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Review

QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY'S TOURISM EDUCATION

The term globalisation has become a part of everyday language in business and political circles and also in education. Croatian tourism is a part of the global economy. It is very important for a small country like Croatia to recognise its environment and to define its goals and priorities. The educational system needs special attention with respect to the development strategy of Croatian tourism, through the framework of the reconstruction of the Croatian economy and redefinition of tourism products. It is necessary to educate and train tourism professionals through full-time education programs, on-the-job education and training, and continuing education. A good education system has to be based on scientific research. Educational development needs goal-oriented research. Educational programs should be created to parallel users' needs. In the framework of education, global planning and quality curriculum development is especially dependent upon external relationships and students mobility (ECTS - system).

Key words: globalisation, education, curriculum development, tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education in Europe is a part of the new economy, new currency, new brands, and new hotel markets. New strategies are required to stay at the forefront of global change. The key drivers of these new market dynamics are the forces of globalisation. Competition is moving from a national to an international – global platform. Higher education supports the tourism industry. The education system needs special attention in the development strategy of Croatian tourism, through the framework of reconstruction of the Croatian economy and redefinition of tourism products.

It is necessary to educate tourism personnel through good full-time education, on the job education and training, continuing education, and personnel training. A good education system should be based on scientific research and must provide personnel with an understanding of economic development surrounding tourism. Educational development needs goal-oriented research. Education programs should be created to parallel users' needs. The results of research should be made available to the public through presentations at scientific and professional meetings. Councillor activities, development projects, co-operation between domestic and foreign institutions should be

encouraged, with the aim of verification of the research for the advancement of the profession and the economic development of the country.

2. NEEDS AND INTERESTS IN THE EUROPEAN EDUCATION APPROACH

Higher education plans and programs are seen as resources, or inputs, into the education system. These programs must satisfy the education market in quality and content. This market consists of students as immediate consumers of the product but also the business elements that receive direct and immediate benefits from educated personnel. Therefore the following have to be evaluated:

- The needs of different student groups;
- The needs of subjects in the tourism economy;
- The educational systems needed to satisfy such demands;
- The role of standards, practices and traditions; and
- The elements in a feedback-system for control.

The European education approach is based on the thesis that "education is extremely sensitive to social changes" and is "one of the sectors that can give the answers to the needs and interests of Europeans" [3, 20]. Associations and social partners play a role in the process of adding a European dimension to education. They are actively involved in the implementation of the SOCRATES programs (see the SOCRATES [www-sides](http://www.sides.org)) [9]:

- COMENIUS – school education programs
- ERASMUS – higher education programs
- GRUNDTWIG – adult education and other educational programs
- LINGUA – language teaching and learning programs
- MINERVA – information and communication or technologies used in education

The education systems of major developed European countries represent a well-conceived and precisely developed institutional structure for education on several levels. More effort is being made in the standardisation of inputs and the conception of quality in education institutions, tourism training and hotel industry training. Quality in an education system is seen as innovation, so it is necessary to define quality and have standardisation of inputs, contents, and output consistent with the feedback system.

Adequate monitoring standards of education at all levels need to be developed because of the inadequacy of former education programs and the lack of knowledge of innovations in science, business techniques, and technology. The principles of the European Council for Cultural Co-operation consider the "education activities and projects as capable of dealing with current problems, sometimes in advance- but keeping in harmony the needs and trying to find the right solutions through discussion and thinking"[3, 21]. Accordingly the European Association for Tourism and Leisure Studies (ATLAS) stressed education programs oriented towards quality and innovation. ATLAS encouraged programs, the international exchange of students, the promotion of entire education systems, and the adaptation of education in the sphere of tourism and free time to European demands. In the framework of this global planning, quality is

stressed to [8, 292] :

