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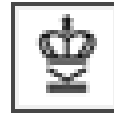
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**SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM CADRE TRAINING AND SELECTION IN BULGARIA
PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON THEIR SKILLS**

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Abstract

The topic of human resources management has always been of crucial importance. The most successful organizations are those which have realized that their greatest assets are their employees and therefore take special care of them. Sustainability in tourism cadre training and selection results from the synergies of the state authorities, local authorities, educational institutions and tourism business in Bulgaria. On the other hand, there should be a match between the tourism cadre training, knowledge and skills and the tourism business requirements for hiring staff. This paper has two main objectives: 1) to outline the regulatory framework for the preparation and training of tourism cadre and 2) to research the attitudes of the two target groups in tourism – staff and employers in order to find out if they match or whether measures should be taken in this direction.

Keywords

Sustainability – Tourism cadre training – Staff selection

Resumen

El tema de la gestión de los recursos humanos siempre ha sido de crucial importancia. Las organizaciones más exitosas son aquellas que se han dado cuenta de que sus mayores activos son sus empleados y, por lo tanto, tener especial cuidado de ellos. La sostenibilidad en la formación y selección de los cuadros de turismo se debe a las sinergias de las autoridades estatales, las autoridades locales, las instituciones educativas y las empresas turísticas de Bulgaria. Por otra parte, debe haber una coincidencia entre la formación de los cuadros de turismo, los conocimientos y las habilidades y los requisitos de negocios turísticos para la contratación de personal. Este artículo tiene dos objetivos principales: 1) delinear el marco regulatorio para la preparación y capacitación de los cuadros de turismo y 2) investigar las actitudes de los dos grupos objetivo en el turismo - el personal y los empleadores para averiguar si coinciden o si Deben adoptarse medidas en este sentido.

Palabras Claves

Sustentabilidad – Formación de expertos en turismo – Selección de personal

Introduction

Bulgaria's economic development over the past 20-30 years, especially for its joining the European Union, has faced a number of challenges. The country has reoriented its economy from planned to capitalist but at the same time it has lost much of its industrial capacity. The free movement of goods, people, capital and services further aggravate the economic situation of the state. It has to deal with the free competition on the common market. Therefore, Bulgaria is increasingly turning to the development of economic branches that would be competitive at a European and world level. Such particular branch is tourism.

In the following years Bulgarian tourism will be among the leading sectors of the national economy. It will be developed at national and regional level, while also following the global trends in this area in order to attract Bulgarian and foreign tourists. Hence the demand for professional, highly qualified and well-trained staff at all levels of the tourism sector to meet the needs of the tourism industry.

According to the **Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2014–2030** published by the Ministry of Tourism, tourism is expected to be among the leading (structural) national economic sectors. Tourism should be a sustainable contributor to the continual optimization of the Bulgarian economy through: a substantial share of GDP - 12-18%; high employment - 300,000 permanent and 500,000 temporary employees; creating investment opportunities and partnership projects; main field for development and running of small and medium business based on family property; environmental protection and preservation of the rich cultural and historical heritage.

On the other hand, in order to develop this sector, the country urgently needs highly qualified and well-trained staff. Therefore, the regulation and development of vocational education and training in Bulgaria and its focus on staff training for the tourism industry is of crucial importance. This training should meet the expectations of both – job seekers and employers. It is essential that there be a match between the requirements of the tourism business and the job seekers' portfolio of knowledge and skills in this field. Another issue of utmost importance for the tourism success is related to the tourism cadre intentions and motivation as well as to their selection and retention by the tourism business. For this reason we have set the objective to research the attitudes among these target groups and to present the Bulgarian regulatory framework, which allows for the preparation of professionally trained staff.

Objectives

What actually happens when tourism business select its staff? Is there an overlap between employers' expectations and tourism cadre's attitudes? To try to answer these questions, we have done research among the tourism cadre in Bulgaria and interviewed employers in the field of tourism.

This paper has two main objectives: 1. To outline the regulatory framework for the preparation and training of tourism cadre and 2. To research the attitudes of the two target groups in tourism – staff and employers in order to find out if they match or whether measures should be taken in this direction.

