

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES AND TOURIST SATISFACTION: EVIDENCE FROM LEBANON'S TOURISM SECTOR

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Abstract: The study aims to highlight the critical role of HR practice in shaping tourist experience and satisfaction, ultimately contributing to the success and reputation of tourism enterprises. Additionally, it aims to understand how effective HR management influences the overall experience and satisfaction of tourists. Using a mixed-methods approach, data was collected from 112 employees and tourists in Lebanese resorts. Structural Equation Modelling revealed significant relationships between HRP and employee satisfaction and performance. Employee satisfaction strongly correlated with tourist satisfaction, while employee performance showed a weaker correlation. Notably, tourists prioritized employee friendliness over professional expertise. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the importance of employee attitude in shaping tourist experience in a developing country context. The findings have implications for HR strategies in the tourism industry, emphasizing the need to focus on fostering positive employee attitudes alongside professional skills.

Keywords: human resource practices, employee satisfaction, employee performance, tourist satisfaction, Lebanon

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INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) is crucial for the prosperous development, operational, and enduring viability of companies (Al Harrasi, 2024). While these issues may have a global focus, they also have significant local consequences. The success or failure of tourist organizations in developing countries heavily depends on their human resources. The research has also indicated that tourist organizations have encountered significant challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled labor. Consequently, numerous new initiatives, plans, and strategies have been implemented worldwide to tackle the human resource management issues. Watson and Maxwell (2004) recognized that effectively providing tourist services presents various organizational challenges. Thus, efficient Human Resource Management serves as a valuable tool for addressing these challenges and contributes to the overall value of tourist organizations (Baum, 1993). Human Resource Management is a crucial aspect of the tourism industry, often referred to as a "human contact industry" by researchers (Baum and Kokkranikel, 2005).

According to Ngirwa (2005), human resources refer to the managerial philosophy, policies, and practices that are focused on effectively managing people in order to facilitate the achievement of desired outcomes within an organization. Human resource management is a collection of managerial actions aimed at optimizing the use of human resources within an organization to enhance performance (Alkhamis, 2024). Organizational management encompasses the ongoing process of adapting the structure of an organization to align with its objectives. This involves ensuring the availability of sufficient and appropriate human resources, providing opportunities for employee development, and creating an environment that encourages their active participation in the efficient operation of the enterprise. It includes various functions such as strategic planning, talent acquisition, employee training and development, performance assessment, occupational health and safety, and management of labor relations. In addition, it encompasses ancillary tasks such as job design and analysis, orientation, placement, career planning and development, motivation, job satisfaction, quality of life programs, employee supervision, communication, disciplining, management of termination, employment contracts, HR search, accounting, auditing, Human Resource Information System, HR policies and procedures (Alkhamis, 2024). Globalization has changed the nature of the marketplace. In a very volatile and competitive marketplace, human resource practices are becoming more and more crucial for the success of any organization (Rudawska, 2024). Nevertheless, despite the fact that globalization created more competition and unstable environments, also it has added to the development of the human resource concept. Globalization has significantly enhanced HRM in the tourism sector by promoting diversity, standardization, advanced

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training, technology integration, and strategic HR practices (Al Harrasi, 2024). These improvements help tourism companies better to manage their human resources, leading to increased efficiency, employee satisfaction, and superior customer service. The findings of the article align with many similar studies (Shah et al., 2024; Elrehail et al., 2020; Keltu, 2024).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The framework of the research is as follows Figure 1. The concept of Human Resources Practices has been delineated from various perspectives. Schuler and Jackson (1987) defined the concept as a system that draws in, cultivates, motivates, and retains employees to guarantee the efficient execution and longevity of the organization and its members, as stated in Tan and Nasurdin (2010). An entity's human capital contributes to the achievement of business objectives through a set of internally consistent policies and practices. These policies and practices are designed and implemented to ensure that the firm's human resources are effectively utilized (Delery and Doty, 1996). Mimbaeva (2005) argued that HR practice refers to a collection of strategies employed by organizations effectively to manage their human resources.

These strategies aim to foster the growth of specialized skills that are unique to the organization, cultivate intricate social relationships, and generate organizational knowledge to maintain a competitive edge. It refers to a set of formal policies and philosophies that aim to attract, develop, motivate, and retain employees who are crucial for the organization's effective functioning and long-term survival. Katou and Budhwar (2007) and Pfeffer (1998) argue that a universal bundle of best practices, including recruitment, training, staff appraisal, and compensation systems, indirectly enhances organizational performance. Wagner (1994) states that forward-thinking companies view HR practices as a strategic tool to promote team accountability, improve organizational culture, and foster customer relationships through participation and empowerment. This, in turn, aids in the development of new markets and services (Singhal and Gupta, 2005).

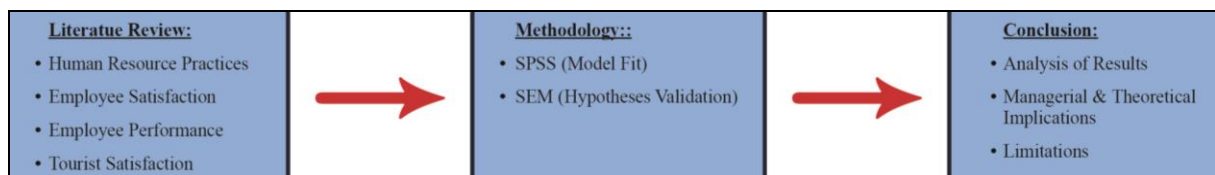


Figure 1. Flowchart of the study

Satisfaction of employees

Theories, approaches, and concepts regarding employee behavior, motivation, and satisfaction were developed in response to the managerial challenge of effectively managing individuals within organizations to achieve organizational goals (Miljkovic, 2007). This challenge served as the foundation for the development of leadership strategies. The manager's role is to choose and implement suitable strategies, tailored to the precise circumstances, to promote desired employee behavior and achieve the organization's goals and objectives, as well as the personal goals of the employees (Rudawska, 2024). Employee satisfaction, as initially defined, encompasses the interplay of psychological and environmental factors that influence an employee's contentment with their performance (Pavlović and Marković 2014).