- Develop a core curriculum for tourism and leisure courses in Europe;
- Examine the required balance of vocational and academic courses;
- Identify the skills and knowledge basis for appropriate tourism and leisure courses;
- Stimulate the production of tourism and leisure textbooks appropriate for international courses;
- Facilitate credit transfer through the development of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for tourism and leisure;
- Identify appropriate means of implementing Europeanisation of the curriculum;
- Identify more effective mechanisms for supporting international placements;
- Research the needs of the labour market and the nature of the "academic gap" on a European basis;
- Identify areas of innovation in tourism and leisure for future course development;
- Communicate the benefits of courses more effectively to employers;
- Investigate the feasibility of European recognition of tourism and leisure courses;
- Find more effective methods of assessing student exchange experiences;
- Increase linkages between student exchanges and mainstream education programs;
- Lower barriers to exchange participation for key student groups (e.g. part-time students).

The Association EFMD (European Foundation of Management Development) is also operating in this direction and its goal is to establish a European education model for managers (European Management Education) for graduate and postgraduate studies.. This model will contrast with to the dominant American model of the AACSB Association (American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business). The AACSB includes more then 300 institutions that provide education in the field of business at the undergraduate and graduate levels.[4, 2] It is important to stress the advancement of quality through unification and standardisation at the highest education levels and in research. In doctoral studies, advancement in Europe is directed by the EDAMBA - European Doctoral Programmes Association in Management and Business Administration [Guide to European Doctoral Programmes, Brussels, Belgium]. The activities of this Association are based on research of different concepts of graduate and postgraduate studies at the European level, with the aim of standardisation and formation of suitable "standards" for the European model of doctoral studies.

Compared with the American situation, the current efforts in the sphere of curriculum and course creation in Europe has not been fruitful as yet because a very heterogeneous base (development of separate programs, non-connection between postgraduate scientific and vocational studies, with the duration of the programs being from one to three years, and different levels and quality of knowledge). If these efforts have a positive result, it will be possible to introduce some basic standards consistent with the American and European experiences.

This will help the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (EIASM) to harmonise its own standards and will contribute to the educational quality of tourism personnel. The European Programmes in Business Studies, Brussels, Belgium is an association active in institutional networking with the aim of developing exchanges in management skills and research methods. Parallel with the global processes of representing quality in Europe, efforts are underway in Great Britain and Netherlands, where the following Associations are dealing with quality programs and

the definition of quality criteria evaluations as measures of control, [11, 219]:

- Higher Education Quality Council in England and Wales (HEQC);
- Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom (CVCP);
- Visiting Committees Dutch Universities.

Croatia is planning to accomplish standards and control of quality according to the European models. Croatia is following the principles of the "European Declaration of Cultural Objects". This means: initiation of new and social activities according to European expectations; contribution to new discoveries; taking an active role in the development of a European identity; preserving and promoting the ideals and principles for supporting common inheritance; promoting international connections and co-operation based on mutual respect; providing for the exchange and close co-operation of universities and research centres; and initiation of peoples' development [3, 124]. The quality aspect of this message is obvious and it demonstrates how common education standards would ensure the mobility of students and researchers and the documentation develop and information exchanges by using modern technologies, especially the Internet.

3. QUALITY IN TOURISM EDUCATION

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) [2, 3] has initiated research with the aim of defining the criteria for input to quality evaluation, content, and output of the education system in tourism. It is believed that these elements can be defined according to basic concepts that are applicable to all education institutions and that these elements can be applied. Research results presented at the international Conference in Portugal can be seen as a reminder to encourage every institution to introduce quality in the education process, to control and review accomplishments, and to improve through the feedback system. It is important to create an atmosphere of criteria application for the benefit of educators and students, and to review the results. The review will show the need for procedure control and other mechanisms to conform to the following documents [12, 15-31]:

1. Common Features of All Institutions Quality Assurance and Control Systems
2. Common Activities in Tourism and Hospitality Training and Education
3. Approaches to Quality Audits in Education and Training

⇒ Common Features of All Institutions Quality Assurance and Control Systems: Purposes and methods are agreed, institutional mission exists, and programme objectives defined; Agreement on what is acceptable evidence in the monitoring and review process;

Channels of communication and processes are effective;

- There is participation in decision- making and review procedures;
- All levels of staff and students know their responsibilities and accept them;
- There is a commitment to staff review and development, improvement and training;
- There are cycles of review and monitoring; and
- Feedback occurs.

