

THE TRAINING OF PROFESSIONAL SKILLS IN STUDENTS FROM TOURISM DOMAIN

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Abstract: *The improvement of specialists training process in tourism domain is conducted in several directions. It is created new basis of approaches regarding the selection of training content in tourism domain, also there are developed pedagogical training models and technologies of certain types of skills. The study is a cross-sectional and descriptive research, it aims the investigation of three groups of subjects (students specializing in tourism (156), teachers who provides program (26) and specialists in tourism - employers (44) to improve training process of professional skills at future specialists in tourism. The most of respondents appreciated the program as being too theorized current study, the average skills training: pedagogical-legal, communicative and motivational leadership. However, they appreciated the importance of projects in tourism development and the process of connecting specialist training in tourism to the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework. The results obtained from the three categories of stakeholders in shaping the future specialist, highlighted the need to reform the educational process in accordance with the requirements of the national economy and international perspectives.*

Key words: *tourism, professional skills, reforming, study program.*

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the economic sectors with the most dynamic development and efficient source of income. The tourism market in the Republic of Moldova is in a period of establishment under conditions of insufficient state sustainability, less developed infrastructure, low level of competition, low level of services, etc. [1], [3], [5], [6].

At the present stage, the basic objective is the formation of a quality specialist in

the field of tourism, able to adapt quickly to the environment changes, ready for practical activity, able to use modern technologies, to find flexible and optimal solutions, to identify influences of the external environment on the company's work and be able to forecast the demand.

At present, one of the main trends in the tourism industry is the phenomenon of tourism globalization, which influences the formation of a new standard of the specialist in the field, oriented to international requirements.

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The transition period for the higher education system means the transition from the model of training an adaptive behavior, of alignment with the environment conditions to the competent professional specialist model, where the emphasis is on the ability to identify and evaluate different problems, constructively to resolve them. This implies system changes, relating to the education process, contents, evaluation, educational technologies, thus the systemic restructuring of the entire professional training process aimed at achieving a competent specialist in the future [2], [4].

2. Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- carrying out a monitoring regarding professional skills training of the tourism specialists;
- formulating recommendations in order to improve the professional training process of future tourism specialists.

3. Material and Methods

In the framework of the proposed research, a questionnaire was applied on a sample of 226 people, divided into three groups of subjects (students specialize in tourism (156), teachers who ensure the program (26) and tourism specialists-employers (44). The questionnaire included 11 questions regarding the quality of the study program and the extent, to which it corresponds to the current requirements of the labor market, the role of the pedagogical-legal, communicative, motivational and managerial skills in the professional activity of the tourism specialist, the importance of projects in the development of tourism field, the role of traineeships and their quality, etc.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis of the obtained data and their interpretation allowed the reflection of the following aspects:

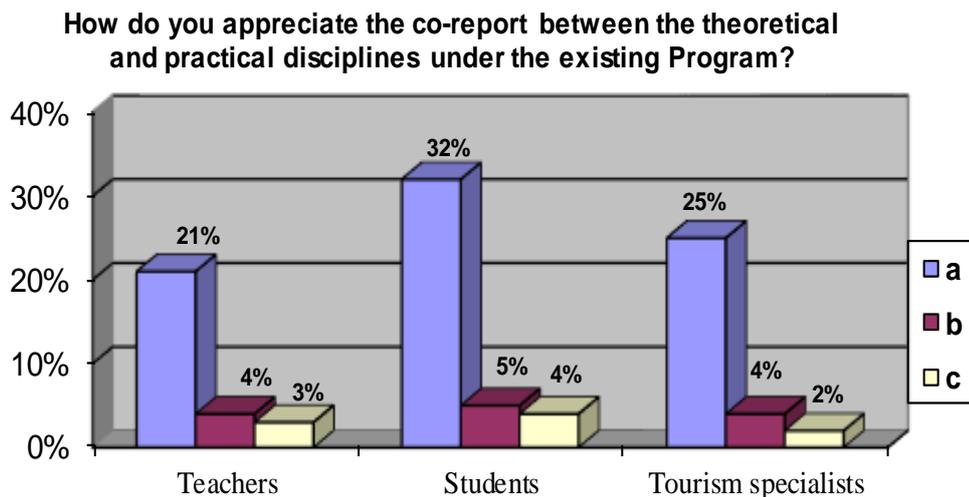


Fig. 1. Graphical reflection of responses regarding the co-report between the theoretical and practical disciplines under the existing Program

- Regarding the question “How do you appreciate the co-report between the theoretical and practical disciplines under the existing Program?” (Figure 1), all categories of respondents noted the over-theorized Program, namely 21% (teachers), 32% (students) 25% (tourism specialists), but those who appreciated the co-report between theory and practice as being optimal one is 4% (teachers), 5% (students) and 4% (tourism specialists).

