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TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR A
SUCCESSFUL TOURISM INDUSTRY IN NEWFOUNDLAND:
A Literature Review

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Abstract

This paper reviews literature on training and development, tourism training, and rural tourism and identifies information that may contribute to a successful tourism industry in Newfoundland, Canada. Upon review, a set of considerations is provided for the purpose of understanding training and development needs in a rural context. This paper aims to interpret previous research in order to condense it into practical and accessible information for tourism professionals and policy makers in the province. Findings suggest that cooperation among stakeholders is critical to the success of the rural tourism industry.

Keywords: tourism industry, training and development, rural tourism

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Training and Development for a Successful Tourism Industry in Newfoundland: A Literature Review

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the Canadian economy has shifted away from manufacturing and towards more service-based industries (Heron, 1996). The tourism industry has become the single largest employer in Canada (MacLaurin, 2005), and provides new jobs and opportunities to diversify the economy. The tourism and hospitality industry incorporates many different types of businesses, such as accommodations and food service providers, transportation companies, and tour operators. As a labour-intensive industry, organizations depend on the availability of good quality personnel to deliver, operate, and manage the tourist product (Amoah & Baum, 1997) as well as for competitive advantage (Zagonari, 2009). Thus, organizations must ensure that their employees are capable of providing top quality service to increasingly discerning customers in a global market.

One integral aspect of ensuring that employees have the right knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide top service is providing effective training. Training and development in organizations has come to be seen as a normal cost of doing business in order for companies to maintain productivity (Percival, Cozzarin, & Formanek, 2013) and stay competitive in the marketplace (Zagonari, 2009). The purpose of this paper is to interpret previous research in the areas of training and development, tourism training, and rural tourism in order to condense it into practical and accessible information for tourism professionals and policy makers to continue growing the success of tourism in rural parts of Newfoundland, Canada. Major sources of economic growth are usually associated with urban centres (Jarábková & Hamada, 2012) that attract and support a variety of businesses. Thus, the remaining rural parts of the province represent an opportunity for growth and prosperity if economic diversification is a viable option to support the people who live in these rural areas.

In the sections that follow, separate analyses are aimed at capturing the essence of the training and development literature, the tourism training literature, and the rural tourism literature. First, a snapshot is provided to outline definitions and give context to the following analyses. Then, in the review of tourism training and rural tourism, subsections are offered to focus on specific details relevant for Newfoundland. The discussion aims to synthesize the preceding sections and offers useful comparison of the literature as well as practical reference material to tourism industry professionals and policy makers.

Definitions and Context

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the easternmost province in Canada, has a modest population of just over 526,000 people (Statistics Canada, 2014). Based on the 2011 census, the population is 59% urban and 41% rural (Statistics Canada, 2011). According to Statistics Canada, the definition of rural

population refers to persons living outside centres with a population of 1,000 as well as outside areas with 400 persons per square kilometer (Statistics Canada, 2011). However, this appears to be a conservative measure. In the literature, ruralness is based on distance from city centres, and often refers to areas with a population of less than 6,000 people (MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003). Other factors also characterize rural areas, such as low density of buildings and residents, a resource-based economy, separation from the urban landscape, and a connection to small-community values and heritage (Kulczycki, 2008; MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003). The conceptualization of rural areas used in this paper is in line with the rural tourism literature and pertains mostly to distance from the core economy and population density.

The island of Newfoundland has three incorporated cities: St. John's and Mount Pearl on the Avalon Peninsula, and Corner Brook on the West Coast. Mount Pearl is Newfoundland's youngest city; it assumed city status in 1988 (Webb, 2000). The greater St. John's area includes other large towns such as Conception Bay South, Paradise, and Portugal Cove-St. Philips. Large towns in other parts of the province include Grand Falls-Windsor, Gander, Torbay, Stephenville, and Clarenville. These large towns can also be considered urban centres based on their populations, but also because they may act as economic hubs for outlying communities. Thus, for the purposes of this paper, areas outside the centres listed above are considered to be rural in nature. It should also be noted, Labrador is not discounted in this analysis, merely excluded for the convenience afforded by comparing the island portion of the province with other island societies in the North Atlantic.

Economically, Newfoundland has historically been characterized by dependence on the fishery, and susceptibility to high unemployment levels (Baum, 1999). Since the cod fishery was closed in 1992, the province has been under immense pressure to diversify local industry (Felt, 2003). The offshore oil and gas industry has more recently begun to develop, but tourism has been a part of the economic mix in Newfoundland for almost 100 years (Seymour, 1980). Over the past decades, provincial government has invested considerable budgets into developing and marketing all that Newfoundland has to offer (Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, 2013a). Now more than ever, Newfoundland is on the world stage as a tourism destination for travellers locally and from around the globe. With a view to the current situation, this paper explores how training and development might play a role in contributing to the success of rural tourism in Newfoundland.

