



HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA

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Abstract: This paper discusses China's changing tourism policy and strategies and their implications for the development of an education and training infrastructure. It argues that human capital has received inadequate attention during the transition from a centrally-planned to a market-oriented economy. The provision of education and training has concentrated primarily on the preparation of hospitality personnel for large enterprises to the relative neglect of the requirements of smaller operators and the stimulation of indigenous entrepreneurship. Furthermore, when human resources development has been considered, it has often had strong ideological underpinnings, and the goal has been to meet international standards which are often at odds with the requirements of a burgeoning domestic market. **Keywords:** China, development, education and training, employment, human resources, planning. © 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Résumé: Ressources humaines: le développement en Chine. Cet article discute de la politique et des stratégies changeantes du tourisme en Chine et de leurs implications pour le développement d'une infrastructure d'éducation et de formation. Il soutient que le capital humain a reçu une attention insuffisante pendant la transition d'une économie centralement planifiée à une économie orientée vers le marché. La provision d'éducation et de la formation a été concentrée surtout sur la préparation de personnel pour de grandes entreprises en délaissant à un certain degré les besoins des plus petits opérateurs et la stimulation d'un esprit d'entreprise autochtone. En plus, quand on a pris en considération le développement des ressources humaines, cela a souvent été avec de fortes bases idéologiques, et l'objectif a été de satisfaire aux normes internationales, qui sont souvent en désaccord avec les exigences d'un marché domestique en plein essor. **Mots-clés:** Chine, développement, éducation et formation, emploi, ressources humaines, planification. © 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

China, with its large area, old civilization, long history, and diverse ethnic cultures, possesses distinctive tourism resources characterized by attraction variety, abundance, antiquity, and uniqueness. These rich endowments have not been fully realized due to a series of political dislocations in recent Chinese history and subsequent national security

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concerns, all of which have made the country, sometimes deliberately, a late entrant into the world market.

The tourism industry of China, a “sleeping giant” (Hall 1994), is gradually developing to be massive in scale as a direct product of economic reforms—known as the “open door” policy, promulgated by the Deng Administration in 1978 (Chow 1988)—which encouraged substantial social and economic changes. Tourism has since been widely adopted as an important economic strategy to facilitate a move from the Soviet-style economy, driven by heavy industry, to an economy incorporating a complex amalgam of services. In particular, with the promise of foreign currency yields and employment generation, tourism was cosseted by the central government as a means to help overcome the hardships experienced in peripheral regions. Its growth in the last two decades has been extraordinary. However, this strategy has met with only mixed success. The participation of the Chinese themselves has been less rapid. Failure of the cadres to respond effectively to the structural shifts in employment and to transform proactively the Chinese laborforce to adapt to tourism jobs has frustrated local involvement. Job opportunities often bypass those with the greatest need to benefit from tourism employment.

This paper discusses China’s tourism policy and strategies and their implications for the development of an education and training infrastructure. It examines whether the demands for human capital during the transition from a centrally-planned to a market-oriented economy, have been properly addressed. In particular, it explores the adequacy of responses to such needs by the public, industrial and educational sectors. It will be argued that the education and training programs that have been put in place have not prepared potential employees well for participation in tourism. The industry has been narrowly conceived as consisting primarily of large hotels that cater to an international clientele. The goal has often been to meet international standards through an unrealistic ideological perspective addressing social doctrines. Not only is this at odds with current market conditions in many destinations in China, this strategy has overlooked requirements of smaller operators and failed to stimulate indigenous entrepreneurship.

Context and Methods

Development can be conceptualized as a process of economic conditioning. This is particularly true in the developing countries where tourism is widely used by governments to elevate the internal functioning of economic and social systems. Concerns regarding the impacts on the poorer destination areas are often built upon the notion that tourism is destructive environmentally, socially, and culturally. These negative dimensions certainly exist and they are often rooted in an acerbic attitude towards tourism mercantilism, the encroachment by foreign cultures, the dependency on metropolitan capitalists, and the resultant problems of economic leakage. At the same time, the strong influence that the local economic and political situations impose upon the

modes of production is often ignored. It is common for the historical context and political processes that determine development to be overlooked (Britton 1982).

Theoretically, it is a widely accepted view that the nurturing of local capacity is indispensable if the economic viability of tourism is to be sustained in a given destination. Employment generation is usually considered to be the most direct and beneficial impact of tourism to the host population. Thus, a fundamental issue is the ways in which government agencies address the development of human resources, and hence employment, an issue which should be addressed through appropriate policies. In light of this, a prerequisite for understanding impacts within the context of developing economies is the study of the implications of policies on the nature of the host population's participation in tourism and the way in which it responds to resulting employment opportunities, including the locals' knowledge, skills, and their perceptions of jobs in this industry.

However, studies of human resource issues generally reflect a perspective on tourism as a major industry contributing to economic growth. Thus, two of the main research directions have been on human resources requirements (staffing needs) and employment generation studies (Elkin and Roberts 1994). Although the extracted examples are often quantitative in nature, on many occasions they distort the true employment effects, since only a narrow range of jobs is incorporated in the analyses. More recent studies have aided understanding of tourism employment through exploration of the dynamics of labor markets (Riley, Ladkin and Szivas 2002; Szivas and Riley 1999; Szivas, Riley and Airey 2003) and inclusion of the informal sector (Cukier and Wall 1994; Timothy and Wall 1997). However, as observed by Baum "the position of human resource concerns within the process of tourism policy formulation and implementation has not been subjected to widespread academic analysis" (1994:259). The dynamic nature of the labor market, including high labor mobility between organizations, wide range of remuneration levels, and issues of seasonality further complicate the matter leading to planning difficulties (Riley, Lodkin and Szivas 2002).

