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DETERMINANTS OF PROFESSIONAL CAREERS OF BACHELOR'S DEGREE GRADUATES – THE FACULTY OF TOURISM AND RECREATION

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Abstract: Tourism has recently been one of the fast developing industries in Poland and all over the world. It is an important source of job opportunities. The estimated global rate of employment in tourism management is 10% of the total employment rate. It also makes a significant contribution to the gross domestic product. Globally, it is estimated as 10%.

Tourism has recently been one of the fast developing industries in Poland and all over the world. It is an important source of job opportunities. The characteristics of the contemporary labour market with regard to tourism include:

- seasonal character of employment,
- part-time employment,
- high percentage of women employees,
- demand for employees of different fields and occupations, who may be employed in tourism management directly (hospitality, catering, direct tourist traffic service) or indirectly (trade, transport, banking, administration, manufacturing of: sports and tourist equipment, foodstuffs and other) – complementary employment in the sphere of tourist traffic service,
- options of professional activity for the retired and the pensioners (seasonal character of employment),
- seasonal and part-time job opportunities for pupils and students.

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All the characteristics of the tourist labour market must be taken into consideration by students taking up education at the faculty of tourism and recreation, when they plan their professional careers. The bachelor's degree studies at this faculty are provided by many schools: university schools of physical education, universities of economics, other universities and many private schools. According to data provided by the Central Statistical Office (GUS), the estimated number of students of this faculty is approx. 28 thousand, which makes approx. 1,5 % of the total number of students in Poland.

Key words: tourism, recreation, professional career, graduate studies.

INTRODUCTION – TERMS: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Recently, literature related to sociology, psychology or pedagogy has often mentioned the term of professional career. The term has occurred in various contexts and usually refers to life success models in operation in a specific society that set the direction for human activity. These life success models are evaluated in terms of morality, as “good” or “bad”.²

In terms of sociology, career is a term referring to a specified sphere of objective social facts – a change in the social status of individuals, usually involving promotion from a lower to a higher one.³ As regards the professional career, these changes refer to a change in a job position. Professional career may be perceived as a work biography, climbing up through a number of job positions arranged in a vertical, hierarchical manner, where subsequent job positions are perceived by the society as higher than the previous ones, based on the measures of social prestige, richness, fame, etc.⁴ Another definition describes professional career as a sequence of roles and job positions held by an individual at different stages of the life cycle.⁵

Such a definition of professional career is close to that of professional development. Literature related to pedagogy, sociology, psychology and economic sciences features many definitions of and approaches to professional development as well as various concepts of the same.

According to T. Nowacki, professional development is the route of professional development of an individual from the introduction into the areas of human economic and cultural activity, through general vocational preparation until the period of vocational preparation. Afterwards, there are periods of professional development, promotions and achievements until retirement from professional work that is, however, not equivalent to the end of work activity. The stages of professional development are to a large extent determined by social institutions defining individual activity and participation in education and work processes.⁶

² A. Paszek, Osiągnąć karierę. *Gazeta IT* Nr 9(39), <http://www.gazeta-it.pl/kariera/>

³ Z. Bauman, *Kariera*. Warszawa 1960, p.23

⁴ H. Najduchowska, Drogi zawodowe kadry kierowniczej. *Studia Socjologiczne*. Nr 3 1969

⁵ E. Rokicka, Wzory karier kierowniczych w gospodarce państwowej. Łódź 1995, p. 16

⁶ T. Nowacki, *Leksykon pedagogiki pracy*. Warszawa 2004, p. 217

According to D. Super, professional (or vocational) development is a process of growing and learning to which all symptoms of vocational behaviour are subordinated. It is a gradual increase and change in the capacity of an individual to follow specified models of behaviour and increase their repertoire of vocational behaviours. Professional development includes all aspects of development that might refer to work.⁷

It could be stated that different authors refer to professional (or vocational) development in a similar manner, emphasising the changes in the personality of an individual occurring as a result of employment relationships passed on his or her vocational route.⁸

Professional development is equivalent to general and occupational self-improvement, perceived as acquisition of an increasing number of new professional predispositions, allowing you to solve more and more complex problems in the course of your professional work.⁹

Career, similar to professional development, is a dynamic category subject to permanent change. Professional development is believed to be a personal characteristic, referring to an individual confronted with the professional work experience, and career is more of a process this individual undergoes while experiencing professional work. Professional development, as mentioned above, is acquiring new professional predispositions, allowing you to solve more and more complex problems in your professional work, and career is going up the professional ladder.¹⁰

It seems that these terms are hardly synonymous, but professional development may be considered a basis for human professional career. Most popular professional development theories assume that it continues throughout human life and identify different stages of the same from childhood to retirement. On the other hand, professional career is clearly associated with the period of professional activity of a person, although education at school or university is said to be career-oriented. The professional career alone, understood as “climbing up” different job positions is parallel with the professional activity of a person. The term “professional development” is used mainly in terms of psychology and pedagogy, while “professional career” – in terms of sociology. It should also be emphasised that if professional career may be considered in terms of morality as “good” or “bad”, professional development as a developmental process should not be subject to such evaluations.