According to Locke (1976), employee satisfaction is defined as a favorable or optimistic emotional condition that arises from the execution of a job or the overall work experience. According to Davis and Nestrom (1985), employee satisfaction is a straightforward concept that encompasses both positive and negative emotions that an employee experiences towards their job. These authors assert that job satisfaction is intricately connected to an employee's behavior in the workplace and the extent to which their expectations align with the actual rewards they receive from their work. Statt (2004) also supports this perspective, asserting that employee satisfaction is demonstrated by the degree to which the employee is content with the rewards they receive for their job performance.

According to Lease (1998), employees who are more satisfied with their work are less likely to be absent, more productive, more committed to the organization and its objectives, and generally more content with their lives. Sagger et. al (2012) assert that organizational factors have a significant influence on employee satisfaction levels. Given the significant amount of time employees dedicate to their work, it is reasonable to expect that various factors within the organizational environment will have an impact on employee satisfaction (Davras and Aktürk, 2024).

Enhancing employee satisfaction can be achieved by effectively managing various organizational factors, including organization development, the rewards system, promotion and career development, work environment, relationships with management, teamwork, and overall work satisfaction (Drinić et al., 2014).

This is particularly apparent in the service sector, specifically in industries like tourism and hospitality, where the emphasis on quality lies in the services delivered by employees. The quality of these services is heavily reliant on the employees' knowledge, skills, appearance, and behavior toward tourists. Given the intangible nature of services in the tourism industry, consumers have limited options for assessing their overall experience.

Among these options, the most significant tangible indicators of service quality are the employees' courtesy, service, and professionalism (Awad et al., 2024). Hence, the level of tourist satisfaction with the quality of services provided is largely determined by the caliber of interaction between employees and tourists.

The performance of employees

According to Ahmad and Zainol (2011), employee performance is reflected in the employee's beliefs about their behavior and contributions to the organization's success. They also mentioned that compensation practices, performance

evaluation, and promotional practices are factors that influence employee performance. Anitha (2014) defines employee performance as a measure of the financial or other results achieved by an employee, which directly impacts the organization's performance and success. Anitha also identifies several key factors that influence employee performance, including the work environment, leadership, teamwork, relationships with colleagues, training and career development opportunities, reward programs, guidelines and procedures, and employee engagement.

Nevertheless, a study conducted by Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) sought to uncover predominant perspectives on organizational structure and employee engagement to comprehend the factors linked to improving individual performance. The study argues that employee performance can be elevated through training and development. In addition, Ng and Feldman (2010) utilized various indicators to assess employee performance. These indicators encompassed core task performance, which encompassed in-role performance, safety performance, and creativity. They also considered citizenship performance, which was further divided into target-specific and general organizational citizenship behaviors. Lastly, they examined counterproductive performance, which encompassed general counterproductive work behaviors, workplace aggression, substance use, tardiness, and absenteeism.

Hence, the performance of employees contributes to the overall performance of the company by fostering innovation. Specifically, when employees are satisfied, motivated, and dedicated, they generate innovative ideas for new products or services. This, in turn, leads to improvements in quality, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction (Sadikoglu and Zehir, 2010). The process of globalization has led to numerous changes and difficulties that impact both the private and public sectors worldwide, including for example Nigerian universities. While there may be ongoing debates regarding the advantages and disadvantages of these changes, it is essential thoroughly to examine and evaluate employee performance. Consequently, due to the declining state of employee performance in universities, it is necessary to establish a policy that can effectively enhance the management of Nigerian universities and promote higher employee performance across all institutions.

Employee performance measures

The argument presented by Ahmad and Shahzad (2011) is that the apparent performance of an employee is a manifestation of the employee's complete conviction with regard to the actions and contributions that they make toward the accomplishment of the organization's goals and mission. In addition, they mentioned that the practices of compensation, evaluation of performance, and practices concerning the promotion of an employee are the benchmarks for determining the performance of a worker. In addition, Anitha (2014) stated that the performance of an employee is a gauge or pointer of the monetary or other result of the employee and that this result has an unchanging relationship with the performance and accomplishments of the organization. Additionally, Anitha (2014) reveals that the environment in which employees perform tasks and other schedules, the relationship with supervisors, the relationship between co-workers and the team, the compensation procedures, and the level of engagement of an employee are all factors that determine performance.

On the other hand, Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) reveal that the performance of employees can be evaluated through the implementation of consistent training and further development. As an additional point of interest, Thomas and Feldman (2010) consider the measures of employee performance to be core job performance, which encompasses in-role performance, security performance, and inventiveness. Following closely behind is citizenship performance, which is branded as equally targets-specific and wide-ranging organizational citizenship. For this study, however, the dimensions for measuring employee performance that were presented in the research conducted by Liao et al. (2012) were selected. This is because the dimensions of employee performance in those studies were measured from the perspective of the organization, the employee, and the job itself. Specifically, organizational objectives, employee objectives, performance development, and employee satisfaction were used as measures of employee performance, which makes it more comprehensive.

