

# THE PARTICULARITIES OF THE STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS OF THE STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, FOR IMPROVING SKILLS IN THE INSTRUCTIVE-TOURISM PRACTICE

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**Abstract:** *The content of the practice in higher education institutions assumes the position of the worker in the field of tourism, who, in addition to office work, is put in the position to go on the route, and this fact can only be achieved through an instructive-tourism practice. The subject of the research focused on the instructive-tourism practice that can have various structural components must be implemented taking into account various aspects of the tourism industry. The methods that provided us with the expected results included the analysis of the specialized literature and the structural aspects of the tourist instructive practice process. All of this presupposes the implementation of some modules for practical field activities, necessary in the training of students' professional skills. Thus, the obtained results lead us to conclude that the diversification of student practices is essential in their professional training.*

**Key words:** structural aspects, educational process, students, practice.

## 1. Introduction

The problem of personnel as one of the conditions for the successful development of the tourism industry has been addressed in recent years at different levels: state, regional, local [5]. Pawgi A., [9] mentions that tourism is an applied field, and studies related to tourism should combine knowledge with practical activities carried out in the field with tourists contingents. The practical aspect bridges the gap between academia and

industry, where students learn how to act on the skills gained. With the increase in the number of tourism enterprises, it is very important that institutions provide interested candidates with a comprehensive training in the field of tourism.

The problem of providing the industry with qualified personnel remains open for several reasons, the main one being the level of practical training of the graduates of various tourism institutions [1, 2, 4], [6, 7],

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Internships constitute a mandatory integral part of the educational process and are carried out in order to deepen the theoretical knowledge accumulated by students during the years of study and to train the skills established by the Framework Plan for higher education approved by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova [8].

The content of the practice in higher education institutions is analyzed from the position of the tourism worker, who, in addition to office work, is also put in the position to go on the route, and this fact can only be achieved through the instructive-tourism practice, which in most higher education institutions in various countries is partially or even not achieved at all.

## **2. Materials and methods**

### **2.1. Purpose and hypothesis**

The purpose of the research: consists in identifying the structural components of the students' educational process, for the formation of organizational, digital skills, etc., within the instructional-tourism practice.

The hypothesis of the research: we assume that the identification of the structural components of the educational process of the students for the instructive-tourism internship will give them the opportunity to obtain skills necessary for the future specialist not only for office work, but also for field work as group attendants.

### **2.2. Tools**

The process of achieving the established goal focused on the following research methods: the analysis of the specialized

scientific-methodical literature, the observation of the tourism activities carried out, the formative evaluation through the proposed tourism activities and the identification of the obtained skills.

### **2.3. The participants**

The students of the specialty " Hotel services, Tourism and Leisure " from the control group, 15 students who carried out the usual internship focusing on the initiation, technological and undergraduate practice, within the practical tourism march in the field having only the role of participants, and the experiment group 15 students of the same specialty carried out the internships listed above, only with an emphasis on practical activities in the field as participants, but also as route instructors with a group of tourists, following the structural components/ experimental modules developed by us, having the role of organizing the activity from its planning until the return of the group inside the institution, under the careful monitoring of the responsible teaching staff.

## **3. Results**

Establishing the level of professional skills of future specialists in the field of tourism in order to carry out the instructive-tourism practice was achieved by centralizing the results obtained by students in the fundamental, general, socio-human and specialized course units, completed in the four semesters preceding the conduct of the instructive - tourism practice (field practice carried out as an instructor on the route in a tourism march). In this context, the professional

skills for the four course units provide skills that a graduate of a tourism specialty must achieve in order to be employed on the labor market (Figure 1).

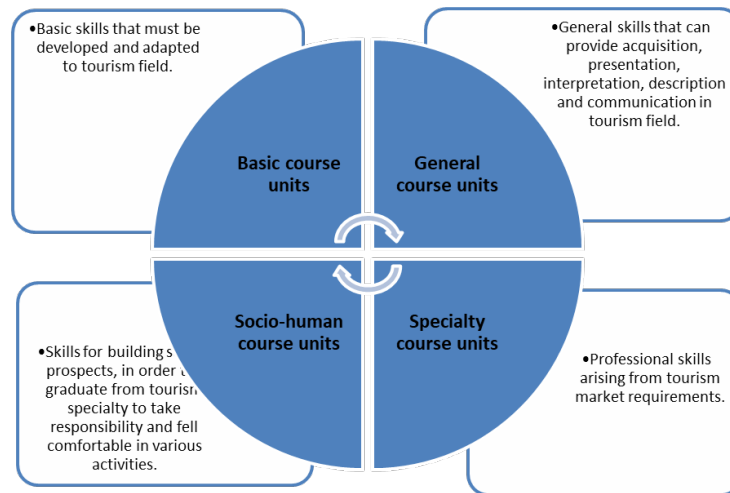


Fig. 1. *Skills that must be trained in the course units (fundamental, general, socio-human and specialized) in the field of tourism*

In the Republic of Moldova, according to the framework plan of 10.02.2020, the recommended share of internships in the first cycle (bachelor's degree) and integrated studies is 10-12% of the total number of study credits assigned to the program, and in the master's (second cycle) – 8 -12% [8]. Thus, most of the plans in the specialty 1013.1 Hotel services, tourism and leisure have an identical practice structure characterized by the initiation, technological and license practice.

