

Zhumbei M.
PhD, Assistant Professor
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University
Ivano-Frankivsk
Ukraine

ANALYSIS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROFESSION OF A TOUR GUIDE

Annotation. For whatever purpose tourists travel to different countries, the journey is always characterized by the cognitive element. The tourists get new information, impressions and feelings, on the basis of which the importance of such a profession as a tour guide increases. The growing number of tour guides in the world emphasizes the tourism industry's demand for this profession.

Key words: world tourism, tour guide, tourist.

Nowadays, the information age provides the process in which the material values are effectively substituted for the spiritual values such as impressions and feelings, which become the main purpose of travelling. The world tourism has become the reason for the development of transport communications network, connection, increasing mobility, reduced working hours and growth of public wealth.

In these conditions the socio-economic positions of tourism are rapidly strengthened. In the world market, the industry of tourism holds a leading position on an equal basis with the oil industry. The research confirms the undeniable fact that, despite the numerous challenges, the industry of tourism remains to be highly profitable, the investment in which will pay off quickly.

The recent analysis of tourism progress shows that in the last decades the industry has started to develop dynamically. After several years of recession, due to the world terrorist attacks, epidemics, military conflicts and floods, international tourism has resumed its increasing rate. According to the UNWTO statistics, 675 million of international tourist arrivals were recorded in 2000; 798 million – in 2005; 940 million – in 2010 and 1,5 billion of international tourist arrivals – in 2019, globally. The year 2019 represents the tenth consecutive year of growth.

However, as the UNWTO states, uncertainty surrounding Brexit, the collapse of Thomas Cook, geopolitical and social tensions and the global economic slowdown much contributed to a slower growth in 2019, when compared to the exceptional rates of 2017 and 2018. On March 26, 2020 The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has released its updated assessment of the likely impact of the COVID-19 on the international tourism. Taking into account the unparalleled introduction of travel restrictions across the world, the United Nations specialized agency for tourism expects that international tourist arrivals will be down by 20% to 30% in 2020 when compared with 2019 figures [1].

The tourism industry offers more jobs each year (approximately 137 million people were employed in the tourism industry in 2001). The World Tourism Organisation's new secretary-general, Zurab Pololikashvili, stated that he "went on to reveal just how many people, on a global level, work within the travel sector". He declared: "Tourism is a people's sector. One in ten people in the world are directly or indirectly employed by tourism. Ours is the responsibility to ensure that tourism benefits each and every community, leaving no one behind." The figure claimed by the secretary was equal to approximately 760 million people. Zurab Pololikashvili took upon himself to lead the World Tourism Organisation with a strong focus on building partnerships with public and private sector, fostering jobs and opportunities for all, mastering technology and innovation and advancing sustainability and the fight against climate change [1].

Tourism employment can be categorized at two separate levels depending on their involvement in or contribution to tourism supply-side. Front offices in hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, tourism information offices, aircrafts, cruise lines, resorts or shopping outlets provide direct employment because their employees are in contact with tourists and cater for tourist demand. Tourism also supports indirect employment in activities like restaurant suppliers, construction companies that build and maintain tourist facilities, as well as necessary infrastructure, aircraft manufacturers, various handicrafts producers, marketing agencies, accounting services, which are more or less dependent on the companies providing direct employment for their revenues [2].

The most demanded in the period of formation of inter-state integration are the highly qualified experts in tourism with the knowledge of foreign languages and, thus, are able to cooperate with foreign clients, make independent decisions in real situations, see the prospects and plan the strategy and tactics of the industry.

For whatever purpose tourists travel to different countries, the journey is always characterized by the cognitive element. The tourists get new information, impressions and feelings, on the basis of which new knowledge is formed, the worldview of the values changes [3]. This is facilitated by information and excursion work in tourism, done by the main performers of excursion activity – **tour guides**. It is tour guides' skills that determine the ultimate cognitive-axiological effect that the traveller receives, which in its turn necessitates the professional training of such professionals [3].

The previous studies of foreign scientists' research on tour guiding have mainly focused on tour guides' roles (Cohen, 1985; Weiler & Yu, 2007; Yu, Weiler, & Ham, 2002); tour guides' performance (Geva & Goldman, 1991; Mossberg, 1995); tourist satisfaction with tour guide services (A. Wong, 2001), and tour guide administration system (Dong, Droege, & Johnson, 2002). The content and methods of professional training of tourist guides were studied in detail by the following Ukrainian scientists: I. Chegaida, S. Grybanova, V. Babarytska, A. Korotkova, O. Karolop, T. Sokol.

Despite the fact that the problems of tour guides' role, performance, training and administration system have found their partial coverage in certain scientific works, some aspects of the problem of training professional tour guides remain insufficiently studied.

Objective. The report is dedicated to the analysis of the significance of the profession of a tour guide in general.

For the data of our study, we draw insights from 2018 Tourism Survey [4], based on the answers from 786 tour and activity operators located in 112 countries worldwide with approximately 7,225 tour guides.

From the results we can see that the number of tour guides in the world who work as permanent employees reaches 29% of tour and activity companies; part-time tour guides – 27%; a lower number of full-time base staff – 21%. This is usually due to the seasonal tour guides – 23 %.

According to the Tourism Survey (2018) the participant companies are located around the world, but still a clear majority of guides are European (37.5%). This figure is followed by South America (17.8%), Asia (16.3%) and North America (13.8%), Africa (9.8%) and Australia (4.7%).

With the research of the gender we found out that 40 % of the total number of tour guides are the females. In contrast, the number of male guides in the Middle East countries exceeds 90 % [4].

The introduced figures emphasize the fact that the profession of a tour guide is presently of high demand and importance in tourism industry.

Having analyzed the scientists' views of training the successful workers of tourism industry, we come to the **conclusion** that the real tourism expert has to be characterized by high professionalism, progressiveness, communicativeness, competitiveness in the labor market. All these features are combined in the career of a tour guide as a representative of the perspective and well-developed industry.

Our further study devoted to the professionalism of the tour guide indicates at the complexity, multidimensionality and insufficient research of this problem.

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