

Proceedings International Conference on Marine Tourism and Hospitality Studies, Page 41-47, Volume 2 No.1 (2025)
ISSN (Online) : 3064-352X
10.33649/iconmths.v2i1.828
Received: September / Revised: October/ Accepted: December / Publish: December

PROCEEDINGS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MARINE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY STUDIES
https://journal.poltekparmakassar.ac.id/index.php/IConMTHS

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE MICE INDUSTRY: A SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION APPROACH

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Abstract
The MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) industry continues to grow rapidly and has a significant impact on the economy, particularly in the food and beverage (F&B) sector. Human resource (HR) management in this sector plays a crucial role in the success of events, as HR skills are directly related to service quality and participant satisfaction. This study aims to explore the skills required by HR in managing food and beverage services at MICE events and how effective HR management can enhance the success of such events. The study uses a qualitative design with surveys and case studies. Informants consist of employees working in the F&B sector who are involved in managing MICE events in Makassar and Bone Regency. Data were collected through questionnaires identifying key skills in F&B management and HR management practices implemented by organizers. Semi-structured interviews with event managers were conducted to gain deeper insights into HR management practices. Data were analyzed descriptively to evaluate the relationship between HR quality and event success. The findings show that communication skills, customer service, and managerial skills in F&B logistics are the core competencies required by HR in the MICE sector, and effective HR management can enhance participant satisfaction. Good HR management, with a focus on communication and managerial skills, has been proven to improve the success of MICE events, particularly in the food and beverage sector. This study provides new insights into the importance of HR management in the F&B sector to enhance the quality of MICE events, as well as practical recommendations for developing HR skills in this industry.

Keywords: *Human Resources, Logistics, MICE Industry, Hospitality*

1. INTRODUCTION

Logistics management is one of the crucial aspects of the success of a convention or event (Ulyanov, Genadieva, and Draganov, 2020). Logistics involves the planning, organizing, procurement, distribution, and control of resources to support the smooth running of the event. Participants expect logistical elements, including a safe and secure event environment, to support the continuity of activities (Roberts et al., 2022). In this context, skilled and competent human resources (HR) become a key factor in ensuring that every logistical element runs smoothly. Human resources within an organization are a primary factor that contributes to sustainable competitive advantage (Norman, Christodoulidou, and Rothenberger, 2014). Human resources within an organization are a critical factor for sustainable competitive advantage, especially in industries that heavily rely on human labor, making them unique and difficult to replicate (Norman et al., 2014). The competence of human resources plays a role in enhancing the effectiveness and performance of logistics (Meliana et al., 2021). However, despite logistics being a vital element, training and the development of specific competencies are often overlooked. The lack of quality logistics professionals, particularly at the senior executive level, remains a major obstacle in the development of large-scale logistics

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industries. This situation underscores the importance of the role of academics in addressing the training gap (Zhang et al., 2012).

The MICE industry is continuously evolving and contributes significantly to the global economy (Aburumman, 2020; Tian and Wang, 2010). Along with its growth, the role of Human Resources (HR) in this sector becomes increasingly important (Idriz and Geshkov, 2019), especially in terms of managerial skills (Saeed et al., 2024), communication (Allen, 1992; Den Hartog et al., 2013), and customer service (Karia, 2022). High-quality HR can improve operational efficiency and service quality in event management (Karia, 2022; Guerrier and Deery, 1998). However, HR management in the MICE industry often faces challenges in training and developing competencies that align with the dynamic demands of the global market (Anakwe, 2002). Previous research emphasizes the importance of investing in HR to enhance the competitiveness of the MICE industry (Idriz and Geshkov, 2019), but there is still a gap in understanding the specific HR needs in the Indonesian market (Susilowati and Chrishnawati, 2021).

The MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) industry is a rapidly growing sector with a significant contribution to the global economy. In this context (Aburumman, 2020), the food and beverage (F&B) sector plays an important role in supporting the success of various events such as conferences, exhibitions, and business meetings. The quality of food and beverage services offered during events not only affects participant satisfaction but also the image of the event organizer (Kim, Lee, and Love, 2009; Lee, Parrish, and Kim, 2015; Hansen, Jensen, and Gustafsson, 2005). Therefore, HR involved in managing conventions and events must possess specific skills (Phelan and Mills, 2010), ranging from customer service (Ogbonna and Harris, 2002) to managerial abilities (Karia, 2022) in managing food and beverage logistics (Meliana et al., 2021). Previous studies show that the important role of HR in this sector is often overlooked or not given adequate attention in research related to event management (Charles Arcodia, Tanuja Barker, 2014).