The practices in the curriculum are those that involve the student in the tourism enterprise activity, where he/she can demonstrate his/her theoretical skills obtained in the subjects of the curriculum. But in the opinion of the majority of specialists, students from various specializations in the tourism industry, employers, etc., it is necessary to find new solutions so that future graduates possess

not only skills for activity within certain departments within tourism enterprises, but also professional skills what can be applied in the field with a group of tourists on a certain tourist itinerary, this aspect in the 18-21 credits according to the framework plan being insufficient. In this sense, solutions are being sought so that the professional activity skills of the future graduates, with a group of tourists, are formed within activities that involve them directly in the activity itself.

Thus, after the start internship where the students of both the control and experimental groups used the theoretical aspects obtained within the course units, but also the practical ones they acquired in the field activity process as members of a group until the start internship, the students of the experimental group continued to have the role of instructors in the instructive-tourism practice that took place in the IV<sup>th</sup> semester after the

start internship (Table 1). The process was a complex one, where students of the experimental group had the task of planning, developing, carrying out, organizing and making the analysis of the tourism activity with a contingent of students for 3 days, which involved: compiling the list of participants, choosing

means of transport, drawing up the itinerary (tourist route), choosing the collective, individual and special tourism equipment, making up the food ration, selecting the components for the medical kit, drawing the topographical map of the itinerary (route), drawing up the report and the expense estimate.

Table 1

*Administration of the instructive-tourism practice (tourism march)*

Name of the discipline		Instructive-tourism practice (I.T.P.) optional course unit					
The holder of the discipline		M.V., G.M./Experimental group students as group instructors					
Cycle (B- bachelor degree, M- master's degree)	L	SPECIALTY	1013.1	Year	II	semester	IV
No. credits	2	Language of instruction	Romanian/Russian	Evaluation form			Ex.
Hours of direct contact	30	Individual study	30	Total ore		60	
Discipline regime (F - fundamental, G - general, H - socio-humanistic orientation, S - specialization orientation)							S
Department		Athletics, Swimming and Tourism					

The tourism march, which we call instructive-tourism practice, according to the educational plan, takes place in the fourth semester, in the second year of studies. This includes 60 hours in total, which 30 are direct contact and 30 are individual activities, with 2 credits for 3 days.

Thus, structural components named by us and experimental modules

(organizational and instructional-methodical) were identified for the field practical activities, necessary for the training of students' professional skills within the instructional-tourism practice, included a series of activities capable of forming professional skills necessary for the future specialist in the field of tourism (Figure 2).

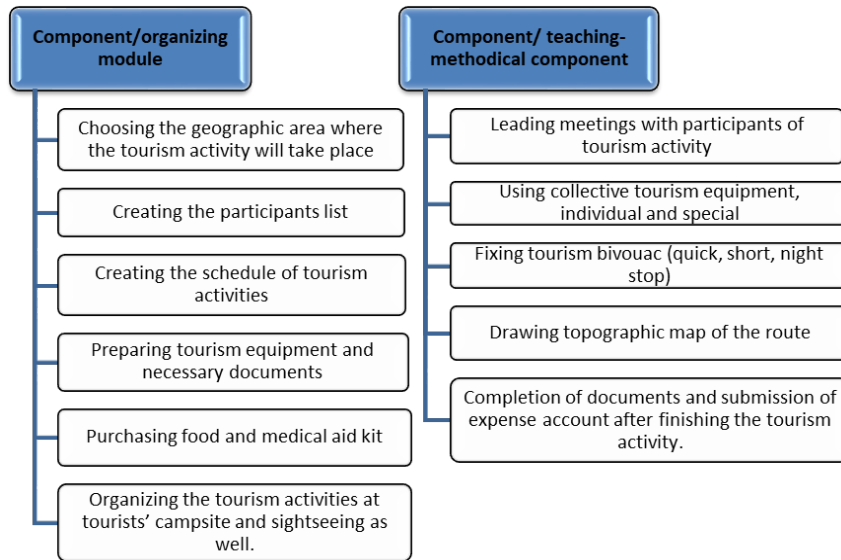


Fig. 2. *Structural components called the experimental modules for the field practical activities, necessary in the training of the professional skills of the students within the instructional-tourism practice*

Based on the structural components/modules developed, the basic objectives of the instructive-tourism practice in the field were for the future specialist to form a series of skills that he would later apply in the activity. Thus, during the instructive-tourism practice, the following were formed: communication skills; to stimulate creativity; cognitive; ensuring and self-ensuring; social interaction; integration; digital and personal development (Figure 3).

