

Employees as key resources and activities of tour and travel business model canvas

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Abstract

Purpose: The research aims to provide insights on how to optimize employees' contributions as indispensable using the tourism business model, helping companies better strategize and innovate their key resources and activities.

Methodology/approach: The study, conducted in Palembang, used semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussions. Nine tour and travel agencies were selected from 110 ASITA members using Slovin's formula. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model.

Results/findings: The study identified key failures in tour and travel companies, including poor Human Resource Management (18%), inadequate role definition (17%), insufficient investment in employee development (13%), lack of strategic HR policies (14%), balancing cost and employee experience (11%), poor communication and support systems (15%), and external competition and workload stress (12%). Additionally, factors such as lack of knowledge, skills, experience, creativity, and commitment contributed. The study concluded that employees play a crucial role in the success of tour and travel agencies.

Conclusion: The study found that recognizing employees as the most valuable asset in the tour and travel industry is essential. Their roles not only significantly influence the success of the business but also highlight that human resources are the key element in this sector.

Limitations: Due to time and cost constraints, only 8.1% of ASITA members responded to this study; all were general travel agencies, with only one Hajj and Umrah company. Future studies will investigate all tour and travel agencies that are members of ASITA in South Sumatra.

Contribution: This study will specifically assist tour and travel agents in Palembang to enhance their businesses by leveraging employees as key resources and activities.

Keywords: *Business Model Canvas, Employees, Key Resources, Key Activities, Tour and Travel Agencies*

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1. Introduction

The tourism and travel business does not only depend on the products or services offered, but also heavily relies on human resources, especially on labor. Employees are at the forefront of providing a satisfying customer experience and ensuring smooth operations (Hebl, Theis, Guisard, & Madera, 2026). Therefore, employees hold a strategic position as a key resource and are involved in important activities that drive value creation in the Business Model Canvas. The tourism industry encompasses all activities that take place at tourist attractions and is supported by various facilities and services

provided by various stakeholders, such as the community, businesses, and government. To meet the needs of tourists during tourism activities, this industry comprises various businesses that work together to produce goods and services.

Moreover, the tourism sector includes employees who are at the forefront of providing a satisfying customer experience and ensuring smooth operations (Hudson & Hudson, 2025). Therefore, employees hold a strategic position as key resources and are involved in important activities that drive value creation in the Business Model Canvas (Carter & Carter, 2020). The tourism industry encompasses all activities that take place at tourist attractions and is supported by various facilities and services provided by various stakeholders, such as the community, businesses, and government. To meet the needs of tourists during tourism activities, this industry comprises various businesses that work together to produce goods and services. Businesses in the tourism and travel sector not only depend on the products or services they offer but also rely heavily on human resources, particularly labor. Employees are at the forefront of providing a satisfying customer experience and ensuring that operations run smoothly. Therefore, employees hold strategic positions as key resources and are involved in important activities that drive value creation in the Business Model Canvas (Fakieh, AL-Ghamdi, & Ragab, 2022).

The tourism industry encompasses all activities that take place at tourist destinations and is supported by various facilities and services provided by various stakeholders, such as the community, businesses, and the government (Achmad, Prambudia, & Rumanti, 2023). To meet the needs of tourists during tourism activities, this industry comprises various businesses that work together to produce goods and services. Businesses in the tourism and travel sector not only depend on the products or services they offer but also rely heavily on human resources, particularly labor. The Business Model Canvas provides a visual framework for designing and analyzing the key elements of a business, including key resources and activities. In the context of tourism and travel, employees are included in the key resource block, which includes professional workers such as tour guides, hotel staff, transportation drivers, and customer service officers (Anto & Setyawati, 2024).

Employees are not just service providers; they also perform key activities such as providing quality customer experiences, managing reservations, conducting tours, and handling complaints effectively. These activities are at the core of the business because they determine customer satisfaction and the company's reputation. The quality and skills of employees contribute directly to the success of tourism businesses. Friendly service, in-depth knowledge of destinations, and good communication skills can enhance customer experience and encourage loyalty (Hsieh & Chuang, 2020). Conversely, poorly trained or unmotivated employees can lower service quality and negatively impact the company's image (Setiawan, Junaedi, & Chandra, 2021). Furthermore, because tourism relies heavily on human interaction, employees play a key role in creating competitive differentiation that is difficult for competitors to replicate (Giotis & Papadionysiou, 2022). Investing in employee training and development is an important strategy for building a long-term competitive advantage for businesses, including tour and travel services.