Training & Development

In the section that follows, the focus is on how training and development provides value to organizations. Generalizations from the literature are gathered in order to inform further sections and contribute to the synthesis. Such an overview is helpful to understanding training and development in more specific contexts.

Billions of dollars are invested in training each year; organizations spend about 135 billion dollars in training individuals in the United States alone (Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, & Smith-Jentsch, 2012). In Canada, the numbers fall slightly behind, but still account for significant investment. While it is estimated that about \$1202 is invested in training per employee in the United States, individual training expense is valued at \$746 (US dollars) per employee in Canada. However, both pale in comparison to the United Kingdom where training expenditure is at an estimated US\$2728 per employee (Percival et al., 2013). Salas and colleagues (2012) eloquently explain why such expenditure is valuable to organizations:

Training and development activities allow organizations to adapt, compete, excel, innovate, produce, be safe, improve service, and reach goals. Training has successfully been used to reduce errors in such high-risk settings as emergency rooms, aviation, and the military. However, training is also important in more conventional organizations. These organizations understand that training helps them to remain competitive by continually educating their workforce. (p. 74)

Salas and colleagues (2012) provide a comprehensive practical review of the science of training and development in organizations to show that training does work to ensure a skilled workforce. Practical guidance is offered on the most effective ways to design, deliver, and implement training programs. However, training is not just an event that occurs in a classroom, “training is now viewed as a system that is essential to promote learning and enhance on-the-job performance” (Salas et al., 2012, p. 95). Viewing training as a system means that organizations must take into account what happens before, during, and after training to ensure results. By considering training needs analysis, the learning climate, individual characteristics, instructional strategies and principles, transfer of training, and training evaluation, business leaders and policy makers can maximize employee learning and position their organizations to be competitive and excel in their industry (Salas et al., 2012).

It is now clear that well designed, delivered, and implemented training works and can help to maintain competitive advantage (Korda, 2012; Salas et al., 2012), but there is still work to be done in understanding exactly how training investment translates into organizational success. Current research suggests that more can be done to measure the effect of training initiatives on organizational outcomes (e.g. sales, quality, customer service) (Tharenou, Saks, & Moore, 2007). This does not discount the positive effects of training individuals, rather it emphasises the goal of understanding the mechanisms at work that produce positive outcomes for entire organizations. In an extensive meta-analysis of 67 studies investigating the relationship between training and human resource, performance, and financial outcomes, Tharenou, Saks, and Moore (2007) found evidence that greater training by organizations is related to greater organizational performance. For example, work quality, as measured by customer responses, showed a positive correlation to training efforts. However, it is suggested that

much more is known about the effects of training at the level of an individual worker, and less is known about how it translates to the greater organization. Therefore, Tharenou and colleagues (2007) urge researchers to continue working to bridge the micro-macro gap in understanding (i.e. understand how individual training success can lead to success in an organization).

Percival, Cozzarin, and Formanek (2013) extend Tharenou, Saks, and Moore's (2007) research by exploring the evidence of the impact of training on productivity in Canada. The authors used quantitative data from Statistics Canada's Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) containing information on 14 industries over seven years between 1999-2005. The findings suggest that 12 of the 14 industries showed positive correlation between training expenditure and productivity. However, only three of the 14 industries showed financial returns on investment of training dollars. Yet, it is indicated that in order to maintain current labour productivity, (even for the industries that did not show financial returns in this study), maintaining training efforts may remain in the best interest of organizations. Due to normal occurrences such as employee turnover or technological change, training should be considered a normal cost of doing business when it comes to maintaining labour productivity relative to competitors (Percival et al., 2013).

Over 50 years ago, Don Kirkpatrick published guidelines for practitioners for measuring the effectiveness of training (as cited in Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2010). Despite academic debate and criticism, Kirkpatrick's "four levels", measuring 1) trainee reactions, 2) learning, 3) behaviour, and 4) results, are recommended as a strategy for training evaluation (Salas et al., 2012). Pervailing popularity of Kirkpatrick's four levels allows organizations to compare training efforts to those in the same industry (Salas et al., 2012). Kilkelly (2010) advises Human Resources (HR) practitioners to take a holistic approach to evaluating the return on investment (ROI) for training programs. Further to Kirkpatrick's four levels, Kilkelly (2010) suggests first evaluating organizational capability to identify gaps in employee knowledge, then deduce where personal capability can be improved. Ultimately, the arguments ring true with Tharenou and colleagues' (2007) call for integration of micro and macro levels of capability and performance: "To deliver real value, training should facilitate the ongoing improvement of organizational as well as individual capability" (Kilkelly, 2010, p. 43). Following a separate but closely related body of research, the next section explores how training and development has been undertaken in the tourism industry.