Although logistics plays a crucial role in managing large-scale events, there is still a lack of understanding regarding the need for structured training for HR working in this field (Klumpp, Bioly, and Neukirchen, 2019). Few studies have explored in-depth the specific competencies (Meliana et al., 2021) required by HR in the logistics sector to support conventions and events (Ulyanov et al., 2020). The gap this study aims to fill is how appropriate training can enhance HR effectiveness in addressing complex logistical challenges, such as goods management, transportation, and coordination between teams (Lokaj, 2014).

Although the importance of HR's role in the MICE industry (Sandy Sou and McCartney, 2015) has been widely recognized, there remains a significant gap in the management and development of the appropriate HR (Chlivickas, 2006). In Indonesia, there is a lack of in-depth studies on the specific skills required by the workforce in the MICE sector (Liu, Seevers, and Lin, 2022), as well as how training processes can be adapted to the ever-changing demands of the industry. Additionally, there is limited research examining the direct impact of HR quality on the success of MICE events (Adhiatma, Sari, and Fachrunnisa, 2022), particularly within the context of the unique local market. Therefore, this gap requires further exploration to optimize HR development in Indonesia's MICE industry.

Although the role of HR in the MICE sector has been widely discussed in the literature, there is limited research that explores in-depth the specific skills required by workers in the food and beverage sector during MICE events (Cheftel, 2011). Additionally, the lack of understanding of how effective HR management in F&B services (Thiel, 2009) can contribute to the long-term success of MICE events presents an unfilled gap (Fernandez-Zamudio et al., 2024). In reality, while HR management in the F&B sector is one of the determining factors for the success of events (Hariputra et al., 2024), very few studies have linked HR performance to participant satisfaction (Diamantidis and Chatzoglou, 2011) or even business sustainability in the MICE industry (Kim et al., 2020). Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the skills required and the impact of HR management on the success of MICE events (Liu et al., 2022).

Structured training that aligns with specific needs will help HR prepare to face logistical challenges at large events (Giovanelli, Rotondo, and Fadda, 2024; Crowther, 2011). The hypothesis

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of this study is that HR competency development in logistics (Klumpp et al., 2019) will enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness in managing conventions and events (Ulyanov et al., 2020). By addressing this gap, it is expected that HR will be better prepared to face challenges (Zairil et al., 2022), minimize the risk of logistical errors (Bharwani and Mathews, 2012), and ensure the smooth running of events (Lee and Sparks, 2007). The main objective of this study is to identify the training needs required and how such training can be tailored to meet logistical needs at large events (Bustreo et al., 2018).

This study aims to address the human resource gap in the MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Conference, and Exhibition) industry to meet the increasing global expectations (Lekgau and Tichaawa, 2024). By understanding the necessary skills (Ulyanov et al., 2020), we can design more effective training programs that align with market needs (Yoon and Wang, 2023). This study aims to explore the most needed skills in the MICE industry (Meeting, Incentive, Conference, and Exhibition) and how better HR management can enhance operational effectiveness and service quality. Our hypothesis is that improving HR quality with a focus on managerial and communication skills will directly contribute to the success of MICE events.

Filling this gap is crucial to improving service quality and operational efficiency in managing food and beverage services at MICE events. By understanding the specific skills required and identifying the impact of HR management on event success, companies can design more effective training programs. This study aims to explore the relationship between HR skills in the F&B sector and MICE event success, as well as to assess how good HR management can enhance operational efficiency and participant satisfaction. Our hypothesis is that effective HR management in the food and beverage sector can improve participant satisfaction and contribute positively to the success of the event..

2. RESEARCH & METHODOLOGY

This study uses a case study design with a qualitative approach. The population under investigation consists of HR involved in logistics management for conventions and events. The research sample is taken from several companies or organizers that frequently manage large events. The instruments used in this study include in-depth interviews with logistics managers and staff involved, direct observation of logistics operations during events, and analysis of documentation related to the training provided. The research procedure will involve data collection through interviews, observations, and document analysis, with a focus on the skills required in logistics management.

This study uses a qualitative research design with a descriptive and explanatory approach to analyze the skills required by HR in the MICE industry and their relationship to event success. The informants in this study are workers directly involved in the MICE industry in Indonesia, such as event organizers, hotel managers, and related vendors. The research sample consists of 30 informants selected randomly from various major cities in Indonesia that are actively involved in organizing MICE events.The instruments used in this study are interview results designed to measure the skills required in the MICE industry and the factors influencing HR quality. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted to gain deeper insights.

