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Current Problems of Personnel Training for the Tourism Sector in Uzbekistan

Masalah Saat Ini tentang Pelatihan Personil untuk Sektor Pariwisata di Uzbekistan

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Abstract

The article considers issues relating to existing system of personnel training for the tourism sector. In connection with the active development of this sector of the economy has appeared the need for clear interaction between the system of professional education and the labor market. Despite the fact that a large number of special educational institutions and higher educational institutions train personnel for the tourism industry, there is a shortage of qualified personnel in the tourist job market. According to experts, today the majority (up to 75%) of employees of tourism companies do not have education of a specialist in the field of tourism. Currently, the market situation is such that graduates of specialized educational institutions do not meet professional requirements that meet international standards. Today's specialists have a low professional level, so hotels and travel agencies that have their own specialist training programs have to re-train the hired employees. Training and retraining of personnel in the field of tourism can become one of the main advantages of the organization, as the quality of the services provided depends on the qualifications of the personnel, and the satisfaction of guests in the service sector is achieved by the competence of the personnel. The purpose of improving the professional training of personnel for the tourism industry is to create a sustainable development of the system of professional training that would meet the needs and development of the individual, the state and society as a whole, which would improve the quality of professional training of specialists in the field of tourism.

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Introduction

Uzbekistan is a country of ancient cities with hundreds of architectural monuments. The historical cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Shakhrisabz, and Khiva are known throughout the world, some of them are of the same age, as Rome and Babylon. Monuments of ancient architecture still remember the times of the conquests of Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan. The Great Silk Road is one of the most significant achievements in the history of world civilization also ran through these ancient cities. Today tourism is a kind of catalyst for many processes in the country, in its economy, culture, social sphere.

In Uzbekistan, the number of arriving foreign tourists is annually growing at a high rate. Thus, in 2017 2,690 thousand foreign tourists entered the Republic of Uzbekistan. This indicator is 32.7% more than in 2016, when the number of arrivals was 2,027 thousand people.

In turn, during 2018 the number of foreign visitors was 5,346 thousand people and it exceeded the indicators of the same period of 2017 by 99%. In 2019, 6,748,500 tourists visited Uzbekistan. (diagram 1.) According to the results of 2019, the volume of travel services export amounted to 1,313,032 dollars. (1,041,089 in 2018). [3, p.18]

