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Educational Technology in the Field Of Russian Tourism and Hospitality.

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ABSTRACT

The article provides an overview of the current situation in Russian tourist market. Particular attention is paid to the influence of negative external economic factors on the development of Russian tourist market. It also covers internal problems of Russian tourism not stipulated by the current macroeconomic situation. The article outlines problems of service standards, relationship manager-client. Nowadays the domain of tourism and entertainment faces the problem of interaction between tour operators and hotel facilities. Business relations between these two parties are often characterized by reciprocal claims, mostly regarding violation of terms and conditions of the Contract. Business practice uses preventive measures for such situations, for example, introduction of Contract clauses on advance payments and deposits; however, violation of Contract discipline is still actual. These problems are associated with the existing system of professional education that needs to be adjusted. According to experts, economic problems in the domain of preparing qualified staff can be resolved by using professional standards that will help an educational institution to set an effective educational program focusing on practice. The article suggests best practices for enhancing educational courses in the domain of tourism and entertainment.

Keywords: tourism, entertainment, Russian tourist domain, tourism developing strategy, educational programs in the domain of tourism, qualified tourist staff, staff training, education development.

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the principles of continuity are gradually implemented in the activities of educational establishments; conditions for personal and professional development of people of all social categories and ages are developed.

Therefore, new technologies, methods, new forms of education are developed to provide the implementation of these processes. The qualification of the tourist specialists leaves much to be desired. According to the data from an empirical study provided by the authors of the article, the CEOs of tourist companies noticed that not more than 20 % of employees are highly qualified in the sphere of tourism management. The structure, content and organization of future tourist specialists training do not fully ensure the development of competences aimed at high level of professional activity. Over the last years, the traditional qualification meaning functional match between the demand of work place and aims of education shifted to development of abilities helping people to navigate in difficult situations, consider the consequences of their activity and assume the responsibility, which increased the importance of competence development approach in the specialists' training.

METHOD

The main objective of the research: expand and prove theoretically educational opportunities in the context of the contemporary education technologies use.

The research object is teaching technologies in the sphere of tourism used both in Russia and abroad.

The research subject is pedagogical opportunities of teaching technologies in Russia.

The research objective is used to solve following tasks :

The research tasks include:

- Understanding of tourism as a specific form and process of world's sociocultural exploration;
- Analysis of conceptual construct on the problems of tourism;
- Analysis of educational programs implementation;
- Understanding of tourism as a social form of behavior
- Study of social and economic peculiarities of tourism;

The study of contemporary pedagogical technologies.

The complex of research methods is used for achieving the objectives and verification of basic statements: general analysis of literature and pedagogic studies on the problem; modeling; method of scientific analysis and scientific assessment; pedagogical experiment; observation, interviews, polls, surveys, individual and group discussions, testing, analysis of practice results of the students' practical activity.

The methodological base of the study uses works on pedagogics of tourism, theory and practice of tourism serves a of the authors: (Zorin I.V., Ilyina E.N., Kvartalnov B.A. Kalney B.A., Pirozhenko N.T., A.I. Seselkin, Shishov A.I.) fundamental scientific researches on pedagogics of professional education (Zvonnikov V. I., Kubrushko P.F. Belyaeva A.P.,Novikov A.M etc); pedagogical studies on problems of professional tourism studies (Zholdak V.I., Zorin I.V., Kalney V. A., Kvartalnov V.A., Novikov A.M., Seselkin A.I., Shishov S.E.) the provisions of personal active approach in the design of pedagogical processes (Bespalko V.P., Novikov A. M.) innovative pedagogical methods and technologies (Pityukov V.U.,Slastenin V.A.); provisions on the design of methodological and pedagogical methods (Bespalko B. P.)fundamental research on theory and practice of tourism education (Zorin I.V., Ilyina E.N.,Kvartalnov V.A.)

