

Human Resources Management in Museums: Systematic Review of Challenges and Solutions

Abstract

This PRISMA systematic review aims to investigate the human resources management (HRM) challenges faced by museums and potential strategic solutions. Despite being a valuable asset, HRM in museums has presented significant challenges for museum management, which until now have not been systematically researched. The analysis was conducted throughout July 2023, with the final sample including 32 records. The findings reveal eight key HRM challenges: digital revolution, co-creation of exhibitions, outdated leadership approaches, lack of crisis and climate change management, high staff turnover, challenges in creating an inclusive museum environment, lack of staff competencies, and organizing staff training. To navigate these challenges successfully, museums can implement a range of strategic solutions. These solutions center on skills development, the adoption of contemporary leadership approaches grounded in collaboration, and the crucial role of organizational and legislative support for staff and talent development in museums. Although the study is limited in the number of records covered, due to the dearth of studies on HRM in museums, it marks the first systematic examination of the HRM challenges in museums, enriching the field of museum and heritage studies by shedding light on the current obstacles impeding the creation of positive, talent-nurturing work environments within museums.

Keywords: museum management, human resources management, human resources, museum, heritage management, staff development

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1. INTRODUCTION

Museums as the most visited cultural tourism attraction (TEA/AECOM, 2022), hold a significant place in preserving cultural heritage, fostering education and engagement with history and art, as well as visitor's wellbeing. Due to the rise of cultural tourism, which now accounts for 39% of international tourism arrivals (UNWTO, 2018), the museums are competing for visitors. As a result, they are increasingly adopting a business-oriented mindset, which requires business management skills and strategies (Friedman, 2005). The success, impact, and sustainability of these institutions largely depend on the efficient management of their most valuable asset, i.e. human resources that bring life to their exhibitions and programs (Janes, 2022; Jelinčić, Tišma & Glivetić, 2022).

Despite being the lifeblood of museums, human resources management (HRM) in museums has often not accorded the importance it deserves. As Friedman (2005, p. 121) put it "...museum management has rarely attempted to establish personnel policies that view employees as valuable resources. Instead, management has relied on personal commitment—to a profession, to museums in general, or to the 'treasures' of the world—to retain its staff." When it comes to managing professional staff members, such as directors, curators, conservators, educators, historians, and even volunteers, applying corporate HRM strategies directly to the museum setting doesn't always yield optimal outcomes (Friedman, 2005). The transformation of museums has been marked by specific structural shifts, manifesting as organizational changes, stricter hierarchies, more pronounced divisions between museum functions, an augmented political role for museums, and a broadening of the concept of heritage. This expansion encompasses not just cultural heritage but also natural, environmental, and intangible heritage, ushering in a preference for consumer-centric approaches over heritage-centric ones (Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016).

For instance, amid this paradigm shift, many museums face struggles in devising human resource strategies that foster recruitment, retention, and development, ultimately resulting

in high employee turnover rates (Friedman, 2005). The adverse effects of such turnover ripple through an organization, diminishing its productivity and profitability (Brown, Garino & Martin, 2009). Furthermore, public and private museums grapple with distinct obstacles in terms of staff management. Private museums contend with the demands of long working hours, fluctuating demand patterns, and often a limited workforce. Conversely, public museums face inflexibility and financial constraints that hinder their capacity to motivate employees. The public sector's constrained ability to create new job openings has driven many museums to rely on volunteers to expand their workforce (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Jelinčić, Tišma & Glivetić, 2022). This predicament is particularly worrisome today, given the changing roles within museums, where they have transitioned from merely curating exhibits to crafting immersive experiences, a transformation driven by the rise of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Consequently, public museums find themselves at a disadvantage, lacking the financial resources to attract and retain qualified personnel who are essential in the creation of these modern experiences (Jelinčić, Tišma & Glivetić, 2022). The design of modern museum experiences led to the emergence of a wide range of museum job roles (e.g., exhibit designers, art therapists, visitor experience managers, digital marketing managers, learning coordinators, etc.), extending beyond traditional museology to encompass diverse skills crucial for designing both online and offline museum experiences (Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016). Furthermore, the digital revolution and the growing expectations of museum visitors for active knowledge co-construction and exhibit co-creation have exerted a profound influence on how museums manage and train their personnel. This trend was further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted museums to leverage their digital platforms to deliver experiences when their physical spaces were inaccessible (Kasiola & Metaxas, 2023). The need for skilled professionals in this regard is only expected to grow (Šveb Dragija & Jelinčić, 2022; Šveb Dragija & Jelinčić, 2023, Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016).

Therefore, due to evolving paradigms in human resources management within the museum

sector, a host of challenges have surfaced, necessitating careful consideration. Museums are evolving into interdisciplinary environments, necessitating the attraction, retention, and nurturing of talent for two pivotal reasons: to be perceived as desirable employers and to craft contemporary museum experiences that nowadays tourists and visitors expect. Consequently, the field of human resources management (HRM) within museums has witnessed a surge in attention, emphasizing the imperative of optimizing strategies and practices to meet the diverse demands of modern museum settings (Janes, 2022; Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016). Despite a growing body of research urging museums to rethink their organizational structure to promote quality personnel management (Janes, 2022; Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016), there is a lack of synthesized knowledge on the main staff management challenges in museums and how HRM strategies can be employed to surmount those challenges.

