

**Investigating the importance of applying Job Descriptions to Human Resources Management Functions in Egyptian Travel Agencies**

**Ghada Mohamed Khairat  
Tourism Department**

**Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management - University of Sadat City**

**Abstract**

*Travel agencies mainly depend on staff with high qualifications, skills, and experiences that can contribute to their success and enhance competitiveness. Job descriptions identify the characteristics and responsibilities required for each job. Moreover, job descriptions are necessary for implementing various human resources management activities, including selection and recruitment, performance evaluations, training, and compensation. This study aims to investigate the awareness and use of job descriptions in Egyptian travel agencies. It also examines the contents of a job description, and shows its importance as a strategic human resource management practice. The sample chosen in this study includes 165 managers, employees, and human resources managers in Egyptian travel agencies. This study reveals that there is a relationship between job descriptions and human resource functions. The results also determine that the selection and recruitment process is the most prominent human resource function with regard to applying job descriptions.*

**Key words :** Human resources management; Job description; KSAs; Recruitment; Training needs ; Performance appraisal; Compensation.

**1. Introduction**

Human resources in travel agencies are considered an especially valuable resource, and one of the most important assets of the agencies. (Rodrigo, 2012) They become an important factor with regard to competitive advantage, and contribute to an increase in the profitability of the agencies. (Vučetić, 2012) Travel agencies are now seeking employees, especially those who will be in contact with customers, with certain types of skills, and highly specialized knowledge. (Nickson, 2007) Therefore, for best utilization of human resources, it is essential to give them tasks that are best suited to their efforts or competences. However, it is not easy to appoint the right person for a job vacancy. Hiring people who are not suitable for the job threatens all

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businesses. One of the main reasons behind the success of any organization is when the hiring process assigns people for the jobs where they can apply their abilities and skills (Prien et al., 2009). A job description is an essential tool for arranging work into positions in an organization (Bodnarchuk, 2012). Moreover, it has grown in importance as the workforce and jobs have changed (Mathis & Jackson, 2010). The description of the various responsibilities of each position can usually be found within the "job description". A job description is "a list of the general tasks, or functions, and responsibilities of a position. Typically, it also includes details about to whom the position reports, specifications such as the qualifications needed by the person in the job, salary range for the position, etc." (Li, 2009, 17).

The main issue for managers in travel agencies is to draw up an appropriate and full job description for the employee in order to be able to deliver better services to customers (Rodrigo, 2012). Companies that regularly develop job descriptions are likely to achieve higher performance, and gain competitive advantage (Siddique, 2004). Using job descriptions is a part of good management (Tzoumas, 2013). The goal of a job description is to explain the purpose, scope, duties, and responsibilities of a specified job. It is also used in various human resources processes such as selection and recruitment, orientation, performance assessment, planning, and compensation (Bodnarchuk, 2012; Banerjee, 2014). This study aims to investigate the awareness and use of job descriptions in Egyptian travel agencies, examine the content of job descriptions, and show the importance of job descriptions as a strategic human resources management practice.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Job Descriptions**

A job description is described by (Nickson, 2007, 91) as: "a document that outlines the purposes of the job, the task involved, the duties and responsibilities, the performance of objectives and the reporting relationships. It gives details of the terms and conditions, including the remuneration package and hours of work". Moreover, a job description is defined by (Nickels et al., 2012, 297) as "a summary of the objectives of a job, the type of work to be done, the responsibilities and duties, the working conditions and the relationship of the job to other function." The level of a job description and the monitoring of employee execution of the duties can vary tremendously from one organization to another. Job descriptions change continuously based on organizational changes, including restructuring, growth, cutbacks, technological innovations, and reassignments. Such

changes influence the relationships among positions, and clarify any weaknesses in the jobs (Bodnarchuk, 2012; Singh, 2008).

Job descriptions mainly identify employees with the main responsibilities and duties of their jobs, standards of performance, and authority in the organization. Therefore, they contribute to designing the organization's structure, recruiting employees, (Bogardus, 2009) assessing employees' performance with regard to the job requirements stated in the job description, and making decisions about promotions and salaries. Furthermore, job descriptions can be used to guide selecting and developing training programs that aim at focusing on jobs' details, and enhancing employees' performance (Boella and Turner, 2005; Stredwick, 2005).

In addition, a key benefit of job descriptions is that they enhance employees' productivity. If a job description does not exist, there will be no clear instructions, and employees may misunderstand their assigned tasks, be confused about how to fulfill them correctly, feel frustrated, lose confidence in their ability to perform tasks, or feel unfairness thinking that managers are overload them with work that they are not supposed to do. This would lead to employees' dissatisfaction and high turnover (Edmunds, 2016; Barbouletos, 2011).

The benefits of using a written job description are having a signed agreement between the management and the employee about the duties and responsibilities of the job, and having a written document as a base for measuring success and pay (Bodnarchuk, 2012). Also, written job descriptions contribute to organizations' success. A detailed job description helps selecting qualified candidates, and, consequently, preparing leaders (Edward, 2010).