THE RESULTS

In order to improve the educational system in the sphere of tourism and entertainment, it is necessary to develop common requirements and standards of staff training for different areas of professional activity in this domain. One of the methods to increase the competitiveness of the graduates of higher education establishments is to engage in the educational process highly qualified specialists with great practical experience. Special attention should be paid to practical trainings, for that purpose higher education establishments are to establish mutually beneficial contractual relationship with the tourist industry companies. Cooperation, sharing experiences, constant adaptation of teaching programs to the needs of the industry will bring the training of students in sphere of tourism and hospitality to a new level. In the long view, the practice of establishing mutually beneficial relationships between universities and businesses can be extended to foreign companies developing the international exchange of experience in tourism and hospitality domain.

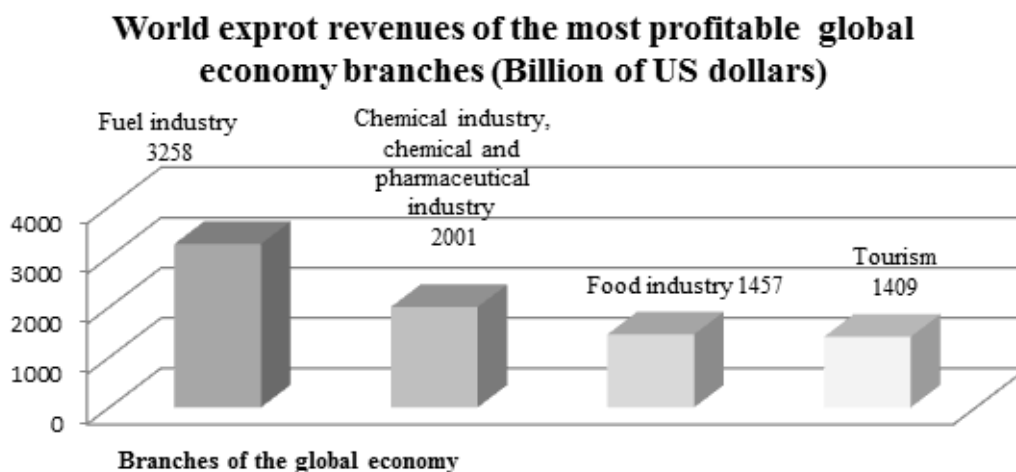
Regarding the theoretical material on the core subjects, it is necessary to improve both content and presentation, the graduates should understand how to apply their theoretical knowledge. The theoretical knowledge should be illustrated with facts and real cases connected with the domain of tourism and hospitality. Submission of theoretical knowledge must be accompanied by relevant factual situation and material related to tourism and hospitality. It is necessary to stimulate the students' interest to industry specific subjects giving them creative tasks, modeling real work situations, learning core documents used in the tourist domain (Baranova, 2010; Balashova, 2008) The training of highly qualified specialists is one of the most important tasks for higher education establishments. However, the need to adjust the training programs to the requirements of the market is not the only problem related to increasing the tourist specialists' competence. Due to the constant changes in the economic and political situation, the introduction of new appropriate tourist formalities and requirements for the enterprises in the sphere of tourism and entertainment, the managers of such enterprises face the necessity to organize postgraduate trainings for their employees. As a rule, big tourist companies hold thematic seminars and tutorials - on actual issues. However these measures are not systemic (each tourist company has its own policy towards postgraduate training) Consequently, the tourist industry faces two major problems: the problem of professional education and that of putting in place the system of advance training. This problem shows another way for cooperation between higher educational establishments and tourist business.

DISCUSSION

The place of tourism in the global economy.

Tourism appears to be one of the most profitable and promising branches of the global economy. UN agency World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) considers tourism as a key factor for international peace maintenance, world trade development and establishment of relationships between the countries.

Image 1



The official statistics proves the importance of tourism to the global economy. According to UNWTO statistics, the past five years witnessed stable increase of 4% in the number of international tourists, while in 2014 this indicator reached record 4.4% that is equal to total 1.1 billion people. According to UNWTO long-term expectations, the number is going to increase up to 1.8 billion people by 2030. The total export revenue for international tourism amounts to 1.4 trillion US dollars. The total export revenue for international tourism is left behind only by fuel industry, chemical industry, chemical and pharmaceutical industry, and there is a slight gap between tourism and food industry (image 1). (Maloletko et al.,2015).