However, no study has examined how employees function as key resources and activities in tour and travel agency businesses. Therefore, this study aims to provide insights into optimizing employees' contributions as indispensable assets in the tourism business model, helping companies better strategize and innovate their key resources and activities. The novelty of this study is the concept of the Business Model Canvas, which derives a template from Alexander for the tour and travel business industries. The concept generated a strategy for using employees as key resources and activities to continue innovating sustainably, increasing competitiveness, and making a positive impact on the environment and society.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1. *Model Canvas*

The Business Model Canvas (BMC) is a popular tool used to design, develop, and analyze business models visually by identifying nine key elements: customer segments, value propositions, distribution channels, customer relationships, revenue streams, key resources, key activities, key partners, and cost

structures (Carter & Carter, 2020). In the context of the tourism and travel industry, key resources mainly involve employees, such as managers and service providers, who are at the forefront of interactions with tourists (Baker, 2024).

The Theory of Business Models (BMC) was developed by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur in 2005. This concept is related to several other theories, such as (a) strategic management and business planning theory, where the BMC serves as a strategic management tool that helps companies describe, analyze, and develop business models in a systematic and structured manner. With a simple visual framework, the BMC facilitates strategic decision-making and the identification of business innovation opportunities. The BMC helps identify customer segments, value propositions, distribution channels, customer relationships, and financial and operational aspects that are crucial for business development and adaptation to market changes (Giotis & Papadionysiou, 2022).

2.2. Employee Theory

Employees are a very important human resource (HR) in the sustainability and success of an organization, including the tourism industry. Tourism HR not only plays a role in carrying out operational activities but also acts as a strategic actor who provides added value through services to tourists (Buhalis, O'Connor, & Leung, 2023). Tourism HRM must be able to manage, empower, and develop employee competencies so that they can carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively amid the highly demanding dynamics of the tourism sector (Hoang, Wilson-Evered, Lockstone-Binney, & Luu, 2021). According to Manurung, Yana, Anesha, and Zuriana (2025), HRM in the tourism sector requires good managerial and interpersonal skills because the job involves direct interaction with customers and complex work arrangements.

In addition, the recruitment, selection, placement, training, and performance evaluation processes must be carried out systematically so that the human resources produced are of high quality and in accordance with market needs. Employee competency development is also an important aspect of tourism-related human resource management. Development strategies are carried out through training, certification, and learning aimed at improving knowledge, skills, and work attitudes so that employees can provide excellent service (Setiawan et al., 2021). Employees with high competencies and strong motivation can increase the competitiveness of tourism companies by creating satisfying travel experiences and service innovations. In general, human resource management theory emphasizes the importance of employees as strategic resources that require attention not only from a technical perspective but also through continuous capacity building to achieve organizational effectiveness and efficiency (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).

2.3. Tourism

Tourism is a human activity that involves traveling to places outside one's everyday environment for a temporary period for recreational, business, or other purposes. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO in Canton (2021), tourism is a human activity that involves traveling and staying in a destination outside one's everyday environment. From a broader perspective, Priatmoko, Kabil, Purwoko, and Dávid (2021) defines tourism as all kinds of activities that involve the temporary movement of people to a destination, including activities that take place while there and the facilities available to meet the needs of tourists during their trip and visit. In addition, Maslow's theory of basic needs has been used to understand the motivation of tourists. Zhao, Yang, Song, and Lu (2025) highlighting the importance of fulfilling basic human needs through tourism activities, which include entertainment, relaxation, socialization, and the search for new experiences.

Tourism is also seen as an industry consisting of a collection of interrelated businesses that provide goods and services to meet tourists' needs (Cave & Dredge, 2021). This industry plays an important role in the economy of a region or country, with the main objective of increasing income and community welfare through the development of tourist destinations and provision of supporting services. Sustainable tourism development must take into account the environmental, socio-cultural, and economic sustainability of local communities so that its benefits can be widely felt and do not damage the tourism resources themselves (Ren, Lu, & Han, 2022). The concept of sustainable tourism

emphasizes the balance between tourism as an economic activity and its social and environmental impact.