There are two types of job descriptions as explained by Mejía et al., (2012): Specific job descriptions, and general job descriptions. First, **a specific job description** summarizes in details a job's tasks, duties, and responsibilities. This type of job description emphasizes efficiency, control, and detailed work planning. It is more suitable for bureaucratic organizational structure where there are set boundaries differentiating between functions and different levels of management. Second, **a general job description** has been recognized recently (Mejía et al., 2012). It highlights innovation, flexibility, and loose work planning. This type of job description is best applied in a flat organizational structure with few boundaries between functions and levels of

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management. Moreover, while a job description describes job activities, including a definition of them, and how, why, and where to be done, job specifications states job requirements, such as the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) necessary to perform a job. KSAs include education, experience, language skills, work skills, personal abilities, and mental and physical requirements. Precise job specifications clarify the KSAs required by an individual to perform the job, regardless of the existing employee's qualifications that might not match the job demands. Frequently, job descriptions and job specifications are put together into one document including a number of sections (Mathis and Jackson, 2010; Suthar et al., 2014).

### **2.2 Job Descriptions' Forms and Templates**

Job descriptions' forms and templates differ from one organization to another. However, a company should have a common format that the job descriptions are based on (Bodnarchuk, 2012). A job description template may include the following (Bogardus, 2009):

**Identifying information:** The first part of a job description is identified with the job title, department, supervisor's title, report to, exemption status, salary range or grade, the date it was created, and location (Mathis and Jackson, 2010).

**Job summary:** The summary is a short description of the job, usually two to five sentences, that summarizes the job's duties, responsibilities, and place in the organizational structure (Mejía et al., 2012).

**Essential functions (job duties and responsibilities):** Essential job functions refer to the purpose of the job; and they must be fulfilled by the individual whose official position qualifies him/her to handle them. They clarify the major tasks, duties, and responsibilities of the job accurately.

**Equipment operated:** This section lists tools or equipment that will be used and the frequency of use.

**Job specifications:** It mentions the qualifications needed to perform a job, stated as: (1) Knowledge, skills, and abilities; (2) education, certification, and experience; and (3) physical requirements, and/or working conditions (Manning et al., 2012).

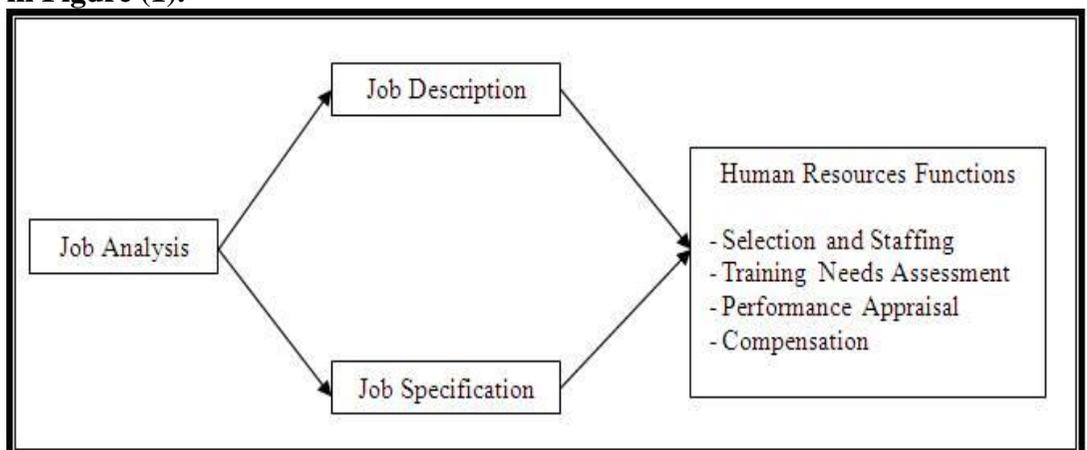
**Disclaimers and approvals:** The job description should be signed by the manager to verify its accuracy, and approve it. A legal disclaimer may also

exist, and it gives employers the right to change employees' job duties or request them to handle extra responsibilities.

### **2.3 The Relationship between Job Descriptions and Job Analysis**

Job analysis is a process. Job description is the product of that process. However, the two terms are often used interchangeably. A competent job analysis is ordinarily necessary in order to write the job description, the formal statement of the responsibilities involved, and the qualities necessary for success in a specific job. Therefore, without such a job analysis, it is difficult to prepare a useful job description (Prien, et al., 2009). Moreover, a job description is usually developed by conducting a job analysis, which is the process used to gather information about duties, responsibilities, skills, outcomes, and the work environment of a particular job (Li , 2009)

In other words, the findings of the job analysis are collected and summarized in the job description (Royer, 2009; Pynes, 2004; Mangaleswaran and Kirushantha, 2015). Job analysis is used to explore a company's organizational structure, and plan its future. It is also used to examine whether the company has the numbers and types of jobs that effectively cover the range of its activities, whether the company needs to create other jobs and define their requirements, and whether the skills needed for these new jobs already exist in the company or not, (Bohlander and Snell, 2013) **as shown in Figure (1).**



**"Figure" (1) Job Descriptions and Human Resources Management Functions**

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### **2.4 The Challenges of Applying a Job Description**

There are many challenges facing writing job descriptions. A job description is seen by some employees and managers as a waste of time. Others feel that it is too confining, and limits people to a specific set of tasks. Also, jobs change too fast to write descriptions (Prien et al., 2009). Many companies do not pay much attention to such documents because they are unaware of their importance, or because the company believes that they cannot be applied to a wide range. Moreover, there are many elements that can hinder the effectiveness of these documents as mentioned by ( *Biagio, 2015; Sîrbua and Pintea, 2014*):

- Managers are not acquainted with the purposes and uses of job descriptions.
- Job Descriptions may not be written well: Unclear, not updated, incomplete, or too general.
- There is no motivation for managers to apply job descriptions.
- The job descriptions' format is not well organized or standardized, and it is difficult for managers and employees to understand or accept.
- Job descriptions may restrict seniors to certain directions, not allowing them to be freely innovative.
- Job modifications may cause a job description to be out-of-date.

