

MODERN APPROACHES TO THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF PROSPECTIVE EXPERTS OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Abstract: *The relevancy of the problem under study is due to the fact that at the moment the transition from a raw-material development model to an innovative socio-oriented type of economy is a necessary condition for the competitiveness of the Russian economy. In this regard, one of the priority directions of the social and economic policy of the Russian state is the dynamic development of the hospitality industry. For reason given, there is a demand to improve the quality of professional training of prospective experts in tourism and hospitality as active subjects capable of designing and implementing their own strategies for professional growth, possessing the necessary competencies, competitive personal qualities and professional mobility. The purpose of the paper is to outline the main theoretical provisions of modern approaches as methodological grounds for the professional training of specialists in the hospitality industry; and in analyzing the results of an experimental study of the professional positions of students as prospective experts in the hotel services. The leading methods of research of this problem are the content analysis of the main theoretical provisions of modern approaches to the formation of professional competencies of prospective hospitality experts from the positions of different authors, as well as the system analysis of the survey complex with students of 2-4 years (aged 18 to 21) in the total number of 73 people, studying in Petrozavodsk State University, in the student courses of "Hospitality" and "Tourism". The results of the research are the identification of students' values that determine the personal position within the chosen occupation, their relationship to socio-cultural and intercultural interaction, the semantic-value relationship to future professional activities in the tourism and hospitality industry. The paper deals with the professional competencies of specialists in the sphere of hotel services, which are formed in various types of practice-oriented activity, proximate to the professional already at the stage of college/university training. The materials of the paper are of practical use for faculty members of vocational educational institutions, postgraduates, and students.*

Keywords: *vocational training, professional competence, educational environment, axiological, culturological, activity, competence approaches.*

INTRODUCTION

At the present stage of globalization processes taking place in the world, the tourism and hospitality industry is one of the most dynamically developing economic sectors, both on the global and Russian labor market. So, Cynthia S. Deale notes that

“effective tourism promotes a balanced and healthy economy, creates jobs, and raises revenues and taxes associated with tourism. At the same time, it protects and improves social, cultural, historical, natural resources and infrastructure that are designed to enjoy leisure, both for locals and tourists”[17]. The Government of the Russian Federation approved the Concept of long-term social and economic development of Russian Federation until 2020 (Strategy 2020) [20], according to which the Federal target program “Development of domestic and inbound tourism in the Russian Federation (2011-2018)” was developed. It is aimed at the effective development and enhancement of the competitiveness on the field of tourism and hospitality, which would meet the needs of Russian and foreign citizens at the level of world standards in quality services in this area. “The activities of the program are aimed at increasing the efficiency of national tourism promotion in the domestic and international markets and improving the staff training system” [21].

This led to the call to improve the quality of the services provided by hotel companies, which is impossible without the achievement of a top level professionalism of experts in this area; these experts must be mobile to solve not only the standard occupational tasks, but also be able to adapt to the constantly changing conditions associated with the introduction of innovations in the field of hotel services. Vocational practice-oriented college/university training facilitates the adaptation of graduates to the workplace in the hotel services “since providing standard staff training in the workplace is complex and time-consuming due to seasonal fluctuations in the hospitality industry and gross size of the workforce” – according to Joan Ho [18]. Against this background, the role of educational programs in the organization of hotel enterprises personnel training in the university is on the rise. At the present stage of Russian society development, higher education is a decisive factor in the social and personal formation of future experts. Prospects for the development of economy and social sphere require the formation of such professional and personal qualities as system thinking, creative activity and responsibility for the performed work, the ability to consciously analyze own activities, to act independently in uncertain conditions, firm grasp of environmental, legal, informational, communicative culture, and culture of entrepreneurship [11, p. 60]. The new requirements for a specialist competitive in the labor market dictate the call to change attitudes towards the professional training of skilled personnel. Methodological grounds for such training are modern approaches: axiological, culturological, activity and competence.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The axiological approach underlies the study of values as the semantic-forming dominants of education. The concept of “value”, used in philosophy, psychology, sociology and pedagogy, “is used to denote the properties of objects and phenomena, as well as theories and ideas that serve as an apparent ideal and a standard of quality in accordance with socially-determined priorities for the development of culture”[1, p. 41]. The implementation of the axiological approach in education is related to the problem of development and self-development of universal and national values in the sphere of the material and spiritual culture of society. “Conditions for the individual to master the universal culture, to recognize and realize own behavior and actions are created in the process of familiarizing with values”[1, p. 359]. Formation and development of the personality occurs “due to the mechanism of inheritance and augmentation of social values that are the truth of life, gained by the experience of previous generations and

existing in the form of knowledge, ideals, standards of behavior and interpersonal relationships”[10, p.18]. System of values allows the person to realize oneself in the living space, creating conditions for unlimited self-development and spiritual self-actualization within the professional activities. Human values are not only to be comprehended, realized and acknowledged by a personality, but also to become a system of individual orientations in professional self-improvement. “The implementation of the axiological approach is related to the orientation toward a system of values as a guarantor of preserving the traditional foundations of society, culture and education, counteracting (by its imagery and potential) the crisis phenomena of modern society”[16, p.94-95].