In spite of this, lack of good human resources development strategies is a common deficiency in many policies and plans. The underlying concept in most plans is predominantly associated with the geographical distribution of attractions, market demands, provision of facilities and services, marketing and promotion, and so forth. Human resources development is scarcely mentioned or is glossed over in the majority of plans. In a book entitled *National and Regional Tourism Planning: Methodologies and Case Studies* by World Tourism Organization (WTO 1994), among an extensive review of 25 plans prepared for the developing countries, discussion on human resources planning is found to be scant.

Developing destinations' pressing demand for sound human resource strategies has been a shared international concern, (including in the sub-Saharan African case (Ankomah 1991), the Solomons studies (Lipscomb 1998), the Hainan Province of China (Liu and Wall

2003), Thailand (Esichaikul and Baum 1998), and Turkey (Brotherton, Woolfenden and Himmetoğlu 1994). A chronic shortage of trained local individuals has often led to an unfavorable situation for both the industry and local people: managerial and other senior positions are filled by expatriates and the unskilled and correspondingly lower paying jobs are left to the locals. It should also not be forgotten that tourism, with its dependency on value-added personal service, creates the conditions for a range of petty entrepreneurs outside of the commercial interest or competitive capacity of dominant sector firms (Britton 1982; Connelly-Kirch 1982). Furthermore, the employment needs of the formal sector and large firms are usually stressed to the neglect of the training needs of small entrepreneurs or for other employment available in petty trading activities.

The accumulation of human capital is a poorly developed area of discussion in the literature. In plans and in even in the academic literature, section(s) entitled "human resources development", "tourism training", or "local participation" typically involve only a flimsy description of this issue. This topic is frequently passed off as a residual matter and, where addressed, normative approaches to meeting international requirements are often espoused. However, the fundamental issue is whether or not the host population is in a position of strength to intervene in the development process or to negotiate meaningful involvement. Thus, human resources planning has profound consequences for corporate business interests and for the host communities (Conlin and Baum 1994).

Studies on this important research theme should be more than the collection and analysis of data about the interactions between employees' competence and firms' performance. In addition to the conventional industry-oriented approach used by many studies, the inclusion of local awareness and capacity in the conceptualization of employment and human resources development is vital. A broader approach to this subject should include local capacity considerations that take into account local desires and capabilities as well as the quantity and quality of labor required by various operations. In other words, positing policies and plans as potential primary determinants of employment brings to the forefront issues concerning the accumulation of human capital as an integral component of planning. It also leads to questions relating to the strategies and education programs used to develop the workforce. Based on the conceptual considerations outlined above, the creation of human capital is studied in developing countries through a policy-industry-locality framework which acknowledges the complex relationships between policy and planning, the diverse and fragmented nature of tourism, and the pressing needs and scarce resources of many parts of the developing world.

In the above context, human resources development is seen as a means to help destination hosts to capitalize on development through productive and meaningful involvement. Documents are dissected to determine policy preferences for development and employment patterns. Attention is given to the policy implications and resultant opportunities or challenges confronted by establishments of all sizes,

including large corporations, craft level operators, and individual entrepreneurs. More meaningful participation of the hosts is advocated through the application of enlightened education and training initiatives.

Using examples from China, the study illustrates the need—common to many developing countries—to give human capital a more prominent position within the process of tourism policy formulation and plan implementation. The evidence on which the interpretations are based is derived from a careful reading of the literature, both Chinese and Western, as well as both academic and practical experiences gained in Europe, North America, and a number of Asian countries. A wide variety of specific research projects on tourism and involvement in a number of planning initiatives in China and, particularly, participation in a number of human resources development projects in diverse locations in the country, undertaken by the authors over the past decade, inform this study. These activities have included surveys and interviews with the human resource managers in a diversity of establishments, with employees in both the formal and informal sectors, with members of ethnic minorities employed in tourism, and with students enrolled in training programs. Examples of such studies that are particularly pertinent to this paper are Liu and Wall (2000, 2001, 2003).

Attention has been paid especially to the interpretation of China's national-level tourism policies and plans (primarily its sixth to ninth 5-year plans 1981–2000). Those were acquired electronically using on-line sources (CNTA 2000, 2001, 2003) and some Chinese press. An electronic copy of “Five Decades of Chinese Tourist Industry” (He 1999) was extraordinarily helpful in that it provided a thorough review of the tourism development history in the past five decades and future courses of action to be attempted by the government. Some limited supplementary information was also obtained from literature available in Canada.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Since 1978, the Chinese authorities, similar to many countries that have looked to tourism to stimulate economic growth, have swiftly adopted measures to keep pace with growing market demands. These have included strengthening of the material foundations of the industry through constructing more hotels, increasing accessibility, and creating attractions. The strong centralized power of the state has facilitated the mobilization of resources to underpin a rapid rate of growth in Chinese tourism. With the major exception of the Tiananmen Square incident, which had major repercussions, there have been very few cases of civilian resistance to slow the accelerating pace of tourism development, even under the circumstances of competing needs for scarce resources. From 1978 onward, tourism has grown substantially as it has received strong endorsement from the central government. Not only has the state allocated substantial funds for its development, foreign capitalists have also shown keen interest.

Between 1979 and 1988, approximately one-third of the total direct foreign investment was for hotel projects (Hall 1994). Under the investment plans between 1985 and 1990, 85% of the funds were also allocated for hotel projects (Hall 1994). As a result, the accommodation sector witnessed substantial growth. Accommodation capacities increased from 137 hotels (15,539 rooms) in 1978 to 8,880 starred hotels (897,206 rooms) in 2002 (CNTA 2004).