Tourism Training

Tourism education, as a scholastic option for students and as a field of study for researchers, is relatively new. Canadian colleges and universities began to offer tourism training programs in the late 1960s (MacLaurin, 2005). Yet, knowledge has expanded rapidly through the work of social scientists (Stergiou, Airey, & Riley, 2008) and the tourism industry has developed into the world's largest and fastest developing industry (MacLaurin, 2005). While it should

be noted that education and training are often defined separately in the literature, both will be used interchangeably in this paper. For example, Zagonari (2009) defines vocational training, usually attained at schools, as where students acquire well-defined skills transferable to the workplace. This is distinguished from education, referring to formal schooling, usually attained at universities, with the purpose of preparing students to “learn how to learn in order to be flexible enough to cope with the changing skill requirements and rapid technological advances” in the tourism industry (Zagonari, 2009, p. 2). Yet, for the purposes of this paper, both education and training are treated as viable options for improving the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) of tourism employees.

Zagonari (2009) discusses the challenges of bringing together multiple stakeholders (students/employees, employers, educational institutions, and governments) to develop mutually beneficial tourism curriculum and training options. The appeal is made for more integration of stakeholder efforts, arguing that a “professional and well-educated workforce is essential to the provision of quality service and enhancing overall service delivery in a global market,” particularly in the face of changing skill requirements and rapid technological advancement (Zagonari, 2009, p. 4). Canada and the Republic of Ireland are cited as countries that model such integration of national policy development with training and development activity for the tourism industry (Zagonari, 2009). In Canada, these stakeholder relationships are described as being pluralistic (MacLaurin, 2005). Pluralism, in this case, refers to both the private sector and government having jurisdiction over the activities of people; tourism education in Canada has successfully developed through the pluralistic model (MacLaurin, 2005). Yet, given the complex and multidisciplinary nature of tourism, consistency across curriculums at different educational institutions is difficult to maintain. Thus, similar to the focus on outcome analysis and evaluation in the training and development literature discussed above, Stergiou and colleagues (2008) suggest a set of dimensions with which tourism training can be evaluated incorporating data collected from tourism students. Essentially, the dimensions outlined suggest that tourism teachers must have both knowledge and ability. Teachers require knowledge of the field while staying up-to-date with industry trends, but also the ability to organize classes in ways which will challenge student thinking (Stergiou et al., 2008). This speaks to students’ desires to achieve both educational and vocational outcomes. With such research, tourism education is not only being advanced, but teaching can be held to higher standards. MacLaurin (2008) asserts that other industries have long recognized the benefits of working strategically with universities and urges the tourism sector to do the same. Importantly for the topic of this paper, the literature predicts that the future of tourism education will include increasing use of distance learning technologies making flexible and distance learning a possibility regardless of time and location (Cho & Kang, 2005; MacLaurin, 2005). Further discussion is included in later sections.

The role of leadership in improving tourism and hospitality businesses has recently been explored (Alexakis 2011). It is accepted that, ultimately, it is the

behaviours of organizational leaders that shapes the business and the working environment of its employees. Essentially, “what effective tourism and hospitality industry leaders do is make work enjoyable, engaging, interesting, and otherwise intrinsically rewarding as an efficient means to further the organization’s goals” (Alexakis, 2011, p. 709). However, it would appear that this is not an easy task in light of the longstanding human resource issues that exist in the industry including a high proportion of part-time employees, low wages, irregular hours, high turnover, and poor career image (MacLaurin, 2005). Alexakis (2011) recommends tourism education that fosters leadership that embodies trust, appreciation of others, and empowerment. Empowering employees through supportive, nurturing, motivational leadership, leaders gain the ability to harness and utilize the full intellectual capital of their employees. Cho and Kang (2005) recommend training and development as vital business activity to ensure tourism employees feel valued, to help reduce staff turnover, and to ensure that staff who are promoted to supervisory or managerial positions can perform efficiently.

Tourism experts from around the world agree that enhanced human resource skills such as team building, effective listening and negotiation, motivation and leadership, working with distributed, virtual project teams, and emotional intelligence will be important factors in tourism education and training leading into the next decades (Sheldon, Fesenmaier, Woeber, Cooper, & Antonioli, 2008). With the understanding that these skills can be taught, it follows that tourism education and training will help to prepare students for success in the tourism industry. The following section explores tourism training available in Newfoundland.