Therefore, the performance of an employee creates space for innovativeness influencing the performance and innovativeness of the general firm (Al-Nakeeb and Ghadi, 2024). This is done in such a way that the successful work of accomplished, inspired, and enthusiastic human resources results in ground-breaking ideas for newer products or services, as well as an increase in performance quality and the satisfaction of customers (Sadikoglu and Cemal, 2010).

According to Ruky (2010), performance is a type of business activity or program that is initiated and implemented by the leadership of the organization or company in order to direct and control the performance of the employees. In the meantime, according to Praditya (2020), performance is the result of work in both quality and quantity that an employee achieves in the course of carrying out his duties under the responsibilities that have been assigned to him. As was mentioned earlier, the poor performance of an employee will affect the overall performance of the organization. To put it another way, the performance of employees can be a reflection of the performance of the organization (Al-Nakeeb and Ghadi, 2024).

According to Astuti and Amalia (2021), Performance can be defined as the outcome of a process (Sumarsi and Rizal Thomas, 2021) or the degree to which an individual or an entire group achieves success in carrying out their responsibilities over a specific time period in terms of both the quality and quantity of their work. Consequently, performance is always evaluated based on the results, and not on the efforts that individuals make; more specifically, it is evaluated on how well individuals can fulfill the requirements of their work (Hosmani and Shambhushankar, 2014). It is possible to draw the conclusion that employee performance is the result of employee work as a whole or during a certain period of time, both in terms of quality and quantity, based on criteria that have been predetermined and agreed upon. This conclusion can be drawn from the definition of performance shown above. There are many factors that can affect the performance of an employee (Al-Nakeeb and Ghadi, 2024). There were only two aspects that were investigated in this study, and those were job satisfaction and work discipline. Two factors that are thought to have the potential to influence employee performance are job satisfaction and work discipline. According to Astuti and Amalia (2021), employee performance is influenced by a number of factors,

including compensation, employee training, work environment, work culture, leadership, motivation, discipline, and job satisfaction. This is based on the opinion that "employee performance is influenced by several factors."

According to Praditya (2020), performance is the result of work that has a strong relationship with the strategic objectives of the organization, the satisfaction of the customers, and the contribution to the economy. Consequently, performance is about carrying out the work and the outcomes that are achieved as a result of that work. Performance, according to Asbari et al. (2021), is defined as the result of work accomplished by an individual or group of individuals within an organization, in accordance with their respective authorities and responsibilities, in an effort to achieve the goals of the organization concerned, legally not violating the law, and in accordance with morals and ethics.

In order to evaluate employee performance for the purpose of this study, the following dimensions of employee performance were considered: 1. Quantity of Work (quantity of work) with indicators; the amount of work completed in a given time period, including things like meeting work targets, finishing work on time, and maintaining a disciplined work environment. 2. The quality of the work with indicators; the quality of the work that is accomplished is determined by conformity and the requirements that have been determined, such as accuracy, skill, and accuracy. 3. Job knowledge, also known as work knowledge, along with indicators; the breadth of their knowledge regarding the job and their skills. 4. Creativeness (creativity) with indicators; the genuineness of the ideas that are presented and the actions that are taken to solve the issues that are brought up. 5. Cooperation with indicators; willingness to cooperate with other people or fellow members of the organization. 6. Dependability (dependence) with indicators; awareness to gain confidence in attendance and completion of work; awareness to gain work completion and attendance. Initiative (initiative) with indicators; and enthusiasm to carry out new tasks and to expand their responsibilities are the seventh and eighth characteristics. Individual characteristics, including personality, leadership, hospitality, and personal integrity, are outlined in the eighth point.

Satisfaction of Lebanese tourists

There are many different ways to define the concept of customer satisfaction (Davras and Aktürk, 2024). In their 1982 study, Churchill and Surprenant define satisfaction as the result of a purchase and its subsequent use. This result is derived from the buyer's comparison of the reward and the cost of the purchase, which is related to the anticipated consequence. Customer satisfaction is defined by Peter and Olson (2010) as the "degree to which a consumer's pre-purchase expectations are fulfilled or surpassed by a product." That is the definition of customer satisfaction. Hansemark and Albinson (2004) define satisfaction as "an overall customer attitude towards a service provider, or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate and what they receive, regarding the fulfilment of some needs, goals, or desire" (Hansemark and Albinson, 2004) Customer satisfaction can be defined as "an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate and what they receive."

When it comes to the satisfaction of tourists, it can be viewed as a post-purchase construct, which primarily consists of the function between pre-travel expectations and travel experience (Moutinho, 1987). According to Pizam et al. (1978), tourist satisfaction can also be defined as the interaction result between the tourist's experience at the destination and the tourist's expectations regarding the destination. The term "tourist satisfaction" is defined by Tribe and Snaith (1998) as "the degree to which a tourist's assessment of the attributes of a destination exceeds his or her expectations for those attributes." This definition speaks to the level of satisfaction that tourists have concerning the characteristics of the destination.

Because of their intangibility and the fact that they cannot be stored, the goods and services that a tourism organization provides are of a nature that is considered to be an example of perishable goods. Employees working in tourism are tasked with ensuring that customers have an enjoyable and memorable experience. There are many different services that are provided by a tourist organization, and the quality of those services is heavily dependent on the quality of the employees who provide them (Davras and Aktürk, 2024). As a consequence of this, human resources should be aware that they are required to make a significant investment in the development of the tourist labor force. This is necessary in order to ensure that the needs of the skilled labor force are satisfied and that the expansion of tourist organizations is preserved (Awad et al., 2024). The lack of available skilled labor force will make it difficult for a tourism organization to achieve its growth goals, which will, in turn, have a negative impact on the organization's socioeconomic status. Although the tourism industry is a global one, a successful human resource manager must also take a local approach when developing strategies to address the shortages in human resource management, and to adopt the unique opportunities. Offered by the available local workforce.