In the process of professional training of the hospitality industry experts, special attention is paid to the formation of students’ value orientations, related to their prospective occupational activities. In this regard, the aim of the study was to identify the value preferences of students, determining their professional position and attitude towards the most important, from their point of view, values of the chosen occupation. Diagnostic study was conducted in Petrozavodsk State University, at the Department of Tourism with students of 2-4 years in the courses of “Hospitality” and “Tourism”, in the total number of 73 people. The students were offered a list of professional values, which included: occupational prestige, creativity, active social contacts, self-development, spiritual satisfaction, financial well-being, expression of individuality features - which students were to rank according to its importance. Based on the study conclusions, the following results were obtained (Table 1).

Table 1 - The results of professional values ranking by the degree of its significance for students

Professional values	Ranking						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Occupational prestige	2	9	11	9	7	12	23
Creativity	2	5	9	11	14	14	18
Active social contacts	11	10	5	12	7	21	7
Self-development	16	11	25	9	6	3	3
Spiritual satisfaction	23	7	6	12	17	3	6
Financial well-being	18	24	6	10	7	4	4
Individuality	1	7	11	11	15	16	12

From the results presented in the table, it can be concluded that leading values determining the personal position of students within the occupational category are the spiritual satisfaction (23 persons / 31.5%), financial well-being (18 persons / 24.7%), and self-development (16 people / 21.9%). These professional values were identified by the respondents as the most ranked in terms of their significance. Moreover, the students themselves proposed a separate set of values in the hospitality field occupational category (215 positions), which can be provisionally divided into the following groups: professionalism, interaction, care and concern for people, guests’ gratitude quotes. The value positions allocated by the students were distributed as follows (Table 2).

Table 2
Value ranking positions in the hospitality occupational category, allocated by students

Value groups	Values	Positions in abs. figures /%
Professionalism	Creativity, communication skills, punctuality, intellectual nature of the occupation, knowledge of different languages and cultures, strive for excellence (self-development), development of mental outlook, responsibility, self-management, stress-resistance, self-fulfillment in the professional field, aesthetic qualities, intelligence, mobility, commitment to act in unforeseen circumstances, honesty, teamwork skills, charismaticness and charm.	107/49.8%
Interaction	Skills to find common ground with different people, an individual approach to each visitor, goodwill, sympathy, the manifestation of empathy.	45/20.9%
Care and concern for people	Quality of services, customers' safety and maximum gratification, tolerant attitude towards people.	36/16.7%
Guests' gratitude quotes	Good spirits, positive feedback, guests' ultimate experiences, returning customers.	27/12.6%

Based on the data obtained (presented in the table above), it can be concluded that professionalism is the basic group of values for students. This group is supplemented by value groups of interaction, care and concern for people, and guests' gratitude quotes. Allocated by students' value orientations should be considered in the organization of an educational environment focused on the professional training of hospitality specialists. The educational environment is considered to be a "systemic form of being, creating conditions for self-expression, self-fulfillment and self-creation of the personality; and education is considered as a process of the formation of an individual's culture, personal spiritual dimension and subjectivity - contributing to self-esteem and the manifestation of unique individuality and creative activity in various life situations, including the professional activity"[12, p. 35.]. The main goal of the educational process in the higher educational establishment is to form the students' demand for high-quality performance of their professional activity, where the leading values are labor and expertise. Providing occupational orientation of the curriculum disciplines it is important to focus on the formation and development of social-value characteristics of prospective hospitality professionals. The use of innovative methods and tools in educational activities contribute to the creation of a dynamic problem environment, offering the student to decide individually the questions such as: Who am I within that profession and what is my role? What are the characteristics of my future professional activity? Where can I apply my knowledge and skills? How should I perform my work assignments? And what methods and means should be used? Within the organization of an educational environment focused on the professional training of hospitality specialists, it is essential to use analysis and modeling of situations, projecting and evaluation of the objects and processes of providing services, forming a portfolio of own achievements and responsibility for teamwork results - which ultimately brings to students the necessary semantic-value load and becomes a compelling need in the matter of personal professional development.