Tourism Training in Newfoundland

Based in St. John’s, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador (HNL) is an organization dedicated to developing the tourism industry in the province (HNL, 2014). In cooperation with training program providers, HNL offers training programs for the tourism industry using several delivery methods including in-class, workshop, self-study, and online. Making study options available in multiple settings increases opportunities for training in rural areas where Internet connection is available. According to research on human resource management in the tourism industry, activities such as disseminating information about the industry as well as providing career guidance and counseling could stimulate local labour market participation (Popescu, Iancu, Popescu, & Vasile, 2013).

Another option in the province is provided by College of the North Atlantic (CNA), which offers a two-year diploma program in Hospitality Tourism Management to prepare students for supervisory or management roles in the tourism industry. Alternatively, students may obtain a certificate in Hospitality Tourism Management upon completion of the first year of the program. The program is offered at the Prince Philip Drive campus in St. John’s (CNA, 2014).

Additional training options are available through the Bonavista Institute for Cultural Tourism (BICT). The BICT was spearheaded by the CNA Bonavista campus with support from regional tourism agencies as well as the provincial government. Aimed at assisting tourism operators in providing world-class cultural experiences to visitors, several executive-level courses are offered with

substantial subsidies offered to qualified participants (BICT, 2014). Organizations like HNL and BICT provide opportunities for tourism industry stakeholders to collaborate with and provide educational opportunities to local businesses.

The Grenfell campus of Memorial University (MUN) began offering a Bachelor of Arts in Tourism Studies in September of 2006. Tourism Studies may also be taken as a minor in conjunction with a Bachelor of Arts, Science, or Business Administration degree. In addition, an advanced diploma of tourism studies is an option for students who have completed prior training or who may already be working in the tourism industry (MUN, 2014).

While many schools across Canada and abroad offer tourism programs, this section outlines some of the options available across the island that could provide promising talent for tourism businesses in the province. The following sections explore a sampling of the intricacies of rural tourism investigate the state of tourism in rural parts of Newfoundland.

Rural Tourism

Rural tourism is quite simply defined as tourism that takes place in rural areas (Kulczycki, 2008). Rural areas are attractive to tourists for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, picturesque scenery, farms, nature, adventure, arts, history and folklore, local food, and romantic notions of rural life (Farrell & Russell, 2011; MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003). In the rural tourism literature, many forms of tourism including cultural rural tourism (MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003), sustainable tourism (McAreevey & McDonagh, 2011), and creative tourism (Jarábková & Hamada, 2012) have been discussed in relation to rural locations. At the core of sustainable tourism are the “issues of economic efficiency and equity; environmental protection and cultural awareness” (McAreevey & McDonagh, 2011, p. 177). Creative tourism is defined by “authenticity of experiences that enable visitors to develop their creative potential and their skills by means of contact with local people and their culture” (Jarábková & Hamada, 2012, p. 10). All of these conceptualizations of tourism describe culture as an important aspect.

Described in a Canadian context, ‘cultural rural tourism’ is an integrative term used by MacDonald and Jolliffe (2003) to describe tourism activities that take place in a “distinct rural community with its own traditions, heritage, arts, lifestyles, places, and values as preserved between generations” (p. 308). The authors’ case study example of an Acadian community on Prince Edward Island (PEI) sheds light on the process of developing rural tourism. Specifically, evidence is provided to support three hypotheses suggesting that cultural rural tourism can: 1) be developed to provide a short-term and long-term economic tool for rural communities, 2) be a key to identify distinct rural communities as destinations for education, entertainment, and enrichment for tourists, and 3) be the impetus for partnerships and networking important for achieving a community’s goals. Ultimately, these findings are seen to aid in job creation for local residents and become a matter of interest to planners and policy makers (MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003).

A central theme to this research is that strong cooperatives within the community are seen to greatly impact the success of rural tourism development. MacDonald and Jolliffe (2003) provide a framework for the stages of cultural rural tourism development that addresses the formation of cooperatives. Stages 1 through 4 see increasing levels of cooperation from just a few residents involved in tourism, to community groups, to community partnerships and a formal tourism body, until a fully centralized, cooperative, and long-term body is responsible for planning and marketing of tourism. These stages suggest the evolution of a community's success in tourism pursuits based on the level of coordination of efforts within that community.

In a study by Jarábková & Hamada (2012) creative tourism is discussed as a form of tourism with particular success in rural areas. Examples of creative tourism activities include carpet and fabric weaving, culinary classes, wood carving courses, traditional music classes, and other hands-on activities. The main features of creative tourism involve a "visitor's active participation in the creation of a product and authentic experiences including learning, art, cultural heritage and the special character of a specific place" (Jarábková & Hamada, 2012, p. 13). It is suggested that creative tourism development can renew the local population's pride in their heritage and culture, and also add to the uniqueness of a destination and improve its competitiveness in the market.