### **2.5 Uses of Job Descriptions in Human resources Functions**

A job description is the basic tool the organization uses to hire, measure, and manage the performance of each employee (Mangaleswaran and Kirushantha, 2015). Job descriptions are developed basically for the purpose of recruitment. However, they are used for a number of other purposes. Job descriptions contribute to maintaining a salary structure, and determine the suitable payment for the work accomplished (Bogardus, 2009). In addition, performance evaluations, compensations, and selecting training programs could be based on job descriptions (Stredwick, 2005; Li, 2009). Without an accurate knowledge of the requirements of each position, it is difficult to develop efficiently any other activities in the field of human resources management (*Sîrbua and Pintea, 2014*).

#### **2. 5. 1. Selection and Recruitment**

An organizations' performance depends on the quality of its employees. Therefore, companies use the selection and recruitment process to look for qualified employees through attracting and motivating many of them to apply for the job (Condrey, 2005) The recruitment process is mainly used to hire people to complete certain tasks or a group of tasks within the organization (*Biagio, 2015*). Before hiring people in a position, it is necessary to make them understand its requirements, characteristics, responsibilities, and duties; this is in addition to explaining the education, experience, knowledge, and

skills the job demands. This information is essential to identify the qualifications and personal attributes needed for the job, and to decide on salary levels. Therefore, a job description and recognizing the specifications needed in individuals for the job help managers choose the most suitable selection process (Li, 2009).

Job descriptions also provide potential candidates with information about the job in order to help them understand the requirements of the job, and decide if they are qualified to fulfill it, meet the organization's needs, and help to achieve the organization's goals on the long term (Royer, 2009; Bodnarchuk, 2012; Nickels et al., 2012). A job description is also a marketing tool to attract potential applicants (Nickson, 2007; Rabinowitz, 2015). Thus, a job description can play an important role in the success of a new hire. It is essential for hiring the right person with the right competencies and experience for the job, and improving communication to bridge the gap between the manager and the new employee (Jacobson et al., 2012; Martin, 2010). Moreover, job descriptions can keep high productivity through providing the base for hiring employees ready to perform their tasks without the need for extra training.

In addition, using a well-written job description to proceed through the hiring process saves money by raising productivity, lowering personnel turnover, and reducing supervisory problems. Furthermore, personnel conflicts and problems decline sharply, savings in additional hiring costs and downtime (Prien et al., 2009). It is important for tourism and hospitality organizations to consider how they can approach selection and recruitment to avoid poor recruitment that leads to the following: Expensive use of management time, retraining performers, recruiting replacements for individuals who leave very quickly, high-labor turnover, absenteeism, low morale, ineffective management and supervision, disciplinary problems, and dismissals (Nickson, 2007).

### **2.5.2 Training**

Training is the process that enhances people to gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities their job requires. A good training helps individuals to adapt, create, and improve their self-management, and performance. For organizations, training brings improvements in effectiveness and productivity, more profitability and reduced costs, improved quality, and increased social capital (Mathis and Jackson, 2010). Training, based on needs, is defined as gaps or discrepancies between an ideal and an optimal state. Needs arise from the job, a comparison between the desired and actual

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work methods, or a comparison between the desired and actual work results. Training needs assessment is the process of discovering precisely the gaps existing between what people know, do, or feel, and what they should know, do, or feel in order to perform competently (Rothwell and Kazanas, 2003).

A job description can be used to identify areas where the employee needs training, if he does not adequately meet the qualifications of the position. The training programs selected based on that concentrates on the job aspects, and improving employees performance (Stredwick, 2005). Moreover, job descriptions can support designing and improving training and career development programs through identifying the skills, knowledge, responsibility, and requirements of each job. This also prepares employees for potential promotions (Pynes, 2004; Bohlander and Snell, 2013; Royer, 2009).

### **2. 5. 3 Performance Appraisal**

A performance appraisal is "an evaluation that measures employee performance against established standards in order to make decisions about promotions, compensation, training, rewards or termination" (Nickels et al., 2012, 308). Also, job evaluation "is a process used to determine the worth of jobs and creating a link between job worth and salary " (Suthar et al., 2014, 169). Any job evaluation is concerned mainly with obtaining accurate information about jobs. Such information is collected through job descriptions. Performance evaluation is also a process to make sure that the individual staff do their best to perform their tasks and duties, meeting the standards of the organization. Moreover, in order to measure and appraise performance effectively it is essential to compare employee's performance with regard to the job's requirements (Li, 2009). Job descriptions often serve as the basis for a performance appraisal (Royer, 2009) where an employee's performance is measured to a larger or smaller extent against the requirements of the job set out in the job description (Stredwick, 2005).