2.4. Employees and key resources

Employees are considered one of the most critical resources for a business. They play essential roles in operating the business, interacting with customers, innovating, and holding unique skills and knowledge that differentiate the business from competitors (Huang, Chang, & Yeh, 2020). Human resources include employees, contractors, and partners who contribute to the growth, innovation, and success of a company. Effective employee management involves attracting skilled talent, fostering creativity, leadership, teamwork, and providing professional growth opportunities. These qualities are especially vital in service- and technology-based industries and businesses that rely heavily on customer interaction, creativity, and customization (Adula, Kant, & Birbirs, 2022).

Key resources broadly include human resources (employees), financial resources, physical assets, intellectual property, and technological infrastructure, each integral to delivering value and achieving a company's value proposition. Employees, as human resources, have a direct impact on the company's ability to innovate, maintain operational excellence, and sustain competitive advantage (Girish, Lee, Lee, & Olya, 2022). In short, employees are the backbone of a company's key resources, contributing not only their labor but also their expertise, innovation, and customer relationships, which are vital to business success.

In tour and travel agencies, employees form a crucial category of key resources with distinct roles that support business operations and client satisfaction. Common key employee roles include (Girish et al., 2022; Lamare & Kumar, 2025): (1) Travel Agents/Consultants, who serve as the primary contact for clients, providing expert advice, understanding travel preferences, offering tailored vacation packages, handling bookings for flights, hotels, and tours, and addressing customer queries and concerns. They contribute directly to sales and customer satisfaction. (2) Tour Operators: Responsible for planning, developing, promoting, and managing the entire tour experience. They coordinate transportation, accommodation, guided tours, and activities to ensure the smooth execution of travel packages. (3) Tour Directors lead and accompany groups on tours, manage day-to-day arrangements, provide commentary and relevant information about destinations, and ensure customer comfort and experience. (4) Travel Agency Managers, Oversee the entire agency's operations, including managing staff, coordinating activities, handling budgets, and researching new travel products and destinations (Harahap & Yosepha, 2025).

These employees represent the key human resources that are critical for delivering travel services and customer satisfaction. In addition to staff, other key resources for travel agencies include technological systems for booking, financial resources to manage operations, physical resources such as office space, and partnerships with transport and hospitality providers (Febrian, 2025). In summary, in tour and travel agencies, employees such as travel agents, tour operators, tour directors, and agency managers are key resources responsible for business operations, customer service, and experience delivery (Mulyadi, Sumardin, Sari, Sabri, & Sudianto, 2025).

Forelli and Ordonez (2025) suggest that the primary human resource roles in travel agencies include: (1) Recruitment and Staffing, identifying, hiring, and selecting employees with relevant skills and experience in the travel industry. Ensuring that candidates have the ability to manage multiple coordination tasks and client interactions. (2) Employee Training and Development: Providing necessary training programs to educate employees, especially travel agents, about their responsibilities, tools, and customer service skills. (3) Supervision and Management: Overseeing daily operations, delegating tasks, managing employee performance, and handling disciplinary matters or conflicts within the team. (4) Employee Motivation and Retention: Offering commission opportunities, rewards based on performance, team-building exercises, and maintaining open communication to keep staff motivated and productive. (5) Work Environment Support: Ensuring employees have the required tools, technology, and resources, such as booking software and Internet access, to perform their jobs effectively. (6) HR Administration: Managing salary distribution, incentives, employee benefits, and

maintaining HR records. (7) Strategic HR Role: Shaping the organizational culture, improving employee engagement, and aligning workforce capabilities with business goals. Therefore, travel agency managers often assume leadership roles in HR functions, including recruitment, training, motivation, and operational supervision. The HR role in travel agencies is crucial for delivering quality customer service, maintaining efficient operations, and supporting business growth

2.5. Employees and key activities

In tour and travel agencies, employees and their key activities are closely interconnected to ensure smooth operation and customer satisfaction. According to Girish et al. (2022), some parts of tour and travel agencies and their activities include (1) Employees (Primary Roles), Travel Agents/Consultants, who directly interact with clients, helping them understand preferences, offering personalized travel advice, arranging bookings for flights, hotels, tours, and processing travel documents. (2) Tour Operators are responsible for planning and coordinating travel packages, including transportation, accommodation, and local tours, ensuring seamless execution. (3) Travel Agency Managers: Oversee daily operations, manage budgets and accounts, supervise staff, including recruitment and training, resolve client inquiries, and maintain profitable vendor relationships. (4) Customer Service Representatives provide ongoing support to travelers before, during, and after trips, addressing issues and ensuring a positive experience. (5) Marketing and Social Media Managers, Promote the agency's services, manage campaigns, and build customer relationships. (6) Operations and Support Staff: They handle backend processes such as booking systems, financial records, and compliance.