In another study providing case study examples from Northern Ireland, McAreavey and McDonagh (2011) discuss some of the opportunities created by rural tourism:

Tourism and its integration into the rural product can be very much part of developing employment opportunities, increasing local prosperity, conservation and maintenance of the environment, celebrating cultural assets and generally ensuring a greater spread in terms of who can benefit (economically, socially and culturally). (p. 177)

Rural tourism represents an enticing way to diversify rural economies. Yet, McAreavey and McDonagh (2011) do not neglect to point out that with development comes the potential for conflict. In a public-private-voluntary sector partnership such as is recommended for tourism development, tensions can emerge between different interest groups during the development of policy and implementation of local strategies. Despite best intentions, "tourism groups do not always operate in a co-operative fashion, nor do those groups necessarily claim collective ownership for their activities" (McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011, p. 178). Suggesting that there is no "rulebook" for rural development that can be applied universally, McAreavey and McDonagh (2011) call for policy enhancements to facilitate improved synergy of purpose within and between communities, vested interest, individuals, state bodies, and other stakeholders. Robinson and Wiltshier (2011) recommend that for community-based tourism, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can benefit from membership with regional and national organizations as a way of ensuring performance standards are met and service quality can be benchmarked. This may also be a way to help

facilitate communication to minimize disagreement between different stakeholders. Robinson and Wiltshier (2011) further suggest that identifying membership with informal organizations, such as the local chamber of commerce, can reduce the burden on individual organizations. Some of the disadvantages of small-scale operation of SMEs (as is common in rural tourism) are difficulty developing resources and skills required to manage complex relationships with suppliers and consumers, as well as the time needed to up-skill employees. With so many stakeholders including tourism employees, tourism employers, communities, educational institutions, and governments, community level cooperation can help to bridge the gap and include various stakeholder opinions in the larger conversations. Thus, the benefit of co-operations whereby knowledge and expertise can be shared (particularly when supported by public sector input, business support systems, and partnerships and networks) is apparent when it results in the entire community in becoming a successful tourism destination. Upon reviewing the rural tourism literature, it becomes increasingly clear that cooperation among stakeholders is understood to have lasting effects on the success of rural tourism.

In Texas state, authors Murova & Hanagriff (2011) explored determinants of the returns to rural tourism by tracking state investment into 29 communities' tourism activities. In their practical study, quantitative data was collected to investigate the factors that impact the revenues collected by individual rural communities from organizing tourist events. Findings suggested that the age of an event has a great impact on revenues (age was shown to correlate positively) proposing that new events would require more advertising than longer running events in order to increase visitor numbers and revenues. Other findings suggest that local people's willingness to help "my community" positively impacted event revenues. Thus, it is recommended that the success of a local event should be shared widely with the host community in order to increase a sense of pride and belonging which could in turn contribute to the success of future events (Murova & Hanagriff, 2011). Such studies give practical advice for rural communities, planners, and policy makers based on quantitative understanding of the returns on rural tourism investment.

Farrell and Russell (2011) suggest that rural tourism is popular among wealthier socioeconomic groups, which is not surprising given the expense required to travel to and stay in some rural areas. Jarábková and Hamada (2012) further describe the target market as "contemporary postmodern visitors look[ing] for unique experiences which rural areas can provide by making use of their resources" (p. 8) such as natural, cultural, and historical potential. Using such resources, many 'thematic routes' have been successfully developed in Europe. For example, savvy travellers may explore a wine route, cheese route, salt-mining route, or German fairy tale route, travelling between linked communities to explore the food, history, traditions, and culture of a place (Jarábková & Hamada, 2012).

In China, rural tourism quickly gained ground as rural farms became less economically viable and many were repurposed to become tourism destinations for city dwellers looking to experience and enjoy a uniquely Chinese form of rural

tourism, “Nong jia le”(Happy Farmer Home) (Su, 2011). Su (2011) uses the example of “Nong jia le” to present six models of rural tourism development with varying degrees of external input. Su (2011) points out that government intervention has helped rural tourism flourish as a way of creating new jobs and promoting economic prosperity. Due to most owner/operators’ experience in the primary industry of farming, there exists a skills gap in the transition from farming activities to providing tourism services. It is suggested that “it is absolutely essential for all levels of government in collaboration with public sector agencies to promote a unified training system in order to train them for the managerial and marketing knowledge and capability they need” (Su, 2011, p. 1441). Furthermore, governments and tourism administrative authorities can provide cohesive marketing materials to entice the rural tourism market inclined to pursue higher quality products and personalized services. The financial support of government in China has also allowed for the restoration of traditional buildings and properties that may have otherwise fallen into disrepair. The younger generation of farmers who had formerly left to pursue work in urban areas have in some cases returned back to their hometowns to start small tourism businesses using the technological and managerial skills they learned elsewhere (Su, 2011). The development of “Nong jia le” and other forms of rural tourism have shown promise for the people and the economies of rural China.