However, professional development planning is more and more frequently considered equivalent to professional career planning, and sometimes it may be difficult to separate these two ranges of vocational planning.

⁷D.E. Super, *Vocational Development: a framework for research*, New York 1957. Cyt. za J. Budkiewicz, *Dynamika życia zawodowego w świetle psychologii*, W: *Szkoła, Zawód, Praca. Problemy szkolnego poradnictwa zawodowego. Charakterystyki zawodów*, Warszawa 1969, p. 37

⁸Z. Wołk, *Rozwój zawodowy na tle życia*. W: *Problemy Profesjologii*. Nr 1/2005. Zielona Góra 2005, p. 41

⁹tamże, p.40

¹⁰ibidem, p.41

DETERMINANTS OF PROFESSIONAL CAREER IN TOURISM

Professional work is an important sphere of human life. An average person devotes significant part of his/her time to the same, and in Poland, given a nearly 20% rate of unemployment, the fact of being employed alone is a value in itself, appreciated equally with family life, material goods and friendship. The labour market undergoes dynamic changes – the labour law, structure of employment, things that employers expect of their employees change – and with regard to these changes, planning your professional career path is not simple. Nobody is able to identify accurately the occupations with positive prospects for the future in a specific environment or even the scope of activities falling within the range of occupations we already know.¹¹

Nowadays the motto: *“know yourself, know your occupation, see what schools provide relevant preparation”* is outdated and it is replaced by: *“think how you can make best use of your knowledge and skills in the conditions provided by the environment, decide what kind of knowledge and skills you lack and how you can acquire them to be able to make your plans come true”*.¹²

It is assumed that two groups of factors (conditions) determine professional development of a person:

- internal (subjective) factors relating to a person and his/her individual traits such as: biological, physical and mental factors,
- external (objective) factors beyond human control, determined by the situation such as: historical, economic, technical, cultural, social, political and educational factors.¹³

It may be assumed that the factors determining professional development also determine the course of professional career and should be taken into account when planning a career. Major objective factors determining the course of professional careers include:

- interests,
- talents, skills, abilities,
- disposition,
- character traits,
- system of values,
- health status.

However, major objective factors determining the course of professional careers include:

- knowledge of occupations,
- knowledge of faculties,
- knowledge of trends in the labour market.¹⁴

¹¹ Kargulowa A., *Destrukcje, rekonstrukcje i konstrukcje w poradnictwie zawodowym*. W: *Poradnictwo zawodowe w wymiarze europejskim*. Pod red. W. Rachalskiej. Częstochowa 1999, p. 36

¹² *ibidem*, p.37

¹³ Czarnecki K., Karaś S., *Profesjologia w zarysie*. Radom 1996, p.70

¹⁴ Czynniki ważne przy planowaniu kariery zawodowej. <http://www.metis.pl/content/view/204/32/>

Professional careers exist when people take care of them and aim to develop the same. Likewise professional development, they are of individual and unique nature. Developing your own professional career should not be accidental or based on opportunity, but you should plan and take up relevant measures on your own. In professional career planning use should be made of the ability to make feasible decisions concerning the line of education or training, workplace or a change of the profession. These abilities are acquired through self-knowledge and self-evaluation as well as confrontation of your advantages with the requirements set up by the occupations and the labour market.¹⁵

It is very significant that you should specify your own interests being the driving force that makes you take up the measures to get acquainted with a specific field, determine your own skills and abilities and the target for your own professional work.¹⁶

Students when asked *if they have created a list of their professional targets* should be able to answer at the beginning of their period of study, whereas most of them think about their professional targets only when they graduate. Also, many employees start thinking about their professional career in serious terms only when they are made redundant. The professional targets should be noted down, precisely specified and a time framework for accomplishment of these targets should be set up. It is also important to set up a schedule of tasks to be completed in order to improve or complement your qualifications and enrich your experience.¹⁷

Tourism has recently been one of the fast developing industries in Poland and all over the world. It is an important source of job opportunities. The estimated global rate of employment in tourism management is 10% of the total employment rate. It also makes a significant contribution to the gross domestic product. Globally, it is estimated as 10%.¹⁸