Besides a significant contribution to the economy of different countries, tourism fulfils several socially significant functions:

- Recreational function (psychophysical recover of the society, increase of capacity for work);
- Ecological (world's and national tourism organizations' activities include environment protection, protection of natural sites and rare flora and fauna species);
- Gnostic function (tourism gives an opportunity for self-development, acquisition of knowledge about the world, international sharing experiences);
- Peacekeeping function (tourism spreads information about world's ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity establishing international relationships and diminishing dangerous misunderstanding between representatives of different countries).

Thus, development of tourism as one of prior economic branches is an actual issue both in Russian Federation and worldwide. (Kryukova et al., 2014; Kryukova & Sokolova, 2014;Kryukova et al., 2015)

Organizational, economic and legal activity aspects of tourism organizations in Russia and worldwide.

Due to the fact that licenses for tourism business were abolished in Russia in 2007, the regulation in the tourism industry is provided by the legal framework and federal executive institutions. The existing legal framework in the sphere of tourism should be expanded and improved in order to ensure consumer rights protection and increase tourist organizations and hotels' responsibility for their quality of services. Today the development of tourism in Russia is one of the prior objectives. Thus, a new federal program "The development of domestic and international tourism in Russian Federation (2011-2018)" is being implemented. The program is triple- purpose. The first objective is tourism and recreational industry development in Russia. The second is the improvement of tourism services. The third is promotion of Russian tourism in both domestic and international markets.(World Tourism Organization (2015, 2014).

In the beginning of this year, the members of the coordination council of this federal program summarized the results of its first stage implementation (2011–2014).

Oleg Petrovitch Safronov, head of the Federal Agency for Tourism of the Russian Federation, noted high efficiency of the federal program and said that tourist industry was one of few Russian successfully developing industries. In the course of year 2014, more than 50 sites were constructed to provide the necessary infrastructure within the territories of 21 Russian regions. Seventeen sites were put into service, 44 sites are under the final stage of construction. Due to the budget reduction and high inflation rates in 2014-2015 the program tends to slow down its pace (infrastructure construction rates decreased, material and equipment procurement terms changed, some of the regions were forced to suspend the program realization) (Chizhikova, 2015).

Thus, despite strong government support of tourism and hospitality industry, Russian tourism suffers from a number of problems that impede its development. Russian hotels still do not keep up with the quality of service of western hotel chains and their Asian colleagues. Today nearly 12 000 hotels operate in Russia, and more than 70% of them do not correspond to the European quality standards. Unfortunately, most part of them do not satisfy the demands of clients, used to polite service and comfortable conditions. (Dusenko, 2013).

Four-star and five-star hotels providing high European quality services usually belong to international hotel chains under international corporations' management. Such hotels are usually partially owned by private

investors and local authorities. In correspondence with high quality services, such hotels fix high prices for their services accessible only for a small consumer market sector (wealthy businessmen, famous people of art, and titled sportsmen). Moreover, hotels featuring both quality services and moderate prices for travelers with average incomes, the largest segment of clients, practically do not exist. (Shchetinina, 2011).

Our country has many hotels referred as three-star hotels, but the real service quality does not correspond to the announced category. Most part of such hotels is usually characterized by poor staff training and low services quality in the whole.

From the other point of view, the tour operators also have claims to the hotel facilities. Hotels often do not confirm booking requests from tour operators in an attempt to prevent potential losses from unredeemed rooms, disregarding deadlines for booking confirmation mentioned in the Contract. This practice is often observed on the eve of the holidays, or any major events that trigger increased demand for hotel services. However, not many hotels can accommodate foreign tourists, that's why tour operators keep contractual agreements with such hotels disregarding their violations of the contract. (Baranova, 2011). Some of the hotels specially form price policy in which prices for tourist groups are higher than those for corporate customers that creates unprofitable conditions of cooperation for tour operators. If this is the case, tour operators may find it difficult to protect their rights and negotiate profitable conditions of cooperation with hotels. Hotels lose their money because many tour operators book rooms in advance and then do not buy them (Kabushkin and Bondarenko, 2009; Lyapina, 2009; Medlik, 2005). One of the major risk factors for money losses in hotel industry is the last minute room cancellation, as a result, hotels don't manage to find new clients and lose a considerable part of their potential revenue (Senin and Denisenko, 2009). Such a poor interaction between hotels and tour operators aggravates the market situation and slows Russian tourism development.