Considering this backdrop, the current PRISMA review endeavors to systematically consolidate the existing body of knowledge about HRM in museums, with the dual objective of shedding light on the challenges museums are confronting in the realm of HRM and discerning potential strategic solutions derived from extant literature. To do so, the challenges in museum staff management are explored and potential HRM solutions are examined. Consequently, this study will provide museum professionals with a comprehensive overview of the challenges they confront and, more importantly, offer invaluable insights into strategies to address them effectively.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

We conducted a systematic literature review using The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol. PRISMA enables transparency in reporting the results of the review by following a detailed procedure (Page et al., 2021). We conducted the literature search throughout July 2023, and all the records published until July 30th were included in the analysis to ensure that the latest developments on the theme were included in the

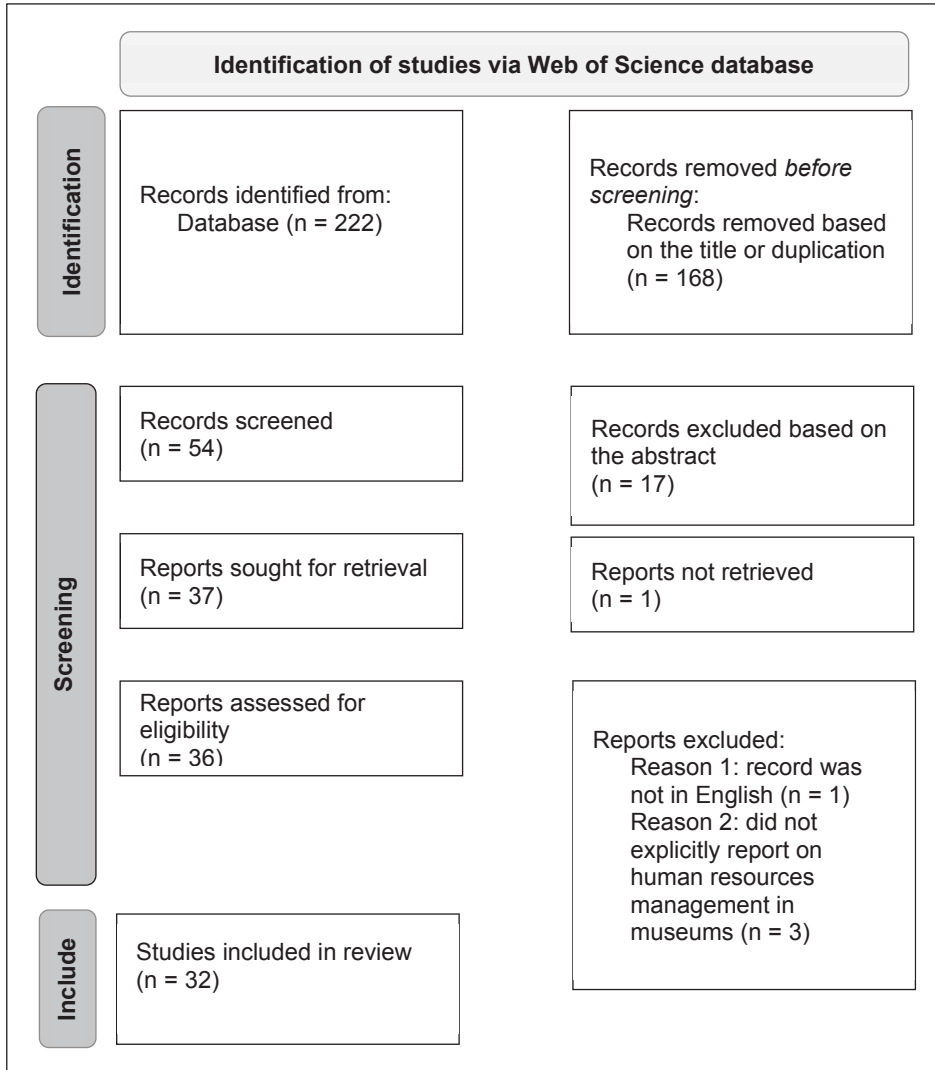
review. We utilized a Boolean search strategy within the Web of Science database, targeting original research papers published in journals and book chapters in the English language. Specifically, the search criteria included the following keywords in titles, abstracts, keywords, and author's keywords: ('human resource*' AND 'talent*' AND 'personnel*' AND 'staff*') AND ('museum*') AND ('management*'). This method yielded a total of 222 records.

Before the screening process, we excluded records based on their titles if they did not pertain to the field of human resource management (HRM) or if they were duplicates of records already included in our analysis. During the second stage of screening, we reviewed 54 records and excluded 17 of them based on their abstracts, as they did not address the subject of HRM in museums. We subsequently sought the full records of the remaining 37 items, ultimately retrieving 36 of them. During this screening phase, we excluded 3 records for either lacking explicit reporting on human resources challenges or HRM strategies within museums, or for insufficient coverage of the topic (e.g., some records merely mentioned the importance of HRM in one or two sentences). Additionally, 1 record was excluded because it was not written in English. Following these criteria, our final sample comprised 32 records. We exported the bibliographic details of these 32 studies to Microsoft Excel for further analysis. To identify the principal research themes across these 32 articles, we read the full records and coded the repeating themes, which we present in the findings below. PRISMA diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the record selection process.

Results

The PRISMA systematic review identified 32 records for analysis, each focusing on specific aspects of human resources management (HRM) in museums. Although it was not our intention to include solely the records from the past two decades, it is worth noting that the records included in this review, as seen in Figure 1, span the years 2000 to 2023, with a noticeable concentration of publications between 2019 and 2023, underscoring that the topic of HRM in

Figure 1. The PRISMA diagram (adapted from Page et al., 2021).