Annual arrivals and receipts have consistently sustained impressive growth, varying between annual rates of 7.4 and 70.9%, with the exception of 1989 when a decrease of about 17% occurred as a result of the Tiananmen Square event on 4 June of that year (Hall 1994; Jenkins and Liu 1997). In 2002, inbound tourists reached 36.8 million, which was an increase of 52 times when compared with only 0.71 million in 1978 (CNTA 2004). Compatriots from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan have always been the majority (about 86% in 2002) of the “international” arrivals. In the same year, international receipts accounted for US\$ 20.4 billion, which was the 5th largest worldwide, as compared to a 1980 income of US\$ 0.6 billion that placed China in 34th position globally (CNTA 2004). Until the recent SARS epidemic that decimated tourism in early 2003, both domestic and international, China rose to be a leading destination, attracting 4.8% of the world’s cross-border arrivals and receiving 3.8% of the world expenditures in 2001. The World Tourism Organization acclaimed that China, together with Hong Kong and Macau, has become an “unrivalled leader” of Asian tourism (WTO 2003). These are achievements of only two decades of growth. The WTO projected that China’s inbound tourism will increase at an annual rate of 8%, with estimated annual receipts of RMB 3,300 billion (\$399.5 billion) by 2020.

The domestic market has also become prosperous, as the Chinese economy has grown substantially. Over 878 million domestic trips took place in 2002, generating expenditures of approximately RMB 387.8 billion or \$47 billion (CNTA 2003). Tourism has been an expression of the increasing capitalization (or commercialization) of the Chinese economy. By 2000, receipts generated by both international and domestic tourism comprised approximately 8% of China’s GDP (RMB 8,940 billion, or \$1,082 billion). Correspondingly, the number of jobs in tourism-related industries soared by 33 times between 1978 and 2000. An estimate by China National Tourism Administration (CNTA 2001) indicated that people employed in tourism increased from only 17,000 in 1985 to 5.64 million by the end of 2000, with secondary employment effects of 28 million jobs generated in other supporting industries. This is a phenomenal growth in only 15 years.

Yet, beyond the impressive growth, many complained about local defects in meeting the expectations of tourists (Choy and Gee 1983; Hall 1994; Oudiette 1990). Domestic concerns and some resistance have also emerged related to the fears of subordinating Chinese authenticity to foreign demands and tastes. Other issues have also risen as a result of a lack of skills and experience in dealing with tourism development, such as underestimation of the increasing leisure needs of the domestic population, dominance of the state authorities in planning without

mobilizing local involvement, loss of control and proprietorship of many facilities, as well as failure to carry out necessary measures to improve the quality of services and to create a trained workforce.

In spite of the impressive rates of growth, Zhang (1987) attributed such deficiencies and China's inability to capitalize fully on tourism development opportunities to the absence of an adequate response from the educational system. The needs of the industry for human capital have been constrained by a bureaucracy that has placed a primary emphasis on strengthening the socialist ideology and values of personnel and, in association with this, devaluing and suppressing individualism. This has resulted in an unfavorable situation: China appeals for substantial amounts of foreign capital and expertise to develop this industry; at the same time, there is competition for tourists' expenditures among the state, prefectural authorities, the collective sector, and corporate business; meanwhile, small-scale enterprises and individual entrepreneurs are often discouraged from direct involvement in tourism.

Tourism Policy in Transition

In the early 19th century, tourism developed very slowly using the facilities established during the colonial era to cater to commercial trades, religious purposes, diplomatic exchanges, large export of labor, and some scholarly activities. As a response to increasing tourism trades, the first travel agency was set up in 1923 by the Shanghai Commercial Bank, when China remained under the republican sovereignty founded by Sun Yat-Sen's Administration (known as Republic of China). In 1954, organized tourism services came into existence followed by the establishment of the China International Travel Services under the governance of the communist government, People's Republic of China (Choy and Gee 1983).

Tourism became a national issue when the China Travel Affairs and Administration was established in 1964 with two goals: "expanding external political influence" and "absorbing free foreign exchange" (He 1999). However, tourism prior to the mid-70s was not considered as an industry even as an economic activity, "because of its scale, purpose, and method of operations" (Gao and Zhang 1983:76). At the same time, policy was largely negative, with an aim of controlling rather than stimulating tourism. Under the dominance of Maoism, China's political-economic system, which used the aid and experience of the Soviet Union, linked regional development strategies with perceived national security needs. As a result of emulating the Soviet development model, heavy industrialization was intensified across the country with the goal of producing a self-sustaining economy. China's development theories, as Oakes has pointed out, were "the political legacy of the revolution and the continuing perception of a hostile world beyond China". Thus, the regional development strategies that followed from this were "dictated by what was perceived as the efficient realization of rapid industrialization and national defense requirements"

(1998:107–109). As such, tourism was not a factor in China's economic development policy at this time. Rather, it was a perquisite of a political elite who frequented resorts such as Beidaihe (Xu 1999).

Before the onset of the "open door" policy, the perspective was that the fewer foreigners, the better state control would be (Richer 1983). Contacts with the outside world were cut off, because the communist government denied Westerners entry and vice versa. Tourism was then initiated at a miniature scale as a part of a diplomatic strategy confined to "friendly civilian interactions" with its socialist allies. Only a limited number of "friendly" tourists, notably from other socialist states and overseas Chinese, were permitted entry and their activities were restricted to designated circuits. As a coherent group, they were shepherded by the personnel of the China International Travel Services during their stay to assure that "tourists would not have contact with Chinese who might offer contradictory interpretations of political reality" (Richter 1983:397). Foreign arrivals reached an historical peak of 12,877 in 1965, but dropped drastically to about 500 in 1966 and were further reduced to 300 in 1967 due to the Cultural Revolution (CNTA 2004). GATT, the agency at the national level that was responsible for the development and management of travel services, was also downsized and staffed with only 12 employees.

