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## **Features of soft skills formation in the study of the discipline "Market of tourist services"**

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### **Abstract**

The article highlights the peculiarities of the formation of soft skills in students majoring in "Tourism" while studying the discipline "Market of tourist services". The article focuses on the key soft skills, including empathy, emotional intelligence, teamwork skills, customer service, networking and leadership, which are extremely important for the competitiveness of future tourism professionals. It is emphasized that the development of these soft skills contributes to a better adaptation of graduates to the needs of the labour market, where quality communication and customer service skills determine success in the tourism sector.

The article describes that the formation of soft skills in the course of studying the discipline "Market of tourist services" involves the use of interactive methods, in particular:

role-playing games and practical tasks that help students develop the necessary soft skills in real situations.

**Keywords: soft skills development; students; speciality "Tourism"; discipline "Market of tourist services".**

**Особливості формування м'яких навичок під час вивчення навчальної дисципліни «Ринок туристичних послуг»**

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У статті висвітлено особливості формуванню м'яких навичок у студентів спеціальності «Туризм» під час вивчення навчальної дисципліни «Ринок туристичних послуг». У статті акцентовано на ключових м'яких навичках, зокрема емпатію, емоційний інтелект, навички командної роботи, обслуговування клієнтів, нетворкінг та лідерство, які є надзвичайно важливими для конкурентоздатності майбутніх фахівців туристичної сфери. Акцентовано, що розвиток цих м'яких навичок сприяє кращій адаптації випускників до потреб ринку праці, де якісна комунікація та вміння працювати з клієнтами визначають успіх у сфері туризму.

У статті описано, що формування м'яких навичок під час вивчення навчальної дисципліни «Ринок туристичних послуг» передбачає використання інтерактивних методів, зокрема: рольові ігри та практичні завдання, що допомагають студентам розвивати необхідні м'які навички в реальних ситуаціях.

**Ключові слова: формуванню м'яких навичок; студенти; спеціальність «Туризм»; навчальна дисципліна «Ринок туристичних послуг».**

In today's world, soft skills refer to interpersonal skills that help people interact with each other. These skills can help you motivate your team, expand your professional network,

and build trust with your customer base. Soft skills are based on the ability to interact with other people and are therefore crucial in tourism in an industry that relies heavily on how well future Tourism professionals can communicate and maintain trust with clients.

It is crucial to understand the differences in the level of social competences of tourism and recreation students to understand that academic training plays the role of social training. In the concept of interactionism of social competence formation, it is the element of learning that, together with the individual characteristics of students' personality, will determine the effectiveness of this activity. Thus, the analysis of the phenomenon of the relationship between social competences and academic interaction in the study of tourism and recreation, or any other field of knowledge, requires a view of this issue – at least to some extent – from both a situational and a personal perspective, taking into account the dynamics of development. It is assumed that social competences can be formed during the so-called learning process, which at the university level is associated with the implementation of the educational program. It is important to interact with academic teachers and the teaching methods they use during lectures, practical classes, laboratory work, camps, field practices, interaction with potential or real employers during internships, as well as participation in international exchanges under the Erasmus program. Indeed, according to M. Nowak-Dziemianowicz, education is a type of social learning that should meet local, national, and global needs [4]. In this context, it is surprising that with such an important and still growing role of soft skills, the assessment of the implementation of educational outcomes in their entirety is measured essentially without any external criteria, at a purely subjective and arbitrary level. We have limited feedback in the form of student self-assessment and teacher assessment. This means that there is currently no objective system for evaluating them both at the academic level and later, at the stage of studying the fate of graduates. One of the key factors in planning for learning effectiveness is knowing the baseline level and intensity of variation in acquired competencies, as well as accurate and reliable feedback on results. Although we have a certain amount of knowledge about the soft skills of tourism professionals [1], the very initial level of these soft skills of students entering university is unknown. The effect of academic education should be to prepare students for the requirements of the labour market, i.e. the needs and expectations of employers, while it should be noted that, taking into account secondary school education, it is known what knowledge and skills a student has, but it can only be assumed at what level their soft skills are.

It is crucial to understand the differences in the level of soft skills development among

higher education students majoring in tourism to understand that their academic training plays the role of social training. In the concept of interactionism of soft skills formation, it is the element of learning that, together with the temperamental and personal characteristics of students, will determine the effectiveness of this activity. Thus, the analysis of the phenomenon of the relationship between the formation of soft skills and academic interaction in the educational process in the study of the discipline "Market of tourist services", or any other, requires a scientific view of this issue - at least to some extent - from both a situational and personal perspective, taking into account the dynamics of development. It is assumed that soft skills can be formed during the so-called learning process, which at the university level is associated with the implementation of an educational program. It is important to interact with academic staff and effectively use the learning content and teaching forms and methods they use during lectures, practical classes, laboratory work, interaction with stakeholders (potential or actual employers) during internships, as well as participation in international exchange programs.

