industries. Among them, executive candidates and workers aspiring to engage in tourism business from other industries are noteworthy. The primary target students predominantly comprise hospitality industry workers of various age groups and professions with a sole proprietorship [ITCS, n.a.].

The number of ITCS students admitted ranges from 17 to 25 per year. The course fee is 40000 yen (≒US$350).

4.2 Curriculum of ICTS

The ITCS is designed to provide the skills and management strategies pertaining to tourism, through case methods and active learning. The curriculum features of ITCS include systematic curriculum design (from understanding the basic structure of tourism to business planning), standardized active learning, and team-based learning, using the case method.

An outline of the curriculum of ITCS for 2021 is depicted in Table 2. It is a 14-day course with 6 hours of classes per day. The core curriculum of ITCS aims at development of facilitation skills, project management, hospitality management, marketing, and other subjects directly related to business, including the case method approach for accommodation management. The curriculum includes facilitation skills that contribute to fostering group discussion in class. Accounting is an optional class. In the learning process, the importance of local culture for the purpose of promotion of tourism is emphasized. Community study includes fieldwork that is conducted to survey local resources and commercialize them. Case Method 2 is the case study of the real local Ryokan (Japanese style inn) in Ishikawa prefecture. After the discussion in the class, the owner of the ryokan inn explained the actual response.

The basic design of the ITCS curriculum has not changed since the program began in 2017. However, minor alterations have been made on the basis of a survey of comprehension level and the result of the program evaluation by the operating directors of the ITCS.

A certificate of completion will be issued to those who complete the program. Participants who have attended the program for a certain number of hours and demonstrated the required results are entitled to receive the certificate.

4.3 Participants

The program began in 2017, and during the fifth term, in 2021, there were 111 participants from diverse industries including the lodging industry, public affairs, and transportation (Table 3). Regarding gender distribution, 59 % of the participants were males, while 41 % were females. Most participants were in their 30s and 40s, while some were in their 20s and 60s. The age distribution has been depicted in Figure 3.

Table 3: Classification of course participants by industry (*N* = 111)

Industry	No. of participants
Accommodation	21
Public Affairs/NPO	19
Transportation	8
Retail	8
Travel	7
Tourist Facilities	6
IT	5
Food	5
Art/Designer	4
Consultant	4
Education	4
Architecture	3
Event/Planning	2
Medical/Welfare	2
Printing/Publishing	2
Manufacturing	2
Other	9

Table 2: Curriculum for 2021

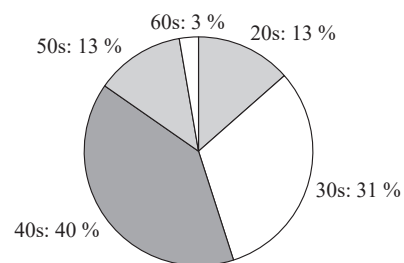| Day	Subjects
1	Opening Ceremony, Guidance for Class, Basics of Tourism System
2	Facilitation Skills
3	Project Management, Case Method 1
4	Hospitality Management
5 & 6	Community Study (Field Work)
7	Destination Branding
8 & 9	Case Method 2 (Human Resource Management)
10	Marketing (Basic)
11	Marketing (Advanced) Business Planning
12	Financing, Strategy, Business Planning
Optional	Accounting
13	Business Planning
14	Business Planning, Presentation, Closing Ceremony

Figure 3: Age distribution of the participants from 2017 to 2021

4.4 Methodology

In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 participants (8 males and 6 females) from August 27, 2021, to November 7, 2021. Table 4 shows the employment data of the interviewees. The average age of the interviewees was 42.9 years, and all of

Table 4: Research interviewees

No	Type of Business	Type of Employment
1	Food	Independent contractor
2	Event/ Planning	Business owner
3	Event/Planning	Independent contractor
4	Transportation	Employee
5	Accommodation	Independent contractor
6	Food	Independent contractor
7	Education	Independent contractor
8	Public affairs/NPO	Independent contractor
9	Education	Independent contractor
10	IT	Business owner
11	Retail	Employee
12	Accommodation	Employee
13	Travel	Employee
14	Art/Designer	Independent contractor

Table 5: The reasons for enrollment in the program

Reasons	No. of participants
To contribute to the community	7
Take advantage of business opportunities	6
Recommendations from graduates and friends	5
Gain knowledge from the program	4
Networking	3
Sent by a company	3
Interested in tourism	2

Note: Multiple answers allowed.

them had different occupations. Semi-structured interviews of 30-60 minutes duration were conducted and recorded using the Zoom app. These represented 12.6 % of the 111 participants who completed the program. Interviewees that represented a variety of occupations, employment statuses, and ages were selected. The challenge was how to increase the sample size.