The desire to strengthen the national economy led to a self-sufficient and "boot-strap" mode of industrial development, a shared characteristic of the development approach often adopted by socialist countries (Hall 1990). Following the implementation of the "Four Modernizations" policy (which emphasized strengthening national capacity in science, technology, and national defense, while rejuvenating agriculture to feed the large population), tourism was resumed with a primary objective of supplementing the balance of payments. Under Deng Xiaoping's economic liberalism, the Chinese authorities viewed it as having great potential to stimulate economic growth and to support the modernization movement. Tourism has since entered into Chinese leaders' discourses about economic progress and is omnipresent in official documentation.

As Deng reiterated in his conversations with local industrial leaders and Chinese officials in 1978 and 1979, "tourism business has significant prospects, requiring unique planning and accelerated development. Tourism earns more money and faster and, consequently, there are no outstanding foreign debts that cannot be settled" (CNTA 2004). This statement was based on Deng's calculation that if one tourist spends \$1,000 per trip 5 million foreign tourists can bring \$5 billion annually. The incipient development, as depicted by him, was to be implemented through China's own concerted efforts but using foreign capital. Hence, in response to an urgent need to earn foreign exchange, the country's attitude towards the outside world shifted drastically, as capacity to earn foreign currency greatly depended upon the degree of openness to the outside forces (Hall 1994; Tisdell and Wen 1991).

The State and the Communist Party of China made an unprecedented move: more emphasis was given to issues of economic recon-

struction than to political ideology in the Plenary Session of the 11th Congress of the party (Zhang 1985). Subsequently, in the National Tourism Conference of China held in September 1979, the role of the industry was redefined from being a "political reception activity" to an "economic management activity".

Under the 6th Five-year National Economic Plan (1981–1985), the objectives were to receive 1.3 to 1.6 million foreign tourists and 6 million Chinese compatriots (residents of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan), with a targeted revenue of \$1.2 to \$1.3 billion. Also, China allocated a RMB 5 billion (\$605.3 million) annual budget for 5 consecutive years (1984–1988) to the improvement of tourism infrastructure. In 1986, this industry received a prominent place in the national social and economic development plan. The state's attempt to use it as a development tool was expressed explicitly in Chapter 37 of China's 7th Five-year Plan (1986–1990), which further substantiated its role as a significant economic sector. In the 8th Five-year Plan (1991–1995), more prominence was directed to the development of the tertiary sector and tourism was positioned as a priority activity.

Tourism is playing an increasingly important role in today's Chinese economy. In the 9th Five-year National Economic Plan (1996–2000) and a national conference on economic tasks that took place in December 1998, this industry, together with real estate and information technology was defined as one of the "prominent growth points" of the national economy. In the country's modernization process, tourism was portrayed as a "pillar industry", a "priority industry" or a "pioneer industry" by 24 local governments of provinces, autonomous areas, and municipalities. As well, there is wide recognition, both at home and from abroad, viewing tourism as "a language and canvas for finishing China's incomplete modernity" (Choy and Gee 1983; Hall 1994; Oakes 1998:128; Richter 1983; Uysal, Wei and Reid 1986; Zhang 1985).

Table 1 summarizes the evolutionary changes that have taken place in China's policy and development approaches over the last five decades. Tourism, from being virtually synonymous with political and diplomatic activities in the late 40s through to the mid-70s, was endowed with more realistic economic objectives after the inception of the open door policy in 1978. However, with decentralization and deregulation being slowly put in place, developments have been authoritarian in nature and were largely used as means to diversify an economy based on heavy industry. The current situation in China is one in which political controls remain rigid even when economic controls have been gradually relaxed and continue to be further loosened. An autocratic growth-oriented principle—"development is an irrefutable argument"—is perpetuated in development and planning decisions. Hence, local participation in China's plans rarely refers to the involvement of *gatihus* (private proprietors) but predominantly pertains to the agencies of local regional governments.

Under the ideologies of communism and socialism, individualism is viewed as embodying dissent. The Chinese are exhorted to conform through unity, uniformity, and collectivism. It is often overlooked that

Table 1. The Evolution of Tourism Planning in China^a

Attributes	1949–1978	1979–1980s	1990s onwards
Motivation	Expanding political reach	National economic growth	Regional development
Objectives	Diplomatic relationships	Foreign exchange Balance-of-payment	Foreign exchange Modernization
Approach	Controlled	Centralized	Decentralized
Mechanism	As a diplomatic strategy	As an economic sector	As a social-cultural activity
Focus	Establishment of tourism organization responsible for reception of “selected” visitors	Increase of accommodation capacity Ease of accessibility Simplification of entry formalities	Product development Diversification of ownership Marketing and promotion
Targeted visitor group	Tourists from socialist countries and non-aligned nations	International tourists Chinese compatriots from Hong Kong and Macao Overseas Chinese	International tourists Chinese compatriots from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan Domestic tourists
Constraints	Political considerations	Political considerations Lack of planning and management expertise Shortage of trained staff Unbalanced investment in tourism infrastructure Sanitation	Political considerations Loss of shares of tourism equity ownership Shortage of trained staff Over-supply of accommodation

^a Constructed by authors.

the Chinese, in becoming involved in this industry, are typically hampered by their lack of familiarity with service skills, marketing, and tourism cultures. Reflecting the nature of the socialist system, little consideration has been given to how to inculcate or empower an individual’s participation in tourism. The self-employed or entrepreneurial groups have not been encouraged to become involved. This is because entrepreneurship still lacks the full support of the public sector. In fact, it is deterred to some extent by the governments at all levels (Liu and Wall 2003). As evidenced in Xu’s studies (1999), people-centered, community-responsive, and socially responsible approaches to policy formulations, planning, and management remain largely unknown.