⇒ Common Activities in Tourism and Hospitality Training and Education:

➤ Admissions :

- Is there equality of opportunity;
- What proportion of those admitted complete;
- Are all personal, professional, and educational experiences of the applicant taken into account;
- Are there alternative entry routes into the program for mature entrants;
- Is information useful, accurate and realistic; I
- Is there a marketing strategy for potential clients of the institution; I
- Is pre-entry guidance given;
- Is the selection process clear and known by all staff; and
- Is the selection process fair and sound in terms of procedure?

➤ External accreditation and validation:

Has the program been approved by external bodies, experts, examiners and industry;

Is there a clear idea of outcomes and learning experiences;

Are there external examiners and reviewers appointed, and if so by what mechanism.

➤ Internal program approval:

Has a process of setting aims, academic rational and program characteristics been undertaken internally within the institution?

➤ Resources:

Have academic space, library and assessment matters been considered and

Are work experience positions arranged.

➤ Participation and Reviews:

Are there schemes for participation in review processes by all parties such as teachers, administrators, students and external bodies?

➤ Teaching delivery progression and assessment:

Are there means and methods by which this information is available, especially to students in the form of handbooks?

⇒ Approaches to Quality Audits in Education and Training:

- Is evidence collected from students, from external assessors, by peer review, and from employers;
- Are communication procedures are checked.
- Are communication roles, responsibilities and lines specified;
- What evidence is there of innovation in learning and teaching; How are programs monitored and reviewed, what feedback occurs and what is recorded and acted upon;
- How are staff members appointed, developed and appraised;
- How are students supported in terms of learning, guidance and facilities;
- What are the students' outcomes and the procedures in terms of progress, assessment and appeals;
- Is there a process of comparison with external standards and is verification undertaken; and
- Are there evidence of participation and a clear statement of responsibilities of academic, technical, managerial/administrative personnel and students?

The quality of the curriculum and style of performance are stressed. The objectives of standardisation are knowledge and skills are transformed to the users; the size of the organisation is logical and suitable for communication with users; the form

of presentation of curriculum contents is appropriate to users; forms and frequency of consulting with students are adequate; and students needs are satisfied. The quality of teaching plans- curriculum and program presentation is the key activity on which quality monitoring is based, and its preservation, which has to include "reaching objectives, contents definition and methods establishing [6,3-32] which will successfully influence the feed-back-system if there is horizontal and vertical co-ordination. Therefore clear procedures are needed to accomplish an efficient resource application in the framework of a global development policy strategy. The curriculum has to be developed to assure the fulfilment of future students' needs and subject to frequent review.

A significant component of a quality education system is availability of training and education for those who have already graduated. Training and education should also be available to those who want to widen their knowledge and introduce new methods, techniques, technology or other fields to their profession. The Leonardo da Vinci Programme supported the research project "Further Training in the Hotel and Accommodation Trade" [14]. The Leonardo da Vinci Programme conducted empirical investigations into continuing education and training for tourism and hospitality management. The target group of this investigation was employed persons, including self employed, who have undergone relatively little formal education and who, on the whole, were not engaged in further training activities. An important characteristic of the group was that they worked in small businesses, a factor that apparently influenced their attitude towards further training. Based on literature analyses, discussions with experts and pilot interviews with employers, the main results of the research project were [14,2]:

- Figures to specify the extent of further training activities and supplementary figures as to the informal further development activities within the hotel trade;
- Insights into hindering/stimulating factors that influence the degree to which further training is undertaken. These insights explain the relatively few further training activities undertaken and provide an encouraging starting point for increasing these activities;
- An overview of future qualification requirements with an outline of the central subject areas for education and further training.

According to the programme of high school education activities of constancy should be foreseen, elaborate creation, organisation of professional meetings, co-operation development with business associations and other professional associations.