These data demonstrate the need to increase the number of practical disciplines that contribute to the formation of skills for the integration and application of theoretical knowledge.

- Regarding the responses to the question „How do you assess the level, to which the study program provides the practical skills of the tourism specialist necessary in the labor market?” (Figure 2), it can be seen from the registered responses that only 5% of the teachers, 6 % - of students and 5% of tourism specialists, rating the level as being a high one, and namely 12%, 13% and 14% - qualified it as „sufficient”. A good number of the respondents rated the level as „insufficient”, namely: 10%, 15% and 20%. This means that, in general, students, teachers and tourism specialists have noticed the need for some changes regarding the compatibility of practical skills developed under the Program with the requirements of the labor market.

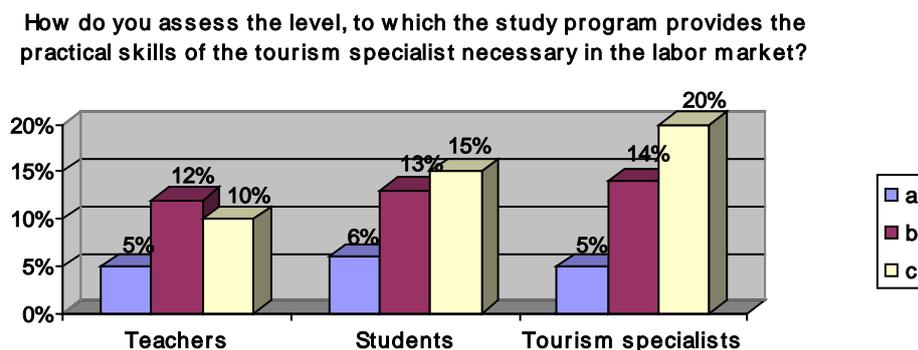


Fig. 2. *Graphical reflection of the answers on the level of training of the practical skills of the future tourism specialist*

- Regarding the question „What is the role of projects in the development of tourism field?” (Figure 3), the majority of teachers - 18%, students - 27% and tourism specialists - 21%, stated that the impact of projects on the development of the field is an important one. At the same time, some

of the respondents: teachers - 8%, students - 15% and tourism specialists - 11% mentioned that the role of the projects is medium or minimal in the development of the field, which demonstrates their low level of information on the importance of projects.

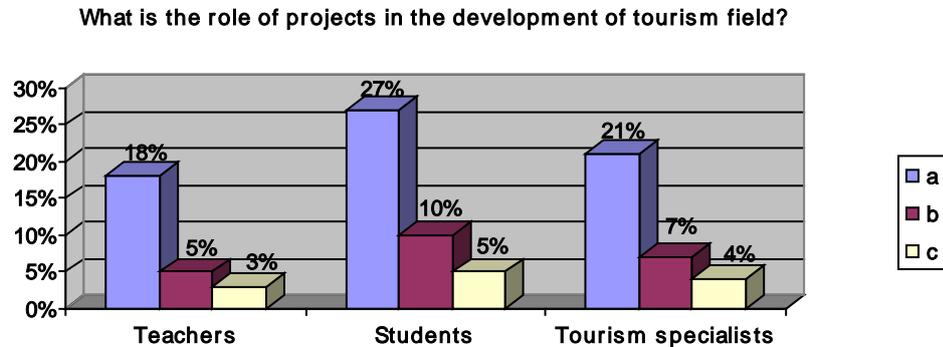


Fig. 3. Graphical reflection of responses on the role of projects in the development of tourism domain

• Regarding the question "How do you appreciate the level of training the pedagogical and legal skills under the program?" (Figure 4), most of the respondents appreciated the level as a sufficient one. At the same time, a significant percentage, namely 17% (teachers), 10% (students), and 19% (tourism specialists) mentioned the

insufficiency of training these skills under the existing Program. This reveals the necessity of introducing new disciplines, disciplinary modules, and study subjects on tourism legislation, which will contribute to the formation of the pedagogical and legal skills, necessary for the current tourism specialist.

How do you appreciate the level of training the pedagogical and legal skills under the program?