The purpose of a job evaluation is "to produce an ordering of items that can be used as a basis for a rational structure of payment. Payment can be determined according to a reasonable estimation of the contribution that each post brings to the organization in terms of skills, responsibilities, duration of training and other factors" (Sîrbu and Pintea, 2014, 60). While a job description sets forth what people are supposed to do, employee appraisal evaluates how well an individual actually carries out those job description activities, duties, or responsibilities over a given time. The most important performance factors to be appraised are knowledge, ability, skills related to the job, attitude to work, commitment, motivation, quality of work, attention

to details, amount and extent of productivity, and interaction through good communication skills (Nickson, 2007).

Furthermore, developmental uses of appraisal aim to improve employees' performance and enhance their job skills. Therefore, they are concerned with providing feedback to employees, counseling them on successful work practices, and encouraging training. A performance appraisal can pave the way for multiple uses; vary from operational to strategic purposes. In addition, performance appraisals present the criteria used to validate selection systems; and they are also referred to when legally needed to justify personnel decisions, such as terminations. Furthermore, performance appraisal helps organizations apply their strategies (Mejia et al., 2012; Ortiz, 2009).

Formal job descriptions provide a helpful tool of performance measurement and appraisal that business owners and supervisors can take advantage of (Rabinowitz, 2015). They highlight the tasks the employee is responsible to do, and the skills and abilities he should obtain, setting the standards of employee performance that evaluators should consider when they put the ratings. The evaluator can then decide to what extent the employee perform his tasks, and whether his skills and abilities qualify him for the job (Royer, 2009).

#### **2.5.4 Compensation and Benefits**

Compensation is the reward received by an employee for his services. It includes direct, indirect, and non-monetary compensation. First, direct compensation refers to the basic salary an employee receives for performing his job. It is defined according to a particular scale of pay. Second, indirect compensation refers to the monetary benefits an employee receives other than his basic salary. It includes retirement programs, moving expenses, insurance, subsidized housing, paid leave (sick, holiday, and personal days), subsidized utilities, clothing laundry services, meals, cellular phones, child care, etc. Also, another form of indirect compensation is benefits (Rothwell and Kazanas, 2003). Third, non-monetary compensation is any benefit with no monetary value that an employee gets from an employer or a job. It includes career and social rewards such as job security, flexible hours, promotional opportunities, appreciation, task enjoyment, and friendships (Rayaroth, 2011). Companies use compensation to attract, retain, and motivate employees to achieve organizational goals. The design, implementation, and maintenance of compensation systems are important

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parts of strategic human resources management (Pynes, 2004; Mathis and Jackson, 2010).

A job description informs potential applicants about the obligations and rewards of the job. It also provides a standardized procedure for systematically determining pay, salary structure, and other benefits based on relative level of duties, responsibility, and qualifications of each position in the organization (Rabinowitz, 2015; Pynes, 2004). Additionally, a job description helps figuring out the relative worth of a position so the compensation for it is fair and equitable (Bohlander and Snell, 2013).

### **3. Research Methodology**

A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, and 185 collected (giving a response rate of 93%). Only 165 were valid, after the elimination of the incomplete ones. The sample of the study was randomly selected from Egyptian travel agencies' managers, employees, and human resources managers (Category A in Greater Cairo). The sample units are chosen from the issue of Egyptian Travel Agents Association (2014).

Structured questionnaires were used and administered. The questionnaire was composed of three sections. The first section was designed to obtain data on the age and size of the companies (number of employees). The second section was designed to investigate employees' viewpoints and attitudes towards job descriptions, and how job descriptions are used and perceived in the company. The third section of the questionnaire aimed to measure the importance of using job descriptions to human resources functions, and the relationship between job descriptions and human resources functions. Moreover, collected items have been assessed on five-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data and information found in this study were analyzed and discussed in accordance with the research objectives. The Statistic Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v 17.0) was used to analyze the data obtained. Descriptive statistics, including simple frequencies and mean ratings, have been computed. Moreover, Spearman correlation analysis was also applied to determine whether a relationship exists between job descriptions and human resources functions.

### **4. Results**

#### **Section 1: Distribution of Companies by Age and Size**

The first section provides background information on the company age and size.

**Table 1: Company Age**

Company age	Frequencies	Percentage
Less than 5 years	17	10.3
5–10 years	109	66.1
11–20 years	37	22.4
More than 20 years	2	1.2
Total	165	100

Regarding the age of companies, 66.1 percent of the companies ranged between 5–10 years, while 22.4 percent of the companies range between 11–20 years; 10.3 percent of them were less than 5 years; and only 1.2 percent of the companies had existed for more than 20 years. The company's age would reflect its knowledge and experience with regard to job descriptions. This would help it understand the topic of research.

**Table 2: Company Size**

Size (number of employees)	Frequencies	Percentage
Less than 20	124	75.2
21-50	38	23
51-100	2	1.2
More than 100	1	0.6
Total	165	100

To identify a company's size, the respondents were asked to indicate the number of employees working in it. As indicated in Table 2, 75.2% of the companies had less than 20 employees. 23% of the companies were medium-sized businesses with 21-50 employees. Big businesses with over 50 employees accounted for 1.2% of the companies. Agencies with more than 100 employees represented 0.6% of the sample.