4. EDUCATION IN CROATIA AND GLOBALISATION

Taking into consideration the needs of tourism development, which are complex and dynamic, an innovative approach in education plans and programs has to be applied in the transformation of the education system. In the process of tourism market globalisation [5, 10] it is important to consider the standardisation of curriculum and program elements. The globalisation process on the tourism market is demonstrated through integration processes of international economy, widening on new destinations,

unevenly segment development on international tourism market, competitiveness of tourism destinations in the price area and quality.

Evaluations of quality in education should be made according to criteria of quality conceived through positive practice and research results, not imposed by external authorities. Quality education and training for the tourism industry starts with a definition of quality and confirmation of its wider meaning. Specific answers can be found in the framework of activities, as in the following [10, 34]:

- (a) We must view all quality questions, first of all, through the eyes of the user, e.g. the consuming tourist, for without the positive decisions of the consumer there is no tourism, hence there can be no discussion regarding its quality;
- (b) Before deciding how much weight, or attention, to give to particular quality aspects or dimensions, we must form an integrated whole of tourism, with respect to all of the services and service qualities that are typically involved.

If the above mentioned relations support the acceptance of the global definition for quality in tourism as everything that a guest of certain consumption ability wants to have, through the wholeness of relationship and appearances defined by characteristics of products and services, depending upon the cultural level of the user and the offers ability to satisfy real or supposed needs. The educational and professional level of personnel influences the quality of tourist services offered. Therefore, there is a need for quality education processes. This gives us a hint as to how to define the consumer's perception of "value for money" in the education process. The consumer has to be satisfied through network organisations, methods, standards, procedures and techniques, processes, programmes and activities. "Value for money" is seen, in the education process, as the input and output for the evaluation of:

1. The investment for education, whether it be education hours, which define the curriculum and programme, or the evaluation, personnel and technology basis, processes and procedures of teaching and other relevant resources represent for the government, the employer, students or other user, the expenses of the education process, or the process input. Curriculum and courses are the products for the target user groups. Quality is evaluated by the teaching hours of curriculum, teaching contents, quality of personnel, mechanism of teaching, organisation of lectures, and quality of communication.
2. The results of the education process are demonstrated by the students' knowledge and evaluated by the extent of the graduates' readiness to participate in practice. Graduates should be open to new information and knowledge through continuing education. Students and other groups are seen as consumers or clients, but also as evaluators of the quality of education programs.

During the evaluation process, internal and external controls should be examined with the aim to insure that information that helps in the evaluation of goals and the improvement of the system is obtained. To apply quality elements in tourism

and education, strict methods of evaluation should be followed. However, the evaluation criteria of services are based mostly on suppositions, promises, and ideas. There is a dilemma as to the extent to which standards differ (e.g. airlines have different standards for first, business and economy class, and the offer is also different, so that the user needs to be assured that his expectations will be fulfilled) and the creativity in evaluation criteria differ.

The basic education process was not, until recently, seen as a service, nor was it conceived according to clients' needs. Education was financed mostly from central-associations, with subventions from different funds and available to all consumer groups. Currently, the education process has been more commercialised and developed according to market criteria. This change introduced the process of quality and the acceptance of quality control criteria because the users of the education process, individuals and institutions, rightfully demand quality for money from education institutions as well as other groups.

Programs adapted to the educational needs of the tourism industry are still developing, so in practice we can find richness of content and forms. The differences are breadth, program direction, connection with other disciplines, and range of education levels (professional education, undergraduate education, postgraduate, doctoral studies, and other forms of full-time education and training). The aim of education is to train students for direct inclusion in practice of their discipline. But educational systems should provide for the continuation of studies both in the student's own country and abroad. Research has shown that the contemporary system of secondary education for tourism does not satisfy all the demands of the modern education system because [7, 167-173]:

- the conceptual, terminological dissonance with current trends in curriculum and courses oriented to Europe (especially in differentiation of skills and academic education level);
- the dissonance in the content of curriculum and courses for realistic needs of tourism;
- insufficient tolerance of specific characteristics in formation of curriculum and appointment of teaching personnel (negative selection is present);
- inadequate and inconsistent financing of education programs;
- insufficient professional improvement of teachers from the narrow professional field;
- insufficient informative and structural control of schools;
- irrational separation of former school centres, teaching personnel and expensive equipment, which make the organisation of the teaching process and its efficacy more difficult;
- the slowness of legislature and lack of criteria for proving the conditions for drawing up the work permit for schools;
- high levels of regulations with insufficient recognition of their scientific, professional, and practical, experience of individuals.

