

THE NECESSITY OF IMPROVED TRAINING OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN TOURISM

Adriána Grenčíková²⁶³

Dagmar Petrušová²⁶⁴

Jakub Sokol²⁶⁵

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Abstract: *Presented study is focused on reviewing selected indicators in tourism in relevance to the quality of the personnel and efficiency of the tourism segment within the national economy. The objective was to analyze selected available data from mentioned field and draw connections, which are pointing at the necessity of establishing a firm concept of education in the field of tourism and particularly at the improvement and expansion of higher education. Despite Slovakia's considerable potential for tourism advancement, the national economy is oriented on industrial production and in the present mainly on the automotive industry. The abundance or shortage of qualified staff significantly affects the efficiency of an establishment in any segment of human production, therefore it is essential to deal with the issue.*

Key words: *tourism, human resources, quality of personnel, education*

1. INTRODUCTION

The system of tourism is an open dynamic system where product innovation is very rapid. The key point of success for organizations belonging to this segment is the quality of personnel, which plays the decisive role in service offering. Despite Slovakia's considerable potential for tourism advancement, the national economy is oriented on industrial production and in the present mainly on the automotive industry. The abundance or shortage of qualified staff significantly affects the efficiency of an establishment in any segment of human production. Industrial production solves the problem of employee shortage by progressive automatization and by replacing the human work with technology. Concept Industry 4.0 and its vision of Intelligent industry predicts that in near future 50% of job positions in industrial production in Slovakia will disappear. It concerns mainly the positions of low qualified laborers. Contrariwise the tourism segment, despite the introduction of new technologies, is expecting a growth of available job positions to ensure a sustainable growth of service development and to secure innovations. The quality of personnel will play the key role. Human resources are remarkably important for tourism as a whole. The quality of offered service is very closely related with the quality of personnel offering the service. Qualified, amiable and cordial employee has an easier time finding a position in the job market.

The notion „people in tourism describes persons which are primarily or secondarily in direct contact with customers, on a regular or irregular basis. [3] Secondary participants are inhabitants of tourism centers employed in other sectors than tourism, e.g. sale assistants, police

²⁶³ Alexander Dubček University in Trenčín, Faculty of Social and Economic Relations, Študentská 3, 91150 Trenčín, Slovakia

²⁶⁴ Alexander Dubček University in Trenčín, Faculty of Social and Economic Relations, Študentská 3, 91150 Trenčín, Slovakia

²⁶⁵ Alexander Dubček University in Trenčín, Faculty of Social and Economic Relations, Študentská 3, 91150 Trenčín, Slovakia

officers, etc. These participants in the relationship with customer rarely come to a contact with the customer and not in a sense of taking part in tourism services. Primary participants in the relationship with customers are entrepreneurs and employees that are taking part in offering the tourism services and are in direct contact with the client. This includes tourist guides, workers of accommodation facilities and travel agencies, taxi drivers, animators, bus drivers, etc. One of the main factors, that significantly influences tourism services, is the quality of personnel. Professional and lingual knowledges form an important part in customer's experience. Therefore, the workforce should be properly qualified, and employees should be the absolvents of high school or have the undergraduate or postgraduate higher education in chosen sector according to their position. Many people employed in tourism are not qualified for their profession. [3]