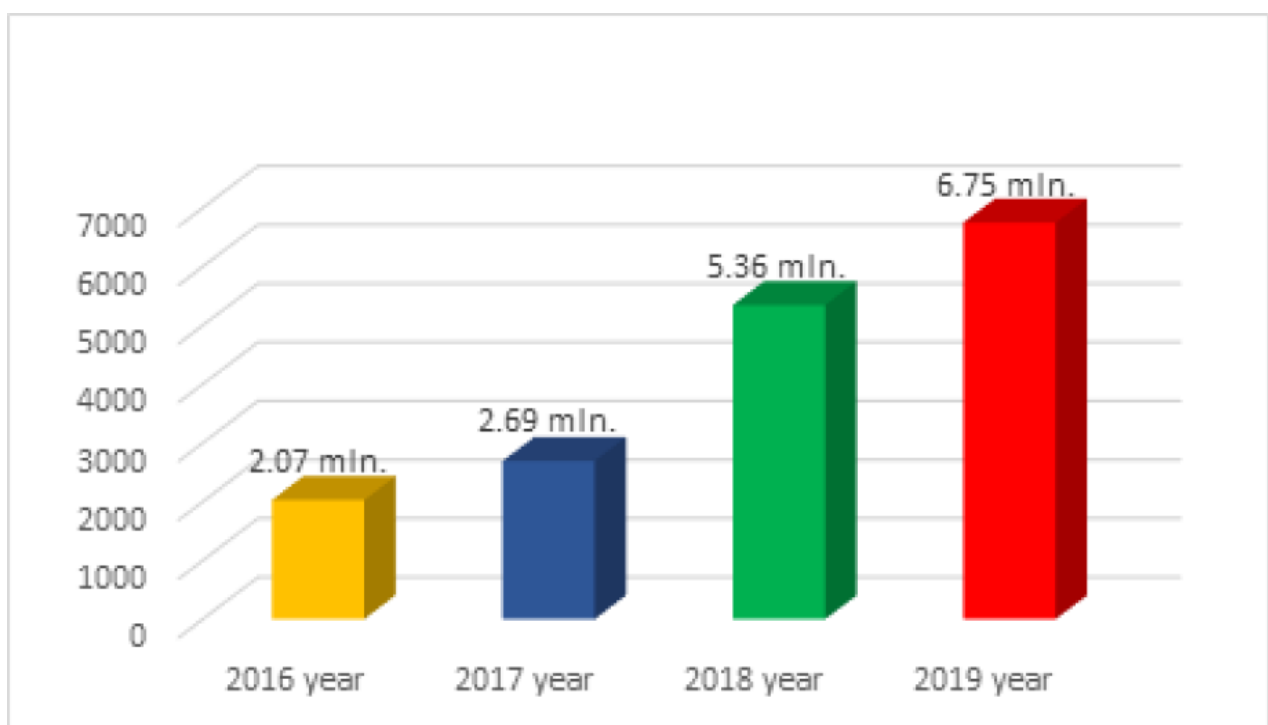


Figure 1. Diagram 1. The number of the arriving visitors. (mln. people)

Tourism in Uzbekistan plays an important role in providing employment of the population, which reaches 98.6 thousand people. It makes up for 0.8% of all work places. By 2023, up to 145,000 people are planned to be employed directly in the tourism industry. Tourism in Uzbekistan directly, indirectly and conditionally employs about 305.1 thousand people, which is 2.4% of all jobs.

Tourism has become one of the leading sectors of the world economy. In this regard, Uzbekistan pays special attention to the modernization of the tourism industry, the development and improvement of the legal and regulatory framework for the sustainable development of the industry and the organization of services for foreign guests in accordance with international standards.

The basis contributing to the significant promotion of tourism in Uzbekistan is the updating of the regulatory framework, so on January 5, 2019, important regulatory acts were adopted for the tourism sector: The decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No DP - 5611 "About additional measures for the accelerated development of tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan" and the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. RP-4095 of 05.01.2019 "About measures for the accelerated development of the tourist industry", the Decree of the head of state of July 13, 2019 "About measures for further development of the sphere of tourism". The document provides for the establishment of a Tourism Development Institute. The Institute will be engaged not only in scientific developments and researches, but will also assign qualifications to guides, and instructors-guides". [3, p. 33]

These regulations define the main strategic directions of tourism development. In particular, the Decree of the President No. DP-5611 approved the Concept for the Development of Tourism in the period up to 2025. Thus, the priority areas of development of the tourism sector of the country are the following:

- improvement of the legal and regulatory framework in the field of tourism activities;
- implementation of international norms and standards aimed at creating favorable conditions for the development of the tourism industry.

The Government 's ongoing policy and reforms to develop tourism have made it possible to include Uzbekistan in various international ratings with high indicators. (table1.) [3, p.16]

Rating	Criteria	Occupied Place
Rating United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) 2019	Top 20 countries with the fastest growing tourism industry	4
Solo Travel Safety Report 2019	The safest for single travelers	5
Global Muslim Travel Index 2019 (GMTI).	Top 10 countries for «Ziyorat-tourism»	10
Global Muslim Travel Index 2019	Service"Muslim hospitality"	22th place among 130 countries
Rating Gallup global 2018	Safe country for travel	5th place among 145 countries
Rating Gallup global 2018	10 most attractive directions for next year 2	2
Magazine Travel and Leisure 2018	Best Place for Tourism	1
Lonely Planet (Publishing house for the production of guides for non-rich tourists) 2018	Popular tourist destinations for next year	2
Analytical agency "TurStat" 2018	Top 5 popular countries for gastronomic tourism	5

Table 1. Uzbekistan in international ratings in 2018-2019

Methods

The growing interest of the population in tourism has led to the expansion of the tourism industry: the emergence of new types of tourism, new travel destinations, an increase in the number of tourist enterprises, which in turn has led to an increase in the demand for highly qualified specialists in this sphere.

Peculiarities of training future specialists for the sphere of tourism are described in the works of I.V. Zorin, V.O. Qvartalnov. The importance and essence of researches on peculiarities of personnel training for the sphere of tourism were proved by M.I. Kadyrova, M.N. Mikhaylova, V.Yu.Morozov, E.L. Pisarevsky, P.Z.Khashimov, O.A. Brel. They considered the problems prevailing in this direction, proved the importance of fundamental tourist education; studied the theoretical basis of personnel support of the tourism sector.