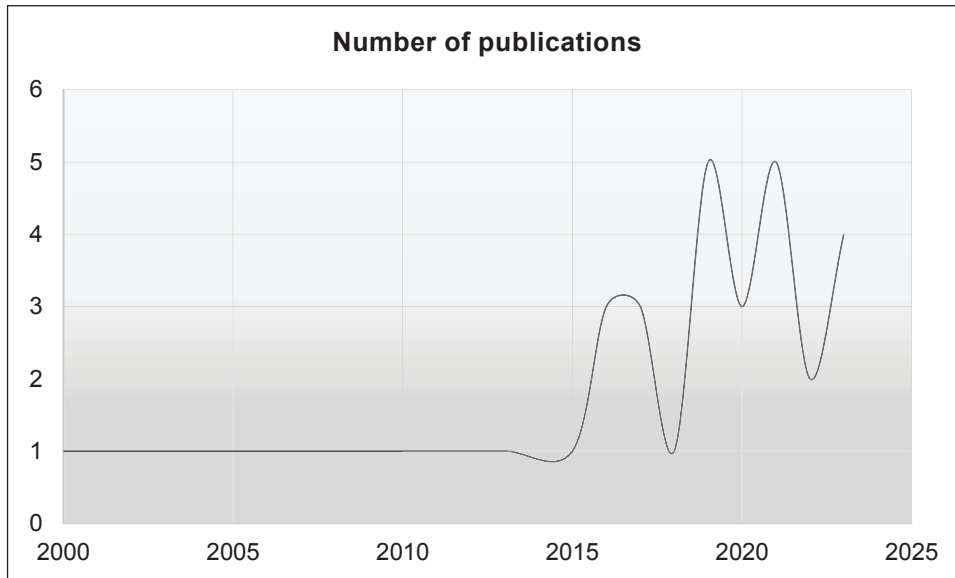


museums began to be researched in 2000 and it grew in significance in the recent years.

Additionally, as seen in Table 1, most of the records included in the review were case studies. These records were sourced from various re-

gions worldwide, encompassing locations such as the United States, Europe, and Asia. This diversity ensures a representative sample, enhancing the applicability of the findings to a broader global context.

Figure 2. Distribution of records per year.



The 32 records were analyzed through the coding process, in which recurring themes were coded to highlight various challenges along with their corresponding HRM strategic solutions, as supported by existing literature. The coding process involved a blend of deductive reasoning, where established HRM challenges from the literature were analyzed, and inductive analysis to explore new or less explored facets specific to HRM in museums. Initially, HRM challenges from the literature were integrated into broader frameworks to compare previous findings with our own. Subsequently, concepts and themes from prior research were applied to the review data using a deductive coding approach. Additionally, new codes were introduced, or existing ones were split if aspects not previously addressed in the literature were encountered or if particularly significant aspects were detected in multiple records. Following the initial coding phase, the coding scheme was refined by removing highly specific codes that occurred less frequently, with the remaining codes organized into themes representing eight prevailing challenges in HRM in museums: (1) digital revolution, (2) co-creation of exhibitions, (3) outdated leadership approaches, (4) lack of crisis and climate change management, (5) high staff turn-

over, (6) challenges in creating an inclusive museum environment, (7) lack of staff competencies, and (8) organizing staff training. The same coding process was applied to determine potential strategic solutions, which were then paired with the challenges they could address. In the subsequent sections, we present the findings of the analysis, thematically grouping the findings so that strategic solutions align with the challenges identified in the literature search.

Digital revolution

The advent of digital technology has transformed the way museums operate, necessitating a shift in the museum operations as well as the skill set of their personnel (Kasiola & Metaxas, 2023; Giannini & Bowen, 2019; Maye et al., 2017; Dukić, 2015; Kung, Uen & Lin, 2020). For instance, especially during and after COVID-19, museums began to employ digital systems and social media to create digital exhibitions, which has led to the necessity of new skills and new museum jobs (Kasiola & Metaxas, 2023; Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016). Moreover, such changes further fostered the need for innovations in museums to remain competitive (Kung, Uen & Lin, 2020).

Table 1. Summary of Literature Sources Included in the Analysis.

Source	Methodology	Country	Main themes
Dicus, 2000	Case study	USA	Museum crisis management
Rosa, 2009	Case study	USA	Museum leadership
Graham & Jomphe, 2010	Case study	Canada	Museum staff competencies
Jung, 2011	Theoretical perspective	USA	Inclusive museum environment
Huvila, 2013	Case study	Finland, Sweden	Museum staff competencies
Dukić, 2015	Questionnaire with museum, library, and archive professionals	Croatia	Digital revolution in museums
Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016	Theoretical perspective	France, Switzerland	Museum staff competencies, digital revolution in museums, co-creation of exhibitions
Freudenheim, 2016	Theoretical perspective	UK	Inclusive museum environment
Usiaeva et al., 2016	Structured observation	Russia	Museum staff competencies
Maye et al., 2017	Action research	UK	Digital revolution in museums
Flax, Holko & Stricker, 2017	Case study	USA	Museum leadership
Kristinsdóttir, 2017	Review	Iceland	Museum staff training
Zan, Baraldi & Santagati, 2018	Case study	Italy	Museum staff training, legislative support
Vigli, Panagiotopoulos & Argyropoulou, 2018	Theoretical perspective, case study	Greece	Museum staff competencies
Flouty, 2019	Case study	USA	Museum staff competencies
Piqueras & Achiam, 2019	Action research	Sweden	Museum staff training
Giannini & Bowen, 2019	Theoretical chapter	USA	Digital revolution in museums
Fifield, 2019	Qualitative analysis	USA	Museum leadership
Kung & Uen, 2020	Questionnaire with museum professionals	China	Digital revolution
Decker, 2020	Theoretical perspective	USA	Climate change management in museums
Kupec et al., 2020	Questionnaires with $n = 810$ museums from EU 27	EU 27	Museum staff competencies