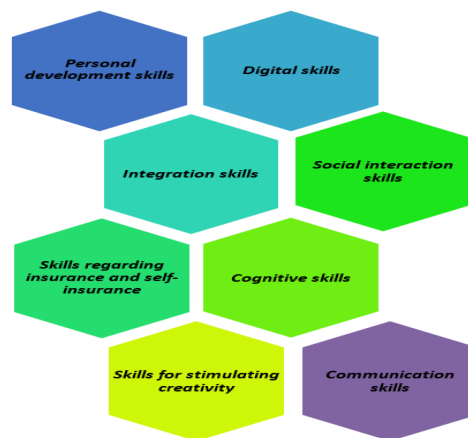


Fig. 3. *Skills acquired as a result of the application of structural components within the field instructional-tourism practice*

Thus, the skill in higher education with a tourism profile can be called the ability to apply knowledge, capabilities and personal qualities for the successful

realization of tourism activities carried out in various types of activity. This provides for the realization of complex activities that involve the assimilation of both theoretical and practical knowledge, the acquisition of communication, organization and management skills, etc., and the formation of a value system that facilitates the activity carried out.

The skills of those who work in the tourism industry are determined by the presence of the necessary specialized knowledge in certain fields of activity which essentially assume the advancement in the professional career, the possession of certain skills that were obtained by the experimental group (Figure 2) during the instructive -tourism practice that included:

- *communication skills with tourists, locals, tourism staff, etc.*: very important for employees in the field of tourism in the context of the activity with various contingents of tourists of different ages, professions, etc., which in itself implies communication skills, the ability to communicate with consumers (tourists), managing situations through communication skills, flexibility in discussions with locals or tourism staff, persuasion skills in crisis situations, etc.;

- *skills for stimulating creativity in field tourism activities*: tourists currently appreciate the activity of the employee in the field of tourism if he/she shows creativity in the activity he/she performs, the activities performed being much more dynamic and interesting. The tourism activities carried out by the experimental group in the field involved the use of the students' creativity as instructors, giving them the opportunity to carry out activities that involved the achievement of the intended objectives. At the same time,

the creativity skills demonstrated by the students during the practical activities in the field assumed the adaptation to situations in which they were asked to improvise so that the tourists would be satisfied with the expected activities.

- *cognitive skills for organizing field tourism activities necessary in tourism activity* involve the capacity of the future specialist in the field of tourism to plan, organize and carry out activities to promote, realize and put into practice (in the field) the tourism products or services that were offered to the tourist in the office;

- *skills regarding insurance and self-insurance in tourism activities* involve the student's ability to react and promptness to situations of force majeure in tourism activities carried out especially in those activities that involve dynamic activities in specific geographical areas: mountain space, aquatic environment or underground environment (caves), etc.;

- *social interaction skills with tourists, etc.*, involve social and professional skills in the relationship with tourists, manifested by the ability to resolve conflicts, work in groups, take into account the tourist's ethnic characteristics, social status, etc.;

- *integration skills* which involves the structuring of the knowledge that the student possesses from theoretical classes, updating the knowledge in order to take into account the trends in the field and the specifics of the tourism market, but also the type of activity carried out, the geographical area where it takes place, etc.;

- *digital skills* involve the student to possess the ability to process information, to use computer programs (software) to create: the technological and

topographical map of the trip in general and the route in particular, the list of participants, the schematic map of arranging tourists in transport, accommodation used, etc., the possession and development of digital skills, the use of broadcasting stations along the route, etc.;

- *personal development skills* necessary in the situation where the tourism industry [3] is in progressive dynamics and involves the regulation of one's own emotional state, reflections of certain moments that materialize on the tourism route; professional development in the field of tourism, improving knowledge in terms of the known foreign language, when on the tourism route we meet groups of foreign tourists, etc.

The instructive-tourism field practice carried out by the students of the experimental group is a way where the students put into practice the theoretical skills obtained in the subjects studied. Thus, during such an instructive-tourism practice, the students of the experimental group obtained a range of skills that they can use once they are employed in tourism enterprises, giving them the opportunity to guide a group of organized tourists as group attendants, guides, etc., to visit tourism attractions, practice hiking or various forms of tourism in a special sports way, etc.

#### 4. Conclusions

Analyzing the necessary skills to be obtained by students in the instructional-tourism practice on the route with an organized group of tourists necessary for group attendant, manager in travel agencies, tour guide, etc., identified by us following the application of the elaborated

structural components, we can conclude that the dynamic development of the tourism industry at the national and international level requires a different approach regarding the qualification and professional training of the future specialist in the tourism field.

The structure for the practice internships (start and technological) with an emphasis on activities in the field, as well as the proposed instructional-tourism (field) one, with an emphasis on well-defined structural components, have the role of training the professional skills of the future specialist within the tourism enterprises.

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