## **Section 2: Application of Job Descriptions in Egyptian Travel Agencies**

**Table 3: Awareness of Job Descriptions**

	Frequencies	Percentage
Yes	165	100
No	-	-
Total	165	100

As outlined in the objectives, this research aims to investigate the awareness of job descriptions in the travel agencies. All the respondents assure that they are aware of job descriptions and their purposes, which gives them a clear vision of the position, content, tasks, duties, and responsibilities.

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**Table 4: Application of Job Descriptions**

	Frequencies	Percentage
Yes	45	27.3
No	30	18.2
Not correctly used	90	54.5
Total	165	100

The awareness of job descriptions is not being fully transferred into the application of them in the Egyptian travel agencies. Only 45 of the respondents (27.3%) say that they used job descriptions in their agencies. They confirmed that a job description is very important because it functions as a foundation for work; it clarifies the work, states responsibilities and commitments, and records them in the form of a written document. In addition, a job description helps the employee know what he is committed to, and what the position requires.

On the other hand, 30 of the respondents (18.2%) explained that they did not apply a job description because they do not have a proper knowledge about job descriptions; and applying them also depended on the size of the company and its management. Moreover, 90 respondents stated that they used a job description but not correctly because it was inaccurately written, and referred to more general tasks without identifying specific duties and responsibilities; moreover, the employee performs tasks for other departments, and the supervisory or reporting relationships were not clearly clarified.

**Table 5: Barriers Encountered by Travel Agencies when Implementing Job Descriptions**

Reasons	Frequencies	Percentage
Waste of time	65	39.4
Cost	12	7.3
Inflexibility	41	24.8
Knowledge and understanding	47	28.5
Total	165	100

The most important constraints encountered by travel agencies is time (39.4%, n=65); they consider writing job descriptions as time consuming, followed by knowledge and understanding (28.5% , n= 47) as most of them are not acquainted with the uses of job descriptions, and do not have proper knowledge and understanding of them. Others perceive its inflexibility (24.8%, n= 41) considering that job descriptions restrict them to a specific set of tasks. Moreover, a percentage of 7.3 ( n= 12) believed that cost was one of

the barriers facing them when implementing job descriptions; this is due to manager's reluctance to bear more expenses.

**Table 6:Content of Job Descriptions**

Job Descriptions' Contents		(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Neutral	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
1- Job title	Frequencies	152	13	-	-	-	4.921	.270	1
	Percentage	92.1	7.9	-	-	-			
2- Duties and responsibilities for each job	Frequencies	121	13	-	19	12	4.285	1.333	2
	Percentage	73.3	7.9	-	11.5	7.3			
3- Knowledge, skills, and abilities needed	Frequencies	64	42	2	33	24	3.539	1.520	4
	Percentage	38.8	25.5	1.2	20	14.5			
4- Job summary	Frequencies	77	39	-	21	28	3.703	1.559	3
	Percentage	46.7	23.6	-	12.7	17			
5- Reporting Relationships	Frequencies	51	34	-	51	29	3.164	1.563	5
	Percentage	30.9	20.6	-	30.9	17.6			
6- Work hours	Frequencies	47	29	1	40	48	2.921	1.653	6
	Percentage	28.5	17.6	0.6	24.2	29.1			

The respondents have been asked to rate the job descriptions' components according to their job descriptions. It is noticeable that every job description in the study contains a job title for each position reported by all the respondents (n= 165, 100%), making it the most frequently included section in the job descriptions. Many respondents (n= 134, 81.2%) report a list of duties and responsibilities with mean 4.285; this is to identify the specific

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activities that the employee should do. Other respondents (n=116, 70.3 %) mention that each of their job descriptions include a job summary which describes the purpose of the job briefly. Also, 64.3% of the respondents add that their job descriptions contain information about knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the job efficiently. On the other hand, reporting relationships, and work hours are the most neglected sections in the job descriptions as the travel agencies have not identified the supervisors or the department which the employee is required to contact. Also, they cannot impose fixed working hours on employees due to work overload.

**Table 7: The Role of Job Descriptions in Human Resources Functions**

		(5) Very important	(4) Important	(3) Neutral	(2) Not very important	(1) Unimport ant	Mean	Standard deviation
The role of job descriptions in human resources functions	Frequencies	92	48	1	16	8	4.212	1.162
	Percentage	55.8	29.1	0.6	9.7	4.8		

A high percentage of respondents (84.9%) assure the importance of the role that job descriptions play in human resources functions. A job description assists managers in deciding on the most appropriate selection and recruitment process. It also helps in measuring each employee's performance. However, the rest of the respondents (15.1%) perceive that the role of job descriptions is not very important to human resources functions. The average response for the importance of job descriptions to human resources functions falls between important and very important with mean (4.212), and standard deviation (1.162).

**Table 8: Human Resource Functions Applying Job Descriptions in Travel Agencies**

Human resource functions	Frequencies	Rank
Selection and recruitment	161	1
Training and development	156	2
Performance appraisal	134	4
Compensation & rewards and benefits	149	3

Note: The respondents identified multiple human resources functions (total >100%)

Table 8 shows that "selection and recruitment" was the main human resource function with regard to applying job descriptions. Knowing the employee's required skills and abilities from the job description can help finding experienced workforce for new positions. Then comes "training and development", "compensation & rewards and benefits", and "performance appraisal", respectively. Job descriptions can be used to identify areas where the employee needs training, determine the appropriate salary level, and help supervisors measure employees' performance.