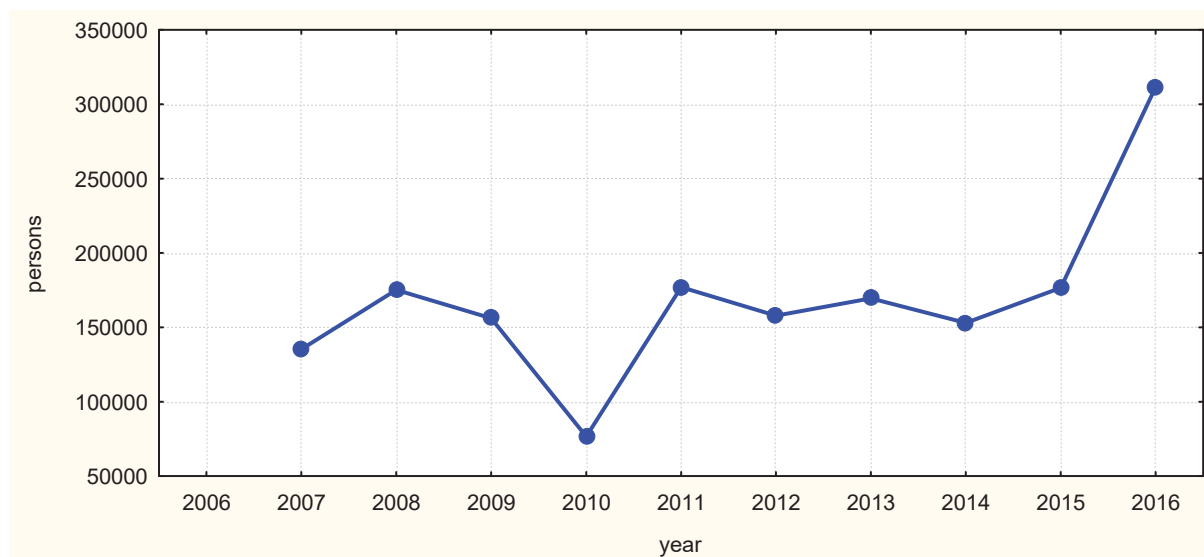
2. IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Inbound tourism is necessary for tourism development in any country. The tourism progress greatly depends on the demands of country's visitors, who visit various destinations with various levels of tourism development. Potential of tourism in Slovakia is much greater than its current level. If we take into consideration current occupancy rate of accommodation facilities, which is now approximately at the level of 30%, then overall assets from the economy and employment are several times higher than the current rates. Our further tourism progress is mainly dependent on the ability to compete with micro and small enterprises, that form the tourism in Slovakia. In comparison with our neighbors and direct competitors, Slovakia has a lot of catching up to do when it comes to creating good conditions for business development in tourism. The biggest obstacles in ensuring a sustainable growth of Slovak tourism are primarily in the economic and social sphere. The conditions for business, specifically for micro and small enterprises, are unsuitable. High rate of tax burden in comparison with other European countries (especially high rate of VAT) causes a shortage of resources necessary for investments and employee salaries, which can seriously reduce the competitiveness of Slovak tourism. Record numbers of tourists mean higher tourism revenues, which positively effects the wage growth in the sector. Despite these positives, we note a growing lack of employees, both qualified and unqualified. For this reason, changes in the Labour Code are necessary, connected to the opening of the labor market.

Facts about tourism in Slovakia:

- Creates jobs for more than 300,000 employees in Slovakia;
- Tourism and resulting services generate more than 5 billion euros in revenues;
- More than 90% of enterprises in tourism are businesses with less than 50 employees;
- Tourism is one of the biggest first-job provider, more than 20% of employees are young people, under 25 years of age;
- The support of the country on propagating and presenting the tourism is declining, despite the growing benefits. It currently generates only 0.001% of the annual profits in the sector. [13]

Doc. Ing. Adriana Grenčíková, PhD. works at the Department of Economy and Economics of Faculty of Social and Economic Relations, A. Dubcek University in Trencin. During her pedagogical activity she has been involved in work on scientific research projects of faculty and departmental character as an effective project leader, deputy head of the project, co-worker. In her teaching and research work focuses on the problems of the human resources and the labor market.



Graph 1: The development of tourism in Slovakia during 2007 - 2016

Tourist season of 2017 was very successful and surpassed the record occupancy rates from 2016. In first eight months Slovakia was visited by 3.71 million visitors, which amounts to about 300 thousand more than in 2016. The number of visitor in Slovakia during the summer months rose interannually by 8.2%. Domestic tourists form the majority, representing 56.6% out of all the visitors. The number of international tourists rose by 8.3%. [12] Majority of these visitors were from Czech Republic, about a third of all international tourists, then there were visitors from Poland, Germany, Hungary and Austria.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of people	135294	175203	156139	76620	177090	157872	169484	153091	176650	311561
Days of stay	543331	512308	387754	279067	41885	285978	339817	319064	342483	463046
Average length of stay	4,0	2,9	2,5	3,6	2,4	1,8	2	2,1	1,9	1,5

Table1: The progress of active tourism in Slovakia during 2007 - 2016

According the latest statistics of accommodation in Slovakia for 2016 and first half-term of 2017 the tourism continues in its progressive trend and the number of accommodated guests is rising. In first two quarters of 2017 Slovakia was visited by about 2 and a half million visitors, which is a rise by almost 10% against the same period in 2016.

