





# Human resource strategies in Greek tourism businesses: Perspectives and challenges



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## Dates:

Received: 26 Nov. 2024

Accepted: 13 Mar. 2025

Published: 28 Apr. 2025

## How to cite this article:

Fotiadis, I., Salepaki, A., Angelou, I., & Kourkouridis, D. (2025). Human resource strategies in Greek tourism businesses: Perspectives and challenges. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronbestuur*, 23(0), a2911.  
<https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v23i0.2911>

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**Orientation:** Recruitment and selection play a crucial role in the performance of tourism businesses in Greece. This study explores employee perspectives on recruitment and selection practices in two prominent hotels in Greece.

**Research purpose:** This study analysed current recruitment and selection methods within the tourism sector, identifying both prevailing trends and areas for enhancement.

**Motivation for the study:** With evolving market demands and a competitive labour environment, tourism businesses must refine their hiring processes to attract suitable talent.

**Research approach/design and method:** A mixed-method approach was employed, integrating a quantitative questionnaire distributed to 40 hotel employees and qualitative data from 10 semi-structured interviews with hotel staff at different hierarchical levels.

**Main findings:** The results reveal the ongoing use of traditional recruitment channels such as job ads and collaborations with educational institutions, while the adoption of social media is on the rise, especially for attracting younger talent. Interviews are the predominant selection method, although psychometric tests and assessment centres are valued but underused because of implementation challenges. Interactive methods, such as role-playing and group discussions, are identified as beneficial yet underutilised.

**Practical/managerial implications:** The study recommends tourism businesses invest in innovative selection methods and continuous training for staff to improve hiring outcomes. Integrating modern technologies into recruitment could enhance both efficiency and appeal to a broader talent pool.

**Contribution/value add:** This study provides insights into improving recruitment practices in the Greek tourism industry, suggesting methods that can bolster staff selection and retention.

**Keywords:** human resources; human resource management; Greek tourism businesses; personnel recruitment; personnel selection; hotels; social media.

## Introduction

The recruitment and selection of suitable personnel are critical factors for the success and sustainability of tourism businesses (Nikolskaya et al., 2022). In the tourism sector, the quality of services provided is directly linked to employee performance (Greasidou & Valachis, 2022; Rodjam et al., 2020). Therefore, effective human resource management (HRM) can enhance service quality and boost business competitiveness. As noted by Cooper et al. (2008), high-quality service and customer satisfaction are fundamental pillars of tourism success, highlighting the need for effective HRM strategies in the sector. Human resource practices play a crucial role in ensuring service consistency, operational efficiency, and workforce motivation within hotel environments (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2006, 2015).

This study provides insights into recruitment and selection practices within Greece's tourism industry, helping businesses refine strategies to attract skilled employees. It also contributes empirical data on HRM in a key economic sector. The research follows a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data with interview insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of current hiring practices. The article explores employee perspectives on recruitment methods, assessing current practices, identifying strengths and weaknesses and offering recommendations for improvement. To enhance clarity, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) *What are the predominant recruitment and selection practices in the Greek hotel industry?* (2) *How do employees and managers perceive the effectiveness of these hiring methods?* (3) *What are the contributions of quantitative and qualitative insights to understanding recruitment challenges and opportunities?*

The article contributes by examining recruitment and selection practices within Greece's tourism sector, integrating modern approaches such as social media and psychometric tests. Prior research highlights the short-term impact of social media metrics on an organisation's competitiveness (Angelou et al., 2020, 2024), suggesting that incorporating these tools into recruitment strategies can enhance business performance. Given Greece's strong digital media engagement, the reliance on online platforms for job searches is increasingly relevant (Angelou & Veglis, 2024). The study contributes empirical data on Human Resources (HR) practices in Greek tourism, offering insights that can improve business efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, it underscores the need for further research on implementing and optimising modern recruitment methods.

## Literature review

### Theoretical foundations of human resource management in hospitality

Effective Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are critical to maintaining high service standards and operational efficiency in the hospitality sector, where human interactions directly influence guest experiences (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2019). HRM in the hospitality industry is shaped by several key theories that explain how strategic workforce management enhances service quality, customer satisfaction, and organisational performance. The Human Capital Theory (HCT) (Becker, 1964) posits that employees are valuable assets whose productivity increases with investment in education, training and experience. This theory is particularly relevant in the hospitality industry, where service quality and customer satisfaction are directly linked to the skills, knowledge and professionalism of employees (Baum, 2006; Chand, 2010).

Human Capital Theory suggests that organisations that prioritise human capital development through structured recruitment and selection processes achieve higher efficiency and competitiveness (Mahapatro, 2021). In the Greek hospitality sector, where seasonality, staff shortages and high turnover rates pose significant challenges (Belias et al., 2020), investing in well-designed recruitment and selection practices ensures the acquisition of skilled employees who contribute to service excellence and business success (Papademetriou et al., 2023).

Studies have shown that hotels that implement strategic hiring processes – selecting candidates based on competencies, cultural fit and service orientation – report better customer experiences and stronger financial performance (Olsen et al., 2007; Wang, 2019). In particular, recruitment strategies that prioritise highly skilled candidates and continuous employee training programmes align with HCT's premise that a knowledgeable and experienced workforce drives business success (Al-Tit & Omri, 2022).