Review of literature and legislative regulation sources

The topic of human resources management has always been of crucial importance. The most successful organizations are those which have realized that their greatest assets are their employees and therefore take special care of them. Staff-related issues have been examined by a number of Bulgarian scientists. Monika Bogdanova¹ has focused on the question about staff selection and staff performance evaluation. She states that staff selection and evaluation processes should be strategically planned. It is essential that good candidates should be chosen and hired and also, they should be evaluated through effective systems which motivate the staff and decrease staff turnover rates². Another Bulgarian scientist Tatyana Hristova³ has added some more colour to the staff selection processes. She sees the best employees as real talents, i.e. nowadays it is not enough to have a set of diplomas, qualifications and competences to be the perfect candidate for some vacant position. Another very important ingredient of the skills portfolio is the special gift, the talent, the ability to create new things, the pleasure to service the customer in the best way and do everything effectively, with an ease. For this reason Hristova talks about the modern concept of talent management, not human resources management.

In Britain, one of the leading authorities⁴ on Management Development examines how organisations assess potential, plan promotion, compare internal and external courses, combine formal and informal approaches, focus on the different needs of individuals, and find ways to help them all learn from experience.

Another foreign scientist⁵ states that “education is an especially powerful predictor of participation in public, formally organized activities”. He develops the modern idea of the “lifelong learning”, i.e. initial formal education is not enough for our successful future development; it provides only the initial basis but “we need many more alternative channels for learning”.

Besides education and training, staff selection and evaluation, the question about staff motivation is also very significant. Thomas Kenneth⁶ provides the first comprehensive treatment of intrinsic motivation in the workplace – the psychological rewards workers get directly from the work itself. It is crucial that companies should know how to direct its tremendous power to develop a more committed, self-managing workforce.

Staff Training for the tourism development in Bulgaria is subject to legislative regulation. It can be classified according to several criteria. The first is the European and national legislation. Since Bulgaria is part of the European Union its laws should be in accordance with the European standards. On the other hand, the legal regulations for staff training in tourism is subject to the national, general and special legislation. We should also take into consideration the level of staff qualification in tourism because tourism industry requires staff with secondary and higher education.

¹ M. Bogdanova, *Staff Selection and Evaluation* (Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski, 2013).

² M. Bogdanova, *Staff Selection and Evaluation...*

³ T. Hristova, *Human Resources Management in Tourism* (Varna: Science and Economics, 2012).

⁴ Jeff Gold; R. Thorpe and A. Mumford, *Leadership and Management Development: Strategies for Action* (London: CIPD, 2010).

⁵ T. Schuller, *The Need For Lifelong Learning*. *The Political Quarterly*, 72(1) (2001), 90-99, doi: 10.1111/1467-923X.72.s1.12

⁶ T. Kenneth, *Intrinsic Motivation at Work: What Really Drives Employee Engagement*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. 2009.

The main regulation for the tourism development in Bulgaria is the **Tourism Act**, published in the State Gazette, vol. 30/ 26.03.2013. This regulation, besides all other tourism-activities, also concerns the staff training in the field of tourism. The state policy about staff training in tourism is defined by the Ministry of Tourism and supported by the tourism associations but the main burden and responsibility for the preparation of tourism staff falls on the Bulgarian educational system and the vocational education and training in particular, which is under the remit of the Ministry of Education.

The operation of the Bulgarian educational system is regulated primarily by the **Pre-school and School Education Act**, published in the State Gazette, vol. 79/ 13.10.2015. It includes the training of tourism staff of low and medium level and regulates the state educational standards. The act also includes the **National Qualifications Framework**, which is to comply with the **European Qualifications Framework** in order to ensure mobility and recognition of qualifications within the European Union as well as tourism cadre sustainability at both national and European level.

The European Qualifications Framework, based on the priorities of the Copenhagen process on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training, encourages and develops the transnational partnership through ERASUM +. It has introduced a uniform framework for professional qualifications and skills transparency (Europass) entirely adopted and used by the EU member-states. For example, “in Spain IVET programmes lead to the award of diplomas (títulos de formación profesional) and CVET programmes lead to the award of certificates of occupational standards (repertorio nacional de certificados de profesionalidad)” (Javier Armaolea: European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) implementation in Spain). It also employs the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET).