The highest occupancy rate in the first half year of 2017 was recorded in the month of June, during which more than 520 thousand guests were accommodated in Slovakia's regions. Slovaks further prove that they want to get to know their homeland. They formed 62 percent of all the visitors, while their numbers in the last half year rose by more than 10 percent.

Likewise, the number of international visitors rose by more than 9 percent and their stay was longer (+7.4%). The majority of international visitors came as usual from neighboring countries, mainly Czech Republic (28%), Poland (10%), Germany (9%), Hungary (5%) and Austria (4%). On the resource market of Slovak inbound tourism, the highest rate of interannual

growth was noted in number of guests from China (+63,8%), Israel (+57,7%) and Russia (+22,6%). [11]

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bratislava	34,8	34,8	27,0	26,0	27,1	29,6	30,4	28,3	35,0	39,5
Banská Bystrica	24,7	25,7	19,0	19,0	16,6	14,2	14,9	14,7	14,8	17,6
Košice	29,5	24,9	21,0	19,0	18,7	17,7	19,2	16,2	17,6	17,6
Liptovský Mikuláš	35,9	31,4	23,0	26,0	29,7	23,0	26,4	24,9	24,0	29,3
Nitra	22,8	31,5	23,0	28,0	24,6	18,3	20,2	19,6	20,4	28,1
Piešťany	39,8	41,8	36,0	37,0	34,7	40,9	41,9	40,8	41,2	41,5
Poprad	33,7	34,3	23,0	23,0	31,1	30,4	28,8	28,9	32,0	32,5
Trenčianske Teplice	63,2	58,6	46,0	44,0	44,2	47,4	49,5	53,3	52,0	53,3
Vysoké Tatry (region)	37,0	37,1	33,0	34,0	35,4	35,2	36,0	35,8	37,3	41,1
Žilina	23,6	20,6	18,0	17,0	18,0	17,8	17,6	19,0	24,8	26,5

Table 2: Net occupancy rates of bed places in selected cities in Slovakia during 2007-2016 (in %) [10]

Despite positive trends of general progress in tourism, it is necessary to also consider other statistics, e.g. the occupancy rates of bed places, which is not that positive. In the following table we specify the progress of the occupancy rates of bed places in selected cities. The occupancy rates show high long-term numbers in health resorts and High Tatras region, e.g. in Piešťany it was 53.3%, which we consider insufficient.

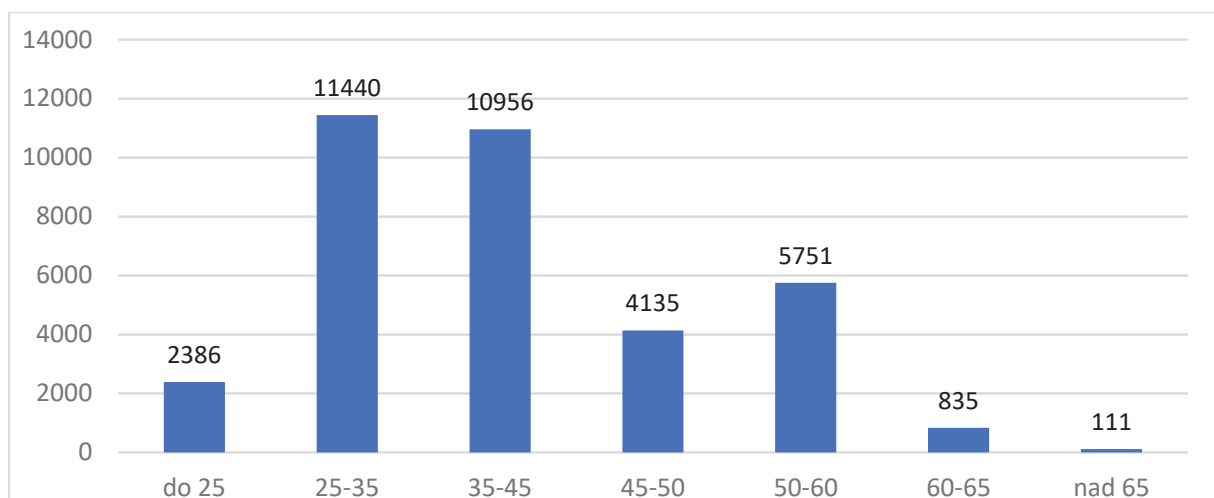
Another negative indicator is the average wage in tourism, which is one of the lowest in the sector. This indicates the fact, that not enough attention is paid to human resources. The first condition of success of an organization is the realization of the importance and value of human resources. People represent the greatest resource of the organization and their management is responsible for the company's success or failure. [6]