In tourism organizations, the concept of collaboration is referred to as the communication between tourists and employees during the process of service realization (Jawabreh et al., 2024). The success of this interaction is largely dependent on the capabilities, knowledge, and skills of employees in the provision of services. The degree to which workers in the tourism industry are content in their jobs is the primary factor that determines the quality of their performance. According to Vrtiprah and Sladoljev (2012), employees who are not sufficiently professional and who are dissatisfied can have a long-term negative impact on the quality of services and products, and consequently, on the satisfaction of customers in the tourism industry. The assumption that there is a correlation between employee satisfaction and consumer satisfaction in the service industry was validated by the findings of a number of empirical studies (Harter et al., 2002; Koys, 2003; Wangenheim et al., 2007; Yee et al., 2008; Jung and Yoon, 2013). These studies indicate that there is a significant impact of employee satisfaction on the creation and maintenance of customer satisfaction and loyalty, which ultimately leads to an increase in sales and profitability for the organization. Even though there are studies in domestic, expert and scientific literature that examined various factors of tourist satisfaction and employee satisfaction in the tourism sector (Laškarin and Ažić, 2017; González et al., 2007; Sekulić, 2016), there is a significantly lower number of studies which have investigated the impacts and effects of employee satisfaction on customer satisfaction (Jeon and Choi, 2012).

This has led to a subject of the research that is being conducted in this paper, which is to investigate the impact that the satisfaction of employees has on the satisfaction of tourists with the services that are provided by spa tourism in the Republic of Serbia. Organizations in the tourism industry employ a variety of strategies in order to achieve and maintain competitiveness. As a result, it is essential to investigate whether correlation between the satisfaction of employees and the satisfaction of customers with the quality of services provided. This is necessary in order to devise an efficient strategy and allocate significant resources in order to increase employee satisfaction. Considering that tourist satisfaction can be interpreted as an evaluation of the user's experience with the services that are provided, it is essential that tourist satisfaction with the service be rated at least as good as what was anticipated (Hunt, 1977).

As Oliver (1980) explains further, customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the result of an individual experiencing the service and comparing the experience to the expectations that they had for the service. Therefore, the satisfaction of tourists is determined by their actual experiences as well as their overall impression of the quality of the service that is provided.

There are two dimensions that make up the quality of services. These are the technical quality and the functional quality. The technical quality refers to the actual benefits that the consumer receives from the service that is provided, while the functional quality refers to the ways in which the consumer receives the service (Drinić et al., 2014). In his work from 1984, Gronroos asserts that the technical aspect of service quality should not be overlooked; he emphasizes that the functional quality is the most important factor in determining the quality of service. As a result, the interaction that tourists have with the staff members working in the tourism industry is a significant factor that plays a role in determining the overall quality of the service that is provided (Ayele and Singh, 2024). It is persuasive, indeed in many ways self-evident, to draw the conclusion that there is a direct relationship between employee satisfaction and the level of satisfaction that tourists have with the quality of service. This conclusion can be reached by considering the findings of the research that was mentioned earlier on the impact of employee satisfaction on their work performance and their commitment to their employers. The assumption that there is a correlation between the satisfaction of employees and the satisfaction of customers in the service industry is supported by the findings of a number of studies.

According to the findings of one of the earliest studies, which was conducted by Schneider and Bowen (1985), satisfied employees demonstrate greater initiative, which further positively reflects on increasing customer satisfaction with the quality of service. The findings of the longitudinal study that was carried out by Bernhardt et al. (2000), in order to examine the relationship between employee satisfaction, consumer satisfaction, and the profitability of fast food restaurant chains, have shown that there is a positive and significant relation between employee satisfaction and consumer satisfaction. In the research that Spinelli and Canvos (2000) carried out in six hotels (involving 240 employees and 600 guests) the researchers were able to establish a statistical correlation between the level of satisfaction experienced by employees and the level of satisfaction experienced by guests. According to the findings of a meta analysis that was conducted on 7,937 business units across 36 companies, the purpose of which was to investigate the influence of employee satisfaction on customer satisfaction, profitability, productivity, and employee fluctuation, it was discovered that employee satisfaction has a significant impact on all of the variables that were mentioned (Harter et al., 2002).

A survey was carried out by Chi and Gursoy (2009) in order to investigate the connections between the satisfaction of employees and the satisfaction of tourists in 150 three- and four-star hotels. The findings of the research are in agreement with the findings of the studies that were mentioned earlier. It has been established that there is a direct connection between the satisfaction of the employees and the satisfaction of the tourists or hotel guests. The findings of the mentioned and other empirical studies provide ample evidence for the firm conclusion that satisfied employees are highly motivated to provide quality service to customers. Thus wise management of tourist organizations should place a primary emphasis on employee satisfaction. Analyzing the gaps in the literature review, the study generated the conceptual model below seen in Figure 2.