The new *Pre-school and School Education Act* came into force not long time ago, on August 01 2016. For this reason the related literature is relatively scarce. To some extent, a detailed analysis of the changes which it has introduced can be found in the article of Yanka Tsoneva – Innovations in the new *Pre-school and School Education Act, 2016*.

The act also defines the profiles relevant to the preparation of tourism staff, such as: foreign languages; humanities; social studies; economic development; software and hardware sciences; entrepreneurship; mathematical and natural sciences; art; music; physical education and sport.

Especially interesting is the **dual form of training** (i.e. learning through work), which is very suitable for the preparation of tourism cadre, as thus they can be in real working environment. The dual form of training is regulated in detail in the *Pre-school and School Education Act* and it was adopted from Germany. The **dual apprenticeship system** is the core of Germany's **initial vocational education and training** structure (IVET). Learning through work (dual system of training) is a specific form of training in which the professional qualification is acquired by practical training in real working environment and training at a vocational high school. This form of training is organized by the vocational high school based on a partnership between one or more employers. It has been successfully employed in different European Union member states and its implementation into the Bulgarian educational system is expected to enhance the training, knowledge and skills of the cadre being prepared for the needs of the national and European tourism

industry. This will increase their sustainability and competitiveness at the Bulgarian and European labour market.

The other major regulation based on the tourism staff training is the **Vocational Education and Training Act**, published in the State gazette, vol.68/ 30.07.1999. Beside the initial knowledge and skills to pursue a profession, vocational training should provide continuing education and validation of acquired skills to provide students with a job and subsequent professional development. This act also includes the lists of professions for vocational education and training. All professions should be included in the National Qualifications Framework.

Because the vocational education in Bulgaria is related to not only to training but also to the whole economic development of the country, the Bulgarian legislator has envisaged a special vocational training management system. They have established the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. The whole activity of this agency is in accordance with the European Center for Vocational Training Development. The most complete idea about the *vocational education and training is outlined in the collection of papers called National Agency for Vocational Education and Training: 15 years: tradition, partnership, challenges*⁷.

It is clear that the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Health have the primary function which generally defines the guidelines for the development of vocational education, its social function and provides healthy and safe conditions for practicing various professions but merely the professional role for the training in professional fields is assigned to the branch ministries, namely the Ministry of Tourism. Local governments, employers, workers and trade unions are also involved in the vocational training of tourism cadre. All this ensures compliance of staff training with the regionalization of the country and the specifics of each region, the need of skilled professionals and employers as well as the familiarization with the profession specifics and the skills necessary to work in real business environment.

The system in Spain is similar. "To bring VET closer to the needs of the labour market, the national catalogue of occupational standards (catálogo nacional de cualificaciones profesionales) (CNCP) is the reference for the elaboration of VET programmes by both the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports in IVET and the Ministry of Employment and Social Security in CVET" (Javier Armaolea: European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) implementation in Spain).

Bulgarian vocational training is in line with the European standards. This means that the preparation of tourism cadre is linked to the European Qualifications Framework and cadre trained in Bulgaria could find professional development on the European labor market, as well as staff having been trained in Europe could find their career in Bulgaria. In view of tourism, this is essential for the uniform labor market and the specific requirements of the tourism industry. Thus Bulgaria could seek highly qualified staff, as well as employees having extensive experience to support the Bulgarian tourism industry development.

⁷ E. Dimitrova, National Agency for Vocational Education and Training: 15 years: tradition, partnership, challenges (Sofia: NAVET. 2015).

It has become clear that higher education in Bulgaria is also part of the vocational education and training. Tourism cadre are trained in the professional field 3.9 Tourism according to Ministerial Ordinance № 125/ 24.06.2002 on certifying classifier of the higher education and professional fields, published in the State Gazette, vol.64/ 02.07.2002. Therefore, the **Higher Education Act** appears to be an important act for the tourism cadre preparation, published in the State Gazette, vol.112/ 27.12.1995.

According to the **List of professions for vocational education and training** and the instructions regulating the acquiring of certain professional qualification issued by the Ministry of Education and published in the State Gazette⁸, tourism-related professions belong to the section called Services for Persons divided into three areas covering hotels, restaurants, tourism, leisure and sport, as follows: 811 Hotel and Restaurant Industry – Hotelier, Hotel administrator, Housekeeper, Porter, Restaurateur, Chef, Waiter-bartender, Catering and Entertainment staff; 812 Travel, Tourism and Leisure - Tourist agency activity organizer, Mountain guide, Tour guide, Tourism animator and 813 Sport - Assistant instructor in sports tourism, Instructor in sports tourism.

