

# EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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## **Abstract**

Tourism is one of the world's most significant economic activities and critical industries today, as it provides products and services, investments, foreign currency, and jobs directly. It leads to the growth of national economies, the preservation of cultural heritage, the acceleration of development, and the maintenance of world peace and harmony. As a service business, tourism is heavily reliant on its workers. The availability of human resources is critical to the long-term viability of tourism development programs. It is a set of management resources that aids in implementing the organization's policies and plans. According to academia, solid human resources development is a crucial prerequisite for achieving a continuous competitive advantage in delivering products and services that fulfill clients' needs and satisfaction. However, this conceptual study established that the demand and supply pattern of human resources for the tourism industry has changed, favoring highly educated and specialized employees. Tourism's human resource development is constrained by several factors and lags in terms of professionalism. Short-term management and a lack of investment in persons are causing a skills shortage in the sector. As a result, conventional human resource management and development procedures are required to improve the image of industry people. In this paper, the efficiency and effectiveness of human resource development in the tourism business are discussed.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Development, Practices, Tourism Industry, United Arab Emirates

## **Introduction**

Tourism is not a different conception; it has been an integral social activity for humans since the dawn of humanity. Because of its ability to produce revenue and jobs, the tourism industry is a critical part of the global economy (Musavengane et al., 2019; Woyo & Slabbert, 2019). Tourism's impact may be seen worldwide as a significant contributor to GDP for most countries. The Emirati government, for example, has a clear strategy to diversify its economy and equalize its reliance on various

sectors. Tourism has established itself as a significant source of economic disparity. As illustrated in Figure 1, the travel and tourism industry is expected to contribute around 280.6 billion dirhams to the UAE's GDP by 2028 (Puri-Mirza, 2021). As a result, the country gained a favorable image, which influenced tourist arrivals. Tourism, according to research, is an essential instrument for promoting a destination's image (Bolourchian & Karroubi, 2020). It has also had a positive impact on the development of infrastructure and the standard of living.

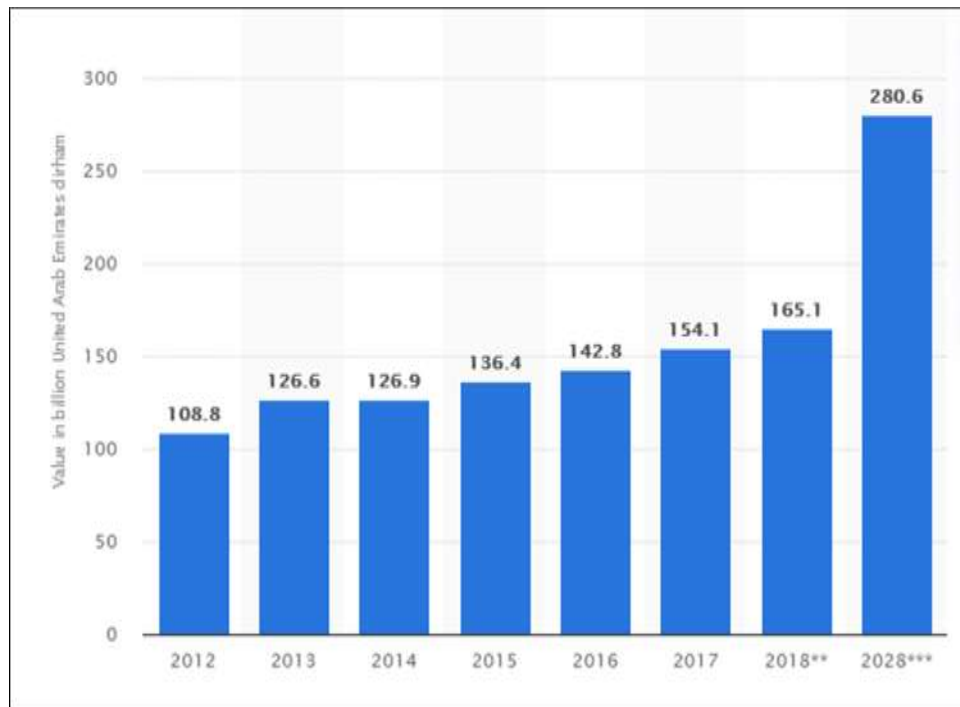


Figure 1. The total contribution of tourism to GDP in UAE 2012-2028 (Statista, 2021)

