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Lifelong education system in Russian tourism and hospitality: Models, technologies, context

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Abstract

Paper's goal is to elicit features of formation a lifelong education system in Russian tourist and hospitality industry. Internet resources monitoring of 30 organisations realizing programs in tourist and hospitality; 10 in-depth interviews with program heads are used as methods. The results show that the absence of a special division for coordinating programs; that the existing theory and methodology do not correspond to a problem of training competitive experts; incoordination of purposes and problems of programs and priorities of employers; absence of professional competences; non-standard-issue documentations; absence of the unified registering of documents of graduation programs. The current system has to be modernized. The principle of lifelong education has to be the basis for developing drivenness and responsibility, strengthening ability to adapt to the economic, social and professional transformations.

Keywords: Continuing education system, hospitality, tourism, supplementary vocational education.

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1. Introduction

Transformation of an economic of modern Russia assumes re-orientation from raw development to the way of service economy formation. In such conditions tourism development as an ecologically safe and economic value branch is of particular importance. It is a growing-point for many Russian regions. Success of realization of this strategy is noted not only by Russian (Ermakov & Garina, 2015; Gvarliani & Kozhushkina, 2015), but also western researchers (Halkier, 2009; Lee, 2011; Buiok, Klempa, Porzer, Yanechkova & Elinek, 2015). It will be promoted by possibilities of branch in general and educational systems in tourism and hospitality in particular (Halkier, 2009).

The Russian Federation possesses considerable tourist and recreational potential. Unique natural and recreational resources are concentrated on its territory; objects of national and world cultural and historical heritage; important economic, cultural, public and sports events are also take places here. In many regions the wide range of potentially attractive tourist objects and complexes enjoying wide popularity among Russian and foreign tourists is presented.

At the same time in the “The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index Ranking 2015” Russia took only the 45th place from 141 countries. But the “high scores on natural (4th) and cultural (10th) heritage sites show how the industry could potentially play a bigger role in the country’s economy” (2015). The Federal special-purpose program “Development of Domestic and Inbound Tourism in the Russian Federation (2011 - 2018)” is aimed at correcting of a current situation and activating of development of tourism in Russia (2012).

According to this Program “... one of the major factors depressant growth of the Russian Federation competitiveness in the international market of tourist services and, as a result, interfering realization of its tourist potential, is a low quality of service in all sectors of the tourist industry because of lack of professional personnel” (2012). Training of the tourist staff is one of the key problems of the given branch and belongs to the area of Russian strategic interests. Modern experts in the field of tourism have to become activators of tourist industry development, learning to use new technologies, bring innovative culture. Development of tourism in Russia determines necessity of personnel's' vocational training in the field of tourism through the system of supplementary vocational education. The problem of lack of professionally trained staff for the sphere of tourism is a particularly acute problem in many regions today. Most of researchers, like Zlokazova (2008), come to a conclusion that “professional education of all levels not always adequately reacts to requirements of modern economy” (p. 94). The new economic relations influenced to the processes proceeding in the sphere of tourist services. They complicated the problem of training staff for tourist and hospitality industry. Thanks to them reconsideration of the settled concepts, organizational forms and nature of activity of enterprises in tourist industry were demanded. Along with public sector of economy the non-state tourist sector grew. In a situation when tourism more and more takes the market forms of functioning, labor market required professionals possessing modern technologies, knowing bases of promotion of tourist services, communicative and psychological features of building relations with clients, possessing skills and abilities of tourist specifics. Training has to promote growth of competitiveness of tourist business, development of structures of business that will provide profitability of tourist branch. But it is necessary to agree with Kolodij's (2010) opinion that “the contradiction between need of multidimensional improvement of modern system of training, re-trainings and professional development of personnel of the sphere of tourism and service and deficiency of reasonable recommendations on this point is obvious”.

The concept of training and retraining of the personnel is based on: the Law of the Russian Federation "About education" (10.07.1992, No. 3266-1); The Federal Law "About the higher and postgraduate professional education" (22.08.1996, No. 125-FZ); The Order of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation "About the approval of requirements to the maintenance of the supplementary vocational educational programs" (18.06.1997, No. 1221; registered in the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation 11.07.1997, No. 1351); The Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation "About the confirmation of a Model provisions on educational institution of additional supplementary vocational education (professional development) of experts" (June 26, 1995 No. 610; with changes on March 10, 2000, on December 23, 2002, on March 31, 2003); The Order of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation "About the confirmation of Provision on an order and conditions of professional retraining of experts" (06.09.2000 No. 2571; registered in the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation on 24.10.2000, No. 2424).