China’s current tourism phenomena suggest that, over the expansionary period of the 80’s and 90’s, a more balanced investment in sup-

porting infrastructure and personnel training would have been desirable, rather than almost exclusively concentrating on increasing accommodation capacity, particularly luxury establishments. Citing other sources, according to Hall, “even after ten years of being open to international tourists, such basics as confirmed reservation, property maintenance, quality control, sanitation, and staff training are large hurdles to overcome” (1994:127). It appears that the benefits which the Chinese authorities have expected are still somewhat elusive.

Tourism and Local Participation

China has a long history of practicing tourism for wide-ranging purposes. Diplomatic and trade interactions with tributary states were active during the past 4,000-year imperial era. Sunzhang Monk’s pilgrimage to Northern India dated back to the Tang Dynasty (AD 7). *Susheng* fellows (intellectuals and scholars) had to travel over a few thousand miles to the imperial capital for an annual examination that granted successful candidates official positions. Commercial and trade contacts were developed by inhabitants of South China by the beginning of the Christian era.

A pragmatic nature inherent within Chinese culture was literally suppressed due to a deliberate promotion of atheism and fears of intervention of Western countries into domestic affairs. This situation stifled tourism in the early days of the establishment of China. Tourism was even further set back when the Great Leap Forward (1958–1960) and the Cultural Revolution (1965–1970) occurred, as the ideology of the political body moved to the extreme left. The socialist regime held the doctrine that leisure, being perceived as nonproductive, undermines society, and tourism was often labeled as an endeavor of the bourgeoisie that contradicted the communist ideology of the formation of an unstratified society. People in such a society are “constrained in their mobility and methods of self-expression by the activities of security and other forces, and mass mobilization of workforces is employed to undertake major projects and emergency works, often proclaimed as voluntary effort” (Hall 1990:37–38).

Movement of the Chinese people was controlled by the *hukou* system, a social control system that binds residents to their birthplaces, instituted by Mao Zedong in 1958 (Ewing 2002). Their movement was also under the close scrutiny of their *danweis* (organization units) and was limited within their residential places and production points. Travel permits were required prior to the commencement of an itinerary within China. Even after the demise of the Gang of Four, the remnants of the Cultural Revolution still fostered anti-foreign sentiments, and caution in dealing with foreigners continued to be the norm (Lew 2000:269). Accessibility to the outside world has been administratively constrained both by domestic control and receiving countries’ vigilance against illegal migrants, even though recent policy relaxations have induced substantial outbound growth. In 1998, China generated 8.4 million outbound trips from a population of 1.27 billion, which

gives only an insignificant intensity ratio of 0.0066. Lack of exposure to the outside world by the Chinese has been a major hindrance preventing the country from attaining a reputation as an hospitable destination (Choy and Gee 1983; Oudiette 1990). The Western tourists' discourses have generally blamed austerities and people's foreignness to an unfamiliarity with their expectations.

The relative isolation, physically and spiritually, as well as the oppression and servitude that the Chinese people have gone through, have all resulted in only a vague sense of what the provision of services entails. Service spirit and skills were devalued under a political and economic environment in which heavy industrialization was seen as the way to achieve a consolidated socialist state. A "big rice pot" system was intended to strengthen collectivism in that every worker received the same wages regardless of the level of job sophistication or their share of work. This diminished workers' enthusiasm and commitments to their responsibilities. As observed by Choy and Gee (1983), the perceived servile nature of service positions and the fact that individuals were assigned by the state to employment in tourism contributed to low motivation and morale among service personnel.

China has gradually opened to tourism without jeopardizing its political, economic, and social agendas. For example, in 1982, an additional permit was required along with a visa to visit a particular city. In 1983, 30 cities were opened to foreign tourists. Free access was then increased to 107 cities in 1985 and to 244 in 1986 (Choy, Dong and Wen 1986; Richter 1983; Zhang 1985). Full freedom of movement within the country was then virtually possible. In 1981, three years after openness was initiated, Richter found several anomalies: "more market-oriented cost structure than in most non-socialist developing nations; a hierarchy of tourist classes in a supposedly classless society; liberalization in tourism itineraries along with a freezing of contacts between tourists and Chinese" (1983:395). At the same time, some Chinese people experienced stunningly the social, cultural, and economic disparities from their encounters with tourists. Arguments, mostly from domestic commentators, were made expressing intolerance of mimicking "Western ways" by youngsters, greatly reminiscent of the orders underpinning the centrally-planned economy. Too often tourism was conveniently condemned for the emergence of non-socialist behaviors and, as put by Zhang (1995:15), as a "scapegoat" for prevailing social problems in China.

Gao and Zhang claimed that tourism was at fault for exerting "unhealthy" and "uncivilized" influences on the Chinese people:

Some weak-willed Chinese, youngsters in particular, could not withstand such influences and blindly pursue the way of life of the foreigners. Also smuggling, contraband trafficking, divulging state secrets, and other offenses occurred. These have violated the decency and image of socialist China and should not be tolerated (1983:78).