While rural China and rural Newfoundland may initially seem incomparable, upon closer inspection the results of declining primary industry bear striking similarity as rural communities in both societies turn to tourism as a way of revitalizing local industry. The following section explores the circumstances in rural Newfoundland that contribute to the undertaking of rural tourism activities.

Rural Tourism in Newfoundland

The island of Newfoundland has seen increased economic restructuring as a result of the closure of the fishery in the 1990s. However, tourism is not a new part of the economic mix in the province. Almost 35 years ago, Seymour (1980) discussed the provincial tourism policy enacted in 1979 claiming, even then, that the policy was not “new” but was tackling the same issues (such as lack of accommodations and poor road quality) as previous efforts to attract tourists far prior to Newfoundland’s confederation with Canada in 1949. Seymour (1980) claimed that “the management of tourism in Newfoundland since the 1890s has followed unchanging line, both in terms of the images promoted and the kinds of infrastructure and attractions developed” (p. 38) and was skeptical about whether tourism, with its low-paying seasonal jobs, could contribute in any substantial way to improving the standard of living in rural areas of the province.

Although tourism alone may not provide the ‘silver bullet’ solution to ensuring prosperity through the decline of dominant industry, Baum (1999) analyzes how North Atlantic communities, in particular Newfoundland and Iceland, have incorporated tourism into their economies. In his analysis, Baum (1999) suggests that island destinations may have an advantage for attracting tourists with a sense of adventure and coherently articulates the island appeal:

Islands may be perceived by visitors as offering a significantly different environment to the pace and pressures of 'normal', particularly urban, living. Islands are seen as slower paced, emphasising traditional, old fashioned values — a real chance to 'get away from it all'. Of course, such images do not match all island situations, but, by and large, the picture of difference, tranquillity and 'another time' represents a key attraction for visitors to islands and is certainly evident in many locations, be they sun-drenched South Pacific destinations, [or] cold-water North Atlantic locations. (p. 48)

Thus, the virtue of being an island may hold additional appeal for adventurous visitors, but not without certain drawbacks. For example, the expense to travel to an island destination can be prohibitive to visitors travelling on a budget. Such is the case with Newfoundland being geographically distant from the priority routes of national airlines. The island is also accessed by ferry and cruise ship, but the vast majority of visitors arrive by plane (Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, 2013). Baum (1999) points out that one of the main contributing factors for helping potential visitors to overcome financial barriers to visiting Iceland has been the country's strong national carrier, Icelandair. Prior to deregulation, Icelandair promoted stopovers between North America and Europe as one of the cheapest options to cross the Atlantic (Baum, 1999). Yet, beyond enticing reductions to access cost, is it suggested that Iceland's success in tourism can be attributed in large part to an integrated, cooperative social structure supported by a community-led political system. Similar to Newfoundland, Iceland has been similarly affected by a decline in fishing as its primary industry. However, the Icelandic response to the economic need to diversify is strongly characterized by initiation at the local level with government playing an active policy and guiding role, while providing limited financial support. Baum (1999) considers the relative success of Iceland's tourism industry (compared to Newfoundland) at the turn of the 20th century as being attributed largely to this type of development initiated by cooperatives at the community level.

In addition to using Iceland for comparison, Felt (2003) discusses the success of a number of small, isolated communities in the North Atlantic with specific attention paid to lessons that might be useful to Newfoundland. Felt (2003) cautions that lessons learned from other societies cannot simply be applied or imposed, but must be modified and adapted to be of use. Advocating international competitiveness as a desired outcome, Felt (2003) claims that in Newfoundland "governments have too often justified extensive intervention in the development process with the rationalization that being small and geographically distant, extraordinary guarantees and subsidies (if not outright government ownership) were necessary to entice development" (p. 141). As understood from other North Atlantic island societies, providing generalized, non-monetary assistance to promote higher productivity is claimed to be more effective (Baum, 1999; Felt, 2003). This is an interesting point for consideration when assessing training and education options for people in rural areas. Indeed, Felt (2003) notes

a “strong, if not necessarily direct, relationship between education and economic prosperity” (p. 121) and provided the conclusion that high literacy levels are essential. Educational attainment and low levels of illiteracy are suggested to promote the rapid embrace of modern economic practices (Felt, 2003) as well as provide the groundwork for further learning. Since 2004, the Provincial Government has invested more than \$31 million to support literacy programming (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2009). It is unclear whether this is the type of government support that Felt (2003) and Baum (1999) might consider detrimental to the self-sufficiency of economies in North Atlantic societies.

