

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**POLYTECHNIC OF SIBENIK**

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**2019**

**4<sup>th</sup> International Conference**  
**THE CHALLENGES OF TODAY**



**ŠIBENIK**  
10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**Conference in partnership with:**

The Institute of Economics, Zagreb;

University of Split - University Department of Professional Studies;

Alma Mater Europaea ECM;

Public Institution in culture Fortress of Culture Sibenik



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Trg Andrije Hebranga 11, HR - 22000 Sibenik, Croatia

Tel: +385 (0)22 311060; Fax: +385 (0)22 216716

e-mail: dekanat@vus.hr

URL: www.vus.hr

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The Conference Time and Venue: Sibenik, October 10-12 2019

## PREFACE

The 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference The Challenges of today was held in Sibenik from 10<sup>th</sup> October to 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The conference was organized by the Polytechnic of Sibenik as a natural sequence to the first scientific and professional conference "Challenges of today: Tourism of today – for tomorrow" which was organized in 2013, the second international scientific and professional conference "Challenges of today: tourism and local development" which was organized in 2015 and the third international scientific and professional conference "Challenges of today: sustainable coastal and maritime tourism" in 2017.

The conference was organized in partnership with The Institute of Economics, Zagreb, University Department of Professional Studies at the University of Split, Alma Mater Europaea ECM and Fortress of Culture Sibenik. The conference was under patronage of Croatian President Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic, Croatian Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Croatian Ministry of Tourism and Croatian Chamber of Economy. The organization of the conference was sponsored by Oracle Academy, National park Kornati, National park Krka, OTP Bank p.l.c., Sibenik Knin County, Sibenik Knin county Tourist Board, Sibenik Student Centre, City of Sibenik, Sibenik tourist board, Municipality of Pirovac and Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts.

The Polytechnic of Sibenik was founded in 2006. From its very beginning, its primal goal and mission has been the education of reliable and socially responsible stakeholders of the future development on local, national and international level. The aim of the Conference The Challenges of Today is to gather the experts who are through different levels of professional and public life engaged in digital transformation issues in different ways and through various fields of professional and public life.

With this conference we wanted to bring together scientists/researchers and the economic community in order to inaugurate jointly new models and insights in promoting digital transformation as a motor of change and economic development through an interdisciplinary approach.

On the first day we had Oracle Academy lectures whereas on the second day we had plenary lectures of invited national and international lecturers and paper presentation in five sessions: Marketing and Management, Technology and Innovations, Gastronomy and Tourism, Accounting and Finance and Legal Order. On the second day we held the roundtable discussion on Sustainable Model of Smart Mid-sized Cities: "Strategy H2020 vs H2030" which we expect to become an active gathering to initiate the beginning and development of future projects.

More than 100 participants from 50 different institutions participated at the conference and more than 50 papers were presented. The authors addressed different themes from different perspectives of certain social occurrences, processes, ways of management and other theoretical and practical situations under given circumstances.

We, therefore, justly assume that their expert analysis has managed to bring closer certain issues and their solutions to the public and have enriched literature in that specific area. We hope that this collection of papers will enable and induce users to continue their own research. This is the guarantee for our future conference and new authors.

Finally, we would like to thank all the authors for their contribution to our conference. We also thank all the other participants for coming, members of the Program and Organizing Committee, reviewers, moderators of sessions, employees of the Polytechnic and all those who contributed to the success of the conference. Special thanks to our sponsors and partners and we truly look forward to our next successful cooperation and future common programs.

Best regards till our next meeting!

Sibenik, October 2019

Organizing Committee

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# Practical work for students in the field of tourism: new perspective in a digitalization era

Oliver Filiposki<sup>1</sup>, Dejan Metodijeski<sup>2</sup>, Nako Taskov<sup>3</sup> and Kristijan Dzambazoski<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of tourism and business logistic, University "Goce Delcev"-Stip, (oliver.filiposki@ugd.edu.mk),

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of tourism and business logistic, University "Goce Delcev"-Stip, (dejan.metodijeski@ugd.edu.mk),

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of tourism and business logistic, University "Goce Delcev"-Stip, (nako.taskov@ugd.edu.mk),

<sup>4</sup>Hotel Ambasador, Skopje, (kristijan@hotelambasador-sk.com.mk).