An important methodological basis for the professional training of a prospective specialist is the culturological approach, which presupposes the organization of the educational process as a system with given parameters of cultural values. “Culturological approach, based on the principles of continuity and unity of tradition and innovation, is implemented in the conditions of any given culture that is the source and focus of the whole heritage of mankind, the treasure of spiritual and moral wealth, the driving force of development and active manifestation of the essential forces of society, social groups, and individual personalities. The conceptual meaning of the “culture” category for the theory of education is determined by the fact that it fills the culturological component of the educational process. Culturological approach to the study of problems of modern education is a set of theoretical and methodological provisions, organizational and pedagogical values and technologies that ensure the creative self-fulfillment of the future specialist within professional activity” [13, p. 11]. The existence of a culture of society largely depends on the individual wealth of the stand-alone personality, the manifestation of personal creative participation and self-fulfillment within the community-transformative activities. Emphasizing the creative nature of culture, Russian educator and scientist Vitaliy Slastjonin notes: “Culture is always a creation - with all the characteristics of a creative act, it is always designed for the addressee, for dialogue; and assimilation of culture is a process of personal discovery, creating a world of culture in oneself, empathy and co-creation, where each newly found element of culture does not negate or deny the previous layer of culture” [3, p.16].

Professional culture takes an important place in the general structure of culture - in our case it is the culture of the hospitality industry expert. Professional culture, being a personal characteristic, is featured by the level of personality development, the synthesis of personal value orientations, creative activity and self-fulfillment in various activities, which allows successfully solve professional problems in the changing conditions of socio-cultural reality. Thus wise, Tom Baum writes that the success of hospitality facilities performance depends on the professionalism of its employees, possessing not only technical skills but personal qualities. Employees of the hospitality service should be loyal, responsible, tolerant, courteous and free in action. They must be able to manage their emotions (at least in the interests of clients). Tom Baum also considers hospitality as a sphere of emotional activity - pointing to its aesthetic aspect. The hospitality industry employee should look esthetically sound, reacting to the trend imperatives of fashion; and be able to maintain a conversation with guests or clients about politics, music, sports or any other topic - which denotes a good command of foreign (English) language [19].

For the modern stage of Russian society development, a dynamic evolvement of socio-cultural interaction between people of different nationalities and confessions in a multicultural space is a common feature. In this regard, the hospitality expert should not only possess a high level of general knowledge, but also be ready to carry out intercultural communication with representatives of other nationalities and confessions on the basis of comprehension of their mentality, customs, traditions, culinary preferences and other aspects of everyday life of visitors -both of domestic and of foreign origin. Given this fact, we conducted a student’s survey, the purpose of which was to reveal the level of their knowledge on the peculiarities of mentality, traditions, customs, culinary preferences of representatives of other nationalities, religions and cultures, as well as their attitude to the fact that these features must be taken into account in their prospective professional activities. The testing results made it possible to conclude that all students consider it essential to be tolerant to representatives of other cultures and nationalities, and to take this into account in customer service. Students appeared to be interested in studying

foreign languages, national peculiarities, traditions and customs of people from different countries -obtaining information from the Internet, television programs, special literature, as part of the educational process and international travel experiences. At the same time, they note that this knowledge is insufficient, superficial, and fragmentary. Students find it difficult to give examples of those national cultural features, traditions and customs that employees of the reception, accommodation and customer service department should consider when working with foreign guests. In the course of the study, we asked students to identify the positions they consider the most significant in the implementation of intercultural communication with representatives of other nationalities and confessions; and rank those positions according to their importance (Table 3).

Table 3 - The results of ranking survey revealing the student's attitude towards the multicultural dialogue

Positions	Ranking(in absolute figures / %)		
	1	2	3
Knowledge and skills to communicate in foreign languages	31/42.5	26/35.6	16/21.9
Cognition of visitors' religious and national peculiarities and the ability to take them into account in prospective professional activities	18/24.6	22/30.2	33/45.2
Tolerance towards representatives of other religions and cultures	24/32.9	25/34.2	24/32.9

Out of the results presented in table, it can be concluded that students in the implementation of intercultural communication on the basis of multicultural dialogue with representatives of other cultures, nationalities and confessions rank first and foremost the knowledge and skills to communicate in foreign languages (31 people / 42.5%); on the second hand is the manifestation of tolerance towards representatives of other religions and cultures during professional performance (24 / 32.9%); the third - the cognition of visitors' religious and national peculiarities and the ability to take them into account in prospective professional activities(18 / 24.6%). The generalization of the conducted research results allowed drawing a conclusion that it is necessary to strengthen the culturological orientation in the organization of the educational process. The curriculum should focus on the theoretical and practical training of future hospitality professionals in the direction of forming their competencies necessary for the implementation of intercultural communication with representatives of other cultures, nationalities and confessions. It is essential to familiarize students with the history and culture of foreign states (including architecture, literature, art, folklore, traditions, customs, lifestyle peculiarities of people in these countries, national regional and global virtual museums, etc.).