Furthermore, effective recruitment and selection practices serve as a long-term investment in human capital, reducing employee

turnover, fostering loyalty and improving overall job performance (Robertson & Smith, 2001; Schmitt & Chan, 1998). In the Greek hospitality sector, where service excellence is a key competitive advantage, hotels that attract, select and retain high-calibre employees gain a significant edge in customer satisfaction and market positioning (Paraskevas & Buhalis, 2002).

Applying HCT to recruitment and selection in Greek hotels underscores the importance of aligning hiring strategies with long-term organisational goals. Strategic hiring practices ensure that selected candidates possess specialised hospitality skills that contribute to service quality and business growth (Chytiri et al., 2018). Continuous employee development through training and professional programmes enhances employees' skills, increasing their value as human capital assets (Papademetriou et al., 2022). A structured approach to hiring reduces turnover rates and enhances employee commitment, leading to long-term productivity (Aslam et al., 2023). Well-trained employees contribute to an improved customer experience, reinforcing a hotel's competitive advantage in the Greek tourism sector (Fotiadis et al., 2020).

By adopting HCT-driven recruitment and selection strategies, Greek hotels can enhance their workforce capabilities, improve employee retention and ultimately strengthen their market position in an increasingly competitive tourism industry.

### Human resource management within the hospitality industry

Tourism is a dynamic sector contributing significantly to global employment and economic development (Page, 2006; Prasad & Kulshrestha, 2015). The hotel industry, a key component of tourism, provides essential lodging and services while maintaining direct customer interaction (Jones & Lockwood, 2004). Hotels vary in classification, services and management structures (Olsen et al., 2007; Vagena & Manoussakis, 2021) and are organised into departments responsible for accommodation, food services and event support (Bardi, 2003; Hayes et al., 2017; Özkan, 2022).

Human resource management plays a strategic role in managing hospitality personnel, ensuring service quality and customer satisfaction (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Mahapatro, 2021). Effective HRM practices, such as structured recruitment, training and performance management, enhance service delivery and customer satisfaction (Papademetriou et al., 2022; Shah & Shrestha, 2022). However, challenges such as high turnover and workforce shortages persist (Kusluvan et al., 2010; Papademetriou et al., 2023; Wang, 2019). Increasingly, technology-driven recruitment strategies, including social media hiring and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based talent acquisition, address these issues (Alalawneh et al., 2022; Paraskevas & Buhalis, 2002).

In Greece, tourism significantly contributes to employment and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Hellenic Chamber of

Hotels, 2023; WTTC, 2019). Seasonal fluctuations create staffing challenges, requiring a balance between temporary and permanent employees (Belias et al., 2020; Ntelopoulos, 2022). Greek hotel HRM integrates traditional recruitment methods, such as internal promotions and job postings, with digital hiring solutions (Chytiri et al., 2018; Noe et al., 2017).

Candidate attraction strategies involve partnerships with hospitality schools, job fairs and online recruitment platforms (Rynes & Cable, 2003; UNWTO, 2018). Social media increasingly supports employer branding and recruitment efforts (Alalawneh et al., 2022; Angelou et al., 2020). The selection process relies on interviews, competency-based assessments and psychometric tests (Ployhart, 2006; Schmitt & Chan, 1998). Given the industry's high turnover, effective recruitment and retention strategies remain essential for long-term success (Aslam et al., 2023; Lucas & Deery, 2004). Job analysis plays a crucial role in defining job responsibilities, skills and qualifications (Gatewood et al., 2008), ensuring alignment between candidate capabilities and organisational needs.

Despite improvements in recruitment and selection in the Greek hospitality sector, alignment with evolving industry needs remains a challenge. This study examines the effectiveness of current strategies, focusing on digital transformation and innovative hiring practices, contributing to the broader discourse on HRM in hospitality and offering practical recommendations for talent acquisition and retention.

## Empirical framework – Tourism in Greece

Tourism is a key pillar of Greece's economy, significantly contributing to GDP and employment (WTTC, 2019). The country is globally recognised for its cultural heritage, natural landscapes and diverse tourism offerings (Smith, 2009). However, the sector faces challenges because of seasonality, with peak demand during summer requiring effective workforce management (Andriotis, 2005; Baum, 1999).

Greece's hotel industry is highly diverse, ranging from family-run accommodations to luxury resorts (Buhalis, 2001). Investments in infrastructure have improved service quality and competitiveness (Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, 2023), while modern trends emphasise sustainability and unique visitor experiences (Kasavana & Brooks, 2011). The hotel sector plays a crucial role in maintaining tourist satisfaction and destination appeal (Paraskevas & Buhalis, 2002).

The country hosts over 10000 hotel units, concentrated in popular tourist regions such as Crete, the Cyclades and the Dodecanese (Andriotis, 2005; Buhalis, 2001; Tsartas, 2003). Coastal areas and islands remain key destinations because of their natural advantages and high international demand. Tourism accounted for 20% of Greece's GDP in 2019, employing 25% of the workforce, although these figures dipped, as the Greek economy was severely hit by the

COVID-19 crisis (Angelou et al., 2022) before rebounding to 18.5% of GDP in 2022 (WTTC, 2019, 2023).

