Quality Problems in Vocational Tourism Education

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We consider the quality of vocational tourism education in terms of world trends of tourism industry development. We identify and describe the quality problems of vocational tourism education in detail from interested focus groups using empirical and theoretical methods. We also note that there is insufficient attention to the development and improvement of vocational tourism education in the world by UNESCO, a low level of scientific research in terms of assessment, and the absence of quality monitoring mechanisms of vocational tourism education level. We analyze the definition of "sustainable tourism" to ensure the quality of the tourism experience in three aspects: environmental, socio-cultural, and economic. As a result, we formulated the definition of vocational tourism education, considering modern business approaches to quality assessment. Besides, we offer innovative ways of partnership and cooperation in providing quality training for the tourism and hospitality industry at the international and national levels.

Keywords: vocational education, quality standards, challenges, tourist personnel, sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

The development of vocational tourism education in the world is uneven. The leaders in the development of the first training courses for the tourism industry in the latter half of the 20th century were the United Kingdom, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Australia, and the United States (Airey & Tribe, 2005; Cervera-Taulet & Ruiz-Molina, 2008; Christou & Eaton, 2000; Cooper, Shepherd & Westlake, 1996;

Sheldon, Fesenmaier, Woeber, Cooper & Antonioli, 2008). Groups of scholars researched the quality of vocational education (Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Williams, 2010; Harvey, 2011).

Further European system training in tourism was formed under the European Union educational policy [EU]. The EU laid the foundations for a unified standardization in the field of tourism for the member countries and their cooperation with other countries of the region and the world. These are the European Center for the Development of Vocational Training [CEDEFOP], the Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education [CHRIE], the European Institute of Education and Social Policy [EIESP], the European Teacher Education Network [ETEN] and others.

The founding of the World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] in the 70s of the 20th century became significant both in the development of world tourism and in the systematization of scientific approaches to the creation of vocational tourism education.

The Russian School of Vocational Education in Tourism and Hospitality absorbed the best world traditions and developed its own personnel training model (Kvartalnov, 2002; Pityukov, 2019). Today, more than 450 Russian universities are engaged in qualified personnel training for the tourism and hospitality industry at all educational levels, from colleges to master's programs.

The discussion about vocational education quality and its relevance to economic demand was on the world's agenda over the past decades. Rapidly changing market demands, globalization, economic and geopolitical transformations require training employees who will work in situations that are difficult to predict at present.

Vocational tourism education is highly dependent on the nature of the tourism industry itself. It is the fastest growing business area at the present stage.

According to UNWTO, 2018 was the eighth consecutive year of steady growth for the industry, with 1.4 billion international tourists. Statistically, 1 in 10 jobs in the world is associated with the travel and tourism industry (UNWTO, 2018).

We consider the quality of vocational tourism education in the context of the tourism and hospitality industry. For this purpose, we operate with business categories and criteria that describe all current and future participants in tourism activities and stakeholders.

The study questions are:
- What are the current global trends in the development of vocational tourism education?
- Is tourism training as it exists today effective in meeting employer requirements?
- What quality standards for vocational tourism education are relevant or require development?
- What are the challenges of international, national, and regional bodies (organizations) implementing or supervising the training system for the tourism and hospitality industry?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We began our research by examining authoritative sources considering the essence of quality and quality management in business (TQM, ISO 9001, etc.), current management concepts following international standards in tourism and hospitality (Barry & Creamy, 2014; Harvey et al., 1993; Harvey, 2011; Fonseca, 2016; ISO, 2018).

The next step was a detailed analysis of the opinions of reputable, certified specialists (auditors of the quality of tour operator services and hospitality services), business leaders and owners, managers, practitioners demonstrating professional competence in quality issues and assessing the quality of tourism products and services (Cooper et al., 1996; Christou et al., 2000; Kvartalnov, 2002; Pityukov, 2019; Sheldon et al., 2008; Yefremtseva, 2016).

An integral part of the study was to consider the activities of the supreme governing bodies in tourism and other international organizations. In this way, we identified current trends in world tourism development to formulate the current goals of vocational tourism education (UNWTO, 2017, 2018; World Economic Forum, 2019).

Implementation of quality management in a business organization involves developing processes, structures, and methods by which planning, execution, control, and quality improvement are systematically achieved. Total Quality Management (TQM) defines a management philosophy characterized by the quality integration throughout the organization of the client satisfying, and the stakeholders' requirements. It is a management system based on the principle that every employee must maintain high work standards in all company aspects. Quality in tourism and travel means meeting or exceeding customer expectations (Fonseca, 2016).

The ISO 9000 family is the most widely used standard for quality management and certification. The following principles guide the International Organization for Standardization (ISO): customer focus, leadership, engagement, improvement, process approach, evidence-based decision making, and relationship management (Barry et al., 2014; ISO, 2018).

ISO standards affect approximately 80% of global merchandise trade. ISO membership comes with rights, benefits, best practices, and responsibilities.