Source	Methodology	Country	Main themes
Viau-Courville, 2021	Case study	Canada, Brazil	Co-creation of exhibitions, museum leadership
Pegno & Brindza, 2021	Case study	USA	Co-creation of exhibitions
Dragouni & McCarthy, 2021	Questionnaires with museum staff and volunteers	UK	Co-creation of exhibitions, museum leadership, staff turnover
Tanga, 2021	Theoretical perspective	USA	Museum leadership
Cerdan Chiscano & Jiménez-Zarco, 2021	Mixed data collection (audit, ethnography, observations, and interviews)	Spain	Inclusive museum environment
Janes, 2022	Reflective analysis	UK	Museum leadership
Tosun & Bostan, 2022	Questionnaire and interviews with museum staff	Turkey	Museum crisis management
Kasiola & Metaxas, 2023	Interviews with museum executives	Greece	Digital revolution in museums
Asif et al., 2023	Questionnaires with museum staff	Pakistan	Museum staff turnover
Duursma, Losekoot & de Jong, 2023	Interviews and observations of museum volunteers	Netherlands	Inclusive museum environment
Cesário, Freitas & Campos, 2023	Case study	Portugal	Museum staff competencies

To address these challenges, various solutions have emerged from the literature. First and foremost, training personnel in digital skills (Kasiola & Metaxas, 2023), is essential to equip museum staff with the knowledge and expertise needed to navigate the digital landscape effectively. Additionally, partnerships between museums and academic institutions (Giannini & Bowen, 2019), offer the potential to train the next generation of museum professionals who are well-versed in digital technologies. Furthermore, museum personnel need to develop an understanding of how technology can complement the visitor experience through experimentation and hands-on experience (Maye et al., 2017). This approach encourages museums to innovate and enhance visitor engagement using digital tools, while also empowering their personnel. Lastly, ambidextrous leadership, characterized by the organization's balance between exploitation and exploration, could play a pivotal role in managing the transition to a digitally focused museum environment.

Such leadership by exploring new opportunities and innovations (exploration) while also efficiently exploiting the museum's existing resources and capabilities (exploitation) fosters an organizational climate for innovation, which is essential in navigating the challenges posed by the digital revolution (Kung, Uen & Lin, 2020). Hence, museums must proactively address the human resources challenges brought about by the digital revolution by investing in training, fostering innovation, and recognizing the evolving skill set required for success in the digital age.

Co-creation of exhibitions

Museums are also grappling with the challenge of co-creating exhibitions, driven by the heightened expectations of visitors for active participation in knowledge co-construction (Gainnon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016; Viau-Courville, 2021; Pegno & Brindza, 2021; Dragouni & McCa-

rthy, 2021). As museums increasingly embrace co-creation to engage visitors and diverse communities, they must address the complexities of collaborative exhibition development, which entails building relationships with different stakeholders, handling the conflicts that arise, and sharing control with others (Pegno & Brindza, 2021). Consequently, effective oversight and supervision of such projects becomes imperative (Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016).

To effectively handle this challenge, museums can consider several strategies. The co-curation model, and a shift towards collaborative frameworks (Pegno & Brindza, 2021), encourage museums to involve stakeholders, including community members, artists, and experts, in the exhibition development process. This inclusive approach can lead to more diverse and meaningful exhibitions. Such a process could be led through strategies of managerial curatorship (Viau-Courville, 2021), which offers a balanced approach, blending management and curatorial responsibilities to guide exhibition co-creation processes efficiently. Furthermore, the development of new skills is essential (Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016). To facilitate the collaborative process of exhibit design, museums should allocate resources towards staff development in diverse domains. This includes training in management, project management, fundraising, museum marketing, proficiency in computer and digital technologies, as well as cognitive and behavioral skills enhancement. Human resources planning, which involves forecasting future workforce needs aligned with the organization's strategic objectives, is also critical (Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016). Training programs should be diverse in content, delivery methods, and locations, offering an individualized approach. Recognition of skills through digital badges and fostering empowerment by involving the entire museum team in day-to-day operations, along with close cooperation between staff and management, are key aspects of addressing this challenge. Finally, recognizing and rewarding staff through bonuses, benefits, or talent development, which includes employee recognition, feedback, training, mentoring, and career development, can motivate, and retain the talent needed for successful co-created exhibitions (Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016).