According to O.A. Brel, "by tourist education we mean training of personnel of different levels of qualification in specialized educational organizations for carrying out professional activities in institutions, organizations and enterprises of tourism and recreation." [8, p.101]

The specificity of tourist education lies in its versatility. It trains personnel of different specialties and directions of economic, technical, technological, managerial, scientific and other profiles. As a result, tourism education is a complex, constantly improving mechanism that allows to actively implement innovative programs for training tourist personnel and to use foreign experience.

According to I.V. Zorin, the professional training of personnel in the sphere of tourism in WTO member countries in modern conditions has a holistic character and covers the following subsystems [1, p.59]:

- pre-professional training (updating of professional self-determination, pre-professional training, professional selection);
- multi-level professional training at higher education institutions (educational and qualification levels: Bachelor, Master, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in the field of tourism);
- post-graduate education (professional development of qualifications, self-education, professional improvement of qualification level, re-training, mastering additional specializations, professional retraining).

According to M.I.Kadyrova, there are three aspects of training, which are important for any sphere of tourism [9, p.27]:

1. Fundamental training (knowledge). This aspect is responsible for obtaining knowledge, compliance with the curriculum of a particular specialty.
2. Technical training (knowledge of how to do), which is responsible for the improving skills and develops skills, necessary for a specific specialization.
3. Personal abilities (know how to behave, how to be), which reflect the personal qualities of the specialist.

Tourism is the same business as any other. And in this sphere, we need professional personnel of different levels, from a secretary to a manager. Since tourism activities are closely related to working with people, it is very important that all employees make up a single whole, one team, are friendly to the client, could replace each other and obeyed to uniform service standards.

The first training school for the tourism industry was opened in the late 19th century in Switzerland - «Ecole hoteliere de Lausanne». This country has remained a leader in training for the tourism industry. Following it, in the early 20th century, others schools began to open in Spain, Ireland, the United States, Great Britain, Australia. They have already expanded the scope of the program, not limited to hotel management, - there is a specialization "Travel and tourism." And until now these two programs (hotel and tourist management) remain basic and are offered by schools sometimes separately, and sometimes jointly. [4, p.104]

Core elements of training are shaped as an adaptive, dynamic socio-economic system that ensures the continuous improvement of education. [5, p.90] Groups of factors that influence processes of training and personnel practices can be identified. (fig.1-2)

