

STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL MODEL OF THE COMPETENCIES OF SPORTS ANIMATOR

(Research note)

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Abstract

Rethinking of the ways of professional training of sports animators highlights the need of developing of some structural and functional models. These key competencies are integrated according to the activities of the sports animator for the purpose of their improving. The innovation is formation of some separate clusters of competencies, characterized with the activity specifics of the sports animation and applied in the typical sports animation context. The integration of this conceptual model in the educational training and career development of sports animators will result in continuous improvement of their competence, which will provide required efficiency and competitive advantage of the sports and animation activities.

Keywords: *sports animator, structural and functional model, competency approach*

INTRODUCTION

XXI century is a period of time characterized with changes in all areas of life and towards personality, its competence as well as the personal realization of new higher requirements are claimed. Thus personal and activity aims of the contemporary education, accepted as continuing, permanent and open to everyone as well as a main factor for overcoming of long layered controversies, are set as priority. This timeless relevance of the education allows seeking of ways for its transformation into conscious, active, motivated, creative and personally meaningful activity. Its orientation towards the free development of the individual, of their creative initiative, independence, competitiveness and mobility require changing in the educational paradigm (Tsankov (Цанков), 2013. This reconstruction requires the usage alone or in combination of different approaches to the development of integrative personal and active qualities. Among them **the competency approach**, acquired a broad applicability within the recent decades, has the most significant and relevant educational results as well as a dominant, innovative and conceptual sounding for the educational and professional environment. The introduction of the competence approach in education, the recruitment and the overall concept for the staff development in the field of tourism will provide the necessary compatibility between the acquired educational and the required professional competence. The gaps in education and vocational training are reflected, on one hand, on the global national economy - *deteriorated economic results, imbalance on the labor market, shortage of highly qualified specialists, high rates of unemployment,*

while on the other hand, they affect devastatingly the personal fulfillment and lead to inefficient usage of the workforce potential.

Nowadays of main importance for the competitiveness of each organization is its capability to define the specific role of its employees, as this will lead to their integration with the company's strategy, objectives and outcomes. This process of management of job performance creates conditions for acquiring the added value of human resources, designing and implementing the activities and ensuring the quality of the final product. Because of this, the human resources should not only be qualified, but also competent and it is exactly the other important prerequisite related to the competitiveness of the organization as a whole and the service and the product specifically. In the context of increasingly complex environment, the competent employee is the one, who will successfully cope with the emerging challenges, basing on his or her personal professional potential, qualities and abilities acquired through training and practice.

Competences are "measurable and sustainable human capacity, combination of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behavior of employees, in order to achieve optimal results / performance levels/; combination, applicable to a specific professional role, working situation and activity in a particular organization (Kolev, Shivachev, Dimitrov, Vekova & Todorova (Колев, Шиваров, Димитров, Векова & Тодорова), 2010. Competences cannot be fully and unlimited achieved because as well as they reflect the dynamics of the environment. According to the definition "competence is

accepted as measurable ability of a person to act qualitatively and effectively in order to cope with particular problems" (TEN Competence Foundation).

Differentiating and defining the competence is an approach, which on one hand allows the organizations to determine precisely the requirements towards staff, in accordance to their occupation, and on another hand to assess the inconsistencies between those requirements and the actual level of readiness of their employees to perform their professional duties.

Competences bear direct mark of the business environment in which the companies operate, their mission, vision, values, while they are influenced by the specific requirements towards the employees. When the situations, events and results change, the same happens with the competences descriptions. According to G. Hamel "nowadays the real competition is the competition of competences" (Hamel 1991). More detailed consideration and development of this idea is provided by R. Sanchez and A. Heene, according to whom „the sustainable competitive advantage in the long term is due to the superior ability to identify, build and manage new competences (Sanchez & Heene 1996a, 1996b)

Taking into consideration all said up to now, we can summarize that the possibility of classification of competences as regulatory requirements about a particular profession is essential in order *professional training* to be improved and *qualification* of staff to be increased; factors that suggest not only the readiness for action but also require expression of creativity, skills for decision-making and planning that are in accordance to the job specifics related to the modern conditions of dynamically changing requirements for the professional realization.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In order human resource to be managed efficiently and with purpose to be ensured successful deployment of the competence approach, integrated sets of mutually complementary competences are constructed, which in the theories of human resource management are known as „**competency models**". These are frames of competences or groups (clusters) of competences, required for the position, which describe the behaviors linked to specific values, goals or corporate culture, that lead to effective job performance and achievement of desired results. In competency models of corporate organization at each position are specified competences with their definitions and corresponding behaviors necessary for excellent performance. Behaviors are detailed so that the management and the employees themselves to be able to consider whether their actions meet the required by the competence standard.

