

OPTIMIZATION OF THE PRACTICAL TRAINING OF TOURISM SPECIALISTS IN THE CONDITIONS OF EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

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Abstract. *The modern requirements of employers for university graduates in tourism are constantly changing, but the requirements for the practical orientation of their education remain unchanged. That is why the purpose of the article was to substantiate the ways of optimizing the practical training of tourism specialists in the conditions of external challenges. In the process of the research, the authors used such scientific methods as the analysis of the theoretical foundations and the current state of practical training of students of higher education, the generalization and systematization of the authors' practical experience in the organization of educational and industrial practices in the online format, substantiating the optimal ways of practical training of students in conditions of external threats, as well as the method of pedagogical observation. The study identified and analyzed the problems of practical training of future tourism specialists in Ukraine at the current stage. Ways to optimize practical training in modern conditions of external threats are proposed and substantiated. A system of online events for various types of practices is proposed, examples are given. The conditions for the successful completion of practical training in the process of external threats are identified and argued.*

Keywords: *optimization of practical training, tourism specialists, educational practice, production practice, online events.*

JEL Classification: *A23, A29, I28*

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Introduction. Practical training of tourism specialists plays a significant role in the formation of professional competencies and program learning outcomes. External challenges caused by the pandemic, which affected the global tourism industry, and the war on the territory of Ukraine, eliminated the possibility for students to undergo traditional practice on the basis of relevant enterprises and organizations. There was a need to find alternative opportunities for organizing and conducting practice in the form of distance and mixed learning.

Literature review. The issues of practical training of tourism specialists are highlighted in the publications of L. Bezkorovaina, N. Wolfson-Garshina, O. Konoh, O. Malinovska, L. Poleva, V. Stafiychuk, L. Chornaya, I. Shchogoleva, H. Shchuka and other scientists.

The problems of practical training of students in higher education in the conditions of the introduction of martial law are revealed in the study of K. Ilnitska and V. Mykolayko [1].

The issue of practical training of higher education seekers is in the field of view of scientists, because it is an important component of the training of specialists in the field of tourism.

L. Bezkorovaina analyzed the system of professional training of future specialists in tourism studies of European countries and provided suggestions for domestic training, including practical training [8]. Domestic and foreign experience regarding the organization of practice is presented in the study of L. Chornaya [9].

O. Konoh gives the most effective forms of organizing the practice of future specialists in active tourism in a higher educational institution, emphasizes the positive influence of practice on the quality of study programs [10].

L. Melko, G. Uvarova, T. Sokol, O. Mikho consider practical training as a component of the practice-oriented education system [2].

Based on a systemic approach, G. Shchuka and Yu. Bezruchenkov developed recommendations for reorganizing the tourism education system in accordance with today's challenges, taking into account the pandemic [11].

Currently, the urgent issue is the development of recommendations for the training of specialists in the field of tourism, including practical training, taking into account modern external threats.

Aims. The purpose of the study is to substantiate the ways of optimizing the practical training of tourism specialists in the conditions of external challenges.

Methods. In the process of the research, the authors used such scientific methods as the analysis of the theoretical foundations and the current state of practical training of students of higher education, the generalization and systematization of the authors' practical experience in the organization of educational and industrial practices in the online format, substantiating the optimal ways of practical training of students in conditions of external threats, as well as the method of pedagogical observation.

Results. The training of competitive specialists in the tourism sector requires practical training throughout the entire period of study. External threats at the current stage level this important stage of the educational activity of future specialists and require the search for alternative solutions, improvement of training forms and methods.

Tourism education is one of the most practically oriented in the training of future specialists in higher education. Practice is a component of practice-oriented training, which consists in the organization of practice-oriented activities throughout the entire period of training [2].

As a result of practical training, appropriate professional competences are formed ("ability to apply knowledge in practical situations; ability to analyze the recreational and touristic potential of territories; ability to analyze the activities of tourism industry subjects at all levels of management; ability to monitor, interpret, analyze and systematize tourist information, the ability to present tourist information material; the ability to develop, promote, implement and organize the consumption of a tourist product" etc.) [3, p. 7-8] and program learning outcomes, including: "analyze the recreational and touristic potential of the territory; apply principles and methods of organization and technologies of tourist service in practical activities; to develop, promote and implement a tourist product; to organize the process of serving consumers of tourist services based on the use of modern information,

communication and service technologies and compliance with quality standards and safety norms, etc. [3, pp. 8-9].

Based on the practical experience of the authors, practical training of tourism specialists should take place every year, both educational and industrial, depending on the course of study.

Today, taking into account external challenges, there are problems of organizing and conducting practice both in general and on the basis of enterprises and organizations in the tourism sector. Among them: threat to health and life in connection with possible shelling; transition of a significant number of tourist enterprises to the format of online activity due to a significant decrease in demand for tourist services, evacuation, outflow of potential customers to other countries, etc. As a result - refusal to rent the premises; tense moral and psychological state of the applicants; stay of some of them in evacuation; communication via remote format, etc.

The tourism business suffers from problems, and the issue of organizing and conducting internships, selecting enterprises for industrial internships is difficult.

We suggest considering ways to optimize practical training in modern conditions of external challenges, including:

- 1) improvement of forms and methods of online education;
- 2) development of an individual trajectory of practical training of applicants;
- 3) use of elements of informal education;
- 4) creation of online schools for young professionals, students by employers and stakeholders;
- 5) providing applicants with the opportunity to have psychological support.

Improving forms and methods of online education, finding new innovative forms is one of the most important components of successful practical training of higher education applicants. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with the online activities that can be conducted during practical training in a remote format (table 1).