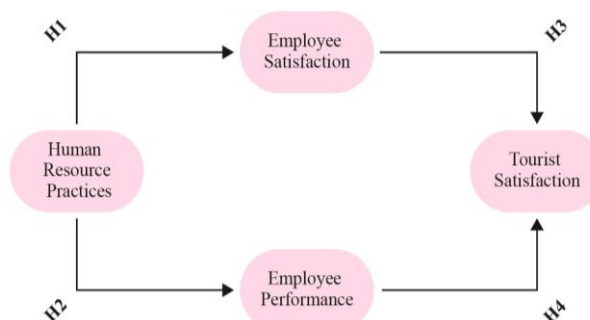


Figure 2. Conceptual Model

- Hypothesis (1):** The impact of Human Resource Practices- **HRP** on Employee Satisfaction-**ES**
- Hypothesis (2):** The impact of Human Resource Practices-**HRP** on Employee Performance-**EP**
- Hypothesis (3):** The impact of Employee Satisfaction-**ES** on Tourist Satisfaction-**TS**
- Hypothesis (4):** The impact of Employee Performance-**EP** on Tourist Satisfaction-**TS**

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the famous proverb states: *“To win in the marketplace, you must first win in the workplace”*- Douglas R. Conant is a noted keynote speaker and New York Times bestselling author with over 40 years of experience in leadership at

elite international corporations. This quotation emphasizes how crucial it is to put employee happiness, engagement, and well-being first as the cornerstones of success in the business. Moreover, workers are more likely to be creative, inventive, and customer-focused when they feel appreciated, driven, and encouraged- by *adequate Human Resource Practices*. Positivity in the workplace encourages loyalty, draws in top talent, and eventually boosts competitiveness and corporate growth leading to profitable results in all business aspects - *client satisfaction*. Therefore, making investments in your staff is not just the morally right thing to do, but also a wise business move.

Method of Sampling

To choose the participants, a stratified random sampling procedure is employed. It guarantees that every population subgroup is accurately represented in the sample. Out of the 150 respondents who were given the survey, 112 of them replied. 112 of the data were deemed suitable for analysis after cleaning. Diversity across industries and corporate sizes is ensured by this size.

Methodology used

Deductive reasoning is used in the reasoning technique to test generic hypotheses with generated data and go from them to specific observations. A *cross-sectional research design* has been used in this work to investigate how Human Resource Practices (HRP) affects Tourist Satisfaction (TS). A cross-sectional method makes it possible to gather information at a particular moment in time, giving an overview of the variables being studied as they stand right now.

A *quantitative survey* is the ideal measurement tool. Next, a 24-question structured questionnaire was utilised, made up of four divisions, each holding between 5 to 8 questions. SPSS is used statistically to evaluate the scale. The study performed an approach used for the first time in this academic area when dividing the questionnaire into 2 parts, where part 1 evaluated employee satisfaction and performance and the second part highlighted tourist satisfaction from the same resorts so that the questionnaire can be analyzed as one entity. A pre-test to find out whether there are any possible problems with the items' clarity, comprehension, or relevance before distributing the questionnaires to the sample. Cognitive interviews or focus groups with a small number of people within the target demographic can be used for this. Pilot testing is essential to guaranteeing the trustworthiness and validity of the research. In this case, the questionnaire was distributed to ten doctorate level experts in the field and to four human resource managers to obtain their opinions on any adjustments that should be implemented. The survey has closed-ended Likert scale questions with answers that range from Strongly Disagree to Agree Strongly. Data was converted to two Google Forms, and the selected sample received the link through WhatsApp. We used stratified sampling to select our responders. Random sampling was used to ensure that each individual had an equal opportunity to be designated, selecting members of the population in an entirely impartial and equitable fashion. This strategy is a fundamental component of reliable research methodology since it is necessary to generate samples that accurately represent the overall population.

Conclusion

To sum up, this study investigated the complex relationships that exist between tourist satisfaction and human resource practices, as mediated by employee performance and satisfaction. The study's goal was to determine how these variables interacted with one another through the development of hypotheses and a well-organized conceptual model. In terms of methodology, the use of stratified sampling techniques in conjunction with primary data gathering through surveys guaranteed a solid dataset for analysis. The study instrument's validity and reliability were further improved by pilot testing and instrumentation. Descriptive statistics, and factor analysis were all used in the statistical studies, which were mostly carried out with SPSS and offered thorough insights into the relationships that were being examined. Overall, by examining the mediating roles of employee performance and satisfaction, this study adds to our understanding of how HR policies affect visitor satisfaction and have important consequences. SEM was utilized to validate the hypotheses deduced at the end of the literature review.

Human Resource Practices:

Utilizing the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test, one can assess the statistical appropriateness of data for factor analysis. The test evaluates how well each variable and the entire model are sampled. The statistic expresses how much of the volatility in a set of variables may be common variance.

It determines if every correlation coefficient is zero. For factor analysis to be performed, the test determines the likelihood that the correlation matrix contains significant correlations between at least some of the variables in a dataset.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's test for HRP

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.815
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	273.779
	df	28
	Sig.	.000

Table 2. Communalities- HRP

	Initial	Extraction		Initial	Extraction
HRP1	1.000	.496	HRP5	1.000	.603
HRP2	1.000	.498	HRP6	1.000	.547
HRP3	1.000	.585	HRP7	1.000	.642
HRP4	1.000	.685	HRP8	1.000	.702

The KMO measure in Table 1 is 0.815, which is regarded as good (greater than 0.6). It implies that there is sufficient shared variance among the variables in the dataset to move forward with factor analysis.

The results of Bartlett's Test suggest that the correlation matrix does not conform to an identity matrix, as the p-value of 0.000 (<0.05) is a statistically significant indication. The fact that the variables are consequently associated demonstrates the utility of factor analysis. The extraction communalities as can be observed in Table 2 indicate the degree to which the

factors taken out of the data account for the variations in the variables that were observed. The factors are more successful in capturing the variance in the associated variables when the extraction communalities are higher. For variables with lower communalities and to sufficiently explain their variance, more research or other factors could be required.

