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## PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE'S SKILLS AND NEEDS OF FUTURE TOURISM INDUSTRY EXPERTS ALL OVER THE WORLD: THEORY VS. PRACTICE

Vasylyshyna N.M.

National Aviation University

The article under consideration deals with the problem of identifying professional communicative competence's skills for future tourism experts in domestic country. The survey comprised two interrelated scientific directions, such as: theoretical and practical ones. The first of them was conducted in the investigation of tourism trends and occupational skills needed for tourism industry experts in various European countries, such as Germany, Spain, Greece, Czech and France. The second, empiric part was dedicated to professional communicative competence's skills designing. As a result, foreign language knowledge was marked out as the most important occupational ability for future tourism experts' vocational activity.

**Keywords:** competence, skills, trends, tourism, foreign language.

**Stating of the Problem.** Advanced modifications and developments such as the changing labor market, growing worldwide competition, technological advances, and changing demand patterns in tourism require new employability skills from graduates that enable them to cope with the changing circumstances of the tourism business world. Universities are therefore encouraged to embed key skills in their curricula, yet there is often a considerable gap between what educational institutions offer and what is needed and required by the industry. One attempt to actually create this interface and increase the opportunities for graduates to maintain or obtain employment is to look at diverse skills and competencies that enhance employability of graduates. Although there have been considerable efforts to specify employability skills, the question of how these could be developed within the curriculum prevails [4].

**The Aim of the Article and Research.** The purpose of the present paper is to theoretically find out and discuss the concepts of skills requirements, and competencies for graduates in diverse countries and to present the practical outcome in the form of created methodology carried out among future tourism industry experts in order to shape in the best possible way the required professional communicative competence's skills and needs for their sophisticated activity in tourism business.

**Recent Surveys and Issues Analysis.** By investigating the skills and needs outlined in studying process of different countries, we would be able to provide the group of interrelated professional communicative competence's components vital for tourism industry experts in their field of specialization along with creating practical guide in order to shape English for Specific Purposes capabilities in mentioned above professionals.

**Methodology and Research.** Currently the perspective-oriented research and analysis of new and changing skill needs in the labour market demands research and analysis at various levels: macroeconomic, regional, local, sectoral, occupational and enterprise levels. Nowadays we hear more about European research into early identification of skill needs but this is still fairly limited and mostly concentrated in specific sectors, trades and occupations characterised by internationalisation, where the

mobility of people, jobs and services are high. Tourism is one such sector. Tourism is very important for the European economy. It accounts for 5% of direct employment and proportion of European GDP and has a tremendous multiplying effect over other economic sectors, enjoying forecast stable growth for the future. Tourism has one of the highest labour mobility rates across Europe, permitting discussion of the emergence of a truly European economic sector and a labour market with a truly European dimension. Thus, the discussion about new occupations and future skill needs for the sector in Europe has a particular significance [3, 5].

**Highlighting of the Earlier Unsolved Problem Sections.** When discussing the trends and skill needs in tourism, it is always interesting to start with some facts and figures on the current situation of European tourism. The general outlook for this dynamic sector is, in relation to other traditional European economic sectors, positive and quite optimistic for the coming years. Tourism is generally and globally acknowledged as being one of the few economic sectors that has more than significant growth prospects and is characterised as a catalyst for peace and prosperity. Despite the increasing competition in overall world tourism, Europe is still the number one destination. It has the highest density and diversity of tourist attractions [3].

Tourism in Europe accounts for more than EUR 800 billion expenditure a year by EU citizens. It constitutes 30% of the EU's external trade in services and creates potential for up to three million additional jobs. Tourism is one of the most important sectors of the European economy; GDP generated by tourism represents already 5% in the core industry with another 7% in the related economy [5].

Tourism is still a very specific sector, so specific knowledge about the sector is required. For the workforce, however, there are still general and basic skill needs for everybody. For example, lack of knowledge of foreign languages has been recently recognised by national tourism organisations of some European countries as a lasting problem and even as a competitive disadvantage. Entrepreneurship – a concept still vaguely defined – is taken more actively on board by education providers who are working on this notion and thinking of

implementing this even at the compulsory school level. There are also specific skill needs defined by labour category. At management level, these are rather transversal skills, hence tourism managers often have an educational background in accountancy, marketing, law, economics, etc. Nevertheless, managers are expected to possess the following skills and competences: computer skills, business and strategic planning, strategic alliances, management skills, management through visions and values, yield management, accounting, product development, innovation, human resource management, destination management, project management, management skills to cope with globalization influences, change management, marketing and sales skills [4].

Other labour categories can be defined: supervisors, skilled craft workforce and the semi-skilled. Supervisors in tourism need basic computer skills, human resource management, hygiene and, accounting, supervision and training skills. Personal skills, problem solving and basic computer skills are especially important for the skilled craft workforce. Nowadays, further demands are placed on semi-skilled tourism staff in terms of both personal skills and specific technical knowledge (e.g. bar attendance, cleaning, catering) [3, 5].