Huang et al. (2020) emphasize that some key activities of travel and tour agencies may include (1) Client Consultation and Travel Planning: Understanding traveler needs, providing expert advice, and creating customized itineraries. (2) Booking and reservation management, securing flight, hotel, transport, and activity reservations. (3) Vendor Coordination: Negotiating with airlines, hotels, and tour operators to maintain service quality and pricing. (4) Customer Service and Problem Resolution, Managing client requests, resolving travel issues, and offering travel support. (6) Marketing and Sales: Developing campaigns, attracting new clients, and achieving sales targets. (7) Operational Management, Daily administration, financial management, staff supervision, and workflow optimization. Together, these employees and activities ensure that travel agencies can deliver personalized, efficient, and enjoyable travel experiences to clients while maintaining operational profitability and growth of the agency.

Many have suggested that employees are key resources. A study found that employees in tourism have direct interactions with customers, such as tourists, making their role vital in delivering high-quality services. This highlights the importance of specialized tourism personnel, such as tour guides, who act as the final link in the tourism service delivery chain (Girish et al., 2022). Another study in Bangladesh found that to promote a destination, professional staff, such as a travel agency workforce, is required. The agency's expertise is essential in this case to execute over a thousand trips, focusing on delivering special and memorable experiences to its clients. The agency prioritizes marketing efforts to effectively reach its target audience and maintains a reputation for high-quality, personalized travel services. Their focus on low-impact tourism and community empowerment distinguishes them in the travel industry. Thus, qualified personnel from these institutions are needed to assist the government in promoting tourism.

Corresponding to a study conducted by Nguyen, Pham, and Nguyen (2025), others have found that the determining factors for success, including salary from tour companies, are influenced by the basic level of education of travel agents, their professional experience, and customer satisfaction. This indicates that employees take an important position to succeed the business of travel in a country (Ribeiro, Gonçalves, & Guerra, 2020). Simultaneously, Sawant, Biwal, and Ragde (2020) revealed that assessing employees' ability to serve customers is insufficient; internal policies and management attitudes must also be considered. For example, companies should develop and enforce anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies for their workforces. It is essential that rules prohibiting harassment or

discrimination based on caste, religion, and gender are rigorously upheld in the organization. Thus, both studies indicate that employees play an important role in the tour and travel businesses.

While a group of scholar Matović and Đurković (2020) argue that current trends in travel and tourism and their effects on Human Resources (HR) competencies in travel agencies. This study aims to identify challenges related to staff qualifications and training in tourism companies. Lee, Rocco, and Shuck (2020) also agree, they emphasize that employee engagement is consistently recognised as an important resource in increasing engagement. They then suggested that a unique resource be grouped into five categories: (a) organizational resources, (b) social resources, (c) job resources, (d) household resources, and (e) personal resources.

This is confirmed by Beqiri and Trakaniqi (2021), who observed the impact of training and development on the service sector, such as travel agencies. The type of training and training needs that are strategically aligned with the travel agency's mission and support long-term goals by developing skilled and adaptive employees. Although professional consultants often conduct training, managers are more effective at transferring practical knowledge because of their experience and understanding of the company. Training in communication skills and software was identified as the most crucial for travel agency employees. In addition, Susanto, Rosita, and Ardi (2021) believe that the individual abilities of employees are necessary. He gives the example of tourism operators' success largely depending on their employees' intellectual potential, professional knowledge, creativity, and ambition, which collectively create intellectual capital that fuels growth and innovation.

High employee turnover occurs because directors often fail to attract professionals and overlook HR brand development, undermining the formation and performance of intellectual capital. In contrast, a strong employer brand boosts the reputation, stability, and strategic success of an organization. Effective HR policies cultivate professional intellect, serving as both the company's intellectual capital and the employees' intellectual wealth. The joint branding of employees and the company enhances its reputation. Hence, common problems at travel agencies related to employees include high levels of human error and challenges in scheduling drivers due to personal route preferences, which are caused by a lack of discipline and training. Thus, the proposed solutions include employee rotation to improve efficiency by replacing less focused employees with more conscientious ones, as well as clearly defining tasks, including specific routes and working hours (Maidy & Dirbawanto, 2022).