In Croatia, professional training at the vocational and secondary education level is conducted where every profession is seen as an entity, a dual education system with a basic profile is accepted, enabling additional specialisation in the form of

professional exams training and additional qualification. Suitable training for jobs of chancre-maid, and similar jobs, is missing. The possibility for attaining knowledge at the level of similar vocations is absent. There is no possibility of getting a polyvalence education. Nor is there a system of continuous education after qualification. Therefore, it is necessary to research the curriculum and courses with the aim of insuring a relation between theory and practice. The European model has to prepare students with practical skills and enable students to improve in their career. Academic programs should widen students' knowledge and open possibilities for further education.

The education for professional and manager functions in tourism is conducted according to teaching plans and programs that are in the field of social sciences and economics. They are conducted at the following universities: Faculty of Economics Zagreb; Faculty of Tourism and Foreign Trade Dubrovnik; Faculty of Economics and Tourism Pula, and the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management Opatija. Tourism is also studied at the Philosophical Faculty in Zadar. Croatia's tourism education systems aim to qualify managers to be competent in communicating in different languages and with different cultures. They are trained to manage and direct the organisation to achieve better results. Efforts are underway to study the educational process with the aim of cutting the duration of the studies and to achieve better results.

The Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Croatia prepared the project "Transformation of Secondary and High- education in Tourism and Hotel Industry" [7], with the aim of defining the development strategies of the education system. The project aims to propose a new constitution of all education and training levels to meet the needs of the tourism industry and to answer questions about the quality of secondary, vocational, university postgraduate, and doctoral studies tourism education.

The project concerns not only the education and training of students for practice, but also for their inclusion in the field of scientific research and professional work. The efforts in the field of curriculum and programme improvements include their co-ordination with the curriculum and courses of similar foreign education institutions. Specialised part-time education programs should be organised for those who have a rich working experience and want to qualify as managers (e.g.. small hotels, agencies, hotel households, gastronomy, restoration, entertainment, sports, ecology, reception, public relations...).

Despite the relatively small amount of funds for scientific research, significant results are accomplished at higher education institutions and specialised institutes. The research results are based mostly on the experience of developed tourism countries. This research represents the qualitative basis for the development and reconstruction of tourism education. But, it is also the starting point for the application of new technologies and introduction of modern methods and techniques in businesses. The research results are presented to the public in the form of projects at scientific and professional meetings, and in scientific and professional publications. The previous represents the certain quality level that is achieved in Croatian education system, which imposes the element definition, need for its control and improvement.

The legislature concerning institutions of higher education and the law about scientific- research activity, the market criteria of hotel economy impose on us the need for revival of the education system and especially for the needs of specialisation of the profession as a fulfilment to academic institutions. Namely, the educational programs of universities have to give students knowledge, as well as the possibility to participate in scientific research. Therefore the research is conducted to establish whether existing curricula and programs satisfy the needs of the tourism industry.

High schools should be established to provide vocational training to the tourism and hotel industry. This represents a significant revival of the education system. High schools have to be established to assure the education of those personnel needed in the labour market and the Croatian tourism industry. The following need to be researched:

- the justification and legislation foundation of its establishment
- its place in the education system
- demarcation of authorities in the education vertical
- constitution and conditions of students registration
- the area and activity programme.