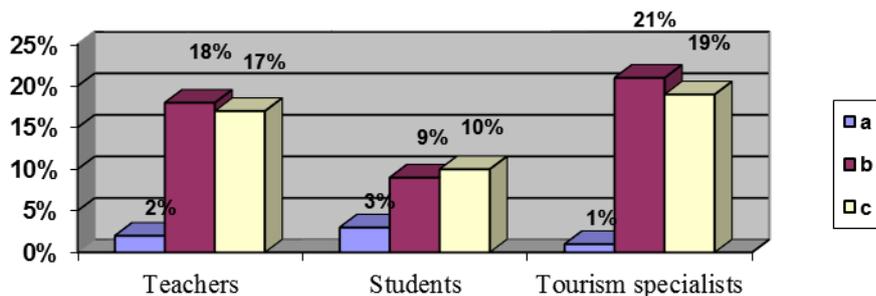


Fig. 4. Graphical reflection of the responses regarding the level of training of pedagogical and legal skills within the Program

• Regarding the question "What would you recommend to improve the internship?" (Figure 5), most of the respondents proposed the increasing the internship period: 30% (teachers), 11% (students), and 25% (tourism specialists); others - 4% (teachers), 11% (students), and 7% (tourism specialists), mentioned the need to diversify the basic units of the internship achievement; and - 1% (teachers), 4% (students) and 2% (tourism specialists) recommended to improve the

curricular support of the internship. This reveals the necessity of revising the specialty practice of the students from the tourism specialization in order to improve

the process of training the practical skills of the Program graduates in accordance with the requirements of the labor market.

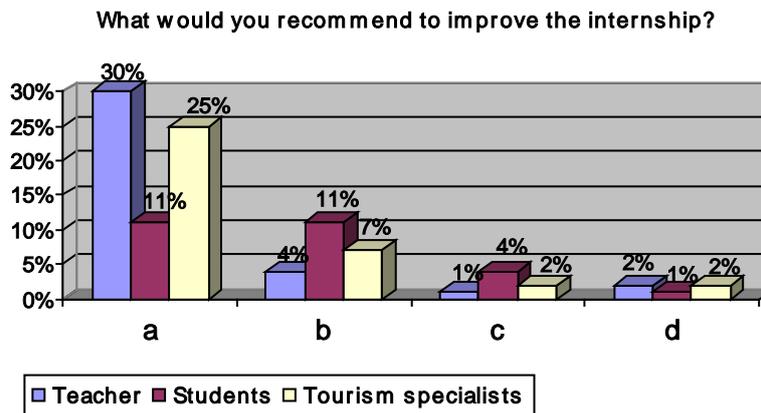


Fig.5. Graphical reflection of the responses on the recommendations for improving the internship

• An important problem was tackled by the question "Do you consider that the disciplines from the curriculum correspond to the requirements of the national economy and the international perspectives?" - Figure 6. The majority of the teachers gave positive answers - 20%, considering the disciplines in the current curriculum sufficient to form specialists in the field for the national labor market, as well as for the international one. At the

same time, some respondents: students (16%), teachers (12%) and tourism specialists (12%) consider that the curriculum does not correspond to the requirements of the national economy and the international perspectives, which shows the necessity of revising it in order to make compatible with the requirements of the labor market of the Republic of Moldova and the international one.

Do you consider that the disciplines from the curriculum correspond to the requirements of the national economy and the international perspectives?

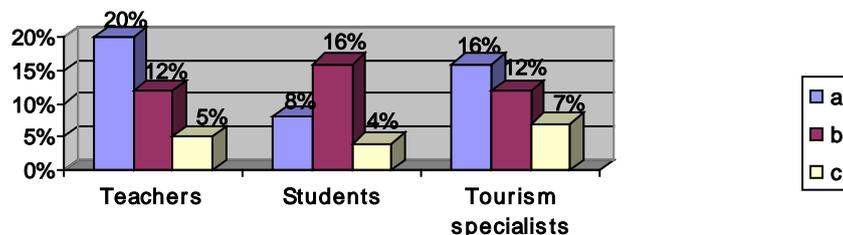


Fig. 6. Graphical reflection of responses regarding the correspondence of disciplines from the curriculum to the requirements of the national and international economy

Thus, starting from the results presented above, some weaknesses of the professional training process of tourism specialists can be formulated as follows:

- Theorizing the Study Program;
- information and insufficient participation of students and teachers in the elaboration and realization of the projects;
- Insufficient training of pedagogical and legal, communicative, motivational and managerial skills for the future specialists in the field of tourism;
- Insufficient training of the practical skills necessary to the future tourism specialist into the labor market.

5. Conclusions

The monitoring of the professional skills training process highlighted several aspects, which require improvements in order to make it more effective. Thus, we can formulate some recommendations, the implementation of which will contribute to the training of a precious specialist: increasing the number of practical disciplines in relation to the theoretical ones; upgrading the internship for the purpose of adjusting its aims to the requirements of the labor market; connecting the Program's curriculum into line with the requirements of the national economy and international prospects and developing / updating the profession of the tourism specialist.

The social order for the higher education focuses on the quality of education, which can provide with professionals any sector of the tourism field and offers the possibility of increasing vertically and

horizontally their professional career. At the same time, the mission of education is also the identification of specification points of the tourism concept as a sphere of professional activity and the phenomenon of professionalism in tourism.

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