The industry has demonstrated strong resilience in recovering from economic crises and global disruptions (Fotiadis et al., 2020; Papadimitriou et al., 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted travel in 2020, yet the sector swiftly rebounded by 2022, highlighting its adaptability (UNWTO, 2018; World Trade Organization, 2022). Tourism remains a key driver of the Greek economy, supporting various industries and services.

## Research design

The study was conducted in two hotels in Central Macedonia, Greece, selected for their significance in the local tourism sector and diverse employee profiles. Firstly, a three-star hotel in Thessaloniki, employs 12–15 staff in winter and 18–20 in summer, benefiting from the city's growing tourism driven by cultural events and exhibitions (Kostopoulou et al., 2023; Kourkouridis et al., 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d; Tsifelidou et al., 2016). Secondly, a four-star hotel in Leptokarya, has a seasonal workforce ranging from 15–20 in winter to 140–145 in summer.

A mixed-method approach was employed, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The quantitative component involved a structured questionnaire designed based on relevant literature, assessing recruitment methods, employee experience and selection effectiveness. Forty employees from various departments were randomly sampled and data collection occurred in January and February 2020.

For the qualitative component, 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted on 25–26 January 2024, with frontline staff, middle managers and senior executives, using purposive sampling to capture diverse perspectives. Interviews, lasting 30–45 min, explored recruitment channels, selection criteria, hiring challenges and employee retention strategies.

Quantitative data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software developed by IBM, incorporating descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to examine differences across hierarchical levels. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts identified key themes such as recruitment method preferences, selection tool effectiveness and talent acquisition challenges. This approach provided a comprehensive view of recruitment and selection practices, combining statistical trends with in-depth insights.

## Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Business and Exhibition Research and Development Institute (IEE) Ethical Review Board.

## Results

### Sample profile

The results, as illustrated in Figure 1, show the demographic data of the research sample. In terms of gender, 55% of respondents were women and 45% were men. The largest age group comprised individuals aged 30–35 years. Regarding education, 40% of participants held postgraduate or doctoral degrees, 55% had university degrees and only 5% had no formal education. The significant presence of individuals with postgraduate qualifications reflects the competitive nature of the job market in Greece, indicating that employers may prioritise highly educated candidates. This could also suggest that the workforce is driven by ambitious professionals seeking advancement.

When analysing positions within the organisational hierarchy, 57.5% were regular employees, 32.5% were middle managers and 10% were senior executives. Lastly, concerning work experience within the same company, 22.5% were employed for 0–5 years, 47.5% for 5–10 years and 30% for over 10 years. The work experience data show that many employees have been with their current employers for a substantial period, suggesting a degree of stability within these organisations. This longevity might correlate with employee satisfaction but could also signal challenges related to career advancement or the attraction of new talent.

Table 1 presents an overview of the demographic characteristics of the survey participants, including their age, experience and gender distribution. By comparing these figures to the qualitative sample, the study provides a broader perspective on the workforce composition in the Greek hospitality sector. It should be noted that Figure 1 reflects the overall demographic distribution of the sample, while Table 1 presents group statistics based on hierarchical positions.

In addition to the survey respondents, qualitative data were collected from 10 employees representing different hierarchical levels and job roles within the two participating hotels, as shown in Table 2. The interviewees included five frontline employees (e.g. receptionists, waitstaff), three middle managers (department heads) and two senior executives (HR and hotel operation managers). Participants ranged in age from 28 years to 50 years, with work experience varying from 3 years to 20 years in the hospitality industry. The gender distribution was balanced, with five male and five female interviewees.

### Attracting the right candidates

Most businesses use traditional recruitment methods, such as job advertisements and partnerships with educational institutions. However, there has been an increasing use of social media to attract younger candidates, as noted by Breugh (2017) and Chapman and Webster (2003). The survey results illustrate the ranking of candidate attraction methods, where respondents were asked to evaluate several