Outdated leadership approaches

The need for modernization and adaptation in leadership practices is pressing (e.g., Fifield, 2019, Rosa, 2009). Firstly, the changing role of curators, as suggested by discussions regarding the potential "death of the curator" (Viau-Courville, 2021, p. 3), introduces significant uncertainty, potentially disrupting established museum hierarchies and practices. This evolution contributes to role ambiguity, a pressing issue that is further exacerbated by external pressures for museum professionals to assume more diverse responsibilities beyond their traditional roles (Dragouni & McCarthy, 2021). Moreover, a crucial challenge emerges in the form of a lack of managerial skills within the museum, posing hurdles in adapting to changing environments and effectively managing complex operational aspects (Dragouni & McCarthy, 2021). Moreover, the inadequacy of staff preparedness for assuming more substantial leadership responsibilities accentuates the need for ongoing professional development to navigate evolving demands in the museum sector (Rosa, 2009). The process of hiring collection managers presents another layer of complexity, necessitating careful consideration of the competencies required for preserving and curating collections (Fifield, 2019). Transitioning into horizontal management structures introduces its own set of challenges, such as a lack of clear advocacy, supervision, and dispute resolution mechanisms, alongside uncertainty regarding career progression (Flax, Holko & Stricker, 2017).

In response to these challenges, a multitude of solutions have emerged from the literature. Firstly, the concept of managerial curatorship offers a promising framework that effectively addresses these issues by seamlessly integrating management and curatorial responsibilities. This approach not only counters the potential "death of the curator" but also encourages leaders to strike a harmonious balance between administrative duties and their curatorial roles. This balanced approach results in more effective and strategic management within museums (Viau-Courville, 2021). Moreover, addressing these challenges necessitates providing training in transformational leadership at all management levels (Dragouni & McCarthy, 2021).

This leadership approach focuses on inspiring and motivating museum staff to collectively work towards a shared vision, thus fostering innovation and adaptability in response to evolving circumstances. Additionally, Fifield's (2019) insights emphasize the importance of defining competencies and work descriptions for collection managers while providing them with training in various aspects such as non-profit management, influence strategies, and risk management. Equipping museum leaders with these essential skills enables them to make informed decisions, conduct thorough cost-benefit analyses, and engage in effective strategic planning. Clear and effective leadership in a horizontal management structure also relies on establishing transparent communication channels, setting unambiguous expectations, and maintaining flexibility to accommodate evolving team and institutional needs (Flax, Holko & Stricker, 2017). To further bolster leadership capabilities, the literature suggests the implementation of formal museum leadership training programs. These programs encompass a wide range of topics, including leadership theory, management strategies, and cultural competencies, ensuring that leaders are well-equipped to excel in their roles (Rosa, 2009). Innovative approaches to leadership, such as collective leadership and embracing of new organizational designs, encourage collaboration, nurture creativity, and empower staff, fostering a dynamic and responsive museum environment (Janes, 2022). Finally, Tanga's (2021) advocacy for exploring non-hierarchical museum structures serves as an essential perspective, promoting a more inclusive and egalitarian leadership approach that values the contributions of all staff members and ultimately leads to a more resilient and adaptive museum ecosystem.

Lack of crisis and climate change management

Another challenge that has shown to be especially relevant during COVID-19, is the lack of crisis and climate change management strategies in museums' human resource management (Tosun & Bostan, 2022; Dicus, 2000; Decker, 2020). Specifically, research until now has pinpointed mold outbreak (Dicus, 2000), climate change (Decker, 2020), and lack of preparedness

for disaster and emergency management (Tosun & Bostan, 2022) as the primary issues in crisis management in museums.

To address these issues, museums can implement several pragmatic solutions. Training staff in disaster management, coordination, and planning, with the appointment of one employee as an emergency management coordinator, can enhance a museum's preparedness for unexpected crises (Tosun & Bostan, 2022). During emergencies, hiring temporary staff could be a resourceful solution to bolster workforce capacity (Dicus, 2000). Moreover, museum staff should be trained in climate change and stimulated to be proactive in educating the public about climate change and advocating for environmental protection. Embracing activism and co-creating initiatives with communities can empower museums to address climate change and crisis management comprehensively (Decker, 2020). Therefore, museums should put effort in educating staff and ensuring financial stability to be able to hire temporary staff if necessary to bolster museum operations during a crisis.

High staff turnover

Due to a lack of satisfaction with the museum's organizational functioning and support from the supervisors, a large number of museum personnel are leaving museums to pursue better career options, leading to high staff turnover (Asif et al., 2023; Dragouni & McCarthy, 2021).

To combat this issue effectively, it is essential to foster a healthy work environment by providing supervisory support and amenities such as recreational facilities and comprehensive social security measures, including health benefits, flexible working hours, and health insurance for employees and their families (Asif et al., 2023). By providing these benefits, museums can demonstrate their commitment to the wellbeing and security of their staff, thereby fostering loyalty and reducing turnover rates. Additionally, implementing transformational leadership practices that prioritize democratic decision-making, equitable task allocation, and clear communication mechanisms has a positive impact on the museum's beneficiaries (Dragouni & McCarthy, 2021). By empowering employees

and involving them in decision-making processes, museums can enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Encouraging the sharing of insights and knowledge between employees who interact with visitors directly and those who work behind the scenes can reinforce perceptions of meaningful contributions and involvement in decision-making processes (Dragouni & McCarthy, 2021). These solutions reflect a holistic approach to mitigating high staff turnover by addressing the improvement of both workplace conditions and leadership strategies, ultimately enhancing employee retention and satisfaction within museums.

Challenges in creating an inclusive museum environment

In an era marked by a growing emphasis on diversity and accessibility, HRM in museums is confronted with the challenge of creating a friendly and inclusive environment (Duursma, Losekoot & de Jong, 2023; Cerdan Chisano & Jimenez-Zarco, 2021; Freudenheim, 2016; Jung, 2011). Museums specifically struggle with involving volunteers in decision-making (Duursma, Losekoot & de Jong, 2023), recognizing individuals with disabilities, and absence of adequate training and understanding among museum managers regarding the preferences and requirements of individuals with disabilities (Cerdan Chisano & Jimenez-Zarco, 2021), lack of staff friendliness (Freudenheim, 2016), and marginalized viewpoints and overlooking the needs of underrepresented individuals (Jung, 2011).