However, there are no official statistics on the application state of ISO 9000 in the tourism and hospitality industry, only the analysis results based on empirical research.

Tour operators choose ISO 9000 for some reasons, which are the following:
- Image creation;
- Promotion and advertising;
- Raising and aligning standards between different departments;
- Reviewing operating procedures and systems;
- Reviewing the tour operator's management;
- Legitimizing the actions of top management to make changes (Foris, 2014).
    International standards in the field of tourism appear every, for example:
- ISO 21401: 2019 Tourism and related services. Management system for sustainable development of hotel resorts;
- ISO 13811: 2015 Tourism and tourism services. Guidelines for the development of environmental requirements for accommodation facilities (Fonseca, 2016).
    Hotels are certified for compliance with the following international standards:
- ISO 9000 Quality Management System;
- ISO 10002 Customer Satisfaction System.

Russian Belmond Grand Hotel Europe (St. Petersburg) and DoubleTree by Hilton Moscow – Vnukovo airport successfully completed certification of international standards ISO 9000 and 14001.

These examples show the commitment of tourism organizations to improvement and sustainable development. Within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), the UN formulated 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and developed a 15-year plan to achieve them (World Economic Forum, 2019).

The SDGs are a general call to action to eradicate poverty, protect our planet, and improve the quality of life for people worldwide.

According to the conceptual definition established by UNWTO, sustainable tourism should do the following:
- Make optimal use of natural resources, which are a key element in the development of tourism;
- Respect the socio-cultural identity of host communities, preserve their life and cultural heritage and traditional values, and promote intercultural understanding and tolerance;
- Ensure sustainable, long-term economic transactions that provide socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are equitably distributed and contribute to the fight against poverty;
- Maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction, provide a meaningful experience for tourists, raise awareness of sustainable development issues, and promote sustainable tourism practices (UNWTO, 2017).

All tourism stakeholders share the responsibility of sustainability, interacting with other stakeholders to realize three important sustainability aspects (environmental, sociocultural, and economic) and ensuring

tourism experience quality (Hawkins & Hunt, 1988; UNWTO, 2017). Figure 1 shows the results of voluntary national surveys on the significant leading role of tourism for achieving 17 SDGs (UNWTO, 2017).

FIGURE 1
TOURISM AND UNWTO SDGS IN VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS
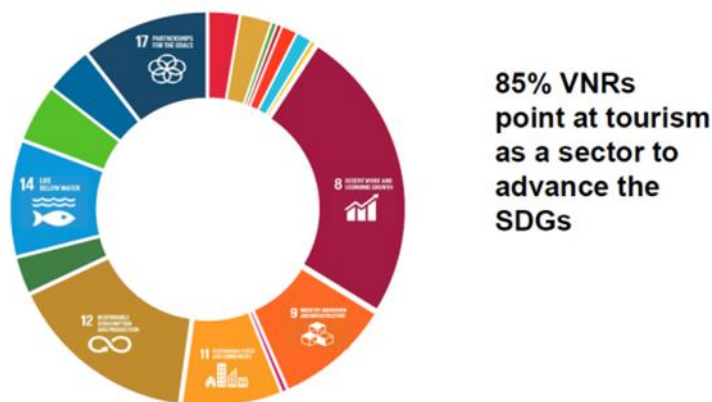
The SDGs are an ambitious road map that requires all elements of society, including local and national governments, businesses, industry, and individuals. The process requires consensus, collaboration, and innovation to be successful.

ISO published over 22,000 International Standards and related documents that provide globally recognized guidelines and frameworks based on international cooperation. For each purpose, ISO has identified the standards that contribute most significantly.

Many international organizations develop programs for sustainable tourism. Thus, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), through its Committee on Tourism, aims to empower member governments to adjust their policies and actions to support sustainable tourism growth (OECD, 2012, 2016).

Quality is a concept that is often viewed in context with sustainability. Perhaps no product or service can be considered a good quality if it does not meet the sustainability criteria.

RESULTS

We formulated a definition of the quality of vocational tourism education.

The quality of vocational tourism education is a high degree of professional readiness to develop sustainable tourism under international standards.

We also identified and described in detail the quality problems in vocational tourism education (Table 1).

TABLE 1
QUALITY PROBLEMS IN VOCATIONAL TOURISM EDUCATION

No	Focus category	Problem description	Level
1	World Tourism Organization	• Lack of mechanisms for monitoring the quality of vocationaltourism education; • Insufficient development of TedQual programs, the international quality certification system for vocational tourism education; • Weak interaction with national ministries and councils on tourism policy development and training.	International National
2	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization	• Lack of attention to the development and improvement of vocational tourism education in the world; • Low interaction with national organizations for conducting scientific research on quality assessment of vocational tourism education.	International National
3	Government/ministry	• Low interaction of the relevant ministries to stimulate international educational projects of tourism; • Lack of attention of the state to the program development for vocational tourism education and scientific research; • Weak legislative base in terms of the formation of professional qualifications; • Lack of a national system for assessing the quality of education in tourism and hospitality.	International National Russian
4	Tourism (business)	• Low interest in training personnel for middle and top management; • Lack of a legislative system of interaction between the industry (employer) and educational institutions; • Creation of training centers by large tour operators as opposed to universities.	International National
5	Hospitality (business)	• Low business interest in training for a senior; • Lack of a legislative system of interaction between the industry (employer) and educational institutions; • Creation of own hotel industry schools for training junior and middle personnel of hotels and restaurants.	International National
6	Destination	• Lack of qualified personnel in destination management (DMO); • Lack of attention to professional personnel training for the development of a tourist service system at the local level;	Russian Regional

