

HOTEL INDUSTRY – REQUIREMENTS FOR HOTEL BUSINESS MANAGERS’ PARTICIPATORY CULTURE ACQUISITION

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Abstract. The paper aims at viewing meeting the requirements of hotel business managers functioning and training. As their successful employment and functions performing largely depends on participatory culture acquisition, the paper addresses the research questions: what groups of skills hotel business managers’ participatory professional skills (PPS) consist of; what activities might be used to teach PPS to future hotel business managers; what is the activities’ impact on teaching PPS to future hotel business managers. Case study and pedagogical experiment (the pretest-post-test control and experimental group design) have been applied in the research. Data have been gathered through conversational interviewing. Data source triangulation has been implemented to prove the validity of conversational interviewing questions. The research results in enlisting profession skills as the core of participatory culture. The traditions of the higher school and the requirements of partners participating in future hotel business managers training have been taken into consideration to teach PPS to future hotel business managers. The paper presents the results of testing the impact of the suggested activities program on the level of PPS. Statistical data processing is performed in the MS Excel 2010 environment using the chi-square test with a sample size ($n \geq 100$). It shows that the program of activities meets the requirements to the future hotel business managers’ participatory culture acquisition.

Keywords: hotel industry, hotel business management; professional skills requirements; participatory culture

INTRODUCTION

Culture of customer service in hotel business is the basic requirement for hotel business managers. Consequently, possibilities of good employment depend on the requirement of high participatory culture level. The core of participatory culture is constituted by participatory professional skills (PPS) which make future hotel business managers more competitive in the labor market. The modern hotel business labor market in Russia is developing on the basis of cluster interaction. It results in the necessity to train future hotel business managers to effectively interact with the hotel staff in a given hotel as well as to perform managing functions in a hotel network, i.e. in the urgency to teach PPS to future hotel business managers.

Participation in pedagogy is interpreted as “involvement”, “complicity”, “initiation” (Kazaeva, 2014). Participatory professional skills of future hotel business managers are viewed in the paper as the skills of participating in the activities of a hospitality enterprise, interacting with consumers of hotel services, cooperating with colleagues in professional activity.

In Russian higher education future hotel business managers’ professional skills are studied in different aspects. Scholars suggest models of training future hotel business managers’ professional skills (Chernykh et al., 2015), professional culture (Shavrina, 2011); principles of training future managers (Babanina, 2014), technologies of teaching managers of tourism (Magomedov & Chupanov, 2012); technologies of recreational sphere (Oborin et al., 2017), directions of future managers’ training in service, tourism and hospitality (Romanova et al., 2016).

The paper aims at describing the process of future hotel business managers' meeting the requirements of the employers. To accomplish with the purpose the paper addresses three research questions: 1) what groups of skills hotel business managers' PPS consist of; 2) what activities might be used to teach PPS to future hotel business managers; 3) what is the activities' impact on teaching PPS to future hotel business managers.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Methods used included Case Study and Educational Experimentation.

Case study

The methods of case study envisages a purposeful selection of a higher school in South Urals (Russia). As shown in examples of research work (Konsek-Ciechońska, 2017), case study can be implemented even in small companies and schools. The present case study has been conducted in a private higher educational establishment, representing characteristic features typical to all Russian higher schools. The higher school chosen for the research is an educational institution, whose graduates meet the requirements of the employers in many industries. The school is licensed by the state so that the educational process can represent the training requirements typical to all Russian higher schools. It is highly equipped with educational tools; education process participants have access to practical training in Salzburg tourist schools, Radisson, Hyatt, Kempinski hotel networks.

Educational experimentation

Educational experimentation is viewed as a research design facilitating education process by changing factors or adding innovations into the teaching environment and monitoring the outcomes by the researcher (Krüger, 2007). In the phase addressing the second research question "the pretest-post-test control and experimental group design" has been implemented. It is characterized as "...commonly used in educational experimentation" (Cohen et al., 2007). The experiment lasted three academic years (2015-2018).