To tackle this challenge effectively, museums should, for instance, savor the importance of involvement and respect for volunteers, recognizing their contributions to promoting a friendly atmosphere and inclusivity within the museum (Duursma, Losekoot & de Jong, 2023). Moreover, staff training is necessary to enrich staff with an understanding of the needs of visitors with disabilities, along with enhancing their communication skills (Cerdan Chisano & Jimenez-Zarco, 2021). This empowers museum staff to provide a more inclusive and accommodating experience for all visitors. In addition, friendliness from staff is a fundamental element in creating

an inviting museum atmosphere (Freudenheim, 2016). A welcoming and respectful attitude from museum personnel can significantly impact the visitor experience. Furthermore, adopting the concept of the museum as an ecosystem can guide museums in creating a holistic approach to inclusivity (Jung, 2011). This approach involves recognizing the interconnectedness of staff members, departments, collections, mission statements, visitors, and other cultural and educational institutions. By fostering these connections and relationships, museums can create a more inclusive and responsive environment that considers the diverse needs and backgrounds of their visitors.

Lack of staff competencies

One of the most prominent challenges museums are confronting in terms of HRM is the lack of staff competencies (e.g., Kupec et al., 2020; Vigli, Panagiotopoulos & Argyropoulou, 2019; Flouty, 2019). In that sense, a crucial issue is staff efficiency which is hindered by the absence of effective staff management strategies (Kupec et al., 2020). This inefficiency can impact the overall performance and productivity of the museum. Furthermore, there is the challenge of insufficient professionalism among museum staff, which can affect the quality of services and visitor experiences (Vigli, Panagiotopoulos & Argyropoulou, 2019). Additionally, supporting part-time staff presents its own set of hurdles such as a lack of adequate training initiatives and skills development opportunities for this segment of the workforce (Flouty, 2019). This deficiency can impede their ability to contribute effectively. Moreover, the issue of staff competencies, including communication skills, can have profound implications for the museum's ability to engage with visitors and stakeholders (Usiaeva et al., 2016). Furthermore, museums often struggle with creating and sharing knowledge among staff, due to a lack of strategic support for knowledge exchange (Huvila, 2013). Additionally, there's a shortage of staff experts in specific fields, which can limit the depth and breadth of research and expertise within the museum (Graham & Jomphe, 2010). Lastly, the lack of involvement of museum staff in the design process of interactive exhibitions is often attributed to

a deficit in the necessary skills, which can impact the overall effectiveness and relevance of museum exhibitions (Cesário, Freitas & Campos, 2023).

To tackle these challenges, Kupec et al. (2020) suggest implementing auditing (i.e., assessment of human resources policies and practices for compliance, effectiveness, and alignment with organizational objectives) and control mechanisms (i.e., measurement and analysis of human resources data to improve staff management) to enhance staff competencies systematically. Regular training and assessment can effectively pinpoint and rectify competency gaps (Usiaeva et al., 2016). Recognizing the need for new skills, museums should engage in comprehensive human resources planning to anticipate future demands for employees with the required skills aligned with the organization's strategic goals. This entails developing a range of training programs tailored to individual needs, offered in diverse formats and locations. For instance, a holistic training approach covering diverse areas such as collection management, preventive maintenance, exhibition planning, administration, communication, funding, and research, coupled with teamwork and interdisciplinary collaboration, can significantly contribute to staff development (Vigli, Panagiotopoulos & Argyropoulou, 2019). Additionally, training museum professionals in authoring tools equips staff with essential digital skills necessary to thrive in the digital revolution (Cesário, Freitas & Campos, 2023). To ensure that all staff members, including part-timers, benefit from ongoing education, online training platforms should be made available (Flouty, 2019). Huvila (2013) highlights the importance of fostering a culture of continuous learning through knowledge exchange among museum staff. Skills recognition, including the use of digital badges, can serve as a motivating and validating factor for employees' skill acquisition (Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016). Moreover, fostering empowerment within the museum team is crucial.

This can be achieved through close collaboration between staff and management, along with providing recognition in the form of bonuses, benefits, and, whenever feasible, talent development opportunities encompassing employee recognition, feedback, training, mentoring, and avenues for career advancement (Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016). Finally, promoting collaborative staffing arrangements between museums and universities can enrich staff competencies through valuable academic partnerships (Graham & Jomphe, 2010).

Organizing staff training

Due to the heterogeneity of museum roles as well as the lack of legislative and leadership support for museum staff development, organizing staff training in museums is challenging (Piqueras & Achiam, 2019; Zan, Baraldi & Santagati, 2018; Kristindottir, 2017).

Addressing this challenge effectively necessitates recognizing the heterogeneity of roles within museums and advocating for a comprehensive learning process that encompasses anticipation of positive effects, familiarization with theory, experimentation, and recognition of the practical benefits of training (Piqueras & Achiam, 2019). Moreover, to create an environment conducive to effective staff training, it is necessary to foster supportive organizational leadership, which includes support, autonomy, trust, and vision (Kristinsdóttir, 2017). Finally, Zan, Baraldi, and Santagati (2018) underscore the role of legislative museum reforms in supporting human resources management within museums, ensuring that the necessary structures and resources are in place to facilitate training initiatives.