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The rapid pace of tourism development has a critical need for professional staff. Higher education institutions are the places where students acquire knowledge and skills in a particular field. In addition to theoretical instruction, curricula also include practical work. Practical work is a system for training students and preparing for their future profession. It is necessary to build a system of practice for students in the field of tourism that will be sustainable, adaptable and compatible with the needs of employers in the field of tourism and students. In this paper, a structured questionnaire examines the needs and perceptions of students and employers for the practical work and challenges of contemporary trends at the Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics from University "Goce Delcev"-Shtip, Republic of North Macedonia. The results suggest that the system of practical work should include understanding of the needs of employers and students in the direction of transformation of traditional tourism and hospitality operations into modern tourism and hospitality operations including information technologies and digitalization. The positive implications of the system of practical work give the effect of satisfied students who give meaningful remarks and conclusions from their practical work and employers which consequently give the opportunity for employment of students with a grate skills and knowledge, and enhance quality of tourism offer.

Keywords: *Practical work, training programs, higher education, tourism.*

## 1. Introduction

Contemporary tourism one of cultural aspect of modern civilization, and for some people that's a way for leveling up the culture and getting healthy, for some fun, for others is opportunity to earn, and for the public sector opportunity to expand the employment and the incomes (Taskov 2013). The dynamics and the intensity of the tourism development globally is more than good. In accordance with the World tourism organization (UNWTO 2018), the coming tourists in 2018 internationally, achieved the number of 1.4 billion. Tourism industry has a 10 percent contribution in the global gross domestic product. Every 11<sup>th</sup> person in the world is a tourism laborer.

Because of the fast moving tourism development, a critical need of employments is showing up from the professional sectors. One part as claimants for professional sectors, are the hotel and restaurant chains. Other perspective or part is that there are most and most people willing to start their own business. For the second ones, the tourism and hospitality continue to provide wide spectra of opportunities, if they have strong entrepreneurial spirit. Creative, hardworking orientated hospitality people, who desire to own and work in personal/private business,

the tourism and hospitality offers them unlimited opportunities. These desires lead to serious approach for the professional sector development. This tendency is connected with the necessity of continuous quality development of the tourism service and tourism sector services. The studying of individual tourism parts, getting to know and tracking and managing the development, planning and predicting the dynamic changes, generates high point of competitive and adequate professional qualification. Professional sector prepare is the key of successful tourism development, and the students practical labor has an important educational role.

## 2. Defining and types of practical classes

In the past, the practical work can be compared with the relation between the foreman and his mate. Today, it presents training system of the students and their preparation for future profession. During the studies, the students, besides their theoretical subject, they have also obligatory practice. It must be said that the practical work is not same as the day regular job. Practical work can be practice, labors, professional practice, ferial work, practical studies etc. In professional way, the practice is defined as skill gained through doing a particular job (Mikunovik 1991). The reason why the practical work is included in the educational system of one state, comes mostly from the needs and requirements of a particular economy professional sector. Mostly, the practical work is introduced with common initiatives by side of the Public sector (OECD 2012), universities, student alliances, high schools and economy department.

Practical work can be defined as process of "service exchanging for experience" between the student and the organization/ employer who accepted the practice worker. Practice is important for students, because, working on particular positions can approach them in a tet a tet position if they suit for that particular job, to expand their contacts, to also expand their professional and personal experience and to achieve their goal – to get the job done, which is necessary for them, and to complete their high education. A part of those students are signing an agreement with the companies where they were doing the practical job, and with this the companies also provide themselves a "trusted partners" who are not in need with additional trainings and orientations.

Practice is widely accepted by the student's activity in the modern EU countries, US and all across the globe. Universities in the last couple decades hold serios approach for the practice job. Because of this, universities start their own practice facilities. University "Goce Delcev"-Shtip, Republic of North Macedonia has its own Office for carriers and alumni club, where is taken care of evidence, agreements are sealed, and directions of practice are issued. Also, the other universities in our country have adopt term conditions for practical work with who the practical work is regulated.