2.6. Gap of Study and Proposed Conceptual Framework

Based on theoretical reviews and previous research results, this study describes the importance of employees in a business, such as tour and travel. Employees are not only an important human resource in carrying out the activities of the travel industry but also a very important part of achieving company success. However, previous studies have not examined how employees are used as resources and key activities in tour and travel companies operating in Palembang. This study focuses on how selected tour and travel agencies have failed to manage their employees as resources and strengths of these companies. The conceptual framework captures several elements, as illustrated in Figure 1.

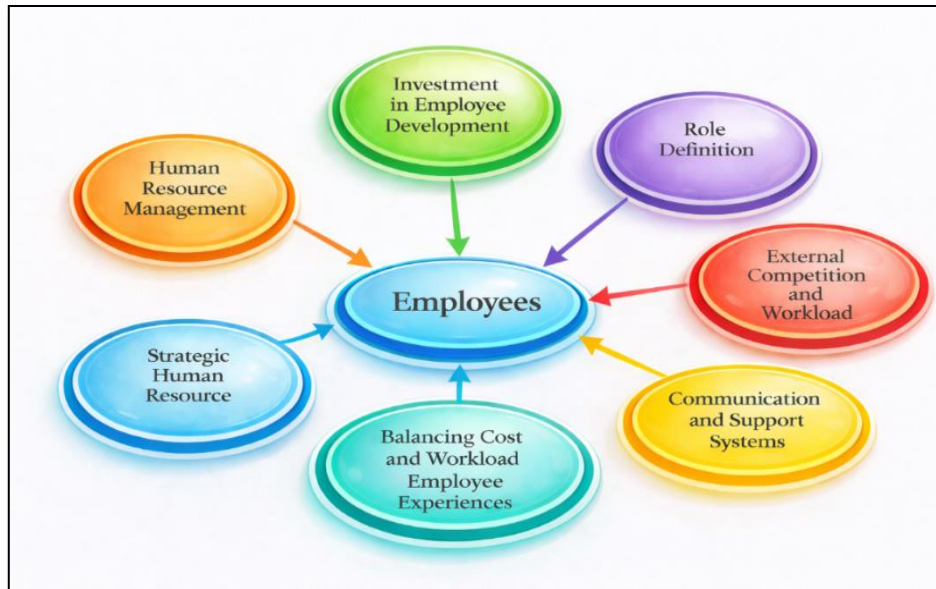


Figure 1. Elements of employees as key resource and key activities in tour and travel agencies
Source: Processed Data (2025)

Not only the seven elements listed in Figure 1 above are evaluated at the travel and tourism agencies where employees work, but research also reveals that employees themselves are key resources because their knowledge, skills, experience, creativity, and commitment influence the quality of tourism services. Their expertise in customer service, cultural understanding, and operational tasks is essential for providing an exceptional experience. Key activities in tour and travel may include many things, such as planning and organizing tours, customer interaction and support, marketing and promotion, managing travel logistics, and maintaining high service standards. These were also investigated in this study, which integrated employees and activities.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2022), qualitative research could be defined as human experiences, perceptions, and behaviors through non-numerical data like interviews, observations, and texts. The analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model (Sugiyono, 2022) and incorporates score interpretation techniques. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, documentation reviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Research Setting: The study was conducted among several ASITA member tour and travel agencies operating in Palembang over a six-month period.

3.2. Population

The study population consisted of tour and travel agencies that were members of ASITA in South Sumatra, recorded at around 110 for the period 2025-2030.

3.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

Using Slovin's sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2022), nine tour and travel companies operating in Palembang were selected, including Hajj and Umrah operators.

3.4. Data Collection Technique

To complete data collection, the study employed three methods: semi-structured in-depth interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussions (FGDs).

3.4.1. Interview Method

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, including the ASITA chairman/manager, selected travel and tour agency owners, and local government representatives. Each interview, lasting one to two hours and conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, was recorded using mobile phones and repeated two to three times if the data appeared incomplete.

3.4.2. Document Analysis

Relevant documents were analyzed, including the types and number of packages offered by tour and travel companies, the annual number of guests, prices per package, employee tasks, and other related matters.