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Industrial production	729	771	800	832	865	914	945	978
Construction	559	579	603	607	607	601	632	651
Accommodation	527	549	552	569	587	601	633	673
Hospitality industry	341	357	358	361	368	365	379	395
Transport and storage	700	712	719	738	763	789	824	856
Information and communication	1 542	1 572	1 736	1 743	1762	1 742	1 785	1 747
Selected market services	737	785	811	818	833	817	827	869

Table 3: The development of gross average wage in the economy sectors in Slovakia during 2009-2016 (in €) [10]

Tourism's share on GDP in 2015 was 2.8% and in 2016 it was 2.7%. [11] We consider this pointer as insufficient considering the potential of Slovakia as a country, that encompasses amazing natural beauty and many historical sites. We consider the insufficiently prepared and educated workforce in tourism to be the main problem, especially in offering complex client services.

The concept of education in this sector is insufficiently developed. It is focused on high school education, which prepares service staff, such as cooks and waiters. As in other sectors, the demand for higher-qualified professions, such as operators, hotel director and marketing workers, is rising in tourism as well. In Slovakia, such education is offered by four universities, while in Czech Republic it is 21. The development on the Labour market shows a shortage of workforce connected with bad demographical development in Slovakia and so we looked further into the age structure of employees. The survey, that was made as part of the research task at the Department of Human resources and personnel management in March 2016, presented an interesting finding about the age structure of employees in services, which is interesting mainly for the predicted development of the workforce in various sectors. In general, the workforce is getting older and therefore it will be very interesting to watch the efficiency of personnel in comparison with their age. The question of the necessity to gain and prepare the personnel its work will become one of the main criteria in creating the employment strategy, especially in creating personnel strategies.

