

Educational and Professional Background of the Executives and Entrepreneurs in the Tourism Industry in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Several studies have revealed that tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Many developing countries have recognized the possible contribution that this industry can make economic and socio – cultural development (Balaguer and Jarda , 2009). The purpose of this study was to investigate the educational and professional background of the executives and entrepreneurs who are engaged in the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. This study used mixed method, and research site was Southern province in Sri Lanka. The study was based on primary and secondary data. Research sample was 60 executives and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. To collect primary data, self administered questionnaire and semi structured interviews were used. Descriptive statistical tools and qualitative techniques were used to analyze data. This study revealed that 11.6% of total respondents are degree holders, 71.7% has collegiate level education as their highest educational qualification, 16.7% has only secondary education. Majority of them are not professionally qualified in the field of tourism. Most of them still have the educational and professional qualifications when they joined to the industry. They do not have proper guidance and encouragements to enhance their qualifications. Lack of time, heavy workload and more responsibility obstruct them to educate and professionally qualified. These circumstances negatively affected the industry for its development up to the international level.

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