**Table 9: People Responsible for Developing Job Descriptions in Travel Agencies**

Position	Frequencies	Rank
Human resources department	95	4
Managers	128	3
Supervisors	142	2
Employees	159	1

Note: The respondents identified more than one position responsible for developing job descriptions (total >100%)

Some of the respondents (n=159) state that employees are responsible for developing job descriptions because they are the experts in what is done in their positions, and aware of the content of their work . Job descriptions could be more precise if they are developed by employees. On the other hand, others (n=128) believe that managers are responsible for developing job descriptions because it is their responsibility to ensure that the tasks are distributed well and done in the best possible way. They also recognize the importance and mutual benefit of keeping the job descriptions updated. In addition, the managers are responsible for informing the employees about any changes to be put in the job description. Other respondents point out that employees and managers are responsible for updating job descriptions together through discussion; however, this depends on the manager's personality, and the employees feeling that they are being heard and their opinions are valued. Furthermore, some respondents (n=95) think that the human resources department is responsible for developing job descriptions.

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On the contrary, others believe that this department is not responsible for developing job descriptions because its task is to store and keep the updated job descriptions, and make sure that the job descriptions are used in the same way throughout the company.

**Table 10: Updating Job Descriptions in your Travel Agency**

	Frequencies	Percentage
Yes	35	21.2
No	130	78.8
Total	165	100

Recruitment process		(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Neutral	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Create a clear idea of the requirements, duties and responsibilities	Frequencies	134	27	-	3	1	4.758	.606
	Percentage	81.2	16.4	-	1.8	0.6		
Clarify the knowledge, and skills needed for the job	Frequencies	122	39	1	1	2	4.685	.6421
	Percentage	73.9	23.7	0.6	0.6	1.2		
Contribute to designing the advertisements to make the job look attractive to potential applicant	Frequencies	117	44	-	1	3	4.642	.698
	Percentage	70.9	26.7	-	0.6	1.8		
Help in the selection process of qualified employees	Frequencies	119	42	-	-	4	4.649	.723
	Percentage	72.1	25.5	-	-	2.4		
Hiring employees according to their abilities	Frequencies	114	47	1	2	1	4.642	.624
	Percentage	69.1	28.5	0.6	1.2	0.6		
Using job descriptions during the hiring process saves money	Frequencies	129	32	-	2	2	4.721	0.649
	Percentage	78.2	19.4	-	1.2	1.2		
							4.675	0.640

Only 35 respondents (21.2%) confirm the updating of job descriptions in their travel agencies. The development of job descriptions have occurred according to work needs, work system, any changes in tasks, functions or organizational objectives, technology, and organizational structure. The majority of the respondents (n=130, 78.8%) mention that their agencies do not develop job descriptions because the managers are reluctant to devote time and resources to such development.

**Section 3: The Importance of Using Job Descriptions in relation to Human Resource Functions**

**Table 11: The Importance of Using Job Descriptions to the Recruitment Process**

According to Table 11, the average response for the importance of job descriptions to the recruitment process falls between agree and strongly agree, with high mean (4.675), and standard deviation (0.640). This, in turn, leads to that respondents have a positive attitude toward the importance of job descriptions to the recruitment process.

**Table 12: The Importance of Using Job Descriptions to Training and Development**

Training and development		(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Neutral	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Helps in the reduction of conducting inefficient and high cost training programs	Frequencies	112	44	-	5	4	4.546	.852
	Percentage	67.9	26.7	-	3	2.4		
Helps to identify the target employees for training	Frequencies	134	22	1	2	6	4.673	.864
	Percentage	81.2	13.4	0.6	1.2	3.6		
Helps in designing training programs	Frequencies	127	29	-	6	3	4.642	.819
	Percentage	77	17.6	-	3.6	1.8		
Helps in identifying Training needs	Frequencies	131	25	-	4	5	4.655	.860
	Percentage	79.4	15.2	-	2.4	3		
Identifies the training methods and contents of the training	Frequencies	124	32	1	3	5	4.618	.852
	Percentage	75.2	19.4	0.6	1.8	3		

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programs								
Identifies the type of training required and the scheduling time for training activities	Frequencies	120	36	-	8	1	4.612	.778
	Percentage	72.8	21.8	-	4.8	0.6		
Fills the gaps between desired knowledge and skills, and the actual ones	Frequencies	118	38	-	-	9	4.552	.953
	Percentage	71.5	23	-	-	5.5		
							<b>4.624</b>	<b>.820</b>

According to Table 12, the average response for the importance of job descriptions to the training and development process falls between agree and strongly agree, with high mean (4.624), and standard deviation (.820). This, in turn, confirms the importance of job descriptions to training.