Basic requirements to the content of the supplementary vocational education programs are:

- Conformance to the qualification requirement to professions and positions;
- Continuity in relation to the State Educational Standards of a higher education of the third edition;
- Orientation to the modern educational technologies and tutorials;
- Compatibility of the supplementary vocational education programs by types and terms;
- Compliance of the participants' academic load to the standards;
- Compliance to the programs' accepted rules;
- Compliance of the contents of programs to types of the supplementary vocational education

Besides, participants of the Tempus project "Network of Continuous Education in Tourism" relapsed 6 focus-groups (December, 2012) in the cities: Ivanovo, Barnaul, Kemerovo, Tomsk; and also expert poll of Heads of Departments of Culture and Tourism, heads of travel agencies, members of the education sphere of the same cities was organized (polling was conducted by method of personal interview). We conducted an experiment to study how international students get adapted in the sociocultural and academic environment of TPU. The object of the study was participants of the TPU Student Academic Exchange Program: international students on exchange and studying full-time. We used a quota sample that considered the nationality and citizenship of the respondents (Germany, China, Mongolia, Vietnam), and age (18-25 years). Sample size was 43 people. The experiment lasted for one month in March 2015. Processing of the results was carried out from 04.04.2015 to 05.10.2015.

2. Methods

In the paper authors highlighted monitoring of the supplementary vocational education programs of retraining and the professional development realized in Russia. Aim was to synthesize and analyze information of experience of the supplementary vocational education in the sphere of tourism. Organizations actively promoting itself via Internet that realize the supplementary vocational education programs formed the base of the given research. More than 30 such Internet

representations were revealed. Besides, 10 in-depth interviews with program heads in Russia were revealed. Among them were representatives of the Educational and Methodological Association in Tourism and Service. Selection is caused by availability via Internet resources and qualitative methodology of results descriptions.

Keywords and categories for analysis were the following:

- Subjects of the supplementary vocational education.
- Structural subdivision on the basis of which retraining is realized;
- Existence of the coordinating division.
- General concept of the program.
- Curricula.
- Documents of the graduation programs of the supplementary vocational education.

3. Results and Discussion

The results allow allocating the main problems of the educational programs:

- The majority of the supplementary vocational education programs are realized by the separate structural divisions (faculties, chairs). Sometimes they even do not have experience of training staff in tourism. There are examples of providing training of the supplementary vocational education programs on the basis of organizations which do not have the legal right for conducting educational activity, for example, travel agencies;
- In most cases there is no any official division (like Co-ordination Centre) in the organization coordinating programs of the supplementary vocational education in tourist and hospitality industry;
- Discrepancy to the existing theory and methodology of the supplementary vocational education to the problem of training competitive experts in labor market in the sphere of tourism (it is not used integrative–module, project-oriented and competence-based approaches in programs). Authors found, on the one hand, the wide range of majors caused by requirements of the market and, on the other hand, - absence of the general concept of all supplementary vocational education in tourism and hospitality (knowledge, skills that have to be created the in frame of educational programs).
- Incoordination of purposes and problems of educational programs and priorities of employers: necessity of a hard professional specialization for activity in tourist and hospitality industry. In focus groups participants marked: in modern conditions there is a gap between education, educational technologies in tourism and real practice in tourism. Moreover, this is common not only for inbound tourism, but also for other types of tourism extended in the market of tourism;

- Insufficient using in the educational process of the integrated information portals, databases and other information and communications technologies;
- Absence accurately formulated professional competences that have to be created in the frame of educational programs; non-standard-issue documentations;
- Absence of the unified register of documents of graduation programs of the supplementary vocational education in Russia;
- Absence of the Unified Register allowing defining, whom and when the graduation document (certificate) of the supplementary vocational education is issued.

Thus, SWOT analysis of the supplementary vocational education programs in the sphere of tourism has revealed the following:

3.1. Strengths

In large educational institutions which experience can be taken as a basis, the organization of the supplementary vocational education programs is realized by divisions having good experience of training staff for the industry of tourism in the frame of the Main Educational Programs for the Tourist Industry.