In accordance with Dewey, "one gram of experience is better than a ton of theory", because only in practice some theory can be confirmed and its vitality. (Dewey 2012). Practical work is designed to help the students in their studies, professional development, getting to know the further job etc. (Goeldner 2009). With the help of the practical work, students have the opportunity to contribute for their own professional and personal development (Sweitzer 2009). Practical work purpose is to maintain new skills and usage of what is learnt on the workplace, as "appendant value" which is made in the company. Practice job goals should be targeted with student's competence which is expected from them and they should be in the right expectance of the jobs training process. With realization of the practical studies, the students can achieve more goals. The more important ones will be stated:

- Gaining professional working experience, skills and abilities for a particular profession;

- Research of different production and service aspects;
- Introducing with the organization and company function;
- Introducing with the pros and cons of the job;
- Introducing with the career advantage;
- Identifying the working conditions;
- Knowing and respecting the proper rules for personal protection, job place and environment protection;
- Developing teamwork skills, communication skills, fixing tasks, responsibility, creativity, making decisions etc.
- Establishing relationship of trust with potential employer.

There are three parts who benefit from this. Those are the students, the universities and the private sector (Walo 2001). Practical work is “bridge” and base for collaboration between the educational institutions and the private sector (Busby 2003). Student must have opportunity to practice in a real working places (companies). Universities must give an opportunity for student to do their practice work in supervised environment in a company's. Private sector must create opportunity of providing an internship possibilities for future employees.

Practical work on a lower or higher level, is making a life change habits for the student, so some affects can be noted:

- Education: some students because of the practical work reduce their studying time and domestic tasks, and after they have some difficulties with overcoming the subject materials. Others, when present on lecturing and practice, are more focused on the practical work and are not careful with the material etc.
- Family: for the students who are living with their parents, siblings, married with children etc., need to be good organized and flexible to execute the family obligations as the practical ones.
- Partners: if the students are with partners who are living together or are only in a relationship, then they need to balance the time of the practical job and their partners time;
- Friends: although some friends are closer than others, all friendships are kind of obligation. The student needs to save some time to spend individual or group socializing.
- Roommates: if the student lives with other people it is normal to have “house rules”, having schedule for cleaning, supplies, parties etc. This schedule can be changed because of the practice (waking up early, impossibility to shop together etc.)
- Other obligations: hobbies, sport, recreation, lunch, cultural activities and other. The rest of the obligations are scheduled by the student, in which he/she is planning by priorities and the time he/she has.

There are a lot of practical job types which can be done in a lot of economic and non-profitable areas, and there are plenty of classifications and divisions (N. D. Taskov 2013). A couple of divisions are ranged in this labor.

- From financial aspect, the practice job can be paid, honorary, or partially paid. In relation with the durance of the practice job it can be divided in weekly; monthly; quartile; half-year; full year and for a longer period.
- In accordance with the interval when the job is done it can be continuous and phase. In accordance with the season, it can be seasonal and non-seasonal.
- In accordance with the students, there are: practice related with achieving a working experience or can be related with research work (bachelor, master, doctor etc).
- Now days you can see the so-called “virtual” students who can do their job through internet, phone, fax, web moderators etc.
- In accordance with the organization types those can be divided in private sector (companies,

firms); public sector (public facilities and institutions) and non-governmental organizations (associations, assemblies, associations etc.).

- In accordance with the educational level of the students, there are three types of practice: High school practice; bachelor practice and master's practice.
- In accordance with the territory that is executed in, the practice can be classified like: living place; in the region; in the country borders, and international practice.
- In accordance with execution, the practice job can be divided on practice in facilities; practice through "playing roles" and outdoor or field practice.

Although, division criteria of the practice are subjected on continuous changes, because of the fast-industrial development, informatics techs and technologies, globalization and other stuff.

### 3. Research methodology

For this research we used quantitative empirical method with semi structured questionnaires for data collection. Long years of service for the students practice job of the Faculty for Tourism and Business Logistics from University "Goce Delcev"-Shtip, Republic of North Macedonia (further this will be used as FTBL) is providing data that can be used for creation of universal recommendations for contemporary working in the sector of tourism and hospitality. Students basic needs were considered at the beginning of the program, and that is for them to gain practical knowledge and skill in the area of tourism and hospitality, so for the last few years can be transformed in interactive program that includes not only the student needs, but also the employers, and so the contemporary tourism and hospitality trends.

The tourism facilities considerate the students from FTBL are doing the practical job, so we can state that this field has a continuous need of research in the tourism facilities. These questionnaires' are provided in FTBL for seven years. Most content questions are directed for the competence, communicational and managing skills. In the last four years, there is making of a questionnaire for supervisors, i.e. selected people from the employer, who will monitor their practice program and will give evaluation of the student. In this case, a both ways communication is important, because of the opportunity to consider particular disadvantages or business community needs for certain competence and skills that need to be owned by the students.