In the above table, there exist two sets of communalities: Extraction communalities and initial communalities. Initial communalities comprise the relationship between the variable and every other variable (that is, the squared multiple correlations between the item and every other item) that is represented by these initial communalities prior to rotation. The probability that results could be skewed is greater when the sample size is small and the majority or many communalities are small (<0.5). Since it is assumed that every variable accurately captures its underlying hypothesis without considering any other considerations, these values are initially set to 1.000. Focusing on the above table, analyzing HRP1 through HRP8, it is remarkable that HRP1 and HRP2 have values lower than 0.5, but they are considered acceptable since they are very close to the desired value. It is recommended to remove the questions that are less than 0.5 to make the scale more consistent.

Employee Satisfaction

The KMO value in the analysis is 0.845, which is a relatively high value. This implies that the variables can be used for factor analysis because of their strong correlation with one another. KMO readings are generally regarded as acceptable when they are above 0.6 and as creditable when they are over 0.8.

A rough Chi-Square value, degrees of freedom, and a significance level (Sig.) are also produced by the test.

A rough Chi-Square value of 286.276 with 10 degrees of freedom and a significance level (Sig.) of .000 were obtained from the analysis using Bartlett's Test. The statistical significance of the Bartlett's Test is demonstrated by the significance level (Sig.) being less than 0.05. This indicates that rejecting the null hypothesis is justified. The variables are correlated and appropriate for factor analysis since the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.

We conclude that applying the factor analysis can be extremely appropriate for the data, as indicated by the significant Bartlett's Test (Sig. <0.05) and high KMO value (0.845). While Bartlett's Test shows that these correlations are statistically significant and not the result of chance, the KMO value indicates that the variables have significant correlations with one another. This implies that the dataset can be used with confidence to apply the factor analysis.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.845	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	286.276
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

Table 4. Employee Satisfaction – Communalities

	Initial	Extraction		Initial	Extraction
ES1	1.000	.587	ES4	1.000	.814
ES2	1.000	.506	ES5	1.000	.622
ES3	1.000	.791			

The Extraction communalities demonstrate that the components extracted from the data account for a substantial portion of the variation in each variable. Higher communalities suggest stronger links between the variables and the extracted components. In this instance, ES2 and ES5 have comparatively lower communalities, indicating moderate associations, whereas ES3 and ES4 have exceptionally high communalities, showing strong relationships with the extracted components. Since it is required that Communalities should be >0.5, closest to 1, looking through Employee Satisfaction-ES1 till ES5 they all hold values above the required as can be observed in Table 4.

This indicates that there is a strong relationship between the observed variables and the factors extracted during factor analysis. Furthermore, it describes a good model fit and good interpretability. This means that the factors provide a clear and meaningful representation of the underlying constructs measured by the variables.

Table 5. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.850	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	369.689
	df	15
	Sig.	.000

Table 6. Employee Performance- Communalities

	Initial	Extraction		Initial	Extraction
ES1	1.000	.506	ES4	1.000	.715
ES2	1.000	.733	ES5	1.000	.747
ES3	1.000	.720	EP6		.654

Employee Performance

The KMO value in this investigation is 0.850, which is a rather high value. This implies that the variables are appropriate for factor analysis because they have strong relationships with one another. In general, a KMO score of 0.6 is regarded as acceptable, and values above 0.8 as creditable. A rough Chi-Square value of 369.689 with 15 degrees of freedom and a significance level (Sig.) of .000 were obtained from this analysis using Bartlett's Test as can be observed in Table 5. The statistical significance of the Bartlett's Test is demonstrated by the significance level (Sig.) being less than 0.05. This implies that it is appropriate to reject the null hypothesis. The variables are correlated and proper for factor analysis since the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. Strong evidence for the data's suitability for factor analysis comes from the combination of a high KMO value (0.850) and a substantial Bartlett's Test (Sig. <.05).

Bartlett's Test shows that the correlations between the variables are statistically significant and not the result of chance, while the KMO value suggests that the variables have strong correlations with each other. Factor analysis on the dataset can thus be done with confidence. To summarize, the extraction communalities serve as a scale for how well the factors derived from the data account for the variations observed in the variables. Higher communalities suggest stronger links between the variables and the extracted components. To understand why certain variables—like EP1—are underrepresented in the retrieved factors (Table 6), more research may be necessary.

Tourist Satisfaction

In this case, the KMO value of 0.612 (Table 7) satisfies this condition, indicating that the variables in the dataset are appropriate for factor analysis and have a reasonable level of correlation since the value for acceptance should be >0.6. This supports the conclusion that the correlation matrix in the statistical significance of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity further supports the existence of correlations between the variables and is not an identity matrix. Thus, it seems that the dataset is appropriate for factor analysis based on the KMO value and Bartlett's Test, and more research using this technique is necessary. All communalities are within accepted ranges as can be observed in Table 8.