3.4.3. FGD Method

FGDs were held once with all selected respondents to explore issues not covered by the interviews or documents. Similar to the interviews, the FGDs were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, recorded via mobile phones, and lasted for two and a half hours.

3.5. Data Analysis Technique

This study employed the Miles and Huberman approach (Sugiyono, 2022) for data analysis.

3.5.1. Data Analysis Stages

Data analysis was conducted in three stages. The first stage, data reduction, simplified the data to meet research needs by grouping them using themes and coding. Data were assigned codes and organized into predetermined themes.

3.5.2. Data Presentation

The second stage involved presenting the data in tables, graphs, or other formats as needed for a clear information display.

3.5.3. Conclusion Drawing

The third stage involved drawing conclusions from the compiled, grouped, and patterned data. The study also used score interpretation by determining intervals with a formula, categorizing results into five levels from 0-20% (very weak) to 81-100% (very strong). The final percentage of each respondent's answers determined the overall value for each response. Validity testing in this qualitative research was carried out by member checking, or checking by participants. In this technique, the results of the interviews were confirmed with the participants to ensure that the resulting interpretations matched their experiences. The validity of qualitative data is more related to the accuracy of the interpretation and the suitability of the data to the context of this study (Sugiyono 2022).

Reliability of qualitative data refers to the consistency and accuracy in the collection and analysis of data resulting from qualitative research. In qualitative research, reliability can be achieved by ensuring that data collection methods, such as interviews, observations, and documents, are consistently carried out across different situations or participants (Sugiyono, 2022). Therefore, in this study, a reliability test was conducted similarly to the selected respondents. The study operated in Palembang, and using the Slovin formula, there were around 11 companies as the sample. The study was conducted over a period of six months.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Profile Key Informants

The primary objective of this research is to bridge the gap in understanding how the Business Model Canvas (BMC) framework can be effectively implemented within the local tourism industry context, particularly the use of employees as key resources and activities in the BMC. To ensure that the study captures comprehensive and relevant insights, it is crucial to identify and involve key informants who possess in-depth knowledge and experience related to the tour and travel sector in Palembang. Key informants involved to achieve a well-rounded perspective, the study engaged several individuals recognized for their expertise and familiarity with the industry: (a) Chairperson of the Tour and Travel

Association (ASITA), who provides strategic insights and an industry-wide outlook. (b) Nine Managers from Tour and Travel Agencies (eight general tour and travel agents, one hajj and umrah travel) offer practical, operational, and managerial perspectives from various businesses within the local tourism sector. (c) Representatives from the Tourism and Creative Economy Office contribute viewpoints and data from the provincial government, ensuring that regulatory and policy considerations are included.

4.2. Major Problems in Tour and Travel Companies in Palembang

As previously discussed, the tour and travel industries in Palembang have not always run according to their preferences. Some of them even had to stop their operations because they were declared bankrupt and unable to continue their businesses. Using the Miles and Huberman approach, the study conducted several stages in processing the data that had been obtained from interviews, FGDs, and documents. Three stages will be carried out: data reduction, providing data, and making conclusions. The study found that the failures that occurred in several tour and travel companies were caused by the following:

Table 1. The main elements causing the failure of tour and travel agencies in relation to HR

Components	%
Poor Human Resource Management	18
Poor Communication and Support Systems	15
Lack of Strategic Human Resource Policies	14
Insufficient Investment in Employee Development	13
Inadequate Role Definition	17
External Competition and Workload Stress	12
Balancing Cost and Employee Experience	11

Source: Processed Data (2025)

As can be seen from Table 1, the first thing that must be considered as a cause of failure for tour and travel agencies operating in the city of Palembang is management's inability to manage its human resources. This is important because how managers can organize and motivate employees is one of the keys to the success of management itself. This is, of course, supported by good internal and external communications. Communication ranks second in importance because, as a service industry, tour and travel agencies must be able to place communication as an important part of their activities. Internal communication, both horizontally and vertically, must be harmonious and well-balanced. In addition, external communication with guests and other parties related to the business must be maintained properly.

In the context of tour and travel companies, regulations are a key focus of this study, where it was discovered that weak strategic human resource policies ranked fourth in importance. According to Wardhana, Sudiari, and Sengkey (2024) strategic HR policies play a crucial role in the tour and travel industry. The absence of such policies can severely impede an organization's efficiency, competitiveness, and adaptability. When HR strategies are not aligned with business objectives, companies often encounter problems such as poor resource allocation, ineffective talent management, and challenges in developing a strong organizational culture. Collectively, these issues affect the industry's ability to deliver quality services and maintain a competitive edge.