Instruments and procedures

The quantitative data were obtained from conversational interviewing. The data collecting method was carried out to study the higher school staff opinions about the actual level of future hotel business managers' PPS. The interviews were carried out before and after educational experimenting in the academic year 2015-2016, and in the first term of the academic year 2017-2018. To analyze the validity of interview questions data source triangulation has been implemented. Data sets complementing one another have been obtained from three sources: administration staff experts ($n = 4$), teaching staff experts ($n = 8$), experts from customers in quazi-professional activities ($n = 10$) in the field of pedagogy. The interview questions validity has been confirmed.

Statistical data processing was performed in the MS Excel 2010 environment. A comparison of the distribution of nominative variables was made using the chi-square test with a sample size ($n \geq 100$).

Sample

To conduct the experimental research two groups of respondents, enrolled in the training program "Hotel service", have been engaged ($n = 104$).

In phase one of the research (measuring the level of hotel business managers' participatory professional skills) the total of 104 of students took part.

In phases two (suggesting activities to teach participatory professional skills to future hotel business managers) and three (evaluating the effectiveness to train participatory professional skills to future hotel business managers) the majority of respondents ($n = 80$) entered the experimental group, the other respondents ($n = 24$) entered the control group.

Phase One: Analysis of groups of PPS to be taught

The research question addressed to in this part of the study was *What groups of skills participatory professional skills consist of*. To answer the research question at the first phase of the research types of PPS were analyzed. Activities to develop them in students were suggested (Table 1). Skills and activities were studied and discussed by future managers and their potential effectiveness was evaluated by administration and teaching staff.

Table 1.
Types of PPS and activities to teach them.

No	Groups of skills	Skills
1	Organizational participatory skills	working in a team organizing the work of a team solving problems and conflicts
2	Hospitality participatory skills	booking checking-in checking out offering typical services to guests
3	Communicative participatory skills	using technical devices for participatory communication effective communication with guests effective communication with colleagues

Source: own study.

The bases for singling out the skills were:

- 1) requirements to hotel business managers activities issued in the State Standard for the profession of a hotel business manager (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation^b, 2012); also described in qualification categories of managers;
- 2) principles of education in higher school described in Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" no 273-FZ (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation^a, 2012).

Phase Two: organizing activities to train PPS to future hotel business managers

This phase of the research was meant to address the research question *what activities might be used to teach PPS to future hotel business managers*.

The following activities program was carried out to teach future hotel business managers PPS:

1. Professional contests "Restaurant service", "Hotel administration".
 2. Conferences with graduates of the faculty (in the years 2010-2013) currently employed as hotel business managers. Graduates make presentations of their present-day career and positions "Secrets of success in hotel business management".
 3. Out-of-class activities to develop students' team spirit, such as "Snowy mix", "Winning Taganai".
 4. Course of lectures "Introduction to hospitality industry" to show the role of participatory skills in the professional culture of hotel business managers.
 5. Discussions to teach future hotel business managers to avoid conflicts. Issues offered for solving included the questions "How one can achieve compromise among colleagues", "What personal and professional qualities help making a good team", "The importance of professional standards to effectively serve clients".
 6. Practical classes containing tasks, e.g. "determine the structure of the team of the hotel company with 20 rooms".
 7. Demonstrating videos about cooperation of Russian-British Institute of Management with Salzburg tourist schools, Hotel operators Radisson, Hyatt, Kempinski.
 8. Participatory games: "Checking-out of a VIP-guest", "Checking-in a walk-in guest", "Animators' team in a hotel".
 9. Making up new programs by students, e.g. "Loyalty-program as a method to increase profit".
- The activities were analyzed, their effectiveness was assessed by Russian-British Institute of Management administration and teaching staff.

Phase Three: Evaluating the effectiveness to train PPS to future hotel business managers

This phase was aimed to answer the question about *the activities' impact on teaching participatory professional skills to future hotel business managers*.

In accordance with the last research question the level of skills was measured. Quantitative values of the indicators have been determined: the indicator' high level is 3 points; the indicator' average level is 2 points; the indicator' low level is 1 point. To attribute each student the skills level a distribution series with equal intervals was built. The total skills level score varies from 10 to 30 points.

Consequently, the skill levels values for the have been established: Low level is 10-16 points, medium level is 17-23, high level is 24-30. Applying the described scale, the initial levels of skills was measured. The scores future managers were determined as in Table 2.

Table 2.
Technique for assessing PPS level by criteria (in points).

Students	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	Σ	Level
Future manager 1	1	3	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	3	17	average
Future manager 2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	15	low
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Source: own study.

C1 – C10 represent the criteria measured. They are:

C1 – how managers work in a team;

C2 – how they organize the work of a team;

C3 – how they solve problems and conflicts;

C4 – if they can book guests;

C5 – how they check-in guests;

C6 – how they check out guests;

C7 – how they offer typical services to guests;

C8 – how they use technical devices for participatory communication;

C9 – how effectively they communicate with guests;

C10 – how effectively they communicate with colleagues.

RESULTS

The criteria have been measured twice. The first measurement took place before the experiment, the second –after the experiment. The data from two groups experimental group (EG) and test group (TG) have been compared and shown in Tables 3-4.

Table 3.
Future managers' PPS levels before the experiment.

Group	Respondents	Levels					
		high		medium		low	
		number	%	number	%	number	%
EG	80	3	4	17	21	60	75
TG	24	0	0	5	21	19	79

Source: own study.

To verify the reliability of the data obtained at the ascertaining stage of the experiment, we use the chi-square test. Its essence lies in determining the level of statistical significance of the differences between the two empirical samples. Before the experiment, we put forward the null hypothesis that the levels of PPS in the TG and EG are not statistically significant. Confidence limits for the chi-square test with the degree of freedom 2 for significance levels of 0.05 and 0.01 are (Ermolaev, 2002): 5,991 and 9,210.

Applying chi-square test, we compared the results of the initial state of PPS levels in EG and TG. The empirical value of chi-square is 0.943, it is significantly less than the chi-square

critical. Consequently, the difference between the PPS level in EG and TG is not statistically significant.

Table 4.
Future managers' PPS levels after the experiment.

Group	Respondents	Levels					
		high		medium		low	
		number	%	number	%	number	%
EG	80	11	14	50	62	19	24
TG	24	1	4	8	33	15	63

Source: own study.

After the experiment the empirical value of chi-square is 12,764, which is much greater than chi-square critical (9,210). It can be assumed that the changes recorded in the experiment are significant at the 0.01 level, i.e. achievement of the new PPS level in EG is not accidental, but due to the purposeful pedagogical influence.

DISCUSSION

The research questions addressed included: what groups of skills hotel business managers' PPS consist of; what activities might be used to teach PPS to future hotel business managers; what is the activities' impact on teaching PPS to future hotel business managers. Consequently, the research results in enlisting participatory profession skills, describing activities to train future hotel business managers, testing the impact of the suggested activities program on improving the level of future hotel business managers' PPS.

In selecting the professional skills the researchers were to take into consideration the traditions of the higher school and the requirements of partners participating in future hotel business managers training (Salzburg tourist schools, Radisson, Hyatt, Kempinski hotel networks). It resulted in uniting in the training program such activities as typically Russian out-of-class activities "Snowy mix", "Winning Taganai" and typically western technique of making up the program "Loyalty-program as a method to increase profit" by students.

In determining the impact on teaching PPS to future hotel business managers we have witnessed that the program of activities to teach participatory skills has helped to reduce the number of students on the low level and to increase the number of future managers on the medium level. It is not assumed that the suggested program of activities immediately provides training participatory skills on the high level. Anyway, the obtained results are commented upon by the higher school administration as considerable.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the first research question PPS were analyzed into three groups: organizational participatory skills, hospitality participatory skills, communicative participatory skills. In accordance with the second research question school administrators, in-service teachers, teachers-to-be were asked to suggest activities, most effective in training participatory skills to future hotel business managers. The suggested activities program includes professional competitions, meeting hotel business managers – graduates of the faculty, conferences after practical training in hotels, out-of-class activities to build up a team of students, lectures, discussions, practical classes, demonstrating videos about cooperation of school with foreign hotel operators, participatory games, making up activity programs by students.

In accordance with the third research question the chi-square testing with a sample size ($n \geq 100$) was implemented. The criterion has shown, that the experimental program of activities, when implemented in EG resulted in the significantly higher level of future hotel business managers' PPS skills. It can be concluded that the program of activities meets the requirements to the future hotel business managers' participatory culture acquisition and thus assists in improving the competitiveness of graduates in hotel industry.

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