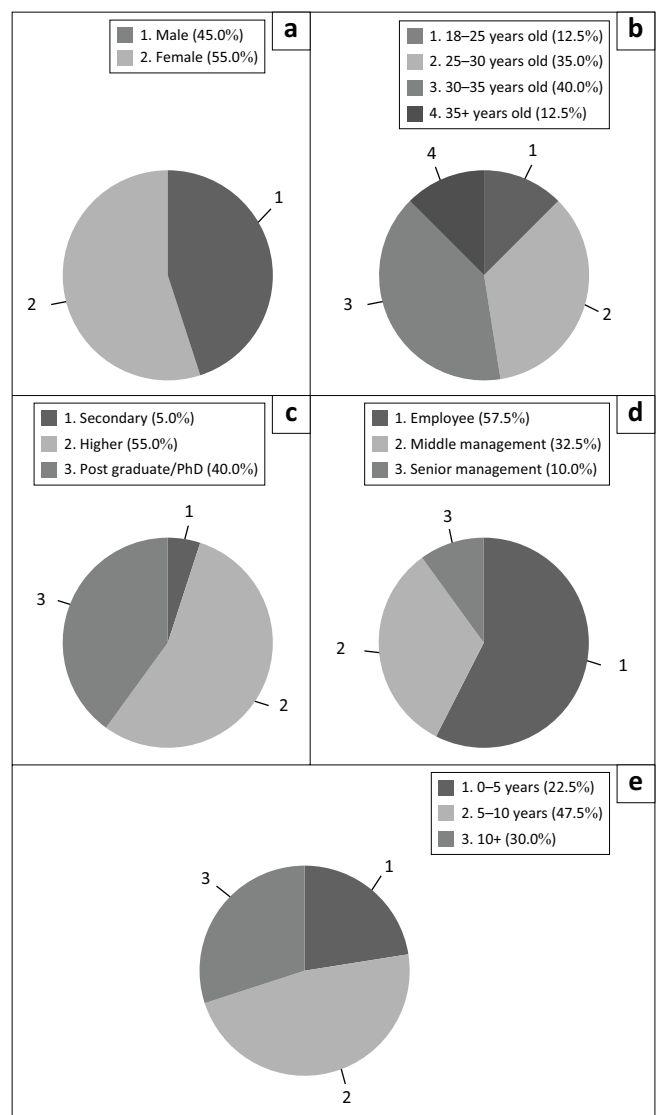
**TABLE 1:** Group statistics.

Group	Mean age	Mean experience (years)	Female (%)	Male (%)
Frontline employees	30.5	5.2	60	40
Middle managers	38.1	10.3	50	50
Senior executives	45.7	18.5	40	60

**TABLE 2:** Qualitative interview participant profile.

Code	Gender	Age (years)	Position	Experience (years)
P1	Male	45	Senior Executive (HR Manager)	20
P2	Female	29	Front Desk Employee (Frontline)	4
P3	Male	38	Middle Manager (Operations Supervisor)	12
P4	Female	31	Front Desk Employee (Frontline)	6
P5	Male	41	Senior Executive (Hotel Director)	18
P6	Female	35	Housekeeping Supervisor (Middle Manager)	10
P7	Female	40	Restaurant Manager (Middle Manager)	15
P8	Male	33	Restaurant Supervisor (Frontline)	8
P9	Female	30	HR Officer (Frontline)	7
P10	Male	28	Waitstaff (Frontline)	3

HR, Human Resource.



**FIGURE 1:** Demographic data: (a) Gender (b) Age (c) Education level (d) Position in the company (e) Experience in the company.

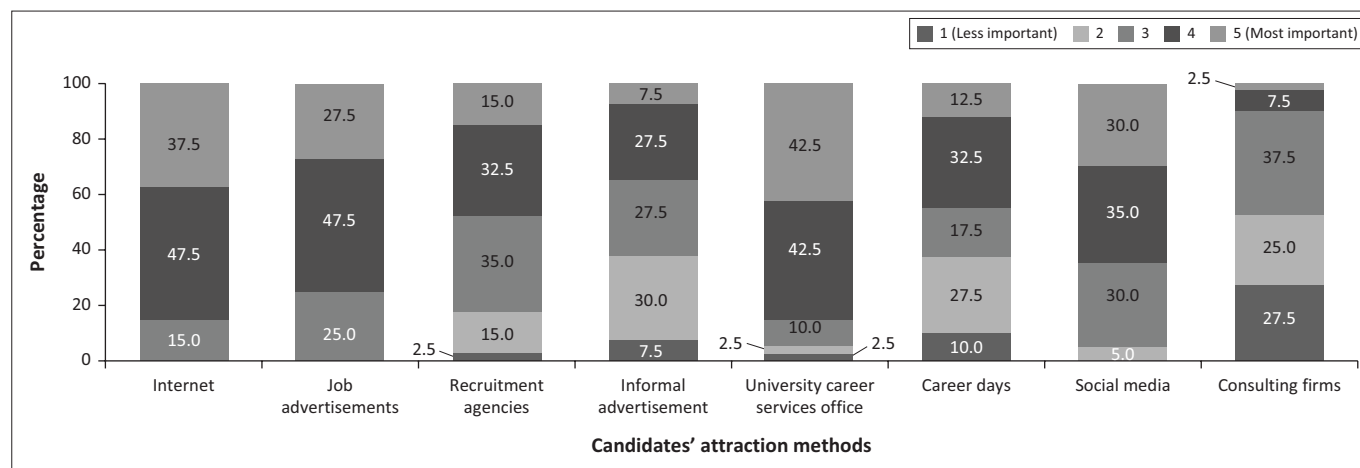


FIGURE 2: Candidates' attraction methods.

options. The data shown in Figure 2 indicate some interesting trends.

The Internet remains a dominant recruitment tool, with 37.5% of respondents ranking it first, 47.5% second and 15.0% third, highlighting its reach and convenience. Traditional job advertisements also retain relevance, with 47.5% ranking them second, 27.5% first and 25.0% third, confirming their continued role in candidate attraction despite the digital shift.

Recruitment agencies received mixed feedback, with 15.0% ranking them first, 32.5% second, 35.0% third and 15.0% fourth, indicating that while they remain relevant, many prefer more direct methods such as online platforms.