The main goal of educational and familiarization, educational practice is to acquaint students of the 1st-2nd year with: features of the future profession, professional assignment, basic production functions of tourism specialists; with recreational and touristic potential, incl. countries of mass tourism, with enterprises of the tourism industry, with the specifics of their activities.

During the internship, students of higher education are offered to get acquainted with enterprises of the tourism industry on excursions and during meetings with specialists. During external threats, meetings and virtual tours can be moved online. Stakeholders, employers of tourist, hotel, and restaurant enterprises join such events. There are both thematic and general meetings. It is important to introduce future specialists to successful people, professionals, which is extremely motivating to continue their education, especially in the current dangerous time. It is especially valuable to invite graduates who are an example of professionalism and success.

Table 1. System of online events in the process of practical training of future tourism specialists

Type of practice, course	Online events
Educational and introductory, educational, 1-2 course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online meetings with tourism industry specialists (master classes, round tables, professional studios). • Online tours (familiarization with the recreational and touristic potential of the territories). • Course preparation on open online courses
Production and technological, production, 3-4 course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online school for young specialists based on tourism industry enterprises • Online meetings with tourism industry specialists (webinars-trainings, workshops) • Online study of the enterprise of the tourism industry, involvement in activities in social networks • Course preparation on open online courses

Source: formed by the authors based on [4,5] and their own practical experience.

Acquaintance with the recreational and touristic potential, as a rule, takes place in the process of visiting museums, tourist destinations, various tourism objects, including in mass tourism countries. In times of external threats, students can take virtual tours, getting to know the museum heritage, tourist resources of Ukraine and the world. It is advisable to provide students with a list of resources and suggest continuing the review list. You can provide links both to individual tourist objects (National Reserve "Sofia Kyivska", National Historical and Cultural Reserve "Kachanivka", Vatican Museums, etc.), and to platforms where thematic resources are collected (Virtual tours of museums of the world on Google Arts & Culture platform, etc.).

Course preparation on open online courses contributes to the formation of relevant skills, allows students to consolidate, deepen and test the theoretical knowledge obtained in pairs from professional disciplines. For example, it is possible to take free courses of your choice on the portal "Educational Hub of the Kyiv City " or online courses on mass tourism countries on the portal of the Ukrainian Association of Travel Agencies (UATA), with the receipt of certificates.

Also, an important component is recording practice results in a diary and periodically discussing them with practice managers, both offline and online.

The main goal of production practice (production-technological) is the generalization, consolidation and deepening of theoretical knowledge and the acquisition of necessary practical skills and competences in relation to the organization of management, marketing and economic activities at enterprises of the tourism sector of Ukraine.

During the practical training, the student should get acquainted with various aspects of the activity of the enterprise in the tourism sector, take part in the

processes of travel registration, get acquainted with the system of management, marketing, planning and economic activities.

During external threats, practice can be organized as follows: attract students to the School for young professionals working on the basis of tourism enterprises (for example, tour operator "Calypso Ukraine", travel agency "Come with us"), organize practical meetings with specialists, involve studying the activity of a tourist enterprise online, with the possibility of joining social networks, recommending training at open courses.

The *development of an individual trajectory of practical training* of applicants is an important condition for conducting practices at the current stage of aggravation of serious challenges. For this purpose, it is necessary to select enterprises for internship taking into account the places of stay of students, to individualize the schedule of visiting enterprises or to organize online meetings with their management and employees. When formulating individual tasks, attention should be paid to the region in which the acquirer is located, whether there are opportunities for their implementation. This will make it possible to develop an individual schedule of practice, including in remote format.

Considering the fact that *informal education* is a process of obtaining education that is not regulated by the place, term and form of education and does not involve obtaining documents on education of the state model, the use of elements of informal education is also relevant in the organization of practices in the conditions of modern challenges. Programs of informal tourism education can reflect both the problems of scientific research and the current directions of tourism development in the region or country where the educational institution is located. Programs related to the development of specialized tourism in a specific area (rural, gastronomic, wine, industrial, cruise, etc.), course preparation on open online courses, etc., can be especially interesting.

The creation of online schools for young professionals, students by employers and stakeholders is also one of the important conditions for optimizing the practical training of higher education seekers at the current stage of a number of force majeure circumstances that have developed in Ukraine. Practicing professionals can help graduate departments in conducting introductory seminars with students before the start of practices, trainings and master classes on the technology of tourist service, organization of managerial, economic, and marketing activities in the field of tourism. The interested participation of representatives of travel firms in the organization of practices through the involvement of students in online schools will contribute to the professional motivation of the student, the actualization of his professional abilities, the establishment of professional competitiveness at the early stage of personal professional maturity [6].

To date, the National Program of Mental Health and Psychological Support of the Population during the War has been launched in Ukraine [7]. Its purpose is to help citizens overcome extreme stress and the consequences of injuries received during the war, to prevent the development of mental disorders. Therefore, *providing applicants with the opportunity to have psychological support* is an important

condition for optimizing internships outside the educational institution. For this purpose, it is expedient to practice the use of psychological and adaptation trainings, to carry out various recreational activities, to fill students with positive emotions.

Discussion. We will single out the conditions for successfully completing practical training in the process of external threats:

- 1) safe location of applicants;
- 2) access to the Internet;
- 3) students' motivation regarding practice;
- 4) interest of stakeholders in the organization of practical training of students to involve them in tourist activities;
- 5) systematic painstaking work of practice organizers regarding its successful implementation.

Conclusion. Practical training of future tourism specialists is an important component of the educational process regarding the formation of professional competencies and program learning outcomes. During external threats, its organization and implementation requires optimization, systematic implementation of online activities. Successful implementation of practical training during external threats is possible if the appropriate conditions for its organization and implementation are met.

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