The participants were asked questions to explore their motives for attending the ITCS program, the knowledge and skills they acquired during the enrollment period, their perception of the behavioral and emotional changes and modification in attitude that they experienced after completing the course, and so on. Two respondents were business owners, eight were independent contractors, and four were employed in companies. In this survey, participants from 2017 to 2019 were selected because they were more likely to acknowledge the changes they experienced after graduating from the course.

4.5 Interview questions

To clarify the characteristics of the industry-academia-government collaboration program and for future curriculum development, it is important to identify the participants' needs regarding knowledge and skills and how they fare after participation. This study mainly focused on the role of the program. Therefore, the primary interview questions that were posed to the study participants were as follows:

Q1: Why did you join the program?
Q2: What were the behavioral and emotional changes that you experienced after participating in the program?
Q3: What was your expectation of the program?
Q4: What are the areas of improvement?

5. Results

Table 5 shows the reasons for enrollment in the program. The responses to the question pertaining to the behavioral or emotional changes experienced after participating in the ITCS were as follows:

- Expansion of network
- Interacting with and talking to people who have different attributes and those from other occupations
- Feel more comfortable while interacting with the administration
- Providing information to classmates
- Consulting other members of the team
- Starting a new business in collaboration with a classmate
- Gained experience of working in a team
- Gained confidence
- Decided on a new career
- Became a turning point in my life
- Realized that I was inspired and enjoyed my work
- Enjoyed coming up with new ideas
- Got the opportunity to learn about another person
- Identified my strengths
- Moved forward in business
- Went to a university or graduate school
- Became a researcher at a university
- Started a new business
- Organized tourism and local events as well as online events
- Proposed new ideas to customers
- Accepted task requests from classmates
- Observed no change
- Failed to implement the plans due to COVID-19

We asked whether the participants were still in touch with other classmates (Table 6), and whether they had joined new communities (Table 7).

The obtained responses differed among independent contractors, employees, and business owners. Independent contractors were eager to communicate with others and maintain contact with their classmates. However, the employees displayed a different approach and used the skills they gained for their daily work. For example, internal proposals that were often rejected before were adopted and implemented after attending the program. Some respondents were unable to start a new initiative due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 6: Are you still in touch with your classmates?

	No. of respondents	Yes	No
Independent contractor	8	8	0
Employee	4	1	3
Business owner	2	1	1

Table 7: Did you join a new community?

	No. of respondents	Yes	No
Independent contractor	8	8	0
Employee	4	1	3
Business owner	2	1	1

Finally, when asked about the improvements that could be made to this program, the responses were as follows:

- Interaction with tourism related businesses
- Information about tourism in other regions
- The objectives, level, and content of the lecture should be expressed more clearly.
- Provide more practical content
- Include a paper on investment, subsidies, and funding
- Include more theoretical topics
- Effective advertisement of the course should be done.
- Horizontal connections in the industry should be established.
- Association with governmental organizations can be sought.
- Information pertaining to the neighboring province can be shared.
- A dummy business idea can be implemented in the classroom setting.

These responses indicate that participants' needs varied depending on the knowledge, skills, and experience of interviewee.

6. Discussion and conclusion
6.1 Discussion
The results of the survey indicated that the participants' actions are impacted by the roles in their current jobs. The three apparent questions that revealed significant results are as follows:

Q1: Why did you join the program?
In response to the question, the participants cited the following two reasons: personal objectives and being asked by a company. The learning objectives of the participants differed significantly depending on the role of the participants.

It is worthy to note that seven out of the 14 interviewees expressed that they would like to learn more about the local tourist attractions and contribute to community rejuvenation through tourism. These findings suggest that participants are likely to acquire knowledge that is useful for both the development of their business as well as the community. This result is not surprising as community revitalization is one of the crucial purposes of educating enrolled participants in the ITCS. The result of the interview also revealed a sense of attachment to the community in participants when they decided to enroll and study at ITCS.