Tourism as a part of the social and economic life is one of the main human activities and it is directly related to other major ones: material production, social and political as well as spiritual activities. Because of this tourist activity is accepted as a specially organized and

implemented system of targeted sub-activities, following the rule according to which: „every major type of activity, retaining its nature, in the specific types and forms is modified, acquires specific features depending on the individuals on which they are targeted, depending also on those conducting the activities, on objectives which an individual places before him or her, as well as on the results of the activity (Ribov (Рибов), 2003a).

As a purposeful activity, the tourist administration should be well planned, organized and managed. Typical for it are all the regularities applicable to the process of producing, offering and selling of the tourist services.

Directed towards the leisure time of tourists, it activates the processes of communication as „it is put in favor of the demand for spontaneity, joy, freedom and physicality" (Bette, 1989) while taking part in specially designed programs. Thus animation lays the foundations for a higher stage in the development of the tourist industry and it could be identified as a new style in production, supply and marketing of the tourist products.

To create a tourist product of high quality, of a key importance is the position occupied by staff, because "the human factor is the one that combines the physical, financial and informational resources within the frame of the tourist product (Nedkova (Неджкова), 2005. Despite the continuous introduction of new technologies in the tourist industry, labor force has its major role in the creation and offering of the product. Therefore, the imposition and establishment of each activity in the tourist business is related to training of highly qualified specialists. Therefore „competitiveness in tourist activities is highly dependent on education, professional training and personal qualities of the specialists who put it into practice (Deliverska 2013) **Human resources** take main position in the *National Strategy for Development of Tourism 2*, because taking into account the tendency of growing in the tourist industry, the biggest challenge is the proper parallel development of human resources, which are in the basis of the development and deployment of the tourist product.

As a result of the continuous development of the tourist industry is the increase of the tourist activities and their diversity and as a consequence of it more and more obvious becomes "the need for both a quantitative increase in qualified staff in the industry and their ensuring in qualitative and structural terms from the perspective of the required qualifications, professions and positions (Georgiev & Madgerova (Георгиев & Мадгерова), 2010.

Trends in the tourist animation clearly put ahead the human resource as determinative for its effectiveness and search. Its approval is directly related to the quality of training of animators /including sports animators/ as participants in this activity, which in turn requires continuous acquisition of new knowledge, skills and competences, forming the image of modern and competent strategic human resource.

Reaching high quality of sports and animation ac-

Table 1. Structural-functional model of the competences of sports animator

№	CLUSTER	KEY COMPETENCES
1.	Corporate culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging to a professional community and professional integrity • Taking responsibility • Effective feedback • Getting results
2.	Innovative thinking and proactive qualities of realization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal effectiveness • Self development • Constant learning and development
3.	Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness for sharing knowledge and experience • Adaptability and flexibility • Coordination and harmony with colleagues • Maintaining collaboration with team members • Self-control • Resistance to stress and tension
4.	Strategic thinking and effectiveness of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and organizing the activities • Providing quality of work • Decision making and problem solving • Conflict Management • Time management and personal productivity • Management of material resources
5.	Communicative competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating in a foreign language • Communication face to face • Dealing with objections and complaints
6.	Tolerant environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intercultural tolerance • Ethics and loyalty
7.	Digital competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer literacy • Operating the database • Use of software products
8.	Sports education and physical preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of a type of sport • Adapted sports activity • Sports for everybody • Caring for the tourists' health and safety

tivities is long and difficult process and it depends to a large extent on the professional capabilities and competence of the animators. Our research on the educational potential of animators (Deliverska (Деливерска), 2013) shows the acute need for professionally trained staff for the various aspects of the animation activity in tourism. The shortage of such professionals negatively affects the competitiveness of the various tourist sites and the business as a whole. Users of tourist services more and more expect to receive proposals regarding the purposeful and well organized animation activities. The data from the casting selection of animators in tourism (Deliverska & Ivanov, 2014.) reinforce the status quo in the professional training and education of candidates.

The analysis of the importance and contribution of the human factor to the quality and competitiveness of tourist, and in particular, sports and animation activities, acquire the need an integrated structural and functional model to be developed (Table 1.), which model should systematize the basic requirements to sports animators embodied of their competences, resulting from their direct activities and opportunities for their professional development.

CONCLUSIONS

The developed competency model allows differentia-

tion and identification of the core competences of sports animator, integrated in the specific context of knowledge and skills, while their systematic and purposeful formation and development is the basis of the quality and competitiveness of the tourism, and in particular, of sports and animation activities.

Created in such way, the conceptualized structural and functional model of sports animator outlines its profile and its key position for implementation in the field of tourism. Owning the described competences provides the necessary competence which sport animator must have for his or her successful realization and professional growth. The competence of the individuals practicing sports animation activities could be achieved only through their systematic and targeted training related to the acquiring of specific professional competences, which will ensure the process of "experience" as an "added value".

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