To summarize what can be learned from the literature, a few of the key points to understanding tourism in rural Newfoundland are as follows: historically, tourism policy remained consistent for a number of years; being an island is not necessarily a disadvantage; there are lessons to be learned from the community-based, cooperative approach to tourism development (not necessarily external financial intervention); education and literacy are important for economic success; and tourism can play a part in successfully diversifying the economy of rural areas in the province. Given that the literature reviewed here is now more than a decade old, it became important to look elsewhere for indicators of the current condition of tourism in the province. Upon seeking out provincial government sources, it appears that there have been substantial efforts to improve the prospects for rural tourism over the past decade. Currently, one of the main strategic issues being addressed by the provincial Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (TCR) is aligning and strengthening tourism partnerships (Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, 2013b). By bringing together the Provincial Government, HNL, and regional Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) as the NL Tourism Board, strategic objectives can be discussed and commitments made. Already, the tourism industry supports over 17,000 jobs in the province. The TCR provides funding to the DMOs so that they might actively engage tourism operators in developmental initiatives as well as training (Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, 2013b).

Fundamentally, as pointed out by Su (2008), “tourism, frequently, creates a form and value of employment which is substantially different from that which existed previously, demanding skills which may not transfer easily” (Baum, 1999, p. 51). Diversifying from a primary industry such as fishing into service-based industry such as tourism takes time and the ability to learn new skills. However, as will be discussed below, aided by training and development initiatives, successful tourism in Newfoundland can continue to provide people with jobs and add value to the economy.

Discussion

A review of the literature indicates varying states of maturity across the areas of study. Although the training and development literature is young in the overall scope of business and management studies, it has increasingly gained attention and validity in the past couple decades. Tourism training and education

is a relatively recent field of too, having emerged in the late 1960s. Rural tourism is represented by a growing body of literature, showing a diversification away from primary industry in rural areas and support for rural tourism as an alternative to city-based vacations or sun and sand tourism activities.

The comparison of these bodies of literature provides some apparent similarities and dissimilarities that warrant discussion. A common theme across all the disciplines reviewed here is the call for collaboration and coordination of efforts between stakeholders. Additional themes span across the literature and have implications for rural tourism in Newfoundland. Below, connections are drawn between the literature to elaborate on the concepts of cooperatives in communities, the role of government, accessible education, and service quality and competitiveness in the rural tourism industry. Following this thematic discussion, a practical framework (see Table 1) is offered to support the decision to provide training and development for rural tourism in Newfoundland.

Cooperatives in Communities

As described by MacDonald and Jolliffe's (2003) four stages of community development, cooperatives in communities can signify the coming together of community members for the common goal of developing local tourism. The success of rural tourism in Iceland based on community cooperatives driving tourism development (Baum, 1999) is not dissimilar to the success story of the Acadian community on PEI described by MacDonald & Jolliffe (2003). Although cooperatives are not unsusceptible to disagreement (McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011) the more decisions that are made collectively, the more support is likely to be garnered locally. Furthermore, presenting a united effort during communications with DMOs may give communities greater sway in how their tourism offerings are marketed on a larger scale. By partnering with organizations that can offer support and training options (such as HNL), communities can be benefited more fully with the buying power of a cooperative versus individual business owners. Overall, there is support in the literature for the advantages of forming cooperatives to drive community development for the purposes of rural tourism.

The Role of Government

Perhaps the most variation in the literature concerns the views on the optimal way for governments to support rural tourism efforts. There is support for both high and low levels of government influence. Baum (1999) appears to weigh strongly in favour of government in a supportive role with limited financial input, as has been observed to be successful in Iceland. The main argument being that when communities have no financial fallback, they are more likely to be driven to succeed. Felt (2003) echoes sentiments of overgenerous government spending in the past, but would perhaps be less concerned if investment fell in line with the many considerations he put forward, such as improving literacy.

In his work using rural tourism examples from China, Su (2008) represents the other end of the spectrum, supporting government intervention as a way of providing necessary training to span the skills gap, and financial assistance to preserve and protect historic properties. Contrasting these various studies from

different parts of the world helps to provide the full spectrum of ideas on the role of government. Given the challenging task of ensuring tourism training curriculums remain consistent and of high standards across Canada, it is plausible that governments could support these efforts. Perhaps of greatest interest to tourism operators is what support their communities can expect to receive, whether financial or through coordinated marketing efforts, etc. So, while the literature provides varying perspectives on how government should be involved, it also remains the responsibility of rural communities to communicate their requirements to local, provincial, and federal levels of government. To advance the industry, governments may play a role in influencing tourism organizations to become more environmentally or ethically conscious (Zagonari, 2009) through policy and education. This in turn could have an effect on drawing the conscious consumer of tourism products to the province.