Table 7. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.612	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	44.882
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

Table 8. Communalities- TS

	Initial	Extraction		Initial	Extraction
TS1	1.000	.631	TS4	1.000	.501
TS2	1.000	.725	TS5	1.000	.610
TS3	1.000	.569			

Table 9. Cronbach alfa- HRP – Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.824	.824	8

Table 10. Cronbach Alfa- ES

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.871	.871	5

Table 11. Cronbach Alfa- EP– Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.871	.874	6

Table 12. Cronbach Alfa- TS – Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.549	.550	5

Reliability: Cronbach Alfa

Cronbach's alpha determines how closely connected a group of objects is to one another. It evaluates if a scale's elements are reliably measuring the same construct. Greater reliability is shown by higher Cronbach's alpha values, which imply that the scale's items are more closely related and consistently measure the same underlying notion. Researchers commonly use Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the validity of questionnaires, surveys, and psychological examinations. It helps guarantee that the components of these devices are consistently measuring what they are supposed to measure. For research purposes, Cronbach's alpha levels above 0.7 are typically regarded as acceptable. Cronbach's alpha in Table 9 is 0.824, according to the dependability statistics in the above table, and this figure holds even when taking into account standardized items. There are eight items on the scale. As shown by Cronbach's alpha value of 0.824, the scale's components seem to have a high degree of internal consistency. Stated otherwise, the scale's items assess the same underlying structure or concept consistently and are closely related. This suggests that the form intended to determine can be reliably measured with the scale.

According to the dependability statistics given, the employee satisfaction scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.871 as can be seen in Table 10. Even when standard items are taken into account, this value stays the same. There are five items on the scale. The elements in the scale appear to have a good degree of internal consistency, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha rating of 0.871. As stated otherwise, the scale's elements evaluate the same fundamental idea of employee satisfaction consistently and are closely related to one another. This suggests that, in this situation, the scale for determining employee happiness is valid. The validity of any results reached from utilizing this scale in employee satisfaction-related research or assessment is increased since researchers can be confident that the scale's items are accurate indicators of job satisfaction.

According to the reliability numbers given, the scale's Cronbach's alpha is 0.871 (Table 11); taking into account standardized items, it rises slightly to 0.874. There are six items on the scale. When the items in the scale have a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.871 (or 0.874 when the items are standardized), it indicates a high degree of internal consistency. This shows that the scale's items assess the same underlying idea consistently and are closely related to one another. When standardized items are taken into account, Cronbach's alpha increases, which could mean that the internal consistency of the scale has been somewhat enhanced by standardizing the items (for example, through z-score transformation). These dependability data show that all things considered (the idea it measures isn't stated here), the scale is fairly reliable. This scale offers consistent measurements that researchers can rely on, which increases the validity of any findings that may be made when utilizing it in a study or assessment. According to the dependability statistics supplied, the scale's Cronbach's alpha is 0.549 (Table 12); when standardized items are taken into account, this value rises slightly to 0.550. There are five items on the scale. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.549 (or 0.550 for standardized items) indicates that the internal consistency of the items in the scale is not very high. This suggests that the scale's elements are not as tightly related to one another and could not be measuring the same underlying idea consistently. Cronbach's alpha of less than 0.7 indicates that there might be reliability problems as well as conceptual problems with the scale or that some of the scale's elements are not consistently helping to measure the desired construct. It is crucial to thoroughly examine every

item on the scale, consider any possible sources of inaccuracy or inconsistency, and determine whether any adjustments are required to increase the scale's trustworthiness. Depending on its intended use and setting, further validation and improvement might be needed to confirm the validity and dependability of the scale for measuring the intended construct.

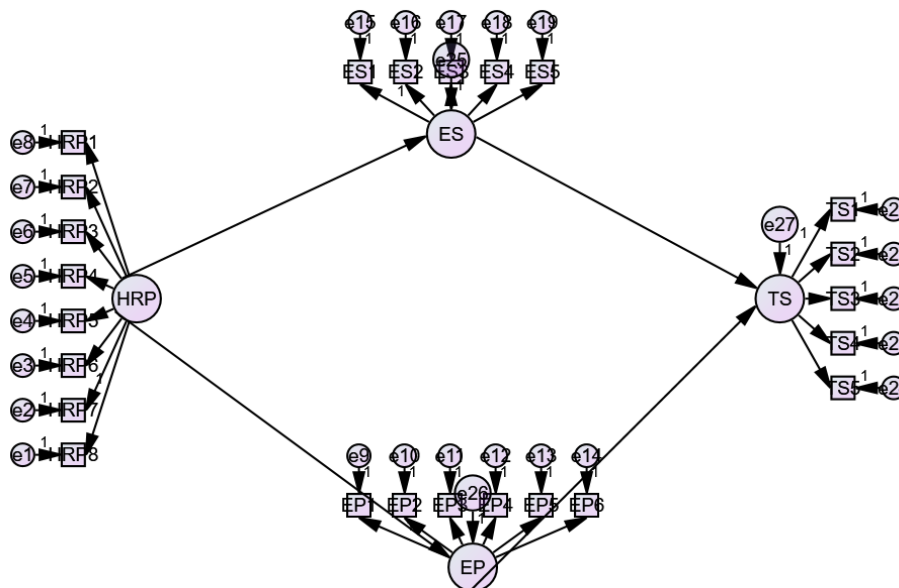


Figure 3. Conceptual model generated by SEM

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) are both valuable tools for hypothesis testing, but they serve different purposes and have different capabilities. SEM is more accurate and informative than traditional SPSS techniques in several contexts due to its advanced features and flexibility. Moreover, SEM was chosen due to its ability to simultaneously test multiple relationships between latent variables, which is crucial for our complex model involving HR practices, employee satisfaction, employee performance, and tourist satisfaction. In Figure 3, the path chart generated by SEM is presented. Analyzing the outcome results from the Structural Equation Modelling, the p value is 0.078 as can be observed in Table 13 which shows a very weak correlation between Employee Performance and Tourist Satisfaction. This, H4 is not valid. The results of this hypothesis may lead to very interesting findings in the service sector. Tourists are interested in the attitude of the employees more than their professional performance.