Informal advertising, such as word of mouth or personal networks, ranked lower, with only 7.5% placing it first, 27.5% second, another 27.5% third and 30.0% fourth, showing a preference for more structured recruitment approaches.

The university career services office shows strong relevance, especially in academic or early-career contexts. A significant 42.5% of respondents ranked it as both their first and second choice, while 10.0% ranked it third and 2.5% placed it fourth. University career services are clearly a major resource for students or recent graduates but may not be relied upon by more experienced candidates or employers in other sectors.

Career days show varied rankings. Only 12.5% of respondents rated them as their top choice, while 32.5% placed them second, 17.5% third and 27.5% ranked them fourth. While these events can be effective for networking and attracting candidates in specific industries or sectors, they may not be as essential as other methods.

Social media is becoming an important tool for candidate attraction, with 30.0% of respondents ranking it first, 35.0% placing it second and 30.0% ranking it third. The prevalence of social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and even Instagram for job postings and company branding has

TABLE 3: Correlation matrix.

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation coefficient	Significance (p-value)
Recruitment method	Employee satisfaction	0.62	0.001
Psychometric tests	Performance evaluation	0.47	0.005
Social media recruitment	Retention rate	0.55	0.002
Traditional job ads	Application volume	0.40	0.015

made it a valuable recruitment resource, especially for engaging younger or tech-savvy candidates. The qualitative data supported these trends, with several participants emphasising the importance of social media in recruitment. A middle manager explained that:

'... we post job openings on Facebook and Instagram because that's where young people look for work. Traditional job boards are still useful, but social media helps us reach a wider audience quickly.' (P3, Male, 38)

However, a senior executive stated that:

'... while social media is good for initial outreach, we still rely on referrals and direct applications for key positions.' (P5, Male, 41)

Table 3 highlights key correlations between recruitment methods and HR outcomes. A strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) between recruitment methods and employee satisfaction suggests that well-structured hiring processes improve workplace engagement. Notably, social media recruitment showed a significant correlation with employee retention ( $r = 0.55$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), reinforcing its growing importance in attracting candidates aligned with company culture. This finding supports the argument that digital hiring tools are not only efficient but also contribute to long-term workforce stability. Meanwhile, the moderate correlation between psychometric tests and performance evaluation ( $r = 0.47$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ) underscores their potential in refining candidate selection, although their implementation remains limited.

Lastly, consulting firms are the least favoured candidate attraction method, with only 2.5% of respondents placing them first, 7.5% ranking them second, 37.5% choosing them

as their third option and 25.0% ranking them fourth. While consulting firms still have relevance, especially in niche or highly specialised roles, they are not a primary method for attracting candidates in broader or less specialised markets.

Overall, the survey results highlight the Internet and job advertisements as the top candidate attraction methods, with a significant portion of respondents relying on these platforms. Other methods, such as recruitment agencies and university career offices, still hold value but tend to be used by more specific groups or in certain contexts. Informal advertising and consulting firms were ranked lower, showing a preference for more formal or widely accessible methods of candidate attraction.

Social media, as highlighted in the survey, plays a growing role in candidate attraction while maintaining a balanced presence among other recruitment methods, rather than completely replacing traditional approaches. While social media is highly regarded and ranked consistently well, it does not yet surpass the Internet or traditional job ads as the top recruitment method. However, its rising influence, especially for targeting specific groups and enhancing employer branding, positions it as a key component of modern recruitment strategies. It offers more agility and audience targeting than recruitment agencies or consulting firms but still operates within a broader ecosystem alongside other digital and traditional methods.

## Effectiveness of personnel selection methods

Interviews remain the primary selection method, with many companies also using psychometric tests and assessment centres to choose the most suitable candidates (Bangura,

**TABLE 4:** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results.

Factor	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-value	p-value
Recruitment method	15.3	3	5.1	4.25	0.003
Selection criteria	12.8	2	6.4	3.87	0.007
Interview type	18.5	3	6.16	5.32	0.001
Use of technology	14.2	3	4.73	4.10	0.004

df, degrees of freedom.