According to the statistics, 47% of Russian hotels are owned by municipal, regional and federal authorities. Another 36% of hotels belong to local and federal authorities and partly to enterprises (in most cases, heavy industry). In western countries, the amount of monetary remuneration for hotel managers depends on the hotels efficiency, but in Russia the contracts generally don't have clauses that can stimulate managers to improve managing system and enhance the efficiency of the hotel (Tourism and services – innovative development, 2015).

Moreover, some hotels are administrated by public employees who are obliged to keep in reserve rooms for the officials, that results in money losses caused by rooms downtime.(Titova, 2015).

Apart from listed problems existing in the current business practices of Russian tourism industry, the tourism and hospitality management today faces some difficulties and peculiarities, associated with the unfavorable external political and economic factors. In connection with the imposition of sanctions against the Russian Federation and increased rates of foreign currencies against the rouble, cost of services of international tourism has almost doubled (however, the service quality remains at the same level). In this connection the Russian tourists have reduced the number of trips abroad on average by 30%, and in some destinations-by 70%. In fact, the bulk of tourists who prefer to purchase vouchers at average prices, switched to domestic tourism. As a result, the flow of international tourists changed its composition: from one part, it includes tourists choosing cheap recreation with inferior service, and from the other part, well-off people opting for exclusive tourism characterized by high prices and service (Golovatyuk, 2013).

Mass refuse to travel abroad resulted in an increase in revenues volume of domestic tourism industry approximately by one and half time. According to Oleg Petrovich Safronov, the CEO of Federal Tourism Agency, in summer 2015 the amount of domestic tourists reached 41,5 million people. At the same time, according to the federal target program for the development of domestic and inbound tourism, the number of domestic tourists was to reach 40 million only by 2018. In 2014-2015 the most popular resorts among Russian tourists were Sochi, Anapa, Mineralnye Vody and the Crimea. Besides, many Russian tourists visit Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kazan (The downturn in the tourism industry, 2015)

Apparently, such situation promotes the development of tourism in Russia and ensures the cash flow in the state budget. However, the situation on the domestic tourism market is not unambiguous. The shift to domestic tourism is sure to trigger its development, yet the expenses of Russian citizens on recreation will

constantly decrease under the unfavorable economic conditions. The tourist flow from the US and the EU has decreased. Despite the decrease in tourist flow from these countries offset by the increase in tourist flow from China and CIS, financially this substitution is not equivalent.

Moreover, insufficient coverage of domestic tourist destinations in regional and federal mass media impedes the communication between tour operators and their target audience, the tour operators do not give potential vacationers the opportunity to receive complete and reliable information on domestic resorts and cities of interest to visit in educational, sports and other purposes, which slows down the development of tourist industry in the country.

As things currently stand, Russian tourist companies and hotels have raised the service prices while maintaining the average low level of service. This is an ambiguous step, because on the one hand, it has worsened the position of the tourists, but on the other hand, funds received from tourists can be invested in the development of the tourist industry. If domestic tourism and hospitality organizations will invest in the development of their facilities, with the help of qualified staff, Russian tourist industry can reach a new level.

Human resources aspect of the development of tourism in Russia

Unfortunately, one of the major problems of development of tourist industry in Russia is the shortage of skilled labour, in particular, that explains the poor organization of work and reduced efficiency of activity of the enterprises in the tourism industry, since important performance indicators such as cost per employee for training and development, a number of innovations per employee, employee turnover, number of employees with high qualifications depend directly on the quality of training specialists in the sphere of tourism and hospitality (Khristoforova I.V. Kovalev, V.G.. etal., 2015).

Now Russia has about 300 higher education institutions preparing specialists in the field of hotel and restaurant business. However, the system of training for the tourism industry in our country is far from perfect.

Let's take a closer look at the aspects of the existing system of training tourist specialists, which requires careful refinement (Khristoforova I.V., Popova J.S..etal., 2015).

