

5<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Educational Sciences - WCES 2013

## Education in Information Technology as a tool for tourism development

Branislav Kršák<sup>a</sup>, Alica Tobisová<sup>b</sup>, Michaela Sehnáľková<sup>a</sup><sup>a</sup>*Technical University of Košice, Faculty of mining, ecology, process control and geotechnologie, Department of Geotourism, Boženy Nemcovej 32, 042 00 Košice, Slovakia*<sup>b</sup>*Technical University of Košice, Faculty of Aeronautics Department of Air Traffic Management, Rampová 7, 040 01 Košice, Slovakia*

---

### Abstract

Each employee has a unique potential, which needs to be stimulated in order to be productive as much as possible. Education is an important factor for this stimulation because only well educated employees represent a real competitive advantage for the company. The research survey of educational needs within tourism organisations in the Kosice region was implemented. It was focused on the identification of factors which are necessary for real development of tourism. The study has uncovered areas, in which human resources need to be strengthened. The following article presents results of the study.

© 2013 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](#).

Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Education and Research Center.

*Keywords: education, tourism, survey, development;*

---

### 1. Introduction

Modern corporations are aware of the need and begin to associate their performance and competitiveness with the formation of such working potential that is characterized by a high level of talent, knowledge, skills and motivation. Activities oriented at forming the working potential are derived from strategic objectives of the company, assuming a complex, sophisticated and continuous system of education and development of prospective employees.

Each corporation, striving to produce quality products, needs qualitative and also well-educated workers. It is important that workers not only want to study and learn, but also desire to be able to use acquired knowledge and skills in their work. It is, therefore, essential that they widen and deepen their knowledge and skills. If they work in an environment that allows them to do so, they will be sufficiently motivated. Education of people belongs to basic targets as well as implications of modern corporations. There are many reasons why the company has to pay attention to the education and development of its employees, such as:

1. variability of human needs influences variability of goods and services on the market, it requires flexible responses of corporations and flexibility of their employees,
2. strong focus on quality of products and customer service,
3. volatility of the business environment increases; if the corporation wants to succeed, it must flexibly respond to changes

Corresponding name: Branislav Kršák. Tel.: +421-55-602 2664

E-mail address: [branislav.krsak@tuke.sk](mailto:branislav.krsak@tuke.sk)

\* intense technological development brings new discoveries, new technologies; techniques and technologies in companies often change, i.e. initial knowledge and skills of people quickly become obsolete,

4. people have to cope with frequent organizational changes in companies (business growth, increasing volume of production),
5. development of information technologies and their application in the company,
6. globalization and internationalization of economic activities and thus the resulting need to move, communicate and undertake activities in an international environment,
7. and so on.

Considering the subject of the survey, we issued from the cycle of education, which consists of four basic phases. The first step in the effective learning process is to identify needs within the company under which the company organizes the training of employees. Next step in the learning process is implementation of the educational process based on prepared schedule. Final step in the whole process is the feedback in terms of evaluating effectiveness of the training and the used methods.

Nowadays tourism is a dynamically developing sector and due to its quick development it represents a significant part of economic benefits for the country. Even though this industry is not characterized by production and its businesses do not export their products to other countries, provision of services in tourism and appreciation of the beauty of the country represent a continuous process of improvement and development. However, the potential of this sector has not been fully exploited yet. One reason for this deficiency is, to some extent, educational extemporaneousness of employees in tourism corporations.

## 2. Methodology

Based on these facts, we implemented research to identify the training and educational needs of tourism subjects in the Košice region. The survey was conducted by using questionnaires. The total number of questionnaires was 400, where 98 were completed, representing 24.5% of return.

The priority of the survey was to assess the needs of additional training for employees of organizations in the field of tourism in order to improve services provided to clients by their fully trained staff. Improving services of organizations contributes to the overall efficiency of tourism activities throughout the Košice region.

The selection of tourism organizations was aimed at provision of services by entities providing secondary conditions for the development of tourism in the form of a variety of accommodation, catering and transport companies. Another area of selection was aimed at various statutory, information, cultural and social facilities which are represented by information centres, travel agencies, government authorities' offices responsible for the regional development, sports and relaxation, cultural and social organizations. Among tourism organizations, there were also companies providing services within the tourism industry, such as: car rental, shopping centres and handicraft. Responses from returned questionnaires were divided into three categories according to the general target area:

- **Category 1** provides generalized information about the organization which sent the questionnaire as well as information about a particular respondent who had the competence to fill in the questionnaire.
- **Category 2** provides information on the subject of education.
- **Category 3** includes basic information about technical and organizational provision of the educational course.

### 2.1 CATEGORY 1: Basic information about the respondent and tourism organisation

The purpose of creating this category was to generate groups of tourism enterprises by the number of employees, length of operating on the market, education and gender of respondents.