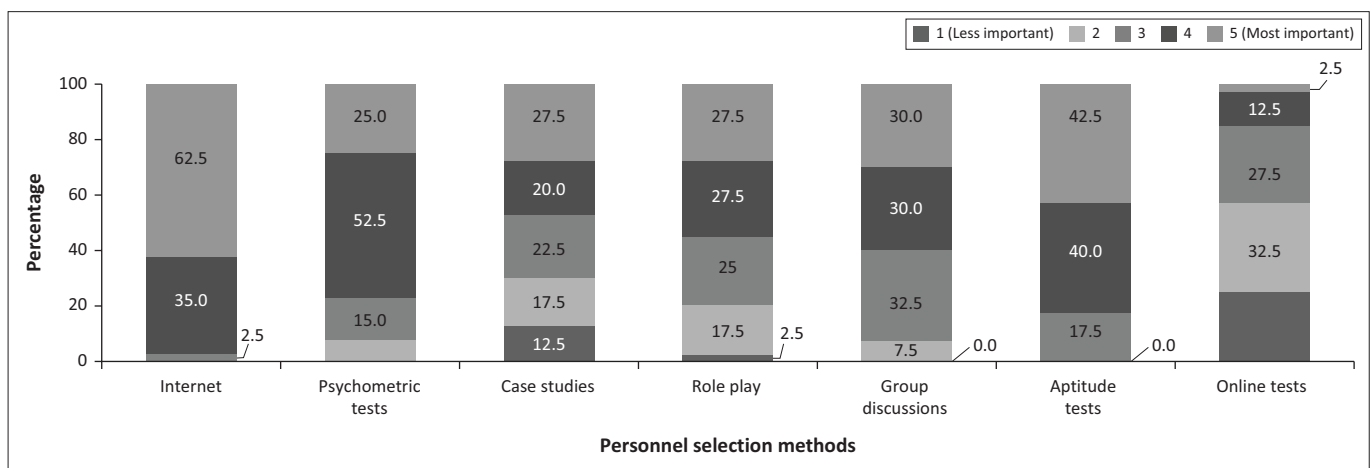
2024; Prochazka et al., 2023; Robertson & Smith, 2001). The analysis showed that the participants consider interviews as the most reliable method, while psychometric tests and assessment centres are evaluated as useful but in need of further improvement in their implementation (Chipana-Castillo et al., 2021; Schmitt & Chan, 1998).

Table 4 presents ANOVA results, revealing significant differences in perceptions of recruitment and selection methods across different hierarchical levels. The selection criteria ( $p = 0.007$ ) and interview type ( $p = 0.001$ ) showed substantial variance, suggesting that executives, middle managers and frontline employees evaluate these methods differently. Senior executives favoured structured, competency-based interviews, while lower-level employees preferred traditional unstructured interviews. The significant  $p$ -value for technology in hiring ( $p = 0.004$ ) indicates that higher-ranking employees see digital recruitment as a valuable tool, whereas frontline employees may be less familiar or comfortable with technology-driven assessments. These results emphasise the need for recruitment strategies tailored to different organisational levels.

A significant portion of the participants reported that psychometric tests provide important information for assessing candidates' abilities. The results, as presented in Figure 3, reflect the participants' rankings of personnel selection methods based on their perceived importance.

The data reveal clear preferences among participants for specific personnel selection methods. Interviews stand out as the most highly valued method, with an overwhelming majority (97.5%) of participants ranking them as either 4 or 5 in importance. This suggests that interviews are seen as indispensable for understanding a candidate's personal qualities, communication skills and cultural fit, aspects that may not be captured by other selection methods. A senior executive stated that:

'... interviews allow us to assess a candidate's attitude and communication skills, which are difficult to measure through tests alone.' (P1, Male, 45)



**FIGURE 3:** Personnel selection methods.

Aptitude tests follow closely, with a combined 82.5% of participants placing them in the top two categories of importance. This indicates strong support for using these tests to objectively measure candidates' abilities to perform tasks relevant to the job, making them a highly regarded tool for assessing potential performance. However, a middle manager noted that:

'... aptitude tests do not always reflect real-world performance in hospitality. Some employees perform poorly in tests but excel in their job.' (P7, Female, 40)

Psychometric tests, while not as highly ranked as interviews or aptitude tests, still hold considerable value. With 52.5% of participants rating them a 4 and 25.0% rating them a 5, there is a clear consensus that psychometric testing provides valuable insights into a candidate's psychological traits, such as personality, emotional intelligence and cognitive ability, which are increasingly considered essential for predicting job success. One HR officer stated:

'... psychometric tests help us understand whether someone is a good cultural fit, but they are not enough on their own.' (P9, Female, 30)

On the other hand, case studies, role plays and group discussions, although recognised as useful methods, are ranked lower in importance. The distribution of responses, especially the higher percentages in the middle rankings (3 and 4), suggests that participants view these methods as supplementary rather than primary tools for candidate evaluation. Case studies and role plays may be seen as methods that test specific skills like problem-solving or interpersonal abilities but are not considered as universally applicable or essential as interviews and tests. A middle manager explained:

'... role plays are great for evaluating problem-solving skills, but they should not replace interviews or experience-based evaluations.' (P6, Female, 35)

Group discussions, with their balanced spread across rankings, may be viewed as effective for specific scenarios, such as assessing teamwork and communication, but not as critical in every job context. Finally, the method that respondents rated with a very low score (1, 2 and 3) is the 'online test'. A total of 87% rated this method poorly (with scores of 1, 2 or 3). Respondents may perceive them as less reliable or valid compared to other methods, possibly because of the concerns about their ability to accurately assess candidate skills or the potential for cheating or technical issues. A frontline employee commented:

'... online tests don't show how someone handles real-life challenges, especially in customer service.' (P8, Male, 33)

Overall, the results suggest a preference for methods that combine objective assessment (aptitude and psychometric tests) with personal interaction (interviews). This combination allows employers to evaluate both the measurable skills and personal attributes of candidates, offering a more holistic view of their suitability for a role. While methods like case

studies, role plays and group discussions were acknowledged as useful in specific contexts, they were not considered crucial for every hiring decision. These findings, though drawn from a limited sample, highlight emerging trends in recruitment preferences within the studied hotels, suggesting the need for a balanced approach that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative assessment methods.