In 1993 it was estimated that tourism generated direct or indirect job opportunities for approximately 212 mln people all over the world. At present, this number is estimated as approximately 338 mln people, which means that the tourist sector is in a group of the largest global producers.¹⁹

In 2001, the average number of employees in tourism-related segments in Poland was 811 thousand people, including 520 thousand in companies with more than 9 employees, and nearly 300 thousand in smaller business entities. People working in the tourist sector constituted 7.8% of all state economy employees. 20% of employees of the tourist sector are owners, co-owners and the self-employed, 80% are hire workers (the analogous ratios in state economy are 13 % and 87%), which suggests that tourism, more than other types of business activity, is a sector favourable to initiatives relating to independent job opportunities.²⁰

¹⁵ Trzeciak W., Planowanie kariery zawodowej. *Pracodawca i Pracownik*. T.10, p..27- 28

¹⁶ A. Paszek, Osiągnąć karierę. Op.cit.

¹⁷ ibidem

¹⁸ W.W.Gaworecki, Turystyka. Warszawa 2003, p..215

¹⁹ ibidem, p.257

²⁰ Turystyka w 2003 roku. <http://www.stat.gov.pl/>

In 2006 in Poland, H-tourism (restaurants and hotels) employed approx. 217.7 thousand people.²¹

However, it should be emphasised that it is difficult to unambiguously determine the full rate of employment in the tourist sector, since part of the employees work part-time or under seasonal contracts, or national statistics give total figures relating to employment in “trade and services”, which makes it difficult to collect data relating to actual employment in the sphere of tourism alone.²²

The characteristics of the contemporary labour market with regard to tourism include:

- seasonal character of employment,
- part-time employment,
- high percentage of women employees,
- demand for employees of different fields and occupations, who may be employed in tourism management directly (hospitality, catering, direct tourist traffic service) or indirectly (trade, transport, banking, administration, manufacturing of: sports and tourist equipment, foodstuffs and other) – complementary employment in the sphere of tourist traffic service,
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All the characteristics of the tourist labour market must be taken into consideration by students taking up education at the faculty of tourism and recreation, when they plan their professional careers. The bachelor’s degree studies at this faculty are provided by many schools: university schools of physical education, universities of economics, other universities and many private schools. According to data provided by the Central Statistical Office (GUS), the estimated number of students of this faculty is approx.28 thousand, which makes approx. 1,5 % of the total number of students in Poland.

This faculty aims at professional preparation of human resources for the needs of the tourist market. The graduates receive theoretical and practical training in handling of tasks required by contemporary national and international tourism, as well as preparation for accomplishment of various undertakings in the field of tourism and recreation.

The universal skills and abilities of graduates of tourism and recreation include:

- ability to operate in the free market according to EU standards,
- good command of foreign languages,
- familiarity with new techniques and technologies of collecting, processing and transferring of information,

²¹ <http://www.intur.com.pl/zatrudni.htm>

²² W.W. Gaworecki, *Turystyka...*op.cit., p..257

²³ *ibidem*, s.257-264

- ability to solve conflicts, negotiate and communicate within a group,
- ability to operate in a geographical environment in line with the environmental protection regulations,
- ability to identify one's own place in the business development plan and strategy,
- familiarity with and ability to use innovative business management and administration techniques,
- ability to work with the disabled,
- tolerance in contacts with representatives of different cultures and religious denominations.

Major professional skills and abilities include:

- ability to prepare and conduct tourist, recreational and cultural events in hotels and facilities providing recreational and farming tourism services,
- maintenance of records relating to organisation and finance of tourist agencies, sanatoria, recreational and sporting facilities and centres, etc.,
- calculation and settlement of accounts relating to tourist events,
- ability to interpret legal regulations concerning tourist services,
- ability to draw up business contracts and negotiate with contractors,
- use of maps, city plans and tourist guides,
- ability to present tourist amenities of the region and country, Europe and the world,
- preparation of excursion and recreational routes with complete documentation of the same,
- ability to select foodstuffs meeting the nutritional requirements of various tourist and recreational groups, make calculations, break down the costs and settle accounts,
- ability to work in a group,
- ability to provide tourist service to hotel guests,
- ability to manage a hotel and its individual divisions.²⁴

Examples of future job opportunities for bachelors of tourism and recreation include: all types of tourist enterprises: travel agencies, group accommodation facilities (hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, spas, hostels, training and recreation centres, tourist and youth hostels, camp sites, holiday camps for teenagers), sanatoria, recreation centres and day spas, sports centres, government and local government administration units related to tourism, tourist counselling and opinion-making authorities, organisations and institutions promoting tourism, recreation and physical culture as well as active spending of spare time.

