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CONFLICT AND CAREERS: STAFFING CHALLENGES IN ISRAELI HOSPITALITY

Abstract:

The Israeli hospitality industry has long faced a chronic labor shortage, particularly in front-line and support roles. Rooted in structural challenges such as low wages, demanding working conditions, and seasonal fluctuations, this issue has been significantly worsened by the outbreak of the October 2023 war. The conflict resulted in a steep decline in both international and domestic tourism and severely disrupted the sector's labor force. Thousands of workers, including foreign nationals and Palestinian day laborers, were either unable or unwilling to return to work due to security concerns, military reserve mobilization, or personal trauma. This study, focusing on a case study in Eilat, Israel's premier resort city, investigates how strategic workforce planning and cross-border labor agreements, such as initiatives to employ Jordanian workers, can serve as innovative responses to the crisis. Interviews with hotel managers and employees reveal that emotional support, job security, and flexible work arrangements are critical factors in enhancing employee retention. In the current climate, fostering regional cooperation, promoting cultural sensitivity, and adapting regulatory frameworks are essential for maintaining workforce stability. This paper offers a timely analysis of the intersection between geopolitical instability and human resource challenges in the hospitality sector. It also presents actionable recommendations for building resilience and ensuring continuity in times of crisis.

Keywords:

Human resources, Hospitality, Employee recruitment, War impact, Tourism crisis

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