Table 1 summarizes the key findings from the review by listing the prevailing challenges in HRM in museums with the accompanied strategic HRM solutions.

Table 2. Challenges and strategies for HRM in museums.¹

Challenges	Strategic solutions
Digital revolution in museums	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training personnel in digital skills 2. Museum and academic partnerships
Co-creation of exhibitions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managerial curatorship 2. Co-curation model 3. Development and recognition of new skills
Outdated leadership approaches	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defining manager competencies and work descriptions 2. Managerial curatorship 3. Training in transformational leadership for all management levels 4. Clear expectations, communication, and flexibility 5. Collective leadership and non-hierarchical museum
Lack of crisis and climate change management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training staff in crisis and climate management 2. Choosing an emergency management coordinator 3. Hiring temporary staff
High staff turnover	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supervisory support and development of healthy work environment 2. Transformational leadership 3. Promoting exchange of experiences between the front of house and back of house workers
Challenges in creating inclusive museum environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Involvement and respect for the volunteers 2. Training staff to understand the needs of the visitors with disabilities 3. Insisting on friendliness 4. Museum as an ecosystem
Lack of staff competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defined roles during recruitment 2. Use of auditing and controlling 3. Regular staff training and assessment in collection management, preventive maintenance, exhibition planning, administration, communication, funding, and research as well as digital skills and authoring tools 4. Supporting part-time staff through online training platform 5. Knowledge exchange between staff 6. Co-staffing between museums and universities
Organizing staff trainings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning process should include anticipation of positive effects, familiarization with theory, experimentation, and recognition of benefits for practice 2. Development of organizational and legislative support for HRM in museums

¹ The table summarizes the literature findings explained in the Results section of the paper. Hence, because it doesn't offer new information and to enable easier reading, the references are excluded from the table.

3. DISCUSSION

The PRISMA review was conducted to understand the intricacies of human resources management (HRM) within museums, aiming to identify the primary challenges and explore potential HRM solutions for these distinct issues. The investigation uncovered eight prevailing challenges across the literature about HRM in museums. These challenges encompassed the digital revolution, collaborative exhibition creation, outdated leadership approaches, deficiency in crisis and climate change management, elevated staff turnover rates, hurdles in fostering an inclusive museum environment, inadequacies in staff competencies, and the complexity of organizing staff training programs due to the diversity of roles and a lack of legislative and organizational support. In response to these diverse challenges, museums have at their disposal a range of HRM solutions, including, but not limited to, skill development initiatives and a shift towards collaborative museum management.

These findings align with previous research on HRM challenges in different sectors, with recent studies emphasizing the significance of the digital revolution and crisis management. For instance, Hamouche (2021) and Sulaiman et al. (2020) identified crisis management, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a prominent HRM challenge, underscoring the importance of personnel training and skill development, reaffirming our findings. Additionally, Pan and Froese (2023) highlighted the impact of technology on various aspects of HRM, such as recruitment, training, and work methodologies, mirroring our observations that museums are grappling with challenges related to digitalization. Da Silva et al. (2022) conducted a review of HRM during Industry 4.0 (the digital revolution) and found that digital trends pose challenges for HRM while also driving investment in learning, training, talent management, inclusion, innovative leadership styles, and decentralized decision-making and collaboration. This resonates with our findings, which revealed that museums currently, amid Industry 4.0, face challenges in terms of digital utilization (Kasiola & Metaxas, 2023; Giannini & Bowen, 2019; Maye et al., 2017; Dukić, 2015; Kung, Uen & Lin, 2020), deficits in

staff competencies and training (Kupec et al., 2020; Vigli, Panagiotopoulos & Argyropoulou, 2019; Flouty, 2019; Usiaeva et al., 2016; Huvila, 2013; Graham & Jomphe, 2010; Cesário, Freitas & Campos, 2023; Piqueras & Achiam, 2019; Zan, Baraldi & Santagati, 2018; Kristindottir, 2017), creating inclusive environment (Duursma, Losekoot & de Jong, 2023; Cerdan Chisano & Jimenez-Zarco, 2021; Freudenheim, 2016; Jung, 2011) and the imperative for evolving outdated leadership paradigms towards innovation-stimulating leadership and non-hierarchical structures that engage staff in collaborative decision-making (Janes, 2022, Viau-Courville, 2021; Dragouni & McCarthy, 2021; Fifield, 2019; Flax, Holko & Stricker, 2017; Rosa, 2009; Tanga, 2021). Additionally, the results are in line with Piwowar-Sulej et al. (2023) who observed diversity management and corporate social responsibility (i.e., green HRM), which includes climate change management, as the new trends in HRM that require distinct HRM solutions. Moreover, it's important to highlight that crisis/disaster management is frequently viewed as an integral aspect of occupational health and safety within the HRM literature. Furthermore, museums typically have a safety department as part of their horizontal (structural) organization, further supporting the notion that crisis management is a challenge and should be efficiently handled in museums (Howard & Schill, 2012). The remaining two challenges highlighted in our study, co-creation of exhibitions and high staff turnover, are more specific to the museum context. Previous research also supports these challenges, with Gainon-Court and Vuillaume (2016) recognizing the increasing expectations of museum visitors for active participation in knowledge co-creation and exhibit development as challenges museums must address to enhance visitor satisfaction. Additionally, Friedman (2005) explored the difficulties museums face in formulating HR strategies that facilitate recruitment, retention, and development, ultimately contributing to high employee turnover rates.