For their professional development in tourism, people willing to work in this field must satisfy the requirements of the Ordinance on the requirements for the location, suitability and equipment of the premises for tour operator and/ or travel agent activity as well as for the education, language qualification and work experience of the staff who will be involved in the implementation of tourism activity. The Ordinance was issued by the Minister of Economics and Energetics and published in the State gazette, vol. 97/ 08.11.2013.

To sum up, the preparation and training of tourism cadre in the Republic of Bulgaria is well regulated both in terms of educational level and acquiring various qualifications. Bulgarian Qualifications Framework is part of the European Qualifications Framework, which creates the opportunity for generality and sustainability when training tourism cadre.

Methodology

The methodology of this study basically combines three methods – empirical, interviewing and analysis of legislative regulation. Each of the methods used leads to achieving certain results.

The empirical method allows for directly receiving the basic data necessary for the analysis of the state, problems and perspectives of staff education, selection, training, motivation and retention in the tourism organizations. The survey was conducted in 45 tourism organizations in Southwestern Bulgaria, the region of Blagoevgrad. The respondents are tourism staff of medium and lower level with a total of 73. For the sake of the study, a questionnaire was designed devoted to the human resources management in tourism. It consists of 18 questions concerning the selection and management of human resources in the field of tourism. The first questions outline the profile of the respondent, i.e. tourism staff. The rest of the questions provide information about the type of the tourism organization, the requirements, criteria and benefits from working in this

⁸ vol.6/ 23.01.2004; vol.101/ 16.11.2004; vol.8/ 30.01.2009; vol.16/ 26.02.2010; vol.102/ 19.11.2004; vol.11/ 02.02.2007; vol.20/ 26.02.2008; vol. 18/ 02.03.2012; vol.12/ 06.02.2007; vol.17/ 02.03.2010; vol.5/ 19.01.2016; vol. 66/ 24.08.2010; vol. 29/ 22.03.2013; vol. 72/ 16.08.2013

organization, the initial motives of the employees to work in the organization, their on-site training, the motivation tools of the employers, their evaluation of staff performance, the feedback from the employees and their attitudes toward their future work. Generally, the questions are closed, some of which giving the choice of more than one of the listed answers and a possibility to express additional assessment. To evaluate the criteria for the cadre selection a 5-degree scale is used starting from 1 – It is not important at all to 5 – It is very important. Some of the general questions requiring strictly Yes or No answer provide a more extensive choice between Yes/ Rather Yes/ Rather No/ No. This has been done to achieve greater preciseness of the survey results.

The second method used is direct interviewing with employers from different spheres of the tourism activity. This method has been chosen to define the adequacy of the Tourism curriculum at schools and the respective knowledge and skills which they provide and develop according to the requirements and expectations of the tourism business. Katya Vladimirova and et al⁹ state that the system for human resources management is going out of its narrow conceptual frameworks and beginning to really function only through particular strategies, set of activities, factors and methods, which need to regulate and properly manage the development of the human capital in the organization.

The third method employed in the study is analysis of the legislative regulation. This method entails selection and lawful interpretation of the regulations that are directly and indirectly related to the tourism industry, training, staff selection, ensuring safe and healthy working conditions as well as social benefits which could provide staff with safety and stability. For this reason it was necessary to make a lawful analysis of directives, codes, acts, regulations and instructions devoted to the field of tourism, education and training, labour, social and health insurance. Among them are the Tourism Act, Pre-school and School Education Act, Vocational Education and Training Act, different ordinances regulating professions bound with Services for persons according to the National qualifications framework.

Results

Sustainability in tourism cadre training and selection results from the synergies of: 1) state authorities – Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Education and Science; 2) local authorities – Municipal Departments for Employment Stimulation; 3) educational institutions – Vocational Higher Schools, Higher Education Institutions and Professional Qualification Centers; and 4) tourism business in Bulgaria – hotels, restaurants, transport companies, travel agencies and tour operators, etc. On the other hand, there should be a match between the tourism cadre training, knowledge and skills and the tourism business requirements for hiring staff. The fundamental acts regulating the preparation and training of tourism cadre in Bulgaria are the Tourism Act, Preschool and School Education Act, Vocational Education and Training Act and Higher Education Act.