In this context, student interuniversity exchanges (both interregional and international), out-of-school student practices in the near and far abroad become quite effective. Of great importance are international educational projects and double degree systems when the learning process is carried out simultaneously in two universities: domestic and foreign. Elements of students' immersion in another culture are implemented in various off-campus competitions and festivals, when they celebrate the

memorable dates of certain countries and regions: Thanksgiving Day, Saint Valentine's Day, East Asian New Year, etc. Thus, in Petrozavodsk State University, creative participation of students and teachers in professional holidays, for example, World Tourism Day is also stimulated. However, the theme of the feast is constantly changing, and student groups enact the culture, traditions and customs of very different countries and nations.

One of the fundamental methodological constructs for the formation of professional competencies of prospective experts is the *activity approach*, according to which the mastering of knowledge, the development of abilities and the acquirement of skills occurs only in the process of intense personal participation. Activity here is understood as “the activity of subjects aimed at changing the world, the production or generation of a certain objectified product of material or spiritual culture” [9, p. 172]. Activity is an important basis for human functioning, the manifestation of individual's active attitude to the surrounding reality as a subject and creator, transforming the world and oneself. Personality development occurs in various types of activity (educational, cognitive, labor, professional, etc.), in which the formation of a system of value relations takes place in accordance with the level of contemporary culture. Active inclusion of students in various activities in the educational process of higher educational establishment creates the conditions for their self-development, creativity and professional training. In the system of vocational education a special type of activity is singled out: the educational-professional one, the integrated design of which is aimed at forming the professional competencies of future specialists.

“Educational-professional activity can be considered as a specific type of performance aimed at the learner (as a subject) for the purpose of development, the formation of his/her personality as a professional. This activity is a combination of the following components: 1) *Motivational and Semantic* (occupational motivation for understanding the purpose of the profession, mastering professional activity and communication, motives for the manifestation of personality within the occupational category); 2) *Activity* (the solution of educational tasks in the course of independent study and performance of educational actions within the framework of formation of professionally significant qualities of the expert); 3) *Evaluation and control* (formation and improvement of self-assessment and self-control skills) [6, p. 57]. According to Russian educational psychologist Andrey Verbitsky, “the content of educational activity is determined not only by the logic of science, but also by the model of the expert's prospective professional activity, which gives integrity, systemic organization and personal meaning to the acquired knowledge. The teaching content is not projected as an academic subject, but as a subject of educational activity, consistently transformed into the subject of professional performance. The basic unit of the professional teaching content is not a piece of information received or a problem solved by a certain algorithm, but a problematic situation involving the inclusion of productive thinking of students” [6, p. 57].

So, Verbitsky identifies three basic forms of activity: *training* (e.g., lecture or workshop), *quasi-professional* (role play and other forms of gamification), *educational and professional* (scientific-research work of students, internships, Thesis Project initiation). “With the transition from one base to the other forms of activity, students are increasingly developed practice of academic and scientific information implementation (of specified forms of activity), mastering professional experience and obtaining the opportunity of natural entry into the framework of occupational category” [6, p. 58]. In the educational process of training specialists of hospitality services (in accordance with the educational

standards), students are included in the technological and production, organizational and managerial, service, research and projective activities, in which the competencies necessary for their future professional performance are formed and developed (Table 4).

Table 4 - Types of activities in vocational training of hospitality experts

Types of activities	Professional tasks
Technological and production	formation of a system of functional processes of hotels and other accommodation facilities, utilization of technological innovations and modern software; development of technological, information and labor procedures for functional divisions of hospitality enterprises in accordance with the consumer and safety requirements, evaluation of the quality of technological processes of hotels, restaurants and travel agencies
Organizational and managerial	organization of production activities of hotels and other accommodation facilities, distribution of duties and determination of the scope of work of contractors, the development of logistics systems and the formation of a communicative space for hospitality enterprises, evaluation of the efficiency of production activities of hotels and other accommodation facilities, catering enterprises and travel agencies, economically well-founded decision making, management of