In this research a group of students were monitored who were executing summer practice semester in the following fields:

1. Gastronomy, nutrition and diets, eight semesters;
2. Restaurant hotel, eight semesters; and
3. Restaurant hotel, sixth semester.

In the research two groups were observed from two educational FTBL's center (Skopje and Stip) for the 2018-2019 school year. Total 94 students were covered with the research and 85 employers from the tourism and hospitality field.

Two questionnaires were made for the research: first one for the students- Company and object Evaluation by the student; and second, for the employers, student evaluation given from the supervisor.

Students questionnaire was compound of two parts, first: twelve questions with possibility to choose, and second part: Likert scale of satisfaction from fourteen parameters for student's satisfaction.

Employers questionnaire was compound with Likert scale for giving grades of fourteen parameters of the supervisor satisfaction marked from the employer for the student's process of

the practical program.

Fulfillment of the questionnaires was obligatory for all the students who were serving obligatory semester practice in the period from 15.02.2019 till 15.05.2019.

The main problem of research in this paper are the conditions for carrying out practical work. As separate hypotheses are distinguished:

- The conditions for practical work for students correspond with the curriculum study programs and the possibility of practicing theoretical knowledge, and
- Employers' satisfaction with the skills and knowledge of students in the field of hospitality and tourism in order to improve the quality of the tourist offer.

## 4. Results

From the conducted research with total of 94 students who did obligatory practice at employers from the tourism and hospitality field, 85 delivered complete documentation that they done the practical program, the 9 left students did not succeed to do the practice program from different reasons.

With the semester practice in the summer semester total of 66 students were in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of studies/eight semester and 19 students from 3<sup>rd</sup> year of studies/ sixth semester. 42% of these students were from Gastronomy, nutrition and diet and 58% from Restaurant hotel department. 45% of the total number were girls, and 55% were boys. All of the finished the obligatory summer semester practice.

The major number of selected students finished the practice in restaurants (52%), hotels (20%), tourism agencies (12%), bars (9%) and rest (7%).

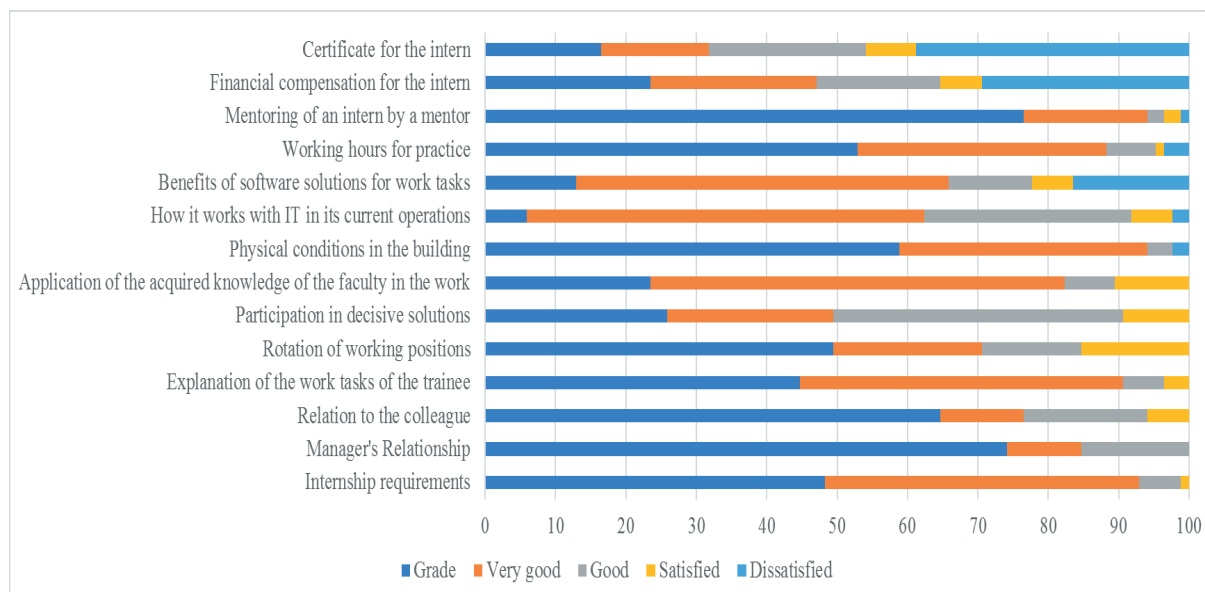
Most of the students marked that FTBL practice is greatly organized 78% and 22% considered it needs to be improved.