From 2012 to 2017, this figure depicts the total economic value of tourism and travel estimated for 2018 and a prognosis for 2028. According to projections, tourism and travel are expected to contribute 280.6 billion United Arab Emirates dirhams to the UAE's GDP in 2028 (Puri-Mirza, 2020). Inbound tourist expenditure accounted for 118.6 percent of outbound tourism expenditure in the UAE in 2019. With over 20 million foreign tourist visits in 2017, it has already distinguished itself as the premier tourism destination in the Middle East area.

Among the Gulf Cooperation Council states, Dubai's tourism industry contributes the most to the country's GDP. Dubai is only second to Marrakesh in tourism GDP contribution to the entire Middle East and the African continent. In the United Arab Emirates, the tourism and hospitality business has established itself as a critical source of employment. By 2028, the travel and tourism industry will employ over 396.5 thousand people. The hotel sector is one of the vital development emphasis areas for the travel and tourist business in the United Arab Emirates. The Emirate of Dubai, in particular, is recognized for its luxury hotels and its unique architecture and resorts. To widen their tourist appeal, the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai have expanded their spa hotel amenities.

Tourist destinations worldwide are expanding investments in the industry to bolster local economies, and the United Arab Emirates is no exception. In today's UAE, the meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) industry leads to financial diversification and actively encourages the judicious use of cultural-historical and natural recreational resources (Aburumman, 2020). Increased investments in tourist locations have resulted in increased global rivalry for visitors, as more and more comparable tourism offerings are offered by a growing number of places (Camilleri, 2018). Because of international and economic trends, destinations are being forced to guarantee that they are effective. As a result, the impact of competitiveness on destination performance is expanding dramatically (Sul et al., 2020).

Competitiveness is a multidimensional concept with no standardized measurement because its structure shows qualitative factors, and its fundamental notion demands in-depth examination. According to tourism academics, competitiveness derives from an awareness of the various aspects of the tourism sector. They claimed that the variables that make a location competitive might be examined and described in terms of tourist competitiveness (Kucukaltan &

Pirnar, 2016). It's potential to boost tourist spending and attract more visitors while offering them enjoyable and memorable experiences. Reisinger et al. (2018) conducted a study to discover the primary characteristics that affect destination competitiveness from a tourist standpoint. The United Arab Emirates' tourist competitiveness is the emphasis. They examine how the UAE's tourist competitiveness is affected by destination resources, infrastructure and support services, human resources, and the business climate. The findings suggest that destination infrastructure and support services, followed by destination resources, have the most significant impact on travelers' perceptions of the UAE's tourism competitiveness.

Over the last few decades, the UAE's tourism sector has been a significant catalyst for economic growth. It has a promising future to employ many people, including both skilled and unskilled workers. These accomplishments result from the dedication, competence, and commitment of the tourism industry's most valuable asset, human resources. Due to the resources delivered by its human resources working at various levels and positions, the industry has reached such great heights (Ganie & Dar, 2018). This concept showed a vital purpose that there is an absolute correlation between tourists and human resources. Finally, it is the human resource that must engage with the tourists and can provide those services. As a result, it is critical to concentrate on the professional in tourist activities. Human resources are essential to the continuity of the business (Tantray, 2018).

There has been a lot of focus on the importance of human resources in the tourism industry worldwide. If a tourism business does not have the right clabbered personnel, the company will fail, and the sector will remain underdeveloped. As a result, standard human resource management and development practices are required to improve the image of industry personnel. This paper aims to discuss the efficiency and effectiveness of human resource development in the tourism industry.