**Table 13: The Importance of Using Job Descriptions in Performance Appraisal**

Performance appraisal		(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Neutral	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Helps to measure the performance of employees in accordance with the requirements and specified functional standards	Frequencies	110	24	1	8	22	4.164	1.433
	Percentage	66.8	14.5	0.6	4.8	13.3		
Determines who to be promoted or transferred to another position	Frequencies	104	30	-	11	20	4.133	1.408
	Percentage	63	18.2	-	6.7	12.1		
Investigates the strengths and	Frequencies	120	14	2	11	18	4.255	1.391
	Percentage	72.7	8.5	1.2	6.7	10.9		

weaknesses in the employees' performance								
Provides the ability to judge the success of the selection procedures	Frequencies	95	39	-	-	31	4.012	1.510
	Percentage	57.6	23.6	-	-	18.8		
Plays an important role in the distribution of responsibilities and duties	Frequencies	118	16	-	14	17	4.236	1.392
	Percentage	71.5	9.7	-	8.5	10.3		
Determines the standards of assessment of employees' performance	Frequencies	115	19	-	11	20	4.200	1.424
	Percentage	69.7	11.5	-	6.7	12.1		
Contributes to decision-making related to incentives, salaries, promotion or training	Frequencies	101	33	-	10	21	4.109	1.414
	Percentage	61.2	20	-	6.1	12.7		
							<b>4.158</b>	<b>1.411</b>

Table 13 illustrates that the agreement level of the respondents with all the statements is positive (agree and strongly agree), with mean (4.158), and standard deviation (1.411). This result proves the importance of job descriptions to performance appraisal.

**Table 14: The Importance of Using Job Descriptions for Compensation & Rewards and Benefits**

Compensation & rewards and benefits		(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Neutral	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Determines the value of salaries according to each jobs	Frequencies	131	18	3	6	7	4.576	1.007
	Percentage	79.5	10.9	1.8	3.6	4.2		

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within the company								
Achieves the principle of justice and fairness in salaries among employees in the same job	Frequencies	125	24	-	4	12	4.491	1.130
	Percentage	75.8	14.5	-	2.4	7.3		
Links between salary and the duties, responsibilities and skills required to perform the job	Frequencies	122	27	1	1	14	4.467	1.150
	Percentage	73.9	16.4	0.6	0.6	8.5		
							<b>4.511</b>	<b>1.086</b>

Table 14, illustrates the agreement level among the respondents that salary is based on the position, and how well the employee manages in the position. They also assure that job descriptions help make sure that salaries are distributed in a fair and equal manner. Moreover, job descriptions expose employee's multiple skills, which has an effect on distributing salary. Furthermore, salary depends on the level of duties and responsibilities. Apparently, the respondents have a positive attitude with mean (4.511), and standard deviation (1.086) toward the importance of using job descriptions to compensation & rewards and benefits.

### Spearman Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is used to examine the relationship between two or more variables. Therefore, the spearman correlation have been applied to test whether there is any significant relation between job descriptions and various human resources functions such as recruitment, performance appraisal, and training and compensation.

**Table 15: The Relationship between Job Descriptions and Human Resource Functions**

	Correlation coefficient	Sig
Recruitment process	.898	.000
Training and development	.843	.000
Performance appraisal	.742	.000
Compensation and rewards	.782	.000

Note: Significance is at the 99% confidence level.

According to Table 15, there is a strong positive relationship between job descriptions and human resource functions. The relationship between job descriptions and the recruitment process is .898 (.000); between job descriptions and training is .843 (.000); between job descriptions and performance appraisal is .742 (.000); and between job descriptions and compensation and rewards is .782 (.000). Also, it is clearly revealed that the relationship between job descriptions and the recruitment process primarily has achieved .898 as a value of Spearman correlation. This means that the recruitment process is strongly affected by job descriptions. Then, training has achieved .843 as a value of Spearman correlation; followed by compensation and rewards, .782; and performance appraisal, .742. These results are consistent with the findings of Berry (2009) that the selection and recruitment process is the main human resource function with regard to applying job descriptions.

### **5. Recommendations**

The study recommends that it is necessary for managers to explain the role of job descriptions to their staff; this would lead to effective work performance. Also, employees must contribute to designing the job descriptions because they are fully aware of the tasks and responsibilities of their positions. Furthermore, travel agencies have to apply job descriptions in order to reduce stress on employees; if job requirements are unclear, workers will be at higher risk of burnout. Moreover, travel agencies have to develop job descriptions, which can provide specific directions to use human power at appropriate time and place. In addition, managements should focus on holding workshops to employees in order to develop their human resource management knowledge. Travel agencies must also set the requirements of

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each position clearly through job descriptions; this can enhance human resources management activities.

### **Conclusion**

A job description summarizes the most important elements of a job in detail. It states the nature of the work and provides information about tasks, duties, and responsibilities. Job descriptions can help companies to know their employees' strengths and limitations. It has grown in importance as the workforce and jobs have changed. Travel agencies that pursue job descriptions are likely to achieve higher performance, and gain competitive advantage in the tourism market. To be effective, human resources planning, selection and recruiting should be based on job requirements, and the capabilities of individuals. Additionally, compensation, training, and employee performance appraisals all should be based on the specific identified needs of the jobs. The purpose of this study is to explore the awareness and use of job descriptions in Egyptian travel agencies, examine what are the content of the job description, and show the importance of job descriptions to human resources functions. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, a survey has been conducted on 165 managers, employees, and human resources managers in Egyptian travel agencies to reflect their experiences. The findings of the study point out that the awareness of a job description is not being fully transferred to application in Egyptian travel agencies. Most of the respondents have assured that a job description is very important because it functions as a foundation for the job. In addition, a high percentage of the respondents have mentioned that a job description is not correctly used or written in their agencies. The results also reveal that some respondents assume that a job description is a waste of time. Others feel that a job description is too confining, which leads to inflexibility. The results clarify that travel agencies apply job descriptions to different human resources functions like recruitment, training and development, compensation, and performance appraisal. The study perceives that there is a strong positive relationship between job descriptions and human resources functions; and the selection and recruitment process is the most prominent human resources function with regard to applying job descriptions.