Accessible Education

Researchers have predicted the growth of more accessible forms of education, such as distance learning and virtual classrooms for tourism education and training (Cho & Kang, 2005; MacLaurin, 2005). Indeed, in a meeting of tourism educators from around the world, advanced human resource skills were identified as a key area of focus required for success in the tourism industry (Sheldon et al., 2008). In particular, it is suggested that students who learn to work with distributed, virtual project teams would have more success by way of access to additional ideas and resources not available in traditional educational settings. This is of particular importance to people in rural communities seeking tourism education if brick and mortar institutions are not feasible options due to distance. Virtual training methods have been developed but, as Salas and colleagues (2012) caution, they may not always be appropriate to the type of training required. Where hands-on skills are required, simulations can be developed and delivered virtually, but may not wholly substitute traditional in-person training methods. Thus, while online training and education becomes increasingly available, decision-makers are advised to consider whether the outcomes they require can be met by such programs. Thus, careful consideration of training as a system, with a view to what occurs before, during, and after, will help to ensure training and education can be used to achieve individual and organizational goals.

Service Quality and Competitiveness

As outlined in the introduction to this paper, all businesses in the tourism industry (from accommodation to tour operation) are subject to customer satisfaction as a measure of success. Thus, offering top quality service to customers is in a business' best interest to remain competitive in the industry. Particularly with online platforms such as tripadvisor.ca (where travelers can rate their experiences with hotels, tour providers, etc., in destinations all over the world, to share publicly on the Internet), potential tourists can easily search information about satisfaction levels from past visitors before even planning their trip. In making the argument that employers ought to seek continuing education for their employees in light of changing skill requirements in the industry and

rapid technological advancement, Zagonari (2009) suggests that a well-educated workforce is essential to providing quality service. This argument is in the same vein as research findings (Percival, Cozzarin, & Formaneck, 2013; Salas et al., 2012) showing training to help organizations maintain competitive advantage in their industry. Thus, there is a clear link in the literature between tourism educators and training specialists showing effective training to build competitive advantage for businesses.

Training and Development for Rural Tourism in Newfoundland

Understanding the options that exist for tourism education, training, and development is helpful in ascertaining how rural tourism operators can best position themselves for success. Furthermore, a holistic view of the topics presented in this paper may help to make human resources decisions with greater appreciation for the broader picture painted by the literature. The following is a practical framework that tourism professionals may consider in planning and executing their training and development activities with respect to success in rural parts of Newfoundland. Table 1 is intended to be used as a reference for tourism professionals in assessing whether training plans meet all the necessary steps for success as set out in the literature, and provide useful considerations when planning to provide (or purchase) training solutions in the context of rural Newfoundland.

Timing	Activity	Rural Considerations
Before Training	Conduct training needs analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills already exist in your organization? • What skills are missing?
	Prepare learning climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare supervisors and leaders • Schedule accordingly
During Training	Enable right trainee mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boost motivation to learn • Provide encouraging work environment
	Follow appropriate instructional principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider partnering with existing tourism training organizations
	Use technology wisely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate whether online/distance learning solutions will accomplish training goals
After Training	Ensure transfer of training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage use of debriefs and other reinforcements
	Evaluate training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly specify the purpose • Consider Kirkpatrick’s four levels

Table 1. Training Considerations (Adapted from Salas et al., 2012)

Conclusion

In this paper, previous research was reviewed with the aim of synthesizing and condensing it into practical and accessible information for tourism professionals and policy makers in Newfoundland. Studies reviewed included examples from Europe (Jarábková & Hamada, 2012; McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011), the United States (Murova & Hanagriff, 2011), and China (Su, 2011), indicating that rural tourism is of interest to researchers all around the globe. By comparing the literature in the fields of training and development, tourism training and education, and rural tourism, the similarities and differences provide interesting ideas for tourism professionals, policy makers, and academics alike. What is considerably valuable is that, by using one body of literature to inform another, practical information can be applied to support and improve rural tourism in Newfoundland. Overall findings suggest that rural tourism is a viable tool for supporting the diversification of rural economies while helping to protect and maintain cultural resources. Cooperatives in communities are suggested to improve the success of rural tourism initiatives by creating ownership and promoting utilization of various stakeholders' knowledge and skillsets. Providing tourism education and training not only enables organizations to provide excellent service quality, but by doing so also builds competitive advantage for rural tourism initiatives in a global market.

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