### **Human Resource Development in the Tourism Industry**

Human resource development (HRD) was a comprehensive method for developing human resources to improve the knowledge, skill sets, and competence of all members of a society (Montague et al., 2016). Civilized countries need to acquire their political, cultural, social, and economic goals. The 2020 Human Development Report includes the 2019 Human Development Index values and rankings for 189 countries and UN-recognized territories and the IHDI for 152 countries, GDI for 167 countries, GII for 162 countries, and MPI for 107 nations. The UAE's HDI value and rank for 2019 are 0.890, placing the country in the high human development category with a 23.1 percent increase, placing it 31st out of 189 countries and territories. Life expectancy at birth in the UAE rose by 6.0 years between 1990 and 2019, mean years of education doubled by 6.5 years, and mean years of schooling increased by 4.0 years. Between 1990 and 2019, the UAE's GNP per capita fell by approximately 34.1 percent (UNDP, 2020). In recent years, the results in the formation of HRD have given immense recognition and see HRD as a guiding factor in strengthening national techniques, skill levels, and employment creation (Saleh et al., 2020). Global economic developments, advancements in technological information, and stakeholders have created difficulties in managing human capital at the national level.

Customers in tourism destinations are more discriminatory and demand higher quality services. Globalization has increased tourists' awareness to a new level. It has unquestionably resulted in changes in the economies of several countries, (Awdel et al., 2020) with highlighting the potential, if not the necessity, for HRD to contribute to maximizing the beneficial effects of international while limiting its dehumanizing elements. For example, in today's globalized economy, all international businesses retain workforce talent and knowledge. The UAE is one of the prominent nations deemed a tourist or living destination by multicultural backgrounds, giving rise to a reformation of the tourism sector. Thus, emphasizing the role of competent individuals in interacting with this healthy and thriving sector may contribute to better talent management practices (Al Aina & Atan, 2020). They are indeed concerned with reducing employee turnover and retaining knowledge. Employment not only incurs a high cost, but it also carries the possibility that the new entrant

could not substitute the individual who previously held that position. HR departments also endeavor to provide advantages that are appealing to employees, thereby lowering risk with the assistance of human resource development (Rekha & Reddy, 2013).

According to academic scholars, human resource development in the tourism industry is confronted with global challenges that necessitate solutions that transcend the boundaries of countries, regions, and continents. One solution is to optimize the professionalism of a country's human resources, including the UAE's (Vij, 2012), by quality education and adequate guidance. According to Nomani and Khan (2015), there is a need to motivate human resources to engage in organizational development and nation-building. Mobilization would entail the requirement to improve human resources for achieving predefined objectives. Efficient and effective management is a requirement for successful tourism development. The quality of staff training is vitally valuable, which is underappreciated in the initial phases of tourism sector development. Because tourism is essentially a service industry, an evolving destination must take the appropriate measures to create a portfolio of efficient, qualified employees to replace numerous tasks in the future. A fully qualified human resource is capable of providing context to international visitors. The sub-role system is to produce a workforce, experienced professionals for a diverse selection of tourism activities.

### **Human Resource Development: Levels of Analysis**

Human resource development (HRD) is no longer the primary organization in the UAE for enhancing employee learning and development (Al Aina & Atan, 2020). To fully comprehend the feature and essence of HRD, it is critical first to indicate the degree of analysis used (Torraco & Lundgren, 2019). Analysis levels play an essential part in outlining advanced research models for advancing both theory and practice. At the 2003 Academy of Human Resource Development town forum, for example, levels of analysis served as a base in which the correlation

between educational development and HRD was discussed at length (Sleezer, 2004). Garavan et al. (2004), in contrast, opined that levels of analysis are frequently confounded in many models published in the literature. They assert that this ambiguity emanates in part from the multidisciplinary nature of HRD and the notion that multiple disciplines may limit individuals to various levels of analysis. HRD professionals' setback to distinguish suitable levels of analysis has occluded the context for HRD and attached undue complexity to it.