Q2: What were the behavioral and emotional changes that you experienced after participating in the program?
All participants reported a change in their actions or mind. All participants of the cross-boundary learning shared that they accepted other people's opinions and ideas more easily. However, some participants shared that they possessed such abilities even before undertaking the training. Thus, it is necessary to examine whether the abilities already possessed were developed at a young age through tourism education or whether they are inherent in their personality.

Independent contractors started new businesses, initiated new projects, enrolled themselves in universities, and pursued graduation and research. These results suggest the possibility of their participation in career and community activities. One participant was offered a job by another participant. Independent contractors maintained contact with other participants after the completion of the program and joined new communities.

Some participants started new businesses and expanded their network. As Araki [2021] noted, several participants pursued another career after recurrent education. Some participants were inspired by the learning process. For example, by utilizing their resources, they organized events in their business areas. This resulted in increased awareness because of active participation in the ITCS and stimulating interactions with other participants.

From the responses, introspection and motivation for career development were revealed. Several participants went on to educational and research institutions or changed their careers. In addition, some participants started new businesses, boosted tourism by holding local events, and participated in another cross-boundary learning. For example, a sustainable art event was conducted with the residents to solve the issues faced by the community using bamboo from abandoned bamboo groves. Another event included recruiting college students for an internship at a hotel.

Q3: What is your expectation from the program? and Q4: What are the areas of improvement?
The training component could have been better if the course included more practical hints, so that the participants can start their own business. Conversely, regarding theoretical topics, implementing a dummy business and horizontal connection shows that they expect the program to be like university classes. Besides knowledge and skill, learning from day-to-day interactions with classmates is highly crucial.

Based on the responses to the question, the similarities and differences pertaining to cross-boundary learning programs conducted within enterprises was apparent.

The similarities with cross-boundary learning are as follows:

- taking in the opinions of people different from oneself (some of whom originally had this ability)
- reflection and thinking about one's own career
- made connections with others.

The differences between cross-boundary learning and ICTS:
- Establishing connection with the government and use of subsidies
- knowledge of tourism studies
- acquisition of more practical and feasible know-how
- attachment to the region and contribution to the community

The connections with the government could be established due to the unique industry-academia-government collaboration. For example, one of the respondents indicated that although there was lack of awareness of the relation with government at the beginning, later it was realized that it is easier to work in collaboration on the project.

Recurrent education for working adults in the field of tourism aims at attainment of knowledge for tourism and to learn ways of implementation of projects pertaining to tourism, which are conducted through university education, as well as connections with other people and career awareness, which can be acquired through cross-boundary learning.

6.2 Conclusion

This study aimed to identify the characteristics of effective human resource training programs in tourism that are implemented in collaboration with industries, universities, and local governments, such as prefectural offices and municipalities. The qualitative data for this survey were gathered through semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the participants of the ITCS training program. Analyses of the data revealed that the knowledge of tourism gained in the program helped them with their routine work and encouraged them to be innovative.

The characteristics of an effective program shared by the participants are as follows:

- As the participants wanted to contribute to the community, learning about local studies is necessary.
- Participants are familiar with the relationship with the local government employees, which they had not been aware of before, hence establishing connection with the government is important.
- Participants can interact with the alumni and gain career awareness through cross-boundary learning.
- Team-based active learning using case method effectively facilitate this prosess.

- Participants can gain knowledge about tourism and the hospitality industry through the university's tourism department.

The program was also successful in providing additional education for human resource development training within the enterprise and in complementing the education provided by institutions, such as universities. The program is a good example of cross-boundary learning, indicating that the program functions not only as vocational education for middle management but also provides the opportunity of recurrent tourism education. Furthermore, it demonstrated a positive influence on the career development of individuals working in the hospitality industry. However, the program that involves collaboration among industry, government, and academia includes many contents. This may cause ambiguity in the objectives and may not be aligned with the needs of the participants.

7. Limitations

Although the present study reveals important findings, it has several limitations. This study examined only one location. Further case analyses are needed to generalize the results. As far as diverse ages and occupational groups are concerned, this study utilized a small sample. A larger sample, a longer survey period, and adoption of quantitative methods are recommended for future research. With respect to the participants, the longer the time for completion of the program, it was more likely that other factors such as the influence of the original affiliation to be added [Ishiyama, 2018]. Regular observation for prolonged periods, such as three months or six months after completion of the program, is necessary.

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