The European experience shows that the most effective system of training tourist specialists for hotel facilities and tourism organizations uses different teaching programs (and often, specialists study in various highly specialized educational institutions). One of the most significant problems of staff training for the tourism industry is the ratio of theoretical and practical knowledge in disciplines connected with tourism and hotel services. In Russia, almost all of the study time is devoted to the theory, while in European universities approximately 60% of hours are devoted to theory and 40%- to practice. Respectively, Russian students have short-time internships, while their European colleagues have 4-5 months of internship during the academic year. First years of studies in European educational establishments are devoted to the acquaintance with practical aspects of tourism industry, European students start management studies only at senior years, when they already know hotel industry from inside. In Russia, academic programs tend to give more time to general subjects, specialized subjects are usually studied during the last two years. Due to this teaching method, the graduates of higher educational establishments face difficulties in finding a job in tourism industry, and their employers have to spend time on staff training at the workplace (in conditions of time shortage and lack of proper system or methods). Though we have a sufficient number of specialized tourist educational establishments, tourist companies and hotels continue to employ staff without specialized education in this domain, but with the necessary work experience. In accordance with the expert estimates, nowadays, up to 75% of employees in the field of tourism and hospitality have no professional education. Under the formation of Russian tourist industry this fact was explained by the lack of academic programs in the sphere of tourism and hospitality, now this trend persists despite the growing number of tourist graduates from higher educational establishments. The survey conducted among the CEOs of the largest Russian tour operators and hotel chains resulted in a ranking of the staff sources in such companies. They named as the first preference staff source- independently trained employees, the second one- experienced staff from other companies in the field of tourism and hospitality, and only in the third place - graduates of specialized universities. This situation is due to the fact that potential employers believe that it is unprofitable to recruit a fresh graduate, since it is necessary to allocate material resources and time to his

teaching and correcting mistakes caused by lack of work experience. In the context of the survey, directors of tourism companies and hotel enterprises named the main disadvantages of young specialists: lack of a realistic vision of the profession, low level of communication skills, lack of practical knowledge (including those of special programmes, ability to work with databases), as well as inflated requirements to the employer. As a result, a great part of tourism companies and hotels employ staff without professional education, or specialists without the necessary experience and skills of customer management; due to this fact, the average level of service in Russian tourist agencies and hotels is significantly inferior to the European.

In addition to the above problems, it should be noted that theoretical and methodological basis for subjects related to tourism and hospitality activities in Russia is only at the stage of development. Program for training specialists in tourism and hospitality is based on the fundamental works in the field of management and marketing, such as works of M. Mescon, M. Albert, F. Khedouri, Ph. Kotler, and I. Ansoff. They are an excellent basis for the training of specialists, but today we lack highly specialized textbooks containing synthesis and analysis of modern technologies of tourism organizations and hotels' work.

CONCLUSION

Summing up, it should be noted that in the context of today's complex geopolitical conditions, Russia's need for qualified labour for the tourism industry is becoming more acute. Development of the domestic tourism makes it necessary to improve service quality in domestic tourist companies and hotels, which is impossible without proper tourist specialist training providing theoretical and practical knowledge in the domain of management, hotel service and tour operator and tour agent services. The current ambiguous situation in the field of tourism and hospitality should be used to develop the Russian tourist industry. The influx of domestic tourists creates conditions for the development of the tourist attracts, ranging from the resorts of Krasnodar region to the towns of the Golden Ring of Russia. During the period of economic embargo of the western countries, Russia has a chance to develop tourism and hospitality sphere, upgrade hotel facilities and prepare qualified staff, which will put the tourism industry to a new level, make it able to compete in the world's tourist market.

To promote the development of Russian tourism industry in the conditions of economic crisis, the following recommendations can be considered :

- Study international and domestic experience of the organization of tourist industry activity.
- Improve and expand the existing theoretical and methodical basis of teaching compulsory subjects for students in the domain of tourism and hospitality.
- Develop advance trainings for tourist specialists, including partnership relations to be established between educational institutions and companies of the tourism and hospitality sphere.
- Along with the creation of works on management and organization of the work in the tourism industry, it is necessary to legislate requirements for the quality of tourist services in a timely manner, as well as make appropriate adjustments in academic programs for tourist specialists.

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