## Employee perceptions

Participants expressed the need for more interactive and innovative selection methods, such as role-playing and group discussions, which can provide a more comprehensive picture of candidates (Brannick et al., 2007). Additionally, the importance of continuous training and development for staff retention was emphasised (Noe et al., 2017). Sixty per cent of participants believed that interactive methods could improve the accuracy of the selection process, while 75% highlighted the importance of ongoing training for professional development and employee satisfaction. A frontline employee stated:

'If interviews included more real-life scenarios, it would be easier to identify candidates who handle pressure well.' (P4, Female, 31)

The survey results confirm previous studies that emphasise the significance of using a combination of traditional and modern methods for recruitment and selection (Breugh, 2017; Chapman & Webster, 2003). Furthermore, the research underscores the need for improvements in psychometric tests and assessment centres, as noted by Robertson and Smith (2001) and Schmitt and Chan (1998). A senior executive stated:

'... we rely on interviews and experience more than tests, but a mix of both would be ideal.' (P5, Male, 41)

## Demographic correlations

The analysis investigates the differentiation in survey responses across demographic variables, specifically focusing on gender and hierarchical position within the company. Using a 5-point Likert scale, respondents expressed their agreement or disagreement with various statements. The statistical analysis examined whether these responses varied based on gender and job position.

A Levene's test was used to assess the equality of variances between male and female responses. For most of the statements, the  $p$ -values of the Levene test were above 0.05, indicating equal variances. In these cases, a  $t$ -test for equal variances showed no significant difference in mean responses between men and women. However, for certain items, such as 'training requirements' and 'healthy competition', the  $p$ -values were below 0.05 for the  $t$ -test. This suggests that men and women differed in their perceptions. Men tended to disagree more on statements concerning training, innovation and healthy competition, while women had higher disagreement with 'employment agencies'.

**TABLE 5:** Post hoc test results.

Comparison	Mean difference	SE	<i>p</i> -value
Internal vs. External recruitment	0.75	0.12	0.002
Structured vs. Unstructured interviews	1.12	0.18	0.001
Use of AI in recruitment vs. Traditional methods	0.85	0.15	0.004

vs., versus; AI, artificial intelligence; SE, standard error.

The analysis also explored how responses varied by hierarchical position (employees, middle management, senior management). For most items, homogeneity of variances was observed, meaning that responses across job positions were similar. Notable exceptions included perceptions of the cost of training for high-level positions and statements regarding work location and foreign language knowledge. Here, significant differences were found between groups, especially with higher-ranking positions assigning greater importance to these factors. A post hoc test further broke down these results, revealing that higher-level executives often had significantly different views compared to middle management and employees, particularly regarding training costs, the work environment and the need for new ideas and innovative contributions to the company. An HR officer stated:

‘... executives see training as an investment, but employees often feel it’s a burden if they have to do it on their own time.’ (P9, Female, 30)

Table 5 provides post hoc test results, offering deeper insights into differences in recruitment perceptions. A significant difference ( $p = 0.002$ ) was found between employees and executives regarding internal versus external recruitment, with executives favouring external hiring to bring in fresh perspectives, while employees preferred internal promotions as a means of career progression. Similarly, structured versus unstructured interviews ( $p = 0.001$ ) showed variation, with senior staff advocating for structured processes while frontline employees found unstructured approaches more natural. The contrast in perceptions of AI-driven recruitment ( $p = 0.004$ ) suggests that while executives see AI as a tool for efficiency, employees remain sceptical about its fairness and impact. These findings indicate that recruitment policies should balance innovation with employee concerns to ensure acceptance across all levels.

The findings highlight that while most opinions on recruitment and training methods do not significantly differ by gender or job position, some specific topics – such as training, competition and foreign language skills – elicit different perspectives, especially between employees and higher-ranking executives. This suggests that organisational strategies, particularly in training and innovation, may need to consider these differing viewpoints to align company goals with employee expectations across all levels. A middle manager stated:

‘... higher-ups push for more training, but they don’t always give us the time or resources to complete it properly.’ (P7, Female, 40)

## Discussion

The findings reinforce prior research on HRM in tourism, particularly regarding the shift towards social networks and technology in recruitment (Breagh, 2017; Chapman & Webster, 2003). This aligns with HCT, which suggests that strategic hiring and technologically advanced recruitment enhance human capital by attracting skilled employees (Becker, 1964; Mahapatro, 2021). Regarding Research Question 1 (‘What are the predominant recruitment and selection practices in the Greek hotel industry?’), the study confirms that traditional recruitment methods, such as job advertisements and educational partnerships, remain dominant, but digital platforms, particularly social media, are emerging as crucial tools for attracting younger talent. The qualitative insights further reveal that while digital recruitment methods are gaining traction, traditional hiring processes still dominate because of managerial reluctance to adopt new approaches.

Interviews remain the most reliable selection method (Schmitt & Chan, 1998), while psychometric tests provide critical insights into candidates’ abilities and personalities (Robertson & Smith, 2001). However, their implementation requires refinement (Brannick et al., 2007). Human Capital Theory supports these methods as a means of optimising human capital investment by ensuring candidates possess the necessary competencies for organisational success (Olsen et al., 2007). In response to Research Question 2 (‘How do employees and managers perceive the effectiveness of these hiring methods?’), the quantitative data highlight interviews as the preferred selection method, while the qualitative findings reveal concerns about fairness and a lack of structured assessments, emphasising the need for integrating interactive and competency-based evaluations.