**Material Exposition.** The following survey of the future tourism experts' skills dilemma is related to the megatrend which comprises the contemporary idea that the overwhelming majority of German citizens have assigned a new role to free time. They use it primarily for recreation, pleasure or just switching off. Leisure time now, more than ever, provides an opportunity to satisfy the core human need to find meaning in life. One's occupation, once a working person's *raison d'être*, now plays second fiddle to family, friends and free time.

As a result, the current trends described above not only affect tourist products and services, they also influence the work of tourism employees. Changes in leisure travel segments focus on vacation design, travel organisation, consulting and sales and sightseeing guide services. In business travel, trip arrangement and processing is undergoing profound change. Until now the main task of travel agency employees had been to offer customers fixed tourist products and services from holiday catalogues, to book transport and accommodation and, last but not least, to sell a package. Travel agents also used to be there to field customer questions about the deal and the destination. The duties of travel agency employees have adapted to the increasingly individual travel wishes and diversified demands of various consumer groups. Tour operators and their sales personnel are now required to tailor and arrange holidays according to specific customer preferences [5].

Further investigation is directed into the regions of Spain, the Czech Republic and Greece. On balance, it should be noted that tourism in these countries is of a different character. While both Spain and Greece are among the most popular world recreational destinations, Czech tourism is of the urban type, with spa tourism also having an important role to play, and is less affected by seasonality [5]. So, according to analysis we have observed a broad agreement among employers and

human resource managers about the lack of adequately qualified labour available for recruitment in the tourism sector. Personal and social skills are requested most frequently with additional capacity to learn and to work independently are gaining in importance. Knowledge of foreign languages and specific knowledge and skills linked to technological innovation and information technologies penetration of the sector are often listed as lacking.

However, in all three countries, systems of initial vocational education are not prepared to meet the skill requirements of the sector. Therefore, continuing training combined with practical work experience and training on-the-job supports skill development more effectively. Furthermore, the limited opportunities for internal promotion constitute a major hindrance to motivating employees to pursue – and employers to provide – training opportunities. Taking another look we have induced the fact that the French hotel and catering industry is characterised by a high turnover and a workforce that is largely young and unskilled. In this respect, it tends to follow the American model: one third of the population of the US has worked in a restaurant at one time or another. The workforce at operational level is exposed to direct communication with customers and thus recruited mainly on the basis of a behavioural assessment. In the hotel industry, the majority of the jobs involve cleaning, which either can be carried out by the staff or outsourced to specialised companies. Jobs involving personal services such as receptionists and night janitors are less numerous. Deluxe hotels also employ porters, doormen and bell-boys. Some members of the staff might manage to be promoted to supervisory or managerial posts, but the high-level jobs are increasingly reserved for those with diplomas in business, accounting, management, company strategy and so on [3, 2].

Moreover, the career prospects of operating personnel are therefore often limited, especially in reception-desk functions, making the hotel industry above all a means of entering the labour market before making a change of profession. In overall, France, where the tradition of self-run enterprises still predominates in the hotel and catering industry, will probably see an increase in the numbers of wage-earning jobs available, especially those involving supervisory, management and marketing skills. As far as the more basic jobs are concerned, segmented managerial practices are tending to develop, generating odd jobs for students, low-skilled employment for a needy men's force and only a few positions with real prospects for career advancement. The American advance in this area thus gives us an opportunity of taking a prospective look at employment, while recognizing France's seniority in the constitution of the various occupations and hotel management training [5].

**Practical Part.** A main aim of the theoretical part was to depict tourism trends and necessary skills of future professionals which has been reached successfully. Taking into consideration the outlined skills, we can present the professional communicative competences of future tourism experts in which the level demanded by the employer could be higher than that demonstrated by the graduate and vice versa. So, in the *Table 1* the

meaningful occupational skills of professional communicative competence of future tourism experts we consider such as.

Table 1  
**Professional communicative competence's skills of future tourism experts**

Mastering of field or discipline
Knowledge of other fields or disciplines
Analytical thinking
Ability to rapidly acquire new knowledge
Ability to negotiate efficiently
Ability to perform well under pressure
Ability to identify new opportunities
Ability to co-ordinate activities
Ability to manage time efficiently
Ability to work in teams
Ability to mobilize the capabilities of others
Ability to communicate properly
Ability to assert one's authority
Ability to use information technologies
Ability to come up with new ideas and solutions
Willingness to question own and others' ideas
Ability to present publicly ideas, products or reports
Ability to write reports, memos or documents
Ability to write, draw up reports and speak in a foreign language
Ability to apply knowledge to practice
Basic knowledge of the profession
Research abilities
Ability to manage information
Ability to communicate with non-expert audiences
Ability to work in an international context
Knowledge of culture and tradition of foreign countries
Ability to work autonomously
Ability to design and manage projects
Ability to integrate in the organisation
Willingness to succeed

But, the general results of the survey indicated that together with listed above skills like intrinsic components of professional communicative competence of future tourism experts we have singled out English for Specific Purposes (ESP) knowledge as of the greatest importance.