To date, it appears that an economic viewpoint overtakes discussions about training and HRD (Young Sung & Choi, 2011; McGuire & Jorgensen, 2012; Vinesh, 2014; Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016; Kareem, 2017; Kareem & Hussein, 2019). As per Antonacopoulou (2002), the integrative orientation is under-researched. She believes there is a need to understand better the characteristics of HRD and how individuals respond to professional learning within their establishments. According to Wang et al. (2020), the preparation and transformation of employee perceptions of HR in the work setting should include a definite insight into different attributes of this contrivance and detailed knowledge of the intricacies. Individual understandings of HRD, conferred by Aryee et al. (2012), intervene and modest interrelations with an organization's HRD and individuals' behavior and attitudes. In the meantime, several empirical studies on the influence of HRD at the community/society level are gaining importance. Related to perceived HRD practices have been outlined as influential factors of unit-level performance at this level (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Such research highlights the increasing unique position of HRD in societal economic, ethnic, and political well-being.

It has become clear that human resource development is necessary to guarantee organizational quality, effectiveness, and responsiveness. According to Alhalboosi (2018), human resource development refers to the process of empowering employees to improve skills, techniques, and knowledge through training and development programs, courses, and learning packages. HRD now facilitates adaptability, flexibility, and continuous development for workplace survival and competitiveness in a global market. As a

result, effective HRD governance at diverse levels is required, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Levels of analysis for understanding approaches to HRD

Level	Leading organizations involved/activities undertaken
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement in knowledge skills and attitude</li> <li>• Enhancing motivation and performance</li> <li>• Improvement in discipline and behavior</li> <li>• Career progression</li> </ul>
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formation of an overall understanding of a company's approach to training and development</li> <li>• Guaranteeing right between what the company wants to achieve and how units can operationalize</li> <li>• Ensuring on and off the job training takes place</li> <li>• Monitoring individuals training and development plans</li> <li>• Performance development and monitoring</li> <li>• Motivation and performance of the team</li> <li>• Team building approach</li> </ul>
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government policy: provision of education and the development of human capital towards improving national competitiveness</li> </ul>

The *Individual Level of Analysis* examines how power structures influence and condition expectations, understanding self, consciousness, and formative goals, addressing issues of subordination and domination. Individual-level critical HRD strategies depend on taking back the "human" in "human resource development" by empowering and liberating humans from coercive working practices and contexts. Fundamental approaches of HRD shed light on social and historical contexts and the status quo generated by these contexts by emphasizing the modern concept of knowledge and individual discursive (Sambrook, 2008). At the personal level, different components are standard in research to assist in the liberation and emancipation of unique voices: action learning, critical reflection, and transformative learning theory.

According to Tantray (2018), this level of analysis predominantly affects the skilled workers in action through existing interventions.

According to Yaghi & Yaghi (2013), the UAE has a workforce diversity. So at this level of analysis, it can use specific functions for the skilled team to introduce them within the same framework, such as performance appraisal; on and off the job training; knowledge, skill, and behavioral improvement; team building and motivation; career progression, and sustaining employability. It contends that important HRD can assist employees in developing an innovative mindset as well as an understanding and awareness of the socio-historical-political context in which resource management operates.

HRD concentrates on how internal management policies and practices generate economic strength at the *Organizational Level of Analysis*. According to Haggerty and Wright (2009), the resilience of an HR system makes a significant contribution to cherished organizational-level performance. It also encompasses the functions and procedures to stimulate organizational members' moral, intellectual, cultural,

psychological, social, and economic development. Ali Kareem (2019) investigates the efficacy of human resource development at the organizational level. Training and development, talent development, career development, and organizational development are all HRD practices that directly influence organizational performance. The authors' research can assist policymakers in designing efficient HRD practices that will enhance employees' qualifications to achieve organizational effectiveness. Also, enable an organization to approach its optimum human potential as a community resource. According to a study conducted by McGuire et al. (2007), differing approaches display organizations as an introspection of production and dominance processes. In contrast, mainstream HRD is perceived as a passively vital instrument of propagating employee performance.