In Greece’s tourism sector, effective recruitment directly impacts service quality and customer satisfaction. While traditional methods such as job advertisements and partnerships with educational institutions remain popular, social networks increasingly attract younger, tech-savvy candidates (Breagh, 2017; Chapman & Webster, 2003). Human Capital Theory underscores the value of targeting candidates with digital adaptability to improve service quality and organisational performance (Wang, 2019). In addition, innovative selection techniques such as role-playing and group discussions can provide a more comprehensive assessment of candidates, enhancing hiring quality (Brannick et al., 2007). Human Capital Theory suggests that such methods ensure the selection of employees with strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills, essential in hospitality (Papademetriou et al., 2023). Regarding Research Question 3 (‘What are the contributions of quantitative and qualitative insights to understanding recruitment challenges and opportunities?’), the mixed-method approach demonstrated that while surveys capture general hiring trends, qualitative interviews offer deeper insights into employee concerns, particularly regarding the limited use of structured assessments and the potential

benefits of interactive hiring methods. Interview participants stressed that interactive selection processes could improve job fit and long-term employee retention, yet these methods remain underutilised in the sector.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. The small sample size (40 employees) and focus on two hotels in Macedonia may limit generalisability. Future research should expand to a broader sample and examine the long-term impact of recruitment strategies on employee retention and performance, reinforcing HCT's perspective that workforce investment yields sustained organisational benefits (Becker, 1964).

The study also relied on self-reported measures, potentially introducing subjectivity. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, integrating qualitative interviews to enrich quantitative findings. This provided deeper insight into recruitment practices, supporting HCT's emphasis on employee perceptions in shaping HRM strategies. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data allowed for a comprehensive analysis, where statistical trends highlighted hiring preferences, while interviews clarified recruitment challenges and potential improvements. The qualitative data underscored the importance of training and career development, reinforcing the notion that structured recruitment and training investments enhance job satisfaction and performance (Papademetriou et al., 2022; Schmitt & Chan, 1998).

## Practical implications

Based on the findings of this research, several improvements can be made to enhance recruitment and selection practices in tourism businesses in Greece. Firstly, integrating psychometric tests and assessment centres more extensively can improve the reliability and validity of candidate evaluations, allowing businesses to make more informed hiring decisions. Secondly, incorporating interactive selection methods, such as role-playing and group discussions, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of candidates' skills, leading to better hiring outcomes.

The strategic use of social networks has also emerged as a valuable tool for attracting a diverse and high-quality pool of candidates, particularly younger and technologically skilled professionals. Given the increasing reliance on digital platforms for job searches, businesses can benefit from enhancing their online presence and engagement strategies. Finally, prioritising continuous training and development for employees can contribute to greater job satisfaction and improved performance while reducing turnover rates. By adopting these improvements, tourism businesses can strengthen their recruitment and selection processes, leading to a more effective and competitive workforce.

## Limitations and recommendations

This study provides valuable insights into recruitment and selection practices in the Greek tourism sector; however, its

generalisability is limited by the small sample size and the focus on only two hotels. Future research should consider larger and more representative samples from various regions of Greece to validate these findings and offer a more comprehensive perspective on industry-wide practices.

While this study incorporated qualitative interviews to enhance the depth of analysis, further research could expand on this approach by conducting a greater number of in-depth interviews and focus groups across different tourism businesses. This would provide an even more comprehensive understanding of employees' experiences and perceptions regarding recruitment and selection processes. In addition, exploring the impact of technology-driven recruitment methods and psychometric testing on hiring decisions and employee performance remains an important area for future investigation.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrated that recruitment and selection in the Greek tourism sector rely on a combination of traditional and modern methods. Interviews remain the most widely used selection tools, while psychometric tests and assessment centres, although less common, are recognised for their value in evaluating.

The increasing use of social networks for attracting candidates reflects a shift towards more technology-driven recruitment strategies, particularly for engaging younger and digitally proficient job seekers. Furthermore, employees emphasised the importance of adopting more interactive selection methods, such as role-playing and group discussions, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of candidates' abilities.

Overall, the findings highlight the evolving nature of recruitment in the tourism sector, where traditional methods continue to be relevant but are gradually being complemented by modern approaches. The need for innovation in selection processes remains a key consideration for organisations seeking to enhance their hiring strategies and identify the best-suited candidates for their workforce.

## Acknowledgements

### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

### Authors' contributions

I.F. was responsible for conceptualisation, methodology, software development and data curation. A.S. handled the formal analysis, visualisation and resources. I.A. and D.K. were involved in the investigation and validation processes and also took on roles as project administrators. The original draft of the manuscript was written by I.F. and A.S., while the

writing, review, and editing were carried out by A.S., I.A. and D.K. The project was supervised throughout by I.A. and D.K.

## Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

## Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, D.K. upon reasonable request.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency or that of the publisher. The authors are responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

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