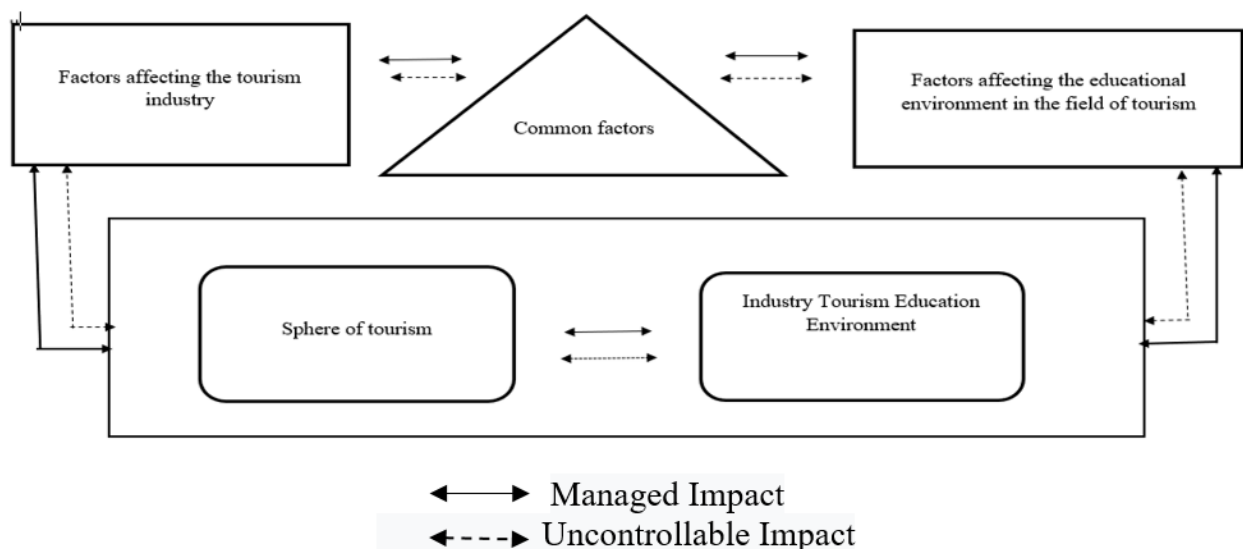


Figure 2. Fig. 1. Factors affecting training personnel in the sphere of tourism

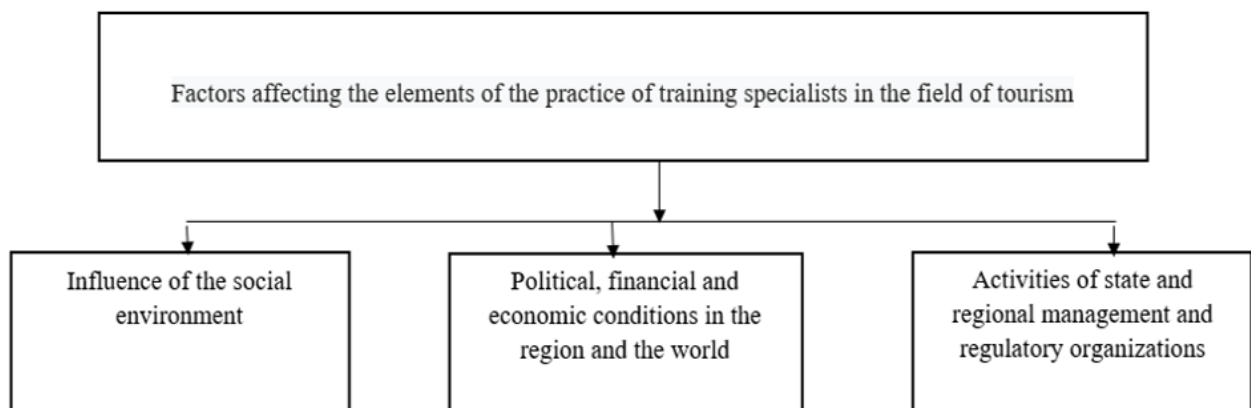


Figure 3. Fig. 2. Factors affecting the elements of the practice of training specialists in the sphere of tourism

There are two approaches to training tourism professionals: traditional and modern. The traditional approach to training is determined by the education system, which includes education within the higher vocational education system, as well as in the secondary vocational education system, specialized courses and practice - oriented trainings. [5, p.92]

Traditional teaching methods are lectures, seminars, mentoring, and there is also off-site learning methods and training methods in the workplace.

Training in the workplace is a practical focus, a direct link to the production functions of the staff. Outside-of-the-workplace learning methods provide an opportunity to be distracted from the workplace situation. This training helps to shape new behavioral and professional competencies.

The modern approach of training personnel for tourism industry enterprises includes outsourcing and outstaffing.

Outsourcing - transfer of non-key functions to a third-party organization. Few modern managers take into account the benefits that can be gained by transferring functions that are secondary to the organization to a more professional service provider. For example, to transfer to outsourcing recruitment agencies and selection of the personnel.

Outstaffing is a method that promotes to optimization of certain professional skills, knowledge and experience that are in demand for both short-term and long-term projects when it is necessary to increase flexibility in the process of hiring employees for temporary and seasonal projects.

Results

Each country that is involved in tourism is developing its own tourism education system that meets the requirements of modern times. If we talk about development trend of domestic education in the field of tourism, it should be noted that against the general background of improving the quality of services provided by market participants, industry enterprises are increasingly seeking to improve the professional skills of their employees, aware of the need for this process to improve in general the quality of activities.

Training of specialists in this field is put on a solid basis in seven colleges, lyceums and five higher educational institutions in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva. The main forge of young specialists with higher specialized education are Tashkent State University of Economics (TSUE), Samarkand Institute of Economy and Service and Singapore University in Tashkent. The adoption of Presidential Decision No 3815 of June 28, 2018 on the establishment of the Silk Road International Tourism University was a great achievement in this direction in 2018. The agreement has been reached on the signing of a cooperation agreement between the State Committee on Tourism and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which provides for the recognition of the status of the University as an international one, granting the University the right to use the UNWTO logo, as well as its recognition as an official partner.

The Republican Scientific and Consulting Center (RSCC) of National Company "Uzbektourism" was established in order to train, retrain and improve the skills of participants of the tourist market and promote the development of industry science, integration of vocational education in the practical activities of organizations and enterprises of the tourist sphere. In order to ensure the integration of education and production, specialized educational institutions of the Republic regularly work with specialists of National Company "Uzbektourism" to improve the system of education, educational programs and methodology for tourism.