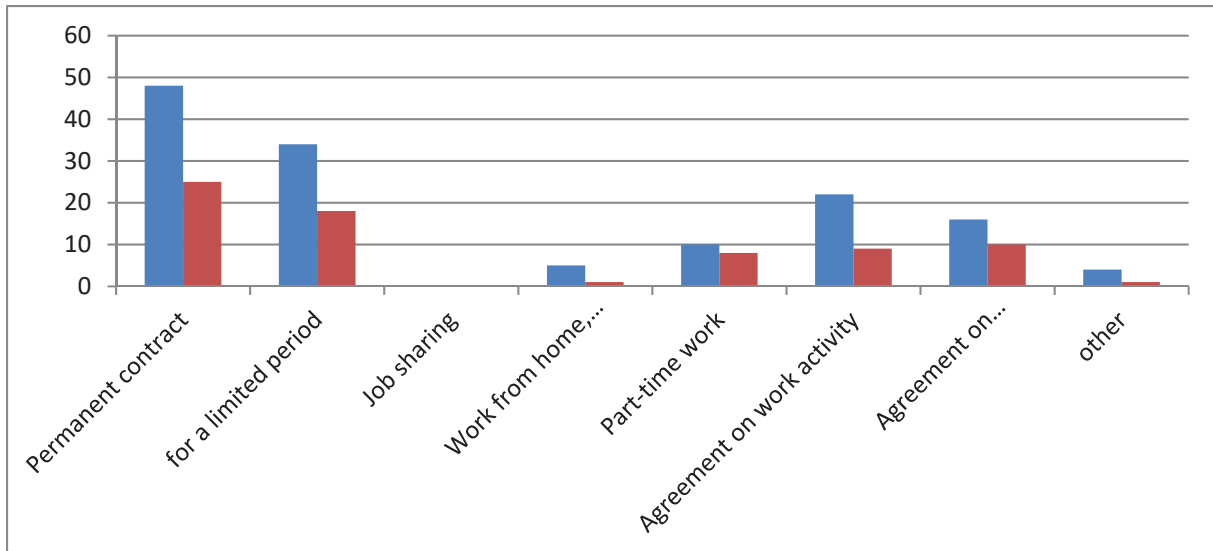


Graph 2: Age structure of employees in smaller businesses

Our survey showed that the situation in tourism is relatively good and the majority of workforce belongs to the age category of 25-35 years old. This signifies good potential for the development of this sector in the future. Paying attention to the concept of education in tourism sector will be a necessity.

What we found interesting in the mentioned survey was the method of employing when it comes to utilizing the flexible types of employment. As in other sectors, the classic types of employment are utilized in the sector of tourism as well, namely the permanent contract and fixed-term contract. The higher utilization of more flexible forms of employment especially in this sector can lead to a higher quality of offering new services as well as to an innovation of offered products, mainly in smaller businesses.

***RNDr. Ing. Dagmar Petrušová, PhD.** works at the Department of Economy and Economics of Faculty of Social and Economic Relations, A. Dubcek University in Trencin. During her pedagogical activity she has been involved in work on scientific research projects of faculty and departmental character as an effective project leader, deputy head of the project, co-worker. In her teaching and research work focuses on the problems of the mathematics, statistics and econometrics.*



Graph 3: The preferred types of employment in smaller businesses

The question of tourism development concerns mainly the personnel questions and specifically the quality of employees, that can offer quality service. No organization is static. [1] Constant changes happen within the organization itself, the environment in which the organization operates as well as in people in the organization. It is necessary to realize, that the organization is made by people that cooperate. The organizational performance will be dependent on people working in the organization and therefore the service offered in tourism is dependent mainly on the human factors. We believe, that it is necessary to pay more attention to the preparation and education in this sector, especially at the level of middle and senior management.

Ing. Jakub Sokol

PhD student at the Department of Management and Development of Human Resources. His doctoral work focuses on tourism.

3. CONCLUSION

Among the basic conditions of tourism development in Slovakia are the complexity and quality of offered services, employee education, coordination of subjects in the tourism region, the international propagation of Slovakia as a country with rich tourism. One of the basic condition of tourism development in Slovakia is offering quality services directed at the customer. It is the quality of offered services where Slovakia is lacking compared with the countries of Western Europe. For this reason, it is necessary to consider the human resources. Among the internal or organizational influences, that effect the management of human resources, are the nature of the business activity, which dictates the nature of work and the structure of workers. Among these influences are also the organizational policy and strategy, geographical location of the organization, organizational structure, current economic situation of the organization, technical and technological equipment of the organization; social, professional and qualification structure of employees and their potential for development; flexibility, organizational culture, unions and the size of the organization. [4]

There is a lack of qualified and motivated personnel in Slovakia, therefore it is necessary to search for options to connect the qualification with motivation. In many cases a situation arises, where we have qualified personnel, but they leave to work abroad because of a better motivation there, namely the financial evaluation. The complexity directly relates with the quality of

offered services. By focusing mainly on accommodation and boarding and not offering additional services, tourism subjects inhibit the progress in tourism. It is necessary to ensure further activities for client, even in case of foul weather, to prevent client's dissatisfaction. The most significant problem in tourism development in Slovakia is the substandard personnel. We see the reason for this in the lack of universities in Slovakia that would prepare their absolvents for this field. It is incredibly important to have educated workers with professional approach, willingness to work and constantly educate themselves. [8] The problem is insufficient financial evaluation, which forces qualified workers to leave Slovakia and seek employment abroad, which leads to a negative development of Slovak tourism. Personnel is the most important element of tourism that makes an impression on international tourists, who are very important for us.

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