The tourism and hotel industry schools of higher education should have a tradition of tourism and hotel management education and they can be located in places with a rich tourism tradition or just rich tradition in teaching. Possibilities for practical work and practical teaching processes of tourism economy, are necessary in a wider and narrower area, including the possibility of building or renting a hotel- workshop with facilities of agency congress and other business performances important for tourism which will directly prepare the students for their profession. Parallel with theoretical teaching, specific skills should also be taught, necessitating therefore cabinets, laboratories and facilities for practical and equipment.

The higher education institution should enable specialisation at a level that would allow for different personnel profiles for performance. Specific activities, for both lower and middle management, include hotel host department, reception department, agency business performance, business communication, gastronomy, restoration, organisation of entertainment, cultural and sports manifestation, interior design and ecology, guides and entertainers.

To separate the responsibilities of high education institutions (schools), compared with other institutions, the vertical in education should contain, as one of the education levels, knowledge for this specific activity, starting with pre-schoolers, through free activities in basic education, to put in operation through programmes for professions, in secondary education, and specialisation in the profession, to postgraduate and doctoral studies.

The separation of responsibility has to be seen in relation to similar programs of university studies of tourism and hotel industry. As the higher education institution should educate narrowly specialised staff for certain profession, the academic studies should enable wider education. The university-educated staffs are indispensable at the

level of middle and higher management, in the hotel industry and tourism, tourism destinations, conducting tourism policy and tourism development management, in the wider sense. Although establishing the higher education institutions, there is still the need for university studies of hotel industry and tourism. Two directions for education in the field of hotel industry and tourism should be organised at the state level of the Republic of Croatia, at the level of university degree studies with a minimum of two global programmes (tourism and hospitality industry), and also through specific programmes of postgraduate scientific and professional doctoral studies.

5. CONCLUSION

The educational system is very important to the Croatian tourism development, with a special position into the reconstruction of the Croatian economy. Educational programs should respond to the needs of the tourism industry. Croatian tourism education should follow European and other international experiences and trends. Educational institutions produce and sell educational services to customers and buys inputs with which to make a quality product. Quality higher education is also more than achieved goals and strict application procedures. Quality includes the image of the institutions. Quality is the result of measures and efforts that have to be adapted to the characteristics of institutions and not imported from outside.

Higher education isn't just a business or a part of tourism business. It is nobler than business and than tourism, more decent and in important ways humane in the purposes it serves. It can also mean that even in economic terms, higher education is simply different from business. Therefore, it is very important to constitute higher education levels in the vertical of education institutions at respect a quality criteria. The possibility of part-time education should be considered a permanent part of education and training. Students have to be stimulated by active learning and not just passive lesson attendance. This approach is different from our previous methods. Professors must have the possibility to satisfy their needs for scientific research and professional work.

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Sažetak

KVALITETA SVEUČILIŠNOG OBRAZOVANJA ZA TURIZAM

Pojam globalizacije postao je dio svakodnevnog poslovnog jezika i jezika kako u političkim krugovima tako i u obrazovanju. Hrvatski turizam je dio globalne privrede. Za malu zemlju kao što je Hrvatska veoma je važno da prepozna svoju okolinu i da odredi svoje ciljeve i prioritete. Potrebno je posvetiti posebnu pozornost obrazovnom sistemu imajući u vidu razvoj strategije hrvatskog turizma pomoću sistema rekonstrukcije hrvatske privrede i redefiniranja turističkih proizvoda. Potrebno je obrazovati i trenirati turističke stručnjake pomoću potpunog obrazovnog programa, obrazovati i trenirati na radnom mjestu i nastaviti s obrazovanjem. Dobar obrazovni sustav treba se temeljiti na znanstvenom istraživanju. Razvoj obrazovanja treba biti orijetiran na cilj istraživanja. Obrazovni programi trebaju biti kreirani paralelno s potrebama korisnika. U okviru obrazovanja globalno planiranje i razvoj nastavnog plana posebno ovisi o vanjskim odnosima i mobilnosti studenata (ECTS sistem).

Ključne riječi: globalizacija, obrazovanje, razvoj nastavnog plana, turizam.