⁹ K. Vladimirova; N. Stefanov; D. Panayotov; E. Bancheva; K. Radev; K. Hadzhiev; M. Stoyanova; M. Mihaylov; M. Dimitrova and M. Ivanova, Human Resources Management. Sofia: New Bulgarian University Europass. 2014. Retrieved 17 November, 2016 from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/BG/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32004D2241>

Through the method of analysis of the current legislative regulation, we have already found out that the preparation and training of tourism cadre in the Republic of Bulgaria is well regulated both in terms of educational level and acquiring various qualifications.

Through the other two methods – survey among tourism cadre and interviewing tourism employers, a number of interesting and significant results have been received serving as basis for future changes and research in the field of human resources management in tourism.

The survey has proved that the majority of the staff working in the field of tourism are young people between 20 and 39 years, 83% of whom belong to the age bracket of 20-29 years and 17% are a little more mature – 30-39 years old. In terms of education, 57% of tourism staff have a university diploma and 43% have graduated from a high school. Most of the respondents are currently working in tourism organizations as 30% of them come from the hotel industry, 40% belongs to the restaurant business and another 30% works in travel agencies.

When it comes to finding the right position in the right organization, people rely heavily on receiving information from a current employee in the company. 44% of the respondents have found their job in this way. The second source of information (17%) is the staff selection agencies followed by the social network (11%) and the newspaper advertisements (5%). Job seekers trust most other employees who have been already working there and are well familiar with the company values and goals. There are also people who have found their job by the assistance of their friends and relatives and also, through specialized internet sites, such as jobs.bg.

In order to find the most eligible candidate for the vacant position, organizations must have clearly defined their requirements, responsibilities and necessary qualities for the potential staff performance. Most of the organizations (70%) are well aware of that and have already employed this recruitment manner; 22% of the tourism organizations have started doing this and only 8% must start making efforts in this direction to improve their selection policy.

On the other end are the potential benefits for the future staff if they have been hired. In the recruitment process it is of crucial importance that employers clearly state what they need and require from their staff. But for the staff, it is really essential to know what the advantages of the working position is and the future benefits for the person employed, e.g. career opportunities, decent salary and probable promotion, executive and representative functions, etc. 75% of the respondents are satisfied with the benefit information received prior to starting work in the respective organization. The other 25% says that they didn't have any clarity about this when they were being interviewed and selected and therefore, later they state that they are only temporarily working for this organization until they have found their right fit.

The reasons for choosing to work in the surveyed tourism organizations vary a lot. 52% of the staff say "because it provides opportunities for career development"; 35% goes for the good financial reward; 26% has chosen the organization for its good reputation; and 22% says it is only a temporary job for them. Some of the respondents have stated more than one reason for their choice proving that they have taken the right decision starting to work there.

The new staff is expected to pass initial training before being officially hired at a permanent position. 79% of the staff say “Yes, we have passed such kind of training” and 21% gives a negative answer. 44% of those who have passed on-site training say it has lasted only one week; 17% has been trained a little longer – 2 weeks; 13% has passed a training between 1-2 months; and only 4% has been lucky to be trained between 3-6 months. None of the respondents has been through a longer training of 1-2 years. As for the end of this training, 26% of the respondents who have passed initial training share that it ends with an exam and much more – 52% - share that there is no post training exam.

These results are worrying because the most successful organizations have a much stricter policy before the formal hiring of permanent staff. For example, in the popular Ritz-Carlton hotel chain, every recruit passes a 20-day training on the job and on the 21st day they sit an exam which verifies their final competence to work at the hotel. After that, a 364-day training program starts considering the service rules and on the 365th day of this permanent training, the trainees sit an exam. This is an issue about which Bulgarian tourism organizations must start working harder if they wish to have the best and professional employees and thus prevent from possibly labour turnover in the future and extra expenses for repeat training.

The question about staff motivation is crucial. Highly motivated staff are the insignia of the successful organizations. Professional managers have motivated staff and hence satisfied customers and great revenue. 26% of the staff say they continue working in this organization “because they feel happy, safe and respected”; 30% does so “because they have a career opportunity”; the greatest amount, 40%, “feels satisfaction with what they do and achieve”; another 26% does it for financial needs. Some of the respondents have given more than one reason for their still continuing to work for the organization. These are the highly motivated staff in the organization.