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## الملخص العربي

دراسة أهمية تطبيق التوصيف الوظيفي في وظائف ادارة الموارد البشرية بشركات السياحة المصرية

ظهرت أهمية العنصر البشري في صناعة السياحة من حيث مدى تأثيره على كفاءة الأداء واكتساب السمعة الجيدة لشركات السياحة؛ حيث يتطلب النشاط السياحي العديد من الموارد البشرية من ذوي المؤهلات والمهارات والخبرات التي تساهم في نجاح الشركة وتعزيز قدرتها التنافسية. وقد اتسع مفهوم إدارة الموارد البشرية ليشمل أنشطة رئيسية من أهمها عملية توصيف الوظائف التي يتم من خلالها تحديد الخصائص المطلوبة للأداء الفعال لكل وظيفة في المنشأة ومتطلبات الوظيفة من حيث المؤهلات والكفاءات والقدرات و المهارات والمعارف والخبرات، بالإضافة إلى توضيح طبيعة العمل لكل وظيفة.

ويعتبر التوصيف الوظيفي أحد أهم الأدوات الإدارية التي أصبحت تعتمد عليها الشركات في كافة أنشطة الموارد البشرية مثل عمليات تخطيط الموارد البشرية، وذلك حيث يساعد التوصيف الوظيفي في التحديد السليم لعدد ونوعيات الوظائف اللازمة داخل المؤسسة، كما يساعد في جذب واستقطاب الموارد البشرية من خلال انتقاء أفضل العناصر، بالإضافة إلى وضع معايير دقيقة للأداء تساعد على تقييم أداء العاملين بالمؤسسة، فضلا عن تحديد قيمة الأجور، وتصميم البرامج التدريبية اللازمة لتلبية الاحتياجات التدريبية، وتحفيز الموارد البشرية وغيرها. وتتمثل أهمية التوصيف الوظيفي في تحديد الواجبات والمسئوليات والمهام الموكلة لكل وظيفة في الشركة، فهو بمثابة وثيقة تعدها الشركات لكل وظيفة على شكل هيكل تنظيمي، بحيث يشمل التوصيف الوظيفي على مجموعة عناصر من أهمها المسمى الوظيفي، ومكان العمل، والمسؤول المباشر، وكود الوظيفة ، وملخص الوظيفة، وتاريخ شغل المنصب، والإدارة التابع لها ، والعلاقة مع الوظائف الأخرى، ومهام وواجبات ومسئوليات الوظيفة، ومؤهلات الوظيفة والمؤهلات العلمية والتدريبية، والمهارات المهنية، والأدوات والآلات والأجهزة اللازمة لأداء الوظيفة، وبيئة وظرف العمل، والرواتب والمنافع، وساعات العمل. ويختلف إعداد التوصيف الوظيفي من مؤسسة إلى أخرى، فلا يتشابه التوصيف الوظيفي لنفس الوظيفة عند كل الشركات، حيث أن كل شركة لها أنشطتها الخاصة، ولها طبيعتها الخاصة، ولها أسلوبها في توزيع الواجبات.

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و تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على مدى الوعي بنظام التوصيف الوظيفي واستخدامه في وكالات السفر والسياحة المصرية، ودراسة ما هي محتويات التوصيف الوظيفي، بالإضافة إلى إظهار مدى أهمية التوصيف الوظيفي لوظائف وأنشطة الموارد البشرية. ومن أجل تحقيق أهداف الدراسة، تم إجراء دراسة ميدانية مع عدد 165 من المديرين، والموظفين، ومديري الموارد البشرية في وكالات السفر والسياحة المصرية لتعكس خبراتهم وآرائهم في موضوع الدراسة. و توصلت نتائج الدراسة إلى أنه على الرغم من الوعي بأهمية التوصيف الوظيفي إلا أنه لم يتم تفعيله وتطبيقه بدقة في وكالات السفر والسياحة المصرية، حيث أكدت نسبة عالية من أفراد العينة أن التوصيف الوظيفي لم يستخدم بشكل فعال، أو يكتب بطريقة صحيحة في بعض الشركات. وعلاوة على ذلك، رأى معظم المبحوثين أن التوصيف الوظيفي ذو أهمية قصوى لأنه يعتبر بمثابة أساس واضح لأسلوب العمل؛ في حين أوضح بعض المبحوثين أن إعداد و تجهيز مستند التوصيف الوظيفي هو مضيعة للوقت، كما رأى آخرون أنه يضع قيوداً بشكل صارم جداً، الأمر الذي يحول دون توفر المرونة في العمل. وأظهرت النتائج مدى أهمية دور التوصيف الوظيفي في مختلف وظائف الموارد البشرية مثل الاستقطاب والتوظيف، والتدريب والتطوير، والتحفيز، وتقييم الأداء. كما أكدت الدراسة أن هناك علاقة إيجابية قوية بين التوصيف الوظيفي وأنشطة الموارد البشرية، و خاصة عملية الاستقطاب والتعيين التي تعتبر من أبرز وأكثر وظائف الموارد البشرية تطبيقاً للتوصيف الوظيفي.