Similarly, Zhang (1995) condemned covetous behaviors that have become pervasive in many tourism areas, such as over-charging, bribes, prostitution, and illegal trading of foreign currencies that were

nowhere to be seen during the Cultural Revolution. Resentments from the Chinese could also be discerned owing to apparent ideological rifts or real disparities between the hosts and guests.

China has attempted a self-styled or genuine Chinese tourism, which has progressed through government-led development decisions. He (1999), Director of CNTA, claimed that, over the course of the last 5 decades, a set of effective mechanisms has been used to promote economic development that has proven to be appropriate for the Chinese culture and a socialist state. However, one dilemma that has confronted the policymakers is to determine an appropriate level of foreign investment (Hall 1994) and, at the same time, to help state-owned and collective entities fight for a greater market share. Overreliance on foreign capital in fostering tourism has led to a leakage of up to 80% of the foreign exchange garnered from this source at the initial stage of massive construction of international standard hotel premises (Richter 1983). Problems have also arisen from difficulties in meeting the material needs of the industry from domestic sources. Complicated corporate governance is another issue that has implications for management incentives, decisionmaking, employee welfare and rewards, and competitiveness in acquiring clientele. In general, foreign-owned entities outperform the locally-operated counterparts and have higher employee productivities. Establishments owned by the local, provincial, or central governments, in many cases, serve as little more than employment centers.

Workforce Development Strategies

China undoubtedly has an ample labor supply (an estimated 700 million strong), albeit with a surplus of primitive skills and low productivity. Ambitious movements toward modernization and dependency on mobile investments (largely foreign capital), however, have inevitably led to an uneven development across the regions. Regional development and resources allocation have appeared to be asymmetric in that, aside from the major cities and special economic zones, the remainder of the country is largely comprised of areas of low productivity with high rates of illiteracy and high unemployment. This has resulted in an uneven distribution of employment opportunities. In the five years from 2001 onwards, an anticipated 40 million jobs in urban areas are expected to absorb the equivalent amount of labor moving from rural areas or the agricultural sector. At the same time, urban unemployment is projected to reach 12 million, whereas the surplus laborforce in rural areas is to be over 100 million people (China Times 2001).

With limited job alternatives, there is a growing amount of urbanward migration—termed by Chinese as *liudong renkou* (floating population)—moving from their peasant jobs to seek more lucrative employment opportunities. Tourism destinations have become one of the magnetic poles of employment to the migrants (Xu 1999). As well, according to an estimate by Liu (1998), in 1988 the tourism labor productivity surpassed by 6% that of the average of all industrial

sectors. It is in this context, though somewhat misinterpreted, that tourism was considered by the central government as an industry that "requires less investment, yet has quicker results, better efficiency, larger employment potential, and a greater prospect for improving people's livelihood than many other tertiary service sectors" (Zhang 1995:9).

Nevertheless, the types of targeted tourists and modes of development have significant implications for the character and extent of local participation in tourism economic activities (Echtner 1995; France 1998). In China's case, the highly centralized socialist system hindered locals' direct involvement. Initial development adopted a self-sustaining, socialist approach using existing resources. Tourism's workforce requirements at the early stage of China's establishment were minimal, given the relatively small scale of the activity and the fact that the distribution of labor was directed by the state and, particularly, with its ability to mobilize labor instantaneously. However, as the country shifted towards the pursuit of substantial funds for building international tourism, acceptance of external influences has become inevitable. This strategy contributed to a more diversified ownership structure but with minimal direct involvement of the locals, leading to their "passive" participation in tourism economic activities.

As the industry quickly expanded, the locals' abilities to respond to its (as a new economic sector) requirements were also problematic. Training and education for personnel were nonexistent prior to 1978 (Zhang 1987). It then germinated with the establishment of Jiangsu Technical School of Tourism (Xiao and Liu 1995). Pressing needs for an adequate workforce to cater to ever-increasing visitation were not properly met: "investment has been made in infrastructure, e.g. hotels, tourist attractions, and purchase of vehicles and airplanes, while education and training for tourism has (*sic*) been neglected" (Zhang 1987:264). Not surprisingly, many writers have been critical of China's capacity to satisfy the requirements of tourists, with most referring to the very low standard of services (Choy and Gee 1983; Hall 1994; Oudiette 1990; Uysal et al 1986). This problem has arisen from workers' lack of knowledge and means to understand and respond to the needs of their consumers.

As a means of alleviating this problem, the government instituted crash programs (mainly foreign languages) to help service personnel eliminate communication barriers. At the same time, some costly training opportunities abroad were also provided: for example, "cooks are being trained in Hong Kong; travel experts are studying at Cornell University" (Richter 1983:406). This was followed by a series of education and training initiatives maneuvered jointly by the State Education Commission and the Department of Personnel, Labor and Education of CNTA, through the design of curricula and guidelines, quality monitoring, teaching material editorials, and resources allocation.

Initially, education programs at the tertiary level outpaced those of secondary and vocational categories. By 1986, according to Zhang (1987:263), there were 4 tourism institutes and 10 universities/colleges

offering courses related to tourism, together with 4 secondary schools, producing a total of 3,896 graduates (2,426 at tertiary level and 1,470 at secondary level). By 1987, workers who had undertaken training courses instituted by the state accumulated to 27,700 (CNTA statistics).