As shown by the results of the survey, the largest group of enterprises in tourism consists of organizations comprised of maximum five employees (Figure 1) and the length of operating on the market up to three years. The other two equivalent groups are organizations that have 5 to 10 and 10 to 50 employees. In the interval of 10%, there are organizations with more than 50 employees. Therefore, they belong to the category of small and medium-sized enterprises.

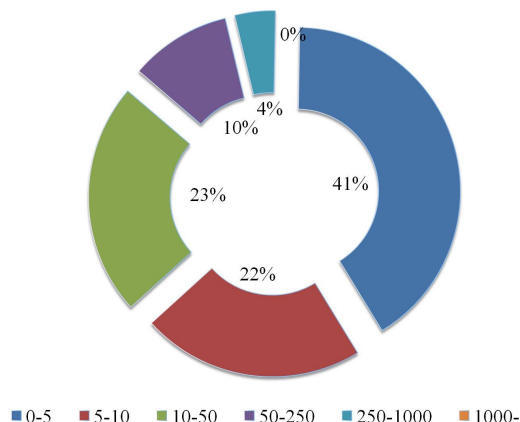


Figure 1 Tourism organisations according to the number of employees

In the Figure 2 there are tourism enterprises with approximately equal percentage of 16-25% organizations that operate on the market from 3 to 20 years, up to 7% organizations with the length of operating on the market over 20 years.

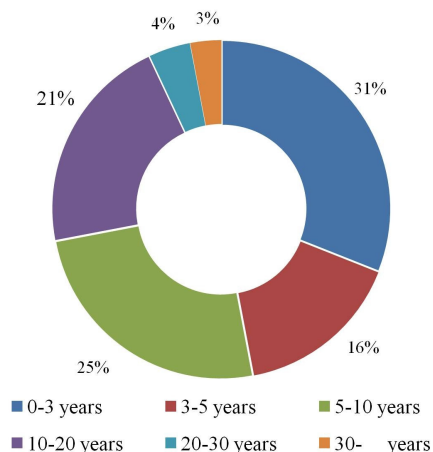


Figure 2 Tourism organisations according to the length of operation on the market

According to the Figure 3 and 4, respondents - employers or operating employees with the competence to fill in the questionnaire were mostly women - 61%, and 39% men. Both groups are about equally divided into a group with higher educational attainment – university or high school graduation.

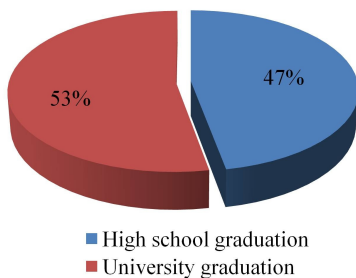


Figure 3 Education attained

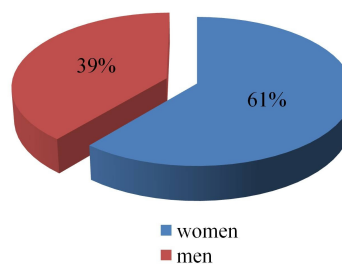


Figure 4 Gender of respondents

## 2.2 CATEGORY 2: Subject of education definition.

The aim of the second category of the survey was to identify the subject, which represents the largest barriers for single organisations in the form of insufficient knowledge, and thus becomes the target need of the planned educational process.

Main questions of the questionnaires were subjects which, according to employers' opinion, workers would have to supplement in their theoretical and practical knowledge. 51 subjects were presented to respondents. Out of 51 subjects, the most requested were these 12 subjects: English language, German language, Hotel Industry, Economics, Interpersonal Communication, Tourism Geography, Cultural Heritage, Marketing, Basic tourism forms and services, Legislation in tourism, Basic computer skills and Psychology. Respondents' interest in these subjects is shown in the Figure 5.