Table 13. Pathway for the SEM - Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
ES	<---	HRP	.704	.117	6.013	***	
EP	<---	HRP	.237	.074	3.203	.001	
TS	<---	ES	.125	.034	3.671	***	
TS	<---	EP	.069	.039	1.763	.078	
HRP8	<---	HRP	1.000				
HRP7	<---	HRP	.920	.141	6.508	***	
HRP6	<---	HRP	.912	.135	6.739	***	
HRP5	<---	HRP	.703	.130	5.415	***	
HRP4	<---	HRP	.720	.115	6.262	***	
HRP3	<---	HRP	.875	.139	6.295	***	
HRP2	<---	HRP	.602	.113	5.349	***	
HRP1	<---	HRP	.613	.126	4.882	***	
EP1	<---	EP	1.000				
EP2	<---	EP	1.909	.477	4.001	***	
EP3	<---	EP	2.086	.522	3.998	***	
EP4	<---	EP	2.212	.552	4.004	***	
EP5	<---	EP	2.245	.556	4.035	***	
EP6	<---	EP	1.741	.445	3.915	***	
ES1	<---	ES	1.000				
ES2	<---	ES	.870	.141	6.179	***	
ES3	<---	ES	1.232	.145	8.504	***	
ES4	<---	ES	1.316	.158	8.331	***	
ES5	<---	ES	1.061	.154	6.880	***	
TS1	<---	TS	1.000				
TS2	<---	TS	.836	.391	2.136	.033	
TS3	<---	TS	.986	.405	2.435	.015	
TS4	<---	TS	1.633	.517	3.158	.002	
TS5	<---	TS	2.762	.676	4.088	***	

Hypothesis (1): The impact of Human Resource Practices- **HRP** on Employee Satisfaction-**ES**

ES <--- HRP	.704	.117	6.013	***
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Analyzing the outcome results from the Structural Equation Modelling, the p value is 0.000 which shows strong correlation between Human Resource Practices and Employee Satisfaction. This, H1 is valid.

Hypothesis (2): The impact of Human Resource Practices-**HRP** on Employee Performance-**EP**

EP <--- HRP	.237	.074	3.203	.001
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Analyzing the outcome results from the Structural Equation Modelling, the p value is 0.001 which shows strong correlation between Human Resource Practices and Employee Performance. This, H2 is valid.

Hypothesis (3): The impact of Employee Satisfaction-**ES** on Tourist Satisfaction-**TS**

TS <--- ES	.125	.034	3.671	***
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Analyzing the outcome results from the Structural Equation Modelling, the p value is 0.000 which shows strong correlation between Employee Satisfaction and Tourist Satisfaction. This, H3 is valid.

Hypothesis (4): The impact of Employee Performance-**EP** on Tourist Satisfaction-**TS**

TS <--- EP	.069	.039	1.763	.078
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CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence of the complex relationships between human resource practices, employee factors, and tourist satisfaction in Lebanon's tourism sector. The strong link between HR practices and employee satisfaction, and subsequently between employee satisfaction and tourist satisfaction, underscores the critical role of effective HR management in enhancing tourist experiences. The unexpectedly weak relationship between employee performance and tourist satisfaction challenges conventional wisdom and highlights the paramount importance of employee attitude and friendliness in shaping tourist satisfaction. These findings have significant implications for both theory and practice.

Managerial & Theoretical Implications

The activities that follow from the outcomes are summed up in the managerial implications. Stated differently, the Managerial Implications assess the outcomes approaching the action standard and suggest a valid course of action.

Investing in HR Practices: Businesses in the tourism industry should place a high priority on making investments in efficient HR procedures designed to improve worker performance and satisfaction. The findings align with the study of Shah et al. (2022). This involves actions to promote a healthy work environment, like training programs, performance management systems, and open lines of communication. **Emphasis on Employee Happiness:** Managers should give priority to activities that enhance the well-being and work happiness of their staff members, as these factors have a substantial impact on both employee performance and tourist satisfaction. **Tactics,** including career development opportunities, work-life balance initiatives, and recognition programs, can attain higher levels of employee satisfaction. Those findings align with the study of Elrehail et al. (2020). **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** By including metrics for customer and staff satisfaction in decision-making procedures, organizations can get important management insights. Managers may make well-informed decisions that promote customer satisfaction and employee engagement by using data analytics and feedback systems.

Performance management: Aligning individual performance with corporate goals can be facilitated by setting clear performance indicators and targets for staff members. Employees may monitor their progress and pinpoint areas for development with the help of regular performance reviews and feedback sessions, which will ultimately increase organizational performance. The findings of the article align with the study of Keltu (2024)

Longitudinal Research and Continuous Improvement: To track the efficacy of HR procedures and their influence on employee and customer outcomes over time, organizations should take a longitudinal approach to research and evaluation. Through ongoing evaluation and optimization of strategies grounded in empirical data, companies may effectively foster continuous improvement and adjust to evolving market conditions.

Limitations of the Research

Although the analysis provides insightful information on the connections among HR procedures, worker satisfaction, worker performance, and visitor satisfaction, it should be noted that it has some limitations. To begin with, the *cross-sectional* form of the study limits the capacity to determine causality or deduce temporal correlations between variables. More convincing proof of causality would come from experimental or longitudinal designs. Furthermore, if the study primarily focuses on a particular industry or geographic area, the *sample size* may limit the generalizability of findings. Greater diversity and size of the samples used in future research could improve external validity. Furthermore, compared to multi-item scales, the *use of single-item measures* for some categories, such as tourist satisfaction, may lack validity and reliability. Lastly, even though the analysis takes certain demographic variables into account, other relevant factors like *organizational culture* or market conditions might have an impact on the relationships that are being studied.

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