Staff performance stimulation is another significant issue to be considered. Successful organizations make the employee reward dependent upon previously appointed indicators of achievements, e.g. number of sales, time for completing a task, etc., and this system is very effective. It ensures value both for staff and managers. 44% of the respondents confirm that there is such kind of staff performance stimulation system. The rest, 56%, denies the application of such system.

The attitude and behaviour of the tourism business toward human resources management we have defined through the interviews held in the different tourism agencies included in this study. We have tried to make an evaluation of some of the criteria being used by employers when they interview applicants for a vacant position.

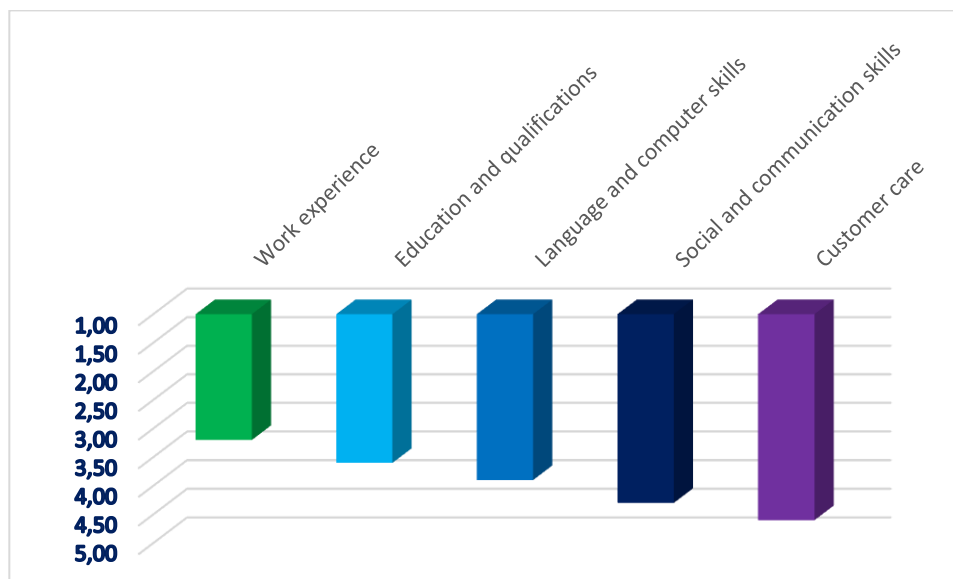


Fig. 1

Evaluation of employers' criteria when hiring new staff

The evaluation has been made by a 5-degree scale starting from 1 – It is not important at all to 5 – It is very important. There are five criteria in consideration, most important of which has appeared to be “High level of customer care, including love and respect for other people” followed closely behind by “Social and communication skills”. Third place has been taken by “Foreign language and computer skills” followed by “Education and professional qualification”. Strange though it is, the criterion which has got the lowest evaluation of 3.2 is “Work experience”. This means that things have changed a lot since this criterion used to be of utmost importance in the past when hiring new staff and thus being the greatest hindrance for graduates who had just received their university diploma and had not professional experience at all. Currently, the new trend is directed to finding talented people who are skilful, creative, innovative, motivated, enthusiastic and devoted to achieving business goals and customer satisfaction. The approach has shifted from experience-oriented to talent-oriented. Employers have come to the conclusion that they can train their staff well regardless of their education and work experience only if they have the talent, the motivation and exceptional skills leading to efficiency and satisfaction. In tourism business whose major goal is to provide for guest needs and ensure the most pleasant experience, love and respect for other people is of primary importance. Therefore, it seeks to hire staff with friendly personality, enthusiastic, courteous and talented. By no means does this underestimate the necessity and significance of work experience. Work experience is also an advantage but it has stopped being an obstacle for young job seekers who has gained none yet.

Once employers have hired the new staff, professional managers continue evaluating staff performance at regular basis. This is something important both for staff satisfaction and career advance and company success. From all the interviewed employers 52% say “Yes, we do so” and the other 48% gives a negative answer. That is another bothering fact because doing a regular evaluation has been proven to be very effective. It shows where the drawbacks are and what should be improved.