All the students stated that practice program is important for improving their skills during the studies and for the future professional education.

In the questionnaire the students stated that practice program should be executed in restaurants and hospitality facilities 45%, to rotate in the institutions 24%, hotels 22% and 9% in tourism agencies and rent a car office. About the electronic system which is used for practice program on university level so far 93% said it's working excellent, and only 7% said it needs improvement. When asked how much the program which is used for the practice is in correlation with, 94% said there is correlation and 6% said it is fully relating.

86% of the students used informatics technologies (IT) during the practice program, and only 14% does not. From the total number of students 82% said they constantly used software resolution during the practice work, 4% couple times a week, and 14% never.

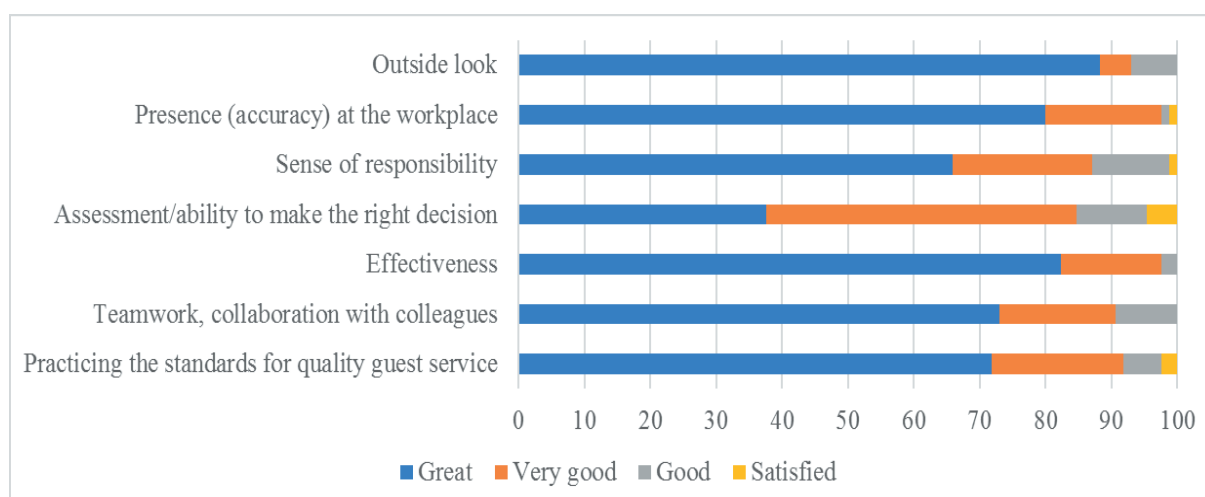
In the second part the students express their grades from (Great, Very good, Good, Satisfied and Dissatisfied) explaining their experience with the working environment where they were doing the practice program.