The center provides advanced training and training of tour guides and tour operators for students and graduates of the Uzbek State University of World Languages (USUWL), the Institute of Oriental Studies, Tashkent State University of Economics (TSUE) and the National University. More than 2,361 tourism specialists were retrained and passed advanced training at the Training and Consulting Center at the State Committee on Tourism in 2018.

Discussion

Despite the fact, that personnel for the tourism industry are train at a large number of special educational institutions and higher educational institutions, there are a number of problems in the tourism services market:

1. According to experts, today the majority (up to 75%) of employees of tourist companies do not have an education of a specialist in the field of service and tourism. During the formation of the tourism industry in the Republic of Uzbekistan, for objective reasons, a large number of specialists with higher non-core education, especially in the hotel industry, were attracted to the industry.

Tourism companies are forced to train specialists in order to increase the level of professional training, while spending considerable financial resources. Many employers believe that it is not appropriate to hire inexperienced specialists who have only graduated from an educational institution. They list a number of shortcomings that are inherent in yesterday's graduates, namely: lack of assessment of the chosen profession, too high requirements for employers, illiteracy, inability to interact with clients and colleagues, lack of practical knowledge and skills. The demand for tourism education is growing, there are educational institutions that are able to meet this demand, but at the same time, the issue of qualified personnel remains relevant. Today there is no demand for broad-based specialists. Today we need of specific knowledge, skills and abilities.

2. Due to the increase in quantity of higher and secondary specialized educational institutions, producing tourist specialists, there is an increasing need to form qualified teaching staff with modern professional knowledge and experience in practical work in the industry. In this regard, there is little involvement of the most trained workers of the tourism industry in master classes, lectures and seminars, participation in scientific and practical conferences, scientific research on tourism problems, management of various types of practices in tourism enterprises.

3. The need of educational institutions for adequate methodological support of the educational process, in mastering of innovative technologies of professional education, introduction of methods and means of distance education is growing. There is a lack of coordination in the problem of provision of the system of professional tourism education with modern textbooks and teaching aids and curricula in many disciplines.

4. In the process of studying in higher education institutions, insufficient attention is paid to practical training of students, lack of financial resources does not allow to use properly the system of passing the occupational practice: There are problems related to training hotels in Uzbekistan.

5. Due to the active development of tourism, Uzbekistan faced an acute shortage of scientific development and research in this field. Experts note, that the activity of universities of the republic on integration and coordination of various directions in the field of tourism is very weak. Thus, for 26 years, from 1993 to 2019 only 5 doctoral dissertations and 20 candidate works were defended. Research work on the problem of tourism in Uzbekistan is carried out by about 30 specialists. Due to the current problems in this country and in this industry, such a number of specialists is very small.

Conclusion

Thus, the system of tourism education requires further improvement in the following areas:

- 1) Development of new qualification requirements for the main positions of employees of the tourism industry, interaction of academic knowledge and practical skills.
- 2) Modernization of the existing and development of new educational standards for training of qualified tourism personnel.
- 3) Improvement of the educational program in terms of its practical component and closer convergence of the topics of course and diploma works to the needs of a tour business. Educational programs should be brought as close as possible to the needs of employers, it is necessary to develop in student's mobility, erudition, communicability, ability to sell any tourist product.
- 4) Research of qualitative and quantitative aspects of the need for personnel of tourism enterprises and monitoring of the needs of tourism and related business institutions in specialists of various profiles.
- 5) Organization of advanced professional training of employees for their subsequent employment in enterprises of the tourism industry.
- 6) Implementation of rating evaluation of specialized educational institutions in order to provide consumers with reliable information on the state of the market of educational services in the field of tourism.
- 7) Formation of a new type educational institutions-uniform educational production associations, such as "university- production", creation of training hotels at universities.
- 8) Improving the quality of educational and methodical literature in tourist specialties.
- 9) Cooperation with international countries in the educational sphere of tourist industry. Partnership with foreign universities will allow to exchange students for a certain period of study.
- 10) Creation of a system of national certification of specialists in the field of tourism on the basis of the best foreign experience.

Implementation of the above measures will make it possible to create an integral system of training of professional personnel, to improve the quality of education and provision of services to meet the demand for highly qualified managers, administrators, operators, receptionists.

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