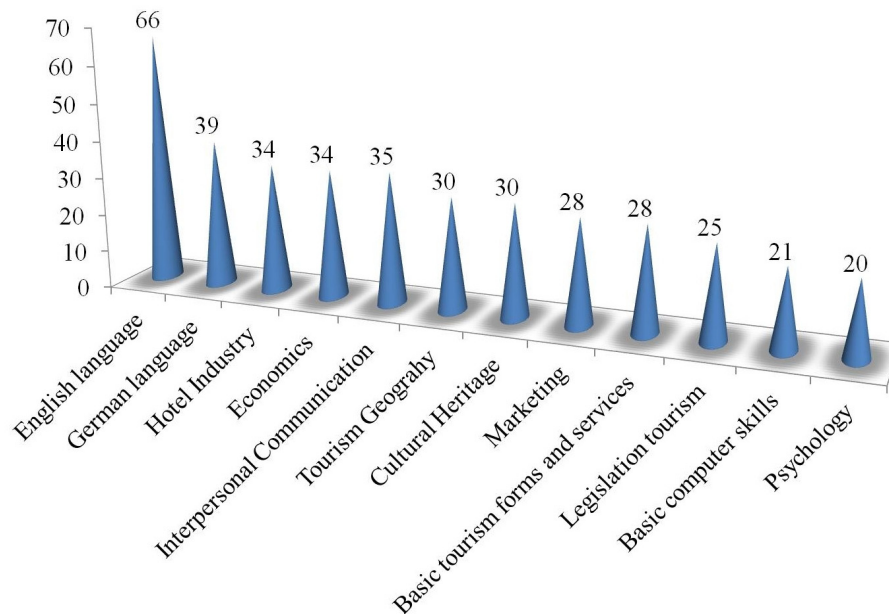


Figure 5 Respondents' interest in particular subjects

The results imply a strong need for language training in active communication and writing skills for employees in contact with customers as well as potential foreign partners. Another important group is represented by the subjects from the tourism industry, such as Marketing, Economics, Hotel Industry, Basic tourism forms and services, which can be, in terms of theoretical knowledge, practically applied in the system of the tourism organization activity. Subjects of Tourism Geography and Cultural and Technical Heritage represent the group of general knowledge in the field of individual regional attractions.

One of the most important subjects in the field of tourism is Interpersonal communication, as a specific specialization of psychology. In terms of its content, it presents effective communication with clients as well as within the working team in order to achieve a conflict-free working atmosphere. The standard of skilled labour is computer literacy, which is nowadays an imperative condition for orientation in the field of modern technologies and software and systems used in the tourism industry.

## 2.3 CATEGORY 3: Organization – technical provision of education

In this category, particular specifics of education and trainings were examined. Observed areas were as follows:

1. **Most suitable time** – the research shows that 37% of employers prefer training of their employees after working hours, that is from 16:00 to 20:00. Alternatively, the time interval preferred by 32% of employers is from 8:00 to 12:00. Up to 20% of employers accept education in the afternoon, that is from 12:00 to 16:00 and in the late evening, that is after 20:00.

2. **Optimal duration** - the vast majority - 40% of respondents considered the most appropriate length of education to be 2 hours. Up to 20% are the alternatives of 3 and 4 hours, other options are acceptable for the 10% or less of surveyed respondents.
3. **Frequency of education** - Totally 27% of employers would welcome a period of lessons twice a month and the further 27% would likewise welcome the opportunity to be educated twice a week. However, the most ideal compromise could be a decision of the further 29% of respondents on the frequency of training 4 times a month, that is once a week. Other options are represented as minorities by less than 11% of respondents.
4. **Most suitable days of the week** when the employer is willing to release the employee from the active labour process for the need of education - research shows that a priority is the education during the working week to be preferred by 2/3 of the surveyed respondents, while 1/3 preferred education at weekends.
5. A significant question was **the way of finishing the training** - 42% of respondents would prefer check-ups in the form of module tests in completing the educational process. The further 30% of respondents would rather take an exam, 17% continuous assessment and 11% of respondents were for a presentation of the final thesis.
6. **Type of certification of completing the educational process** - research indicates a rather consistent selection in the form of graduation of the educational process, where 62% would prefer a certificate on successful completion of the training course, 22% of respondents were for a graduate degree, 14% for confirmation of participation in the project and 2% for testimonial.

### 3. Conclusion

Education is an integral part of the company's development; therefore, as pointed out by the research, even companies providing services, tourism organizations, have to and want to spend time and money on training their employees. The accession of Slovakia to the EU has uncovered new opportunities for activity of domestic tourism entities, but on the other hand, it has enabled the arrival of growing competition. Within the conditions of increasing competition, subjects of tourism are pushed towards the improvement of provided services and readiness of employees.

Another important determinant of the tourism development on an international scale is a high efficient information technology. Possibilities of its application in the country depend on the funds and educational preparedness of people in the area. Research uncovered positive progress of the society, as up to 20% of respondents are aware of the need for the introduction of information technologies in tourism enterprises as a means of increasing the share of the market, and they expressed an interest in education in the field.

### References

- Martonová, S., & Tobisová, A. (2012). The education process in an aviation company. *Acta avionica*, 14 (24), 275-278.
- Csikósová, A., Teplická, K., & Seňová, A. (2012). Communication and humanization of university education through e-learning. *Procedia - social and behavioral sciences*, 46, 2978-2982.
- Džupka, P., Šimková, H., & Kršák, B. (2004). Cestovný ruch ako prostriedok ekonomického rastu a regionálneho rozvoja. *National and regional economics*, 5, 221-225.