- Experience of creation special divisions that co-ordinate all activities for implementation of the supplementary vocational education programs in higher education institutions.
- Use of such divisions (the Uniform Co-ordination Centers, the Resource Centers) for co-ordination of educational and methodical, research, scientific and organizational activities for retraining of the personnel for the industry of tourism.
- The organization of interaction, by means of such divisions with Educational and Methodical Association by training in the field of service and tourism, Association of higher education institutions of tourism and service, the Russian Hotel Association, the Russian Union of Tourist Industry, Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers, mass media, including publishing houses, agencies, etc., employment centers.
- Existence in modern practice innovative educational programs of the supplementary vocational education of the staff, based on modern approaches and progressive techniques (integrative and module, project-oriented, practice-focused and competence-based approaches).
- Organization of a complex retraining and professional development of the personnel for all levels of the tourist industry (including employees of tourist administrations, experts, heads of hotels, travel agencies, the linear personnel, lecturers).
- Existence of training experience of the staff that absolutely ready for the work for the new tourist objects with taking into account regional specifics. Practice of holding seminars, master-classes with use of modern interactive forms of education on workplaces of the enterprises of tourism and hospitality.
- Opportunity of development models of the individual educational trajectories for the further professional, career and personal development.

3.2. Weaknesses

- Unsystematic character of the modern supplementary vocational education programs that is presented both at the subject, theoretical and methodological level, and at the level of control of training results.
- Mechanisms of participation of employers in decision-making process concerning training for the industry of tourism are not created.
- There are no uniform requirements to the supplementary vocational education programs in the sphere of tourism.
- Lack of purposeful activities for recognition by the international tourist community of the Russian diplomas and qualification certificates.
- Absence of the social partnership between all members of the system of lifelong supplementary vocational education providing its multilateral integration communication, inclusiveness into the social and economic relations.
- Lack of competence-based model of specialists in the sphere of tourism.
 - The technique of an assessment of competence of specialists in the sphere of tourism is not developed.
 - There is no co-ordination of educational and methodical activity of lead educational institutions that retrained and professionally developed the staff for the industry of tourism.
 - There is no systematization and synthesis of implementation experience of the supplementary vocational education programs in the sphere of tourism.
 - There is no methodical support of the majority of the supplementary vocational education programs.
 - Weak interrelation of educational institutions with branch enterprises.
 - Lack of monitoring of results of the professional retraining and professional development of the personnel for the industry of tourism for the purpose of development mechanism of their adjustment.
 - Absence of the industrial practice bases, experimental platforms for carrying out a practical training and in-job practice.
 - Absence of continuity of levels, stages and the supplementary vocational education modules within the professional field of activity elected by the person.

3.3. Opportunities

- A rational combination of the state and market management mechanisms of a training system for the industry of tourism.
- Creation of a conceptual model of a training system for the industry of tourism.

- Reorganization of a system of retraining and professional development of staff for the industry of tourism by creation of Uniform Centers of Retraining of the personnel on the basis of leading higher education institutions.
- Creation of a system of monitoring the educational services in tourism and hospitality labor market.
- Strengthening of interrelation of educational institutions with branch enterprises.
- Use of various forms of education, including distance e-learning forms, with various forms and types of control (e.g., the individual consultations with leading experts assuming communication online).

3.3. Threats

- An unstable economic situation in Russia.
- Falling of solvency of the population.
- Discrepancy of the standard and legal regulation of the supplementary vocational education system to the state policy in the field of education.
- Insufficient promoting of a strategy “Life-time Education”.
- Unpredictability of development of the supplementary vocational education system in Russia.
- Excess of the supplementary vocational education offers over their demand.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion authors state that the developed system of the supplementary vocational education in tourism has to be reprocess to the deep modernization. Requirements and expectations of all stakeholders of the tourist industry have to be put in a basis of system of training and retraining of personnel. Monitoring, systematization and inclusion of requirements of the state, employers, potential consumers and participants in basic provisions of the concept of the training and retraining system of personnel in the sphere of tourism will allow to settle part of contradictions in activity of all subjects of the labor market of tourist services and to increase quality of its functioning in the future.

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