We agree with the scientist M. Nowak-Dziemianowicz [4], who believes that education is a kind of special social learning that should meet local, national and global needs. In this context, it is surprising that with such an important and still growing role of social competences, the assessment of the implementation of educational outcomes in their entirety is measured essentially without any external criteria, at a purely subjective and arbitrary level. We have limited feedback in the form of student self-assessment and teacher assessment. One of the key factors for planning learning effectiveness is knowing the baseline and intensity of variation in acquired competences, as well as accurate and reliable feedback on results. The effect of obtaining academic education should be to prepare students for the requirements of the labour market, which is now particularly important in the formation of soft competencies of specialists [2, p.77].

While 'hard' skills are sector-specific and can be acquired through training, soft skills are transferable skills that are key across all sectors. These skills are interpersonal attributes such as communication abilities, language skills, personal habits, cognitive or emotional empathy, time management, teamwork and leadership traits.

In the course of studying the Tourism Services Market discipline, students acquire not only relevant industry knowledge, but also the basic soft skills, such as communication, necessary to succeed in this fast-paced and ever-changing field of tourism. We define soft skills as: empathy and emotional intelligence, team intelligence, customer service skills, client service skills, networking skills, influencing skills, communication skills, and leadership

skills. Let us consider these soft skills in more detail [5].

Developing empathy and emotional intelligence skills. It should be noted that active digitalisation is definitely the future of the tourism industry, but this does not mean that human contact is becoming less important. Human capital is one of the key investments that an organisation must make to offer innovative solutions to business problems. For example, when a customer comes forward with a complaint or problem they may be facing, there needs to be a human being who is better able to handle and resolve such issues than a chatbot or computer. It is people who determine the success of an enterprise, and therefore those who are skilled in this area go a long way, as it is an industry that is largely service-dependent. The skills of empathy and emotional intelligence are acquired throughout the course, while special attention is paid to these skills when studying the topic "Marketing Policy in Tourism" [3; 5].

The next important skill is teamwork. The topic "Organisation of Marketing in a Tourism Enterprise" is dedicated to the development of this skill in students. Every organisation seeks to hire people with good teamwork skills because they are likely to be able to integrate easily into the existing team. People who have great communication and interpersonal skills are more approachable and therefore easier to work with, adding immense value to the team and its productivity. Ultimately, staying ahead in the ever-changing tourism industry requires a team effort from the company and its workforce [3; 5].

Customer service skills are developed in the course of studying the topic Communication Policy. Customers are the backbone of the hospitality business, as they ultimately fund staff salaries and other expenses of a hotel or restaurant. You need to build trust and great relationships with your customers to ensure that they come back and invest in your services. For this reason, it is very important that your customers' needs are always met and that they are satisfied with the level of service you offer. Without a great workforce that comes together to deliver a positive experience to your customers, your business will not be able to survive in this industry [3; 5].

Internet and social media skills are developed in the course of studying the topic "Organisation of marketing in a tourism enterprise" Networking is very important in the hospitality industry and is one of the most important skills that employers look for in job candidates when hiring. Unlike other industries, networking in this sector is not only about improving job prospects, but also about improving customer relationships and getting them to use your services again. The idea is to get business onboarded or repeat business. Building loyal customer relationships is a key driver in sustaining hospitality businesses in the long term [3; 5].

During the practical work on the topic "Creating a branding in the tourism industry", influence skills are developed. People who are emotionally intelligent and have a positive outlook on life can influence people who motivate their team to work hard. Without these skills, it is impossible to successfully do such a huge job. Someone who is influential inspires people to work well together as a team [3; 5].

Communication and leadership skills are developed during the entire Tourism Services Market course. Thus, in the tourism industry, professionals deal with a large number of people every day. Human interaction and effective communication are two of the main ways this industry works. You will have to work with professionals of different backgrounds, ages and temperaments. Being able to communicate with your colleagues will build trust within the team and help you to network with others in your field [3; 5].

Leadership skills are as important in this industry as in any other. Tourism professionals must learn to create an atmosphere of continuous learning and quick thinking. They must be excellent at delegating and disciplining, and at listening not only to customer complaints but also to employee concerns. Future tourism professionals may have to supervise the functioning of different departments at some point in their future careers and thus develop their leadership skills in this area [3; 5].

Thus, the peculiarities of soft skills development in the study of the discipline "Market of Tourist Services" considered in our study correspond to the educational programme for the formation of future tourism industry specialists at Khmelnytsky Humanitarian and Pedagogical Academy and meet the needs of modern Ukrainian society and the labour market. At the same time, we believe that the list of soft skills we have identified is not basic and can be supplemented based on the employee's position and the specifics of the tourism business. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that success in the tourism industry largely depends on the "soft skills set" possessed by employees, which are closely linked to the direct success of the tourism company.

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