Another essential thing to do is to receive feedback from the staff about their satisfaction at work. Feedback serves as a tool to correct the flaws and weak points in the organization operation in terms of staff behaviour and its compliance with the organization goals. One of the main tasks of senior staff is to inspire the feeling of belonging to the organization. Organization goals must become personal staff goals. There are different approaches to receive staff feedback. 65% of the managers do it through regular briefings with their subordinates; 13% of them make their staff complete questionnaires and evaluate their satisfaction; and only 4% makes their staff write reports on the work done. There is another 17% of the managers who state they haven't started doing this yet probably because they are not yet aware of the greatest effect and benefit from this practice.

The last question, which is crucial for the staff selection in general, concerns the match between employers' expectations and the actual cadre's training, knowledge and skills necessary for working in the field of tourism. The greatest per cent of the employers, 83% says "Yes, cadre's preparation matches our expectations". The other 17% are disappointed with the tourism cadre's preparation and they experience difficulty in staff selection. These results are promising now since in the past the difference between the two opinions was much bigger. This means that all the stakeholders – state and local authorities and educational institutions have taken steps in this direction and have made quite a progress. Sustainability in tourism cadre training has enhanced. Practical training has been given a priority at the educational institutions. It has become a part of the curriculum giving an opportunity to the students to apply their theoretical knowledge in real working environment. The Ministry of Education and Science has developed a special project on that making the tourism organizations cooperate with the higher institutions by hiring students for a certain period of time and training them in real business environment.

Conclusions

The preparation and training of tourism cadre in the Republic of Bulgaria is well regulated both in terms of educational level and acquiring various qualifications. Bulgarian legislation complies with the European legislation, which creates the opportunity for generality and sustainability when training tourism cadre, both at national and European level. Legal regulations include various aspects of cadre training for the needs of the tourism industry with the participation of the state, municipal and private sector. There is a system providing opportunities for cadre competences upgrade and career development.

The majority of the staff working in the field of tourism are young people between 20 and 39 years, which is very promising and has a positive effect upon the industry and the service in particular.

When it comes to job seeking, people rely heavily on receiving information from a current employee in the company. As for the staff selection, a large number of the tourism organizations have clearly defined their requirements, responsibilities and necessary qualities for the potential staff performance. But there are still companies which haven't employed this practice yet. Therefore, these tourism organizations must start working harder if they wish to have the best and professional employees and thus prevent from possible labour turnover in the future and extra expenses for repeat training.

Most of the people employed in the tourism organizations choose and continue to work there because it provides opportunities for career development. This is the major factor for their decision plus some other things as feeling safe, respected and motivated. Highly motivated staff are the insignia of the successful organizations. Professional managers have motivated staff and hence satisfied customers and great revenue.

Tourism organizations in Bulgaria must design a system for staff performance stimulation as well as a system for regular evaluation of staff performance. Successful organizations make the employee reward dependent upon previously appointed indicators of achievements. It ensures value both for staff and managers. Managers should start doing a regular evaluation of their staff performance because it shows where the drawbacks are and what should be improved. Another important thing for the senior staff to do is receiving a regular feedback from their subordinates in order to find out and correct the flaws and weak points in the organization operation in terms of staff behaviour and its compliance with the organization goals.

The staff selection approach has shifted from experience-oriented to talent-oriented. Employers have come to the conclusion that they can train their staff well regardless of their education and work experience only if they have the talent, the motivation and exceptional skills leading to efficiency and satisfaction. Work experience is also an advantage but it has stopped being an obstacle for young job seekers who has gained none yet.

Most of the Bulgarian employers in the field of tourism state that there is a match between employers' expectations and the actual cadre's training, knowledge and skills necessary for working in the field of tourism. This means that all the stakeholders – state and local authorities and educational institutions have taken steps in this direction and have made quite a progress. Sustainability in tourism cadre training has enhanced. Practical training has been given a priority at the educational institutions. It has become a part of the curriculum giving an opportunity to the students to apply their theoretical knowledge in real working environment.

Bulgarian tourism has a promising future development in terms of cadre training, knowledge and skills. All the stakeholders have already started working together to improve the preparation, qualification and career development of the tourism cadre and thus providing their sustainability, bot at the national and European labour market.

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