Tourism studies have since proliferated. At the end of 2001, there were 1,152 institutes (311 tertiary level institutes and 841 secondary schools) involved in tourism education with total enrollments of 342,793 (102,254 enrolled at tertiary level and 240,548 at secondary level) (Chen and Yu 2002). Four universities offer doctoral programs in tourism. A pyramidal-structured education system (graduate studies 2.8%, universities 8.2%, polytechnics 18.7%, and secondary schools 73%) mirrors the industry's demands for personnel. Recent trends include a continued growth in tertiary programs but, between 1999 and 2001, 137 (14%) tourism programs in secondary schools ceased to exist. Progress, however, was reduced by lack of familiarity with tourism by teaching staff, lack of teaching materials and information sources, and poor hardware for technical practices. Uneven geographic distribution of institutes reflected the level of tourism development locally. The majority of programs and courses was concentrated in large metropolitan areas or the most populous Chinese cities, such as Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou. Licensing systems for tour guides, tour operators, and managers of star-rated hotels were also put in place to regulate the Chinese tourism personnel.

Reflecting on the nature of tourism policy and the development approach adopted, China's education and training have been dogmatic in nature. The governing principle set for developing its workforce has been to perpetuate state socialism, which did not fully integrate with local labor trends nor the industry's requirements. The emphasis on political doctrines has been combined with precautions to help diminish perceived spiritual defilement or contagion of bad practices induced by tourism. As of 1999, the four training areas designated by the CNTA as fundamental were political thoughts, professional ethics, tourism policies and administration, and up-to-date operational skills and knowledge. Hence, considerable efforts were incorporated to indoctrinate participants with the following tenet:

.... tourism serves as a showpiece for China's sociocultural and political traditions and heritage, and is helping to extend and expand China's relationship with foreign countries, as well as contributing to the "four modernizations (Gao and Zhang 1983:78).

It is in this context that the Chinese officialdom attempts to have graduates or trained staff adhere to an avowed aim of "showcasing the brightness of the country". Regime attitudes of suspicion towards the industry are persistent and tenacious. The response from the tourism administrative body of China to the Tiananmen Square turmoil exposes how much prominence has been given to imparting "correct" political thoughts in training personnel. According to Parker (1992), "China's estimated 620,000 tourism workers underwent compulsory political indoctrination that aimed to cleanse their socialist minds,

deepen their love of the Communist Party and, alarmingly, to cultivate their suspicions of foreigners presumed by paranoid leaders to be bent on sundering communists" (cited in Hall 1994:123).

Tourism semantics now largely reflect an intimate association with economic, rather than political or diplomatic priorities. Thus, complementing the propaganda requirements, education and training objectives have gradually been transformed to be situated closer to the needs of the industry (Zhang 1987). Education and training initiatives encompass pre-employment and skill-upgrading and are driven by the needs of hospitality establishments, primarily catering to the staffing needs of the hotels, tour operators and travel agencies, cruise operators, and tourism administrative bodies.

Availability of training opportunities has also been broadened through collaboration with foreign institutes, personnel exchange programs with other affiliated hotel ventures, and more personnel/educators are being dispatched abroad for advanced studies. Intellectual exchanges are forged through frequent visits of foreign experts commissioned both by local and foreign resources. Inhouse training for senior staff of administrations at provincial, autonomous region, and municipal levels is also in place to improve professional qualities.

However, entrepreneurship is not a concept that is readily acceptable to the centrally dominant organizational model. Even with notions of the competing demands for human resources in a market-oriented economy and high human capital mobility, the core strategies for human resources are still conservatively and narrowly set by the national officials to "attract people, manage people, and retain people" (Chen 2002). Under the ideologies of communism and socialism, individualism is associated with dissension. There is limited recognition of small business, by both the government and educational circles, and, the state manifests apathy towards such operators.

Involvement of *gateihu* (mainland Chinese's term for the self-employed, meaning literally "individuals who are working on their own account") is seen as trivializing the tourism economy. Officials freely admit that they do not regard the *gateihu* as having a role to play in tourism in any capacity. Negatively perceived, the petty traders are seen to inflect the orders and image of the country. Actions are taken to eliminate their spread in the designated areas. Also, citizens are exhorted to uniformity, unity, and collectivism. It is often overlooked that people, in their involvement in tourism, are typically hampered by their unfamiliarity with service skills and tourism cultures. Reflecting the nature of the socialist system, China's planning and management has given hardly any consideration to how to inculcate entrepreneurship or empower individual participation in businesses.

Wei in an overview of the last two decades, stated: "what is most gratifying about the tourism growth in China is what one sees as the emergence of the first group of professionals" (1999:24), who are marked by CNTA as being dedicated (love what they do), professional (know what they are doing, know how to do their jobs and observe work ethics) and open-minded (ready to learn). However, Oudiette's observation, which was quite otherwise, still legitimately describes the

current weaknesses that exist among personnel: great training efforts are required to facilitate "a real change of mentality" to make Chinese workers more familiar with the essence of services (1990:128).

The above points are made from a touristic vision that demands that international service standards and quality expectations are met. Notwithstanding, it suggests that greater adaptations are required to devise practical mechanisms for human resources development, rather than relying so heavily on imparting dogma to support an outdated image. While the authority's focus on planning human capital has switched somewhat towards a system of catering to more diverse tourism demands, the industry has yet to fulfill its potential as an employer. For example, widespread use of appearance, age, and height, as important factors for recruitment (Chen 2002), limited the ability of the marginalized to enter tourism jobs. Unfortunately, labor deficiencies and the employment demands confronted by rapidly growing destinations and measures to address such issues are seldom given priority when planning tourism in China.

Policy Implications for Human Resources

Tourism is a latecomer to China's modernization plans, but it has been and is being used by the state as an important means of reducing regional disparities. However, the ultimate objective of the authority's endeavors is to stimulate significant tourism expenditure increases in the national economy. Consequently, the mode, scale, and techniques of tourism development envisaged by the public sector are often at odds with local capacities. These employment needs and opportunities, though often acknowledged, are generally poorly articulated, yet are of fundamental importance if local people are to be beneficiaries of development.