Several human resource development researchers and scholars attempted to investigate and showcase the role of human resource development and organizational performance at the executive level. By examining the role of employee competencies, Otoo and Mishra (2018) investigate the impact of human resource development practices on organizational effectiveness. He discovered that HRD practices affect employee skills and knowledge in terms of improving organizational effectiveness. Shah (2016) investigates the effect of human resource development initiatives on organizational effectiveness through the lens of employee engagement. According to him, HRD intervention strategies significantly affect the development of employee performance, which increases organizational effectiveness. Alagaraja et al. (2015) examine how human resource development achievements affect organizational performance. Workforce considerably enhanced competitive edge and transaction effectiveness with both classifications of HRD contributions. Thus according to Nilsson and Ellstrom (2012), human resource development techniques in an entire organization play a significant role in boosting employees' competencies, which leads to overall organizational performance.

The importance of HRD at the organizational level can be attributed to the evolving nature of businesses and the fast-changing business environment. Tourism and travel are dynamic industries, so companies involved in them must concentrate on HRD policies and programs that will assist in determining the correlation between the external situation and their employees. In a country like the UAE, where tourism is expanding, several organizational development programs are required. There are objectives and goals set for the organization that will have a beneficial effect on those agencies. The importance of knowing HRD at the organizational level is to create initiatives to maximize performance, identify opportunities to improve performance, and review and evaluate performance (Tantray, 2018).

*The National Level of Analysis.* When discussing tourism in the UAE, it is frequently identified that the economic advantage of a specific sector of a country is dependent on the government legislation towards a particular subset. It is pivotal to include a national policy for human resource development in the travel and tourism sector. The government must build the national policy assuming that the percentage of reserve funds spent on human resource development at the national level is excluded. For example, the Dubai Executive Council (DEC) officially confirmed a slew of initiatives aimed at spurring economic growth and lowering the operational costs in the Emirate. These had a wide range of positive consequences for the hospitality and tourism industries. Also, the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) reported that the maximum number of travelers in the UAE increased by 207 percent in August 2021 (Sankar, 2021). It rose to over 2.5 million, up from 814,000 in the same period in 2020. The UAE Government, like other nations, has great importance in human resource development. It performs the functions of a planner, regulator, catalyst, controller, and investor. Its policies and practices directly affect the growth and purpose of HRD activities in organizations and institutions under government supervision, such as the institutional framework and non-profit organizations.

Critical HRD strategies highlight the significance of "development" as a framework for promoting equity and injustice at the national

level. Academic scholars agree that human resource development has a considerable impact on enhancing physical and human capital levels in society, thereby contributing to economic growth and social inclusion (Kenzhegaranova, 2008). The characteristics of its human resources will measure a country's commitment in the twenty-first century. Through better performances, well-equipped and talented human resources will significantly contribute to individual, organizational, and national development. In Singapore's case, essential human resource development strategies such as multi-departmental approach, tripartism, institute of technical education, general education programs for the working population, and firm-level training have maximized the benefits of its location and human resources (Osman-Gani & Tan, 1998). Budhwar et al. (2002) researched the particular circumstance of human resource development in the Sultanate of Oman. The study indicates greater attention on national HRD initiatives. The findings suggest that top management is well aware of the

implications of a proactive direction to human resource development.

### Human Resource Development: The Process

The HRD process entails a series of moves to be completed, and it is critical to have a well-trained and engaged workforce. In achieving this goal, businesses should make an effective HRD process that aligns with the organization's objectives (Wright, 2008), particularly in the tourism industry. They should always play a leadership role to allow the employees to improve their skills and talents. As a result, the HRD procedure involves measures vital to achieving individuals' performance (Davis, 2021). The primary goal is to increase efficiency to achieve better performance. On the other hand, it intends to enhance the most effective workforce in accomplishing its desired objectives while serving the clientele. Therefore, the tourism sector follows the HRD process, as shown in Figure 2.