The implications of our study are manifold. Firstly, it marks the first systematic examination of the HRM challenges in museums, enriching the field of museum and heritage studies by shedding light on the current obstacles imped-

ing the creation of positive, talent-nurturing work environments within museums. Secondly, in addition to identifying these challenges, our study explores HRM strategic solutions grounded in the literature, equipping museum professionals with tools to address these issues effectively. For instance, our findings underscore the paramount importance of staff training and skills development in tackling most challenges (Usiaeva et al., 2016; Vigli, Panagiotopoulos & Argyropoulou, 2019; Kasiola & Metaxas, 2023; Gainon-Court & Vuillaume, 2016). Furthermore, we emphasize the need for modern leadership approaches characterized by collaborative decision-making, clear communication, flexibility (Viau-Courville, 2021; Dragouni & McCarthy, 2021; Rosa, 2009; Flax, Holko & Stricker, 2017; Tanga, 2021) and fostering a positive work environment that encourages sharing of insights and knowledge between employees who interact with visitors directly and those who work behind the scenes, staff friendliness, and the involvement of volunteers (Duursma, Losekoot & de Jong, 2023; Freudenheim, 2016). However, our findings also underscore the critical importance of organizational and legislative support for HRM within museums (Zan, Baraldi & Santagati, 2018; Kristinsdóttir, 2017). Thirdly, our study highlights a scarcity of research in the field of HRM in museums, with only 32 records included in this review.

Limitations and Future Research

The study is not without limitations. For example, despite our aim to include all records published until 2023, there were no records available before 2000. This, coupled with the overall scarcity of research on HRM in museums, resulted in a low number of records included in the analysis (32). While this limited pool of data poses a challenge due to the restricted availability of information on HRM in museums, it also presents an opportunity for researchers to delve deeper into this important topic, because museums are increasingly becoming hubs for mental, educational, and social enrichment, drawing growing attention from tourists and local visitors alike. Additionally, the analysis relied solely on one database, albeit comprehensive (Web of

Science), which may have influenced the number of records included. Future research could broaden its scope by incorporating additional databases or even non-peer-reviewed sources like museum reports, which could offer valuable insights into the business aspects of museum operations. Furthermore, the focus on HRM and talent development within museums is still in its early stages, and we hope that our study will inspire further research endeavors. For instance, while the lack of crisis management emerged as a notable HRM challenge in museums, there is a noticeable gap in studies addressing this issue. Given the significant impact of climate change on various sectors, more research in this area is urgently needed. Lastly, due to the scarcity of records focusing on HRM in museums, our study was unable to provide comparisons in challenges and solutions between different types of museums (e.g., public/private, large/small, art/science/history). This presents a promising avenue for future research, especially concerning public-private comparisons, given their distinct operational models, access to resources, and talent pool.

4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this review sheds light on critical HRM challenges in museums and offers practical solutions. It emphasizes the need for ongoing research and modernization in museum human resources practices to adapt to changing dynamics and growing tourism market competition. This study provides valuable insights for museum professionals and underscores the importance of staff training and development, modern collaborative leadership approaches, and legislative and organizational support to create a positive work environment that attracts and retains talented museum professionals and enables crafting contemporary museum experiences that nowadays visitors expect. However, it also highlights a need for further research in this emerging field, particularly regarding crisis management and climate change impacts on museums' human resources management. Ultimately, this review contributes to enhancing the management of museums in a dynamic cultural tourism landscape.

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Upravljanje ljudskim potencijalima u muzejima: sustavni pregled izazova i rješenja

Sažetak

Ovaj sustavni pregled, koristeći PRISMA metodu, identificira izazove u upravljanju ljudskim potencijalima u muzejima te njihova potencijalna rješenja. Iako su ljudski resursi iznimno važni, posebice upravljanje ljudskim resursima u muzejima, oni predstavljaju brojne izazove za muzejsko vodstvo koji do sada nisu bili sustavno istraživani. Analiza je provedena tijekom srpnja 2023., a konačni uzorak uključivao je 32 publikacije. Analiza je otkrila osam ključnih izazova: utjecaj digitalne revolucije, izazovi u ko-kreaciji izložba, zastarjeli pristupi vodstvu, nedostatak upravljanja krizama i klimatskim promjenama, visoke stope fluktuacije osoblja, izazovi u stvaranju inkluzivnog muzejskog okruženja, nedostatak kompetencija osoblja i izazovi u organiziranju obuke osoblja. Kako bi se uspješno nosili s ovim izazovima, muzeji mogu implementirati niz strateških rješenja, primjerice razvoj vještina, usvajanje suvremenih pristupa vodstvu utemeljenih na suradnji i osnaživanje organizacijske i zakonodavne potpore za razvoj osoblja i talenata u muzejima. Iako je pregled ograničen u broju obuhvaćenih zapisa, zbog nedostatka istraživanja ljudskih potencijala u muzejima, on označava prvo sustavno ispitivanje izazova u upravljanju ljudskim potencijalima u muzejima, obogaćujući područje muzejskih istraživanja i upravljanja baštinom rasvjetljavajući trenutne prepreke koje sprječavaju stvaranje pozitivnog radnog okruženja u muzejima koje potiče razvoj talenata.

Ključne riječi: muzejski menadžment, upravljanje ljudskim potencijalima, ljudski potencijali, muzej, upravljanje baštinom, razvoj osoblja