**Table 1: Evaluation of students for they are practical work (in %)**

Source: Own analysis

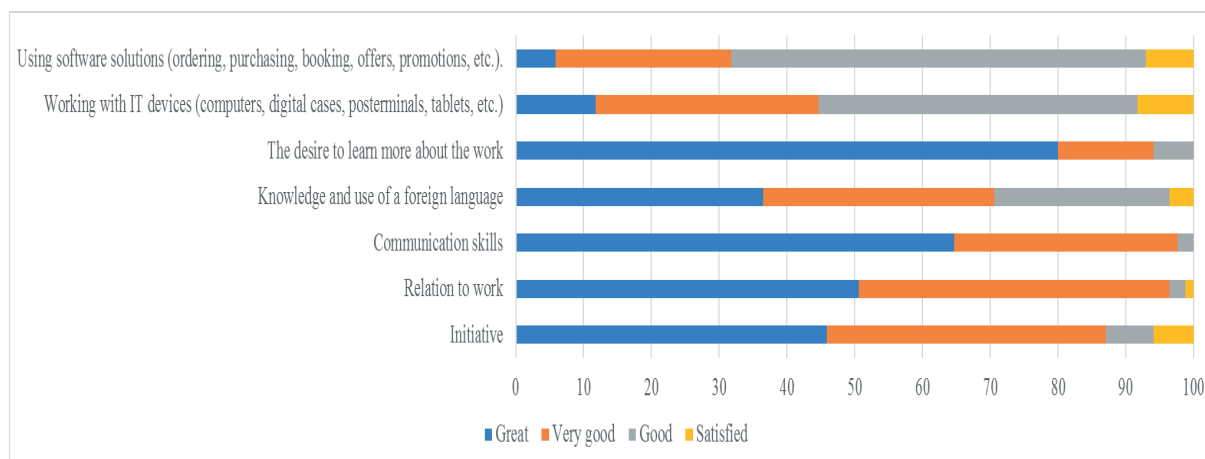
In the student's evaluation can be seen that most Grade grade have the parameters Internship requirement, Manager and colleague's relationship, Physical conditions of the facility, Working hours and Mentoring the student. Very good grade is Using software resolutions for the work tasks, managing in the IT sector and Usage of gained knowledge related with the job. Under average parameters i.e. Good, Satisfied and Dissatisfied are: Participation in decision solutions, financial compensation for the student and Student's Certificate. From the above results the conditions for practical training correspond with the curricula of the faculty.

In the second questionnaire the supervisors selected from the employers evaluated the students' job during the obligatory practice job. This questionnaire gave these results:

**Table 2a: Supervisors evaluation (in %)**

Source: Own analysis

Table 2b: Supervisors evaluation (in %)



Source: Own analysis

From the above data we can see that best graded parameters are: Looks, Accuracy at the workplace, Responsibility, Efficiency, Teamwork, Colleague's collaboration, Standards usage for courtesy serving, Willing to learn more, Communication skills and Job relations. Average grades: Ability to make right choice, Using software solutions, Working with IT devices and Usage of foreign languages. From the above it can be said that the satisfaction of employers with the skills and knowledge of the students in the field of hospitality and tourism, which would contribute to improving the quality of the tourist offer, is great.

In the comments sections by the employers these comments were added: from 85 questionnaires only 13 were fulfilled of which 10 were for improvement in working with "IT devices" and "specialized software" for restaurant working, and also for their workers for more "professional communication" in foreign languages.

## 5. Conclusion

Practice job provides the results of improving and using the gained theoretical student knowledge. During the process of obligational, weekly and summer practice FTBL students reach practical knowledge of the tourism and hospitality area. During the ten years of existence the FTBL need for creation of system practical program was considered which also would be compatible with global practices. So, a system for evidence was created, in the early years, for students who were sent for the practice program as for home courses also as for abroad. In the following years the system was upgraded in electronic form (base of companies which can be used as host for practice program and documentation creation). This upgrade was not good enough to recognize and apart the negative and the positive sides of the practical program, so questionnaires for grades were created about the places where the students were heading. Simple access gave the effect of "less effort" i.e. negative comments on employer's side. From 2015 FTBL exceed the one-way access with introducing the evaluation students working questionnaire, which result in balance of the policy view for the both sides. System access of practical program contributed for FTBL to be in more direct correlation with the business community and to have firsthand information of the needs in the tourism and hospitality enterprise. From the research it can be seen that the basic parameters for unconditional functioning of the practice program are on good level, but it can be promoted (next phase) the specific forms of working and labor specialized for tourism and hospitality. The research confirmed the theses

that the conditions for practical work for the students correspond with the curriculum study programs and the possibility of practicing theoretical knowledge, and there is satisfaction for the employers from the skills and knowledge of the students in the field of hospitality and tourism in the direction of improving the quality of the tourist offer. On one side students/ employers' needs can be grouped in the part for awarding and upgrading for using contemporary electronic devices and IT- solutions. Awarding in form like getting money which should be changed with the new practice law (May 2019) and upgrading and promoting in manner of appreciation, diplomas, certificates or acknowledged forms of credits, as forms of labor and promotion in the field they choose. On other side, it needs to meet the requirements of the tourism-hospitality work with implementing and using the informatics technology in the study programs and continuously applying the same in virtual practice programs environment, also using electronic devices for better enrollment in the working areas after graduation.

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