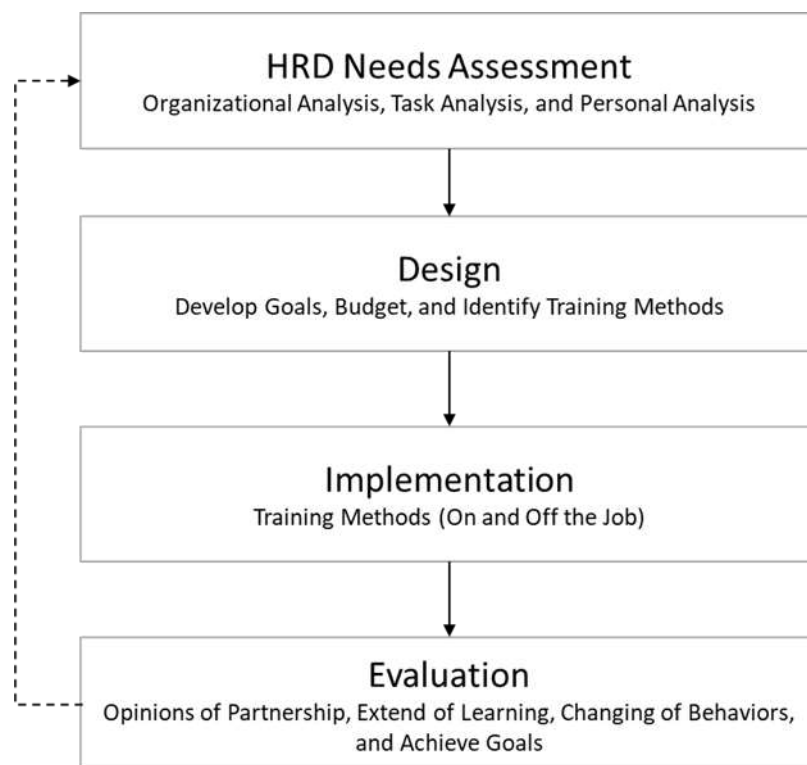


Figure 2. HRD Process (Alhalboosi, 2018)

*Phase 1: The HRD Needs Assessment.* It is a technique of measuring gaps in performance, highlighting the occurrences of those gaps, and recognizing future performance criteria. Several

activities are happening in the tourism industry, that it is difficult for us to understand what is causing these problems. Needs assessment is essential since this assists a tourism organization

in bridging the difference that is limiting it from attaining organizational goals. It is no longer primarily regarded as a significant milestone in the instructional process but as a diversified assessment of performance issues and how an evaluation can rectify organization. According to Chumbhol (2015), needs assessment can drastically reduce performance gaps through several management systems such as sharing this knowledge, offering a collaborative atmosphere, and reviewing profile work. These treatments are necessary if training results in the long-term innovative behavior required in achieving higher performance levels for an individual, employment, or corporate group.

HRD professionals have been able to examine needs assessment from a more comprehensive and sociological standpoint. Tour operators and hotel managers have commonly acknowledged that assessing needs is a pivotal first factor in establishing the accomplishment of whatever training or educational initiative (Cuiccio & Husby-Slater, 2018). In the UAE, 82% of businesses have a formal approval process for analyzing their employees' requirements. Organizations in the UAE, especially others in the tourism sector, use a combination of techniques to assess needs, including analysis of business plans, training audits, performance appraisal, requests from line management, and team member requests. Accurate, sufficient, and timely needs assessment information is essential if companies confirm that the evaluations they provide to their workers probably contribute to the achievement of their organizational goals (Wilkins, 2001). Every job, no matter how difficult or straightforward, necessitates human resource development. As a result, it becomes difficult if any worker lacks sufficient relevant experience to perform a job or meet any changes (Alhalboosi, 2018).