		• Low interaction with tourism universities for the program development to promote destinations on the market and attract tourists to the regions.	
7	Educational institutes	• Lack of interest in international professional ratings and competitions participating; • Lack of scientific and professional interaction between tourism universities; • Low level of scientific research in terms of assessing the quality of vocational tourism education; • Lack of specialized education and work experience in the industry among the majority of the management in universities; • Formation of the Federal State Educational Standard competencies among students, rather than international quality standards; • Lack of flexibility in updating curricula of training areas; • Lack of attention to the development of variable and elective programs and training modules; • Low system development of professional retraining and advanced training of workers and teachers of tourist universities.	International Russian Institutional
8	Students	• Lack of interaction with students at tourism universities in terms of participation in international professional projects; • Low development of student academic mobility programs; • Lack of a national system for assessing the quality of tourism education and individual certification; • Low level of professional and scientific interaction between students of Russian tourism universities and tourism faculties; • Lack of a system to promote student employment and employment of university graduates; • Lack of a flexible system for choosing elective disciplines and modules; • Insufficient elaboration of individual learning paths; • Low quality of practice and internships in professional modules.	International Russian Institutional
9	Teachers	• Lack of scientific and professional interaction between scientists and teachers of tourism universities;	International Russian

			Institutional
		• Low development of academic mobility programs for teachers;	
		• Lack of specialized education among the majority of teachers of tourism university;	
		• Weak system of vocational retraining and advanced training of workers and teachers of tourism universities;	
		• Lack of internships in the industry;	
		• Low motivation to develop innovative courses and revise the content of discipline programs.	
10	Other stakeholders/tourism service providers	• Lack of attention to the system of professional training for the entire service sector in tourism; • Low motivation to improve skills or receive specialized education by employees of companies providing tourism services.	Russian

DISCUSSION

The development of an independent system for assessing the quality of education in the Russian Federation today is one of the important tasks in vocational education.

A tourist university graduate is like a "general practitioner." In other words, the graduate masters the basic spectrum of sciences necessary for work (economics, management, finance, touring, foreign languages, IT); however, there is no "narrow specialization."

The student should have a conscious choice of professional modules or disciplines, supported by certificates (for example, regional tourism, sightseeing, booking platforms, pilgrimage tourism, experience industry, entrepreneurship, etc.). This is a kind of "career tour package." Students could have certificates by solving profile cases on simulators or developing individual projects (Yefremtseva, 2016).

It is necessary to organize training for narrowly specialized modules at the international level, using the vast experience of leading countries in developing professional tourism and hospitality training. There should be no "localism" and no restriction of access to advanced development and exclusive courses. This opportunity is provided by Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC). The advantages of online learning and MOOC are apparent: the best teachers globally, free online education, interactivity, the latest specialties, structured presentation of materials, free training schedule, etc. Leading universities in the world already offer a wide range of online courses. Tourism Online Academy is open on the UNWTO platform, and UNESCO offers the Tourism Management course at UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The organization of Russian centers for assessing qualifications is proceeding slowly, which is due to several reasons: lack of interest among specialized communities, lack of understanding of procedures among the management of universities, the low study of procedural issues in relevant ministries.

We consider conducting scientific research to create a unified system for assessing vocational tourism education (following the example of the international project AHELO).

AHELO (Assessment of Learning Outcomes in Higher Education) is an ambitious project that seeks to develop new methodologies and technical standards for assessing learning outcomes in higher education. We propose the creation of a Research and Development Park sustainable tourism management. This project is under the auspices of UNWTO unite and focuses the efforts of universities, business schools, research centers, and other organizations interested in developing tourism and training qualified personnel.

CONCLUSION

Tourism statistics uses three leading indicators (tourist arrival, overnight stay, tourist expenditure), and a limited number of auxiliaries. However, there are no international statistics on vocational tourism education.

We see an urgent need for the convergence of partnerships of all stakeholders in the vocational education of tourism, cooperation in research programs worldwide.

We see the primary goal of cooperation in promoting the excellence of sustainable development of the world, not only in the industry (including tourism) but also in higher education. This can be done through the support of an active international community; development of theory and practice of quality assurance; exchange of experience and understanding of the academic freedom policy, and institutional integrity in the interests of educational institutions, students, and society.

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