In our investigation we have developed practical drills and tasks in order to achieve effectiveness of professional foreign language communicative competence' skills formation in future tourism experts. For instance,

- pronounce the following rhymes and poems paying attention on highlighted words and phrases. Synonymize tourism terms;
- think about the main issue of each travel poem;
- manage yourself to create personal tourism poems using underlined lexis;
- get acquainted with the most inspiring travel quotes of all times;

- express your personal opinions concerning their meanings;

- make mini-dictionary noting from presented quotes only travel words and phrases with your personal translation or synonymous interpretation;

- study the following phrases with the Longman Dictionary assistance and perform mini-dialogues or conversations with them;

- perform the scenes between the holidaymakers and the foreigners occurred at such places as: hospital, shop, bank, restaurant, hotel, airport terminal, bookstore, museum, theatre and cinema. It is obligatory to work travel phrases in your communication practice;

- read out the question on the card and the partner guesses which of the four 'Ps' of the marketing mix it relates to: the Product, the Place, the Price or the Promotion;

- read out the description of a type of niche tourism and the partner then guesses what it is;

- make a small talk for the given situation for 30 seconds with the partner to the right;

- read the dialogues with partners giving it an appropriate heading. Role play some of them switching roles.

So, presented above, in the form of diverse examples, practical assignments for future tourism experts are considered to be effective and productive tools in shaping foreign language skills which are essential in their occupational activity.

**Conclusions and Future Strategies.** Hus, taking into consideration the detailed theoretical as well as practical research of the professional communicative competence' skills of future tourism experts, both national and foreign experts, as well as all politicians, agree that tourism is a sector strategic importance for future development in the short and in a longer run. At the same time, tourism is challenged by a growing demand for customer orientation, increasing international competition, volatile markets in an insecure environment, changing customer demands towards individualisation, and a significant potential in various market segments. The expansion of new technologies alters the delivery of services since the presence of the Internet changes distribution and sales practices. Mergers and acquisitions in the sector lead to a growing number of services provided by chains worldwide with a certain standardisation of quality and, hence, competences expected from the personnel.

Consequently, the knowledge and skills required to provide services shaped by current social trends become highly interdisciplinary. Multiskilling and new hybrid occupations reflect the trend for new types of tourism products and services – more complex and sophisticated in nature – and the growing demand for functional flexibility in the labour force.

Future strategies, to our mind, lie in shedding some light on which skills and competences will be required by the tourism sector in order to increase the level of professionalism for attracting as more as possible potential customers with least expenses.

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**Василишина Н.М.**

Національний авіаційний університет

### **ВМІННЯ ТА ЗДАТНОСТІ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ ФАХІВЦІВ СФЕРИ ТУРИЗМУ У СВІТІ: ТЕОРІЯ ТА ПРАКТИКА**

**Анотація**

У даній статті розглядається проблема виокремлення вмінь професійної комунікативної компетентності майбутніх фахівців туризму у вітчизняній країні. Дослідження складалося з двох взаємопов'язаних наукових напрямків, таких як: теоретичний та практичний. Перший з них був присвячений розгляду туристичних тенденцій і професійних навичок, необхідних фахівцям туристичної галузі в різних країнах Європи, таких як: Німеччина, Іспанія, Греція, Чехія та Франція. Другий, емпіричний мав на меті висвітлити здатності проектування професійної комунікативної компетентності. Таким чином, знання іноземних мов були виділені як найважливіша професійна здатність у діяльності майбутніх фахівців з туризму.

**Ключові слова:** компетентність, навички, тенденції, туризм, іноземна мова.

**Василишина Н.М.**

Национальный авиационный университет

### **УМЕНИЕ И СПОСОБНОСТИ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЙ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ БУДУЩИХ СПЕЦІАЛІСТОВ СФЕРИ ТУРИЗМА В МИРЕ: ТЕОРІЯ И ПРАКТИКА**

**Аннотация**

В данной статье рассматривается проблема выделения умений профессиональной коммуникативной компетентности будущих специалистов туризма в отечественной стране. Исследование состояло из двух взаимосвязанных научных направлений, таких как: теоретический и практический. Первый из них был посвящен рассмотрению туристических тенденций и профессиональных навыков, необходимых специалистам туристической отрасли в разных странах Европы, таких как: Германия, Испания, Греция, Чехия и Франция. Второй, эмпирический имел цель осветить способности проектирования профессиональной коммуникативной компетентности. Таким образом, знание иностранных языков были выделены как важнейшая профессиональная способность в деятельности будущих специалистов по туризму.

**Ключевые слова:** компетентность, навыки, тенденции, туризм, иностранный язык.