*Phase 2: Design.* The second phase of the HRD process entails developing the HRD program or involvement. If the intervention is a development program, the succeeding activities will bring during this phase: determining the specialized goals and outcomes, establishing a good study guide for the program, obtaining the materials needed, deciding who will distribute the program, choosing a suitable technique to undertake the program, and synchronization the program. For example, to meet the specific goal of luring ten million foreign visitors to the

Emirate by 2021, the nation has launched product placement and infrastructure programs. One of the initiatives under such furtherance is developing an impactful tour guide training program and issuing licenses to qualified applicants. By assisting them in the procedure, they will carve out a lucrative career for themselves. The workflow for developing a vocational training program should be beneficial for tourism businesses about learning needs (Vij and Upadhya, 2021). The design phase includes the selection and development of program content. It involves determining the ideal position for the program, the strategies to promote learning, and the resources to provide the program (Kumar et al., 2013). That means, in this phase, it must develop goals, budget, and identifying training methods.

*Phase 3. Implementation.* The assessment and design phases are intended to result in the performance of effective HRD programs or interventions. It implies that the implementation phase must provide the program in the most excellent and trustable ways imaginable. For example, the UAE government program has made significant strides in establishing a strong HRM governance and strategies framework. First-class HRD and HRM systems and programs have been designed in quite a short timeframe to promote Vision 2021. The Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR) launched the Human Resource Strategy for 2014-2016 in 2013 to consolidate national competencies, develop federal human capital, and improve successful HR planning. Its primary function is to have a whole-of-government human resource management system and development, to improve HRD and HRM policy and regulations, and to facilitate the achievement of government human resource priorities (OECD, 2014).

According to Lervik et al. (2005), implementations governed by the re-creation perception improve the probability that HRD best practices will thrive as an effective instrument in the recipient firm. Multiple writers (Thomas & Lloyd, 2018; Alhalboosi, 2018; Nazir, 2017) understand that providing a quality HRD program usually introduces a myriad of challenges. An example of such is carrying out the program as designed, creating a culture that fosters learning, and mediating any challenges that may occur (Werner & Desimone,



2012). As a result, the workforce is better able to contribute to the company's aims and priorities. On the other hand, it is understood that there are different types of training, such as off-the-job and on-the-job training; apprenticeship; simulation exercises (Basariya & Sree, 2019); distance/internet-based training (Nugroho et al., 2021); and computer-based training methods (Ingurgio et al., 2017).

*Phase 4. Evaluation.* HRD evaluation refers to the final result. According to available academic literature White and Raitzer (2017), evaluation can serve multiple organizations' purposes. Evaluation can assist in the following tasks: determining if an HRD program is achieving its objectives (Mulhall, 2015); identifying its strengths and weaknesses; determining its cost-benefit ratio; deciding who will engage in prospective HRD programs; identifying which attendees prospered the most from the program; reinforcing essential aspects to be selected to participants; gathering data to facilitate in promoting program activities; determining if the program was acceptable; and establishing a system for tracking outcomes. For example, according to Burien et al. (2019), Dubai has used international tourism as a good source of foreign exchange through a tourism structure. It allows it to: sustain market share in existing source markets, increase profitability in identified countries with strong potential growth, and boost the volume of frequent travelers to the destination (Government of Dubai, 2016). This strategic approach has not only sited Dubai as the first choice for international travel and leisure (Dubai Chamber of Commerce, 2014), but it has also augmented its impression as an international business center. This attention contributed to the city's accomplishment in hosting EXPO 2020, with visitor arrivals rising from 14.9 million in 2016 to 25 million in 2020.

## Conclusion

HRD will undoubtedly become the focal point of future tourism planning and development programs in developed and developing countries. It will receive more knowledge and a clearer picture of tourism and its operation and implementation. The presence of properly designed and implemented HRD programs among all stakeholders in the UAE improves the

situation. They are implementing an effective HRD strategy based on instructional systems theory, which can improve individual and organizational effectiveness. In addition, they must align their capacity building with the organization's strategic goals and ascertain what is required at the organizational, job, and individual levels. Also, the involvement of locals in tourism-related undertakings contributes to the increase in tourism. Because tourist satisfaction is the highest priority of any service-based industry, tourism is no exception. As a result, the UAE tourism industry takes serious, dedicated, and competent human sources to satisfy tourist visitors from all over the world, which will help to create a strong brand image of UAE tourism.

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