In addition, inadequate role definition is another critical factor in Palembang's tour and travel companies. Interviews with staff revealed that, owing to labor shortages and efficiency needs, employees often juggle multiple roles. This overlap results in vague responsibilities and hinders optimal performance of the organization. As highlighted by experts, unclear roles create uncertainty about duties, causing task duplication or gaps in key functions. In the tourism sector, where customer service and operational efficiency are vital, such ambiguity can harm employee motivation, hamper training, and diminish service quality. Clear role definitions are essential to improve performance and ensure effective service delivery in this industry (Wurarah, Timotius, Sembiring, & Sadiartha, 2021).

Moreover, Riawan (2025) suggests that unclear role definitions can cause significant workload stress for employees, as they face overlapping responsibilities and competing demands that increase pressure. Such ambiguity often leads to unhealthy competition and confusion in prioritizing tasks, which ultimately decreases motivation, well-being, and productivity of the employees. Research in hospitality and tourism confirms that role ambiguity and conflict are major stressors leading to emotional exhaustion and burnout among employees. This stress affects job satisfaction and performance, contributing to higher absenteeism and turnover. To mitigate these effects, it is essential to clarify role expectations, improve communication, and provide adequate support and resources to employees, thereby enhancing organizational effectiveness and employee well-being.

4.3. Employees' Abilities and Key Tour and Travel Activities

The study also found other issues, namely the individual abilities of each employee in relation to the activities of tour and travel companies. As mentioned above, activities at tour agencies can include planning and organizing tours, customer interaction and support, marketing and promotion, managing travel logistics, and maintaining high service standards in the tourism industry. The study found that several important factors related to employees, such as their knowledge, skills, experience, creativity, and commitment, influence the quality of tourism services. Their expertise in customer service, cultural understanding, and operational tasks is essential for providing an exceptional experience.

Table 2. Lack of Employees' Abilities

No	Lack of Abilities	IS (%)
1	Knowledge	89
2	Skills	89
3	Experiences	78
4	Creativity	100
5	Commitment	78

Source: Data Processed (2025)

As shown in Table 1, this study identified specific weaknesses in tour and travel companies linked to employee capabilities, as shown in Table 2. The tables highlight the deficiencies in creativity, knowledge, and skills. However, tour guides sometimes lack comprehensive knowledge of the sites they visit. According to the informants, this shortcoming arises because they are often unprepared or assigned abruptly to escort guests, which falls outside their primary duties. Consequently, they feel less creative and struggle to demonstrate a strong commitment. This aligns with the key competencies expected of tour guides, such as knowledge of local history and culture, effective communication, and preparedness, which are essential for delivering quality tour experiences (Beqiri & Trakaniqi, 2021).

5. Conclusions

5.1. Conclusion

This study answered the research objective, which was to provide insights on how to optimise employees' contributions as indispensable assets in the tourism business model, helping companies better strategise and innovate their key resources and activities. The study found:

1. There are seven factors that cause the failure of tour and travel businesses operating in Palembang, namely weak human resource management, poor communication and support systems, lack of strategic human resource policies, insufficient investment, and three other determining factors, namely inadequate role definition of jobs and tasks, external competition and workload stress, and balancing cost and employee experience.
2. It was also found that the main triggers were the weak knowledge of employees; they did not have the necessary skills; they lacked experience; they lacked creativity; and they did not have a high level of commitment.
3. Therefore, the study concluded that it is crucial to determine that employees are the most important asset in the travel and tour business. Not only are their activities a determining factor in the success of this business, but they are also human resources, which are the most important part of the tour and travel business.

5.2. Limitations

This study focuses on employees as key resources and key activities among the 8.1% of ASITA members who responded to the survey. All respondents were general travel companies, with only one being a Hajj and Umrah travel company, due to time and cost constraints. Further study will investigate all the members of tour and travel agencies that are members of ASITA in South Sumatera with a variety of data collection methods.

5.3. Suggestions

Future studies should examine other issues, such as workplace instability caused by seasonal and temporary staffing needs, complicating workforce management and causing employee stress; cultural awareness gaps impacting interactions with diverse tourists, underscoring the need for cultural sensitivity training; or low employee morale and motivation.

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