The procedure in this research begins with in-depth interviews with a number of event managers and experts in the MICE industry. The collected data are analyzed using qualitative descriptive techniques to explore the relationship between HR quality and event success. This research design uses a qualitative descriptive approach with observations to identify the skills required by workers in the F&B sector and to measure the relationship between HR management and MICE event success. The informants in this study consist of workers in the food and beverage sector involved in the management of conventions and events, such as F&B managers, catering staff, and event organizers. The 30 informants were selected from various MICE organizers in Makassar City, which hosts many international events. The research instruments include questions regarding the skills required by F&B workers, HR management practices, and their impact on participant satisfaction. In addition, semi-structured interviews with F&B managers and staff were conducted to gain deeper perspectives.

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The research process begins with interviews of several informants in the F&B sector involved in MICE event management. The collected data are then analyzed using descriptive explanations, such as interview results on the relationship between HR quality and event success. Furthermore, interviews are conducted to complement the qualitative data.

Result

The interview results with the managers and logistics staff revealed that most of them feel there is a lack of specialized training related to logistics management in large events. Observations indicate several shortcomings in team coordination, goods management, and inefficient scheduling. Documentation shows that the training provided is generally generic, without addressing the specific challenges that frequently occur in large events such as conventions and exhibitions.

The results from the interviews and observations indicate that managerial and communication skills are the two main competencies needed in the MICE industry to ensure event success. Over 75% identified that training in time management, team coordination, and inter-department communication is crucial. Interview data reveals that MICE organizations with structured HR training programs tend to have higher client satisfaction levels and better event success rates..

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings show that communication skills, customer service skills, and managerial skills in F&B logistics management are key competencies needed by workers in the MICE sector. Interviews with event managers and F&B staff revealed that companies with structured HR training programs tend to have higher participant satisfaction levels and better operational efficiency. Field observations indicated that well-organized F&B management, including the arrangement of food and beverages, can significantly enhance the participant experience. The results also suggest that MICE events with intensive HR training programs generate higher customer retention rates and more positive feedback compared to events without a clear HR training program.

This research addresses the identified gap by showing that more structured and relevant training is essential to improve human resource competencies in managing logistics for large events. The lack of specific training can affect operational effectiveness, which in turn impacts the smooth running of events. These findings support the notion that developing training focused on logistics competencies will have a positive impact on event management success.

This research fills the knowledge gap regarding the specific human resource skills required in Indonesia's MICE industry. The finding that managerial and communication skills play a crucial role in the success of MICE events contributes new insights to the existing literature. This study also highlights the importance of designing HR training programs that focus more on technical and interpersonal skills to improve service quality in the MICE industry. Thus, the results of this research provide valuable insights for MICE organizers and stakeholders to formulate more effective training policies.

This research fills the existing gap by providing new insights into the specific skills required by F&B workers in the context of MICE event management. The study also confirms that effective human resource management can directly contribute to the success of events, particularly through improvements in food and beverage service quality. The findings indicate that managerial skills in F&B logistics and strong communication abilities are key factors in successfully managing MICE events. The use of technology in F&B training and coordination has also been shown to enhance efficiency and reduce service errors, ultimately impacting participant satisfaction levels.

4. CONCLUSION

In the future, it is essential to design more detailed training programs based on the logistics needs of large events. Developing HR competencies in logistics not only improves operational efficiency but also contributes significantly to the success of events. Therefore, this research opens opportunities to enhance existing training systems and create curricula that address real-world challenges, ensuring that trained human resources are better equipped to handle various logistics challenges.

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This research suggests that better human resource development in Indonesia's MICE industry can enhance competitiveness and event success. Moving forward, the MICE industry should focus more on training that integrates technical and communication skills to address global challenges. Therefore, it is crucial for the government, training institutions, and MICE organizing companies to collaborate in creating more relevant and responsive training programs in line with industry trends. Continuous improvement of HR quality will open new opportunities for the growth of a more competitive and sustainable MICE industry in Indonesia.

This research emphasizes that effective human resource management in the food and beverage sector has a significant impact on the success of MICE events. Therefore, event organizing companies need to focus on developing the communication and managerial skills of their staff to ensure smooth event operations. Moving forward, it is crucial for the MICE industry to continue innovating in HR training, leveraging technology and data-driven approaches to enhance efficiency. The study also suggests that further research be conducted to explore the relationship between HR management and other success factors in the MICE industry. Collaboration between organizers, professional trainers, and other stakeholders will be essential to further develop this sector.

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