China has benefited from the direct employment opportunities created within tourism establishments, but realization of secondary employment effects in other sectors supporting this industry is a persistent challenge. Spread effects to other economic sectors are often limited, primarily because of narrowly-focused development interests in exploitation of attractions and expansion of accommodation facilities. The public sector does not recognize the value of entrepreneurship to meet the needs of the domestic market as beneficial, given the fact that domestic tourism (which has grown rapidly in China in recent years) requires less sophisticated services and facilities than international tourism. However, it provides great opportunities to local people to participate with limited capital and modest supplies. Initially, when tourism was resumed and promoted in Mao's era, the personnel employed in the industry was labor deployed by the state. As well, despite contemporary economic dynamics and strong materialistic attitudes, especially among the young in the eastern cities, an overt wealth-oriented mentality is still largely taboo in that it contradicts socialist doctrines. Thus, entrepreneurial activities in China tend to have a marginal position in official tourism development schemes.

In recent years, many education and training endeavors have been planned to foster the creation of a services culture and to upgrade the services skills that were missing in the past. However, a commonality found in this country and in most developing countries is an internationalization process that predominately caters to a foreign clientele's tastes and requirements. The production of trained labor, in its present form, has not enabled most individuals to derive substantial benefits from their participation in this business. There is also an underestimation of the importance of domestic tourism as a home-grown, self-reliant initiative to inspire local entrepreneurship. This does not encourage the flourishing of locally-owned small enterprises.

China's strategies for workforce development do not reflect a self-sustaining approach as proclaimed by its leadership nor do they create appropriate options to eliminate the high unemployment situation. The administration, both at central and provincial levels, trivializes the petty trades, which can be an economical method of employment generation and, more significantly, can be maneuvered to boost indigenous entrepreneurs' movement into tourism, using their traditional products. It appears that decisionmakers have not fully appreciated or articulated the employment effects and the pivotal role that human capital plays in sustaining the viability of an economy.

Observations from China provide evidence that the level of incorporation of tourism into the local economy and its employment effects are largely determined by historical precedents and state ideology. This industry has been keenly pursued because of the perceived need to support political, social, and economic agendas and to place the destination on the world map. At the same time, adequate human capital is generally lacking. This substantial issue negatively affects receipts. The provision of human capital relies greatly on the initiatives of employers. As such, human resource issues are often dealt with at micro levels that have an intimate association with the needs perceived by corporate management or narrow commercial interests.

Even when the cultivation of human capital is acknowledged as an essential component in the planning process, the nature and scope of human resources development is often profiled according to operators' requirements, further contributing to the perpetuation of the privileged status of larger-scale operators. As well, the mechanisms concentrate on building destination competitiveness in the global marketplace without fully comprehending the local contribution to spreading benefits equitably and expeditiously. Such an orientation in developing human capital encourages the external capitalists' interests in becoming directly involved in the destination areas, since craftsmanship and mastery give employers competitive advantages in attaining services standards. However, this is not necessarily beneficial to the elevation of local tourism operatives. One consequence of these tendencies is that only commercial interests are in a position to coordinate, effect, construct, operate, and profit from the deployment of human resources development strategies.

The public sector's ambition to actualize images of advancement, modernization, and developed status further detracts from tourism's

ability to contribute to the achievement of structural reorganization in local social and economic milieux. Particularly under the hierarchical structures in place in the internal economic systems, the working population's limited knowledge and skill deficiencies perpetuate low standards of service within the tertiary sector. A structural transformation is, therefore, difficult to achieve.

Although the tourism economy is flourishing, while craft training is sought to achieve operational professionalism, most of the higher-level skills and management expertise are rarely cultivated and accumulated locally. Thus, the anticipated benefits are minimal to the host populations, because of their inability to manage their resources and to take part in the development. At the same time, empirical information suggests that tourism is not a highly-rated form of employment, mainly because of unfamiliarity with the nature of these jobs and the lack of competitive pay for most positions (although the situation may be different where there are few alternative employment opportunities). This presents a limitation to using tourism as a social and economic development strategy and blocks creation of potential employment in smaller, locally-owned establishments.

CONCLUSION

Very different evaluations exist concerning the benefits that tourism can bring to the hosts. At the same time, the studies of human resources management give priority to the concerns of the industry and, as a result, the importance of the human dimension in planning frameworks has been underplayed. Examples from China indicate that, despite the highly variable remuneration levels of jobs, tourism attracts labor from the land and is often regarded as being more lucrative than other forms of employment. It is also expected to help meet high employment demands from the country's large work population and, particularly, rural migrant workers.

In situations of economic transition, as in China, the dilemma of skills and knowledge deficiencies of destination hosts and the frequent lack of an adequate response by policymakers and planners are obstacles preventing the locals from benefiting from development. These circumstances are actually common to many developing countries as well as countries in Eastern Europe in a state of economic transition (Burns 1998; Baum 1993). China's pursuit of tourism has been largely revenue-driven as part of its modernization process. It is seen as a "pillar industry", but the large number of marginalized workers does not fit well with the service culture of tourism. Sensitivity to local needs and capacity has been lacking.

With due attention to human capital by the public, industrial, and educational sectors, an outcome of education and training efforts could be a mix of all types of personnel, thus satisfying the workforce demands of the multiple sectors involved in tourism and also promoting upward labor mobility. However, for this to occur, it will be

necessary to adopt an approach that goes beyond the dominant physical orientation and growth philosophy of most tourism plans. **A**

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