In 2006 in Poland 2689 licensed travel agencies were registered, mostly in the following provinces (voivodships): mazowieckie (507), śląskie (361), małopolskie (319), dolnośląskie (234) and wielkopolskie (216).²⁵

²⁴ http://www.edukacja.wroc.pl/CMS/oferta/od_sylwetka_klodzko.html

²⁵ http://www.intur.com.pl/biura_podrozy.htm

The highest density of tourist entities is in provinces with the highest travelling potential and high tourist value.

The group accommodation facilities, including hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, tourist and youth hostels, camp sites, summer camps for teenagers, artistic work homes, spas, training and recreational centres, Saturday and Sunday recreation centres, camping sites, tent sites, boarding houses make up for 6972 facilities, including 4563 all-year-round facilities (in 2004). The following provinces have the highest density of accommodation facilities: zachodniopomorskie (914), małopolskie (873), pomorskie (800), dolnośląskie (727), wielkopolskie (540), and śląskie (454).²⁶ These are regions highly attractive in terms of tourism with regard to resting and recreation opportunities supported by natural and landscape values. It may be concluded that most of these facilities also offer catering services.

At present 318 sanatoria are also in operation in Poland.²⁷ The tourist facilities mentioned (although these are not all possible facilities but only those regarded most characteristic for the tourism) may provide future job opportunities for bachelors of tourism and recreation. Based on the list presented, the major characteristics of the tourist labour market in Poland may be formulated as follows:

- seasonal character of employment – only part of the facilities operate on the all-year-round basis,
- concentration of tourist agencies and other tourism-related facilities in regions of high tourist, landscape and cultural value,
- high percentage of self-employed persons.

The facts concerning tourist labour market presented above, as well as the facts concerning the qualifications of graduates of bachelor's degree studies in tourism, should be taken into consideration by graduates of this faculty planning their professional careers. They should answer the question if they have the professional qualifications (knowledge and skills) and general skills required, if they are motivated to work, what additional qualifications they will have to obtain in the future and if they will be able to meet the tourist labour market requirements.

They have to take into consideration the seasonal character of employment, frequent travelling, and necessity to change their place of residence and move to a region with potentially more job opportunities in the tourist sector. They should also be prepared for possible self-employment, establishment and running of their own businesses, which is more frequent in tourism than in other fields of economy.

Furthermore, the possibility of legal employment in tourism in other European Union's countries should be mentioned, in particular in the areas where this sector contributes a lot to the state economy.

²⁶ <http://www.intur.com.pl/baza.htm>

²⁷ <http://www.sanatoria.org>.

CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays, when more and more areas of economic and social life become global, the mobility of employees, including both occupational and geographical mobility, becomes an inevitable process the rules of which should be commonly known. The European Commission announced 2006 as the Year of Employee Mobility. Accession of Poland to the European Union as of 1 May 2004 provided the Poles with an opportunity to make use of a new labour market service, that is, international job brokerage of EURES. This service, addressed both to employees and employers, aims to facilitate employee mobility in EEA countries.

In Poland the activity of EURES is governed by the Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions Act of 20.04.2004., that:

- specifies the tasks of public employment services relating to membership in EURES,
- defines the concept of EURES service,
- specifies the sources of EURES funds in Poland,
- defines the national EURES staff.

According to the act mentioned above, EURES service is one of the basic services in the labour market. And it comprises the following tasks:

- providing assistance to the unemployed and to other people seeking job opportunities in finding relevant employment in compliance with the right of free movement of employees between the EU states,
- providing assistance to employers in finding employees with required professional qualifications,
- initiating and organising contacts of the unemployed and of people looking for a job with potential employers,
- providing information on the living and working condition and the situation in labour markets, taking into account deficit and surplus occupations,
- preventing and fighting the obstacles to employee mobility,
- providing information on EURES services to employees of public employment services and trade unions and to organisations of employers,
- initiating and managing international projects.²⁸

In turn, the Mobile Europe Project is an initiative whose priority is to develop the awareness of employees with regard to their rights and facilitate free movement between the member states. Moreover, people going to work abroad must know their duties and, at the same time, be aware of the opportunities offered by the specific country and the obstacles they may encounter. Nowadays, those who are able to respond fast to the changing needs of employers, resulting from development or deficiencies in specific industries, sectors or companies, will have the highest chances of getting a job. Thus, these will be the people who will continue to learn and acquire new skills that are required at the specific time.²⁹

²⁸ <http://www.eures.praca.gov.pl>

²⁹ <http://www.mobilna.eu/>

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