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# **The myth of higher education? Examining the Chinese service job values from a management perspective in tourism and hospitality**

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## **Keywords**

higher education – industry gap, human resources management, managers, recruitment

## **The myth of higher education?**

Tourism education aims to assist students in better integrating into society or finding their future career paths. But can these higher education training truly deliver suitable talent to the tourism industry? China's status as a populous nation with a flourishing economy, the tourism industry still faces labor shortages and high turnover rates (Recuero Virto, 2023; Sun et al., 2016). Most tourism area graduates enter the job market to seek unrelated tourism jobs. The fundamental cause lies in the mismatch between job-employee values. For instance, most employees leave service jobs because of perceived job stigma (Xiang et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2023). This will also impact tourism-related job recruitment and job-seeker career choice. As noted in Yuan et al. (publishing), the need for diversity awareness in the workplace can foster greater inclusivity in their respective job roles, thereby diminishing perceptions of stigma associated with varying job contexts. In turn, higher education institutions need to help graduates cultivate a diversity awareness to enhance their competitiveness and increase the employment rate of the institution. It will help mitigate organizational investments in time, personnel, and financial resources for employee training.

This study explores the values of frontline tourism employees from a management view. Experienced managers possess a deeper understanding of the desired values in employees, facilitating insights into reasons for employee turnover and reluctance to enter the tourism industry during the process of managing and recruiting staff. Direct employee interviews

may lead to less authentic responses as employees may not fully understand job values and their values. The findings provide suggestions for higher education institutes to create collaboration solutions for both the tourism industry and higher education institutes.

This study will employ interview methods to 1) examine the job-related values of frontline tourism job-seekers and employees from the perspective of managers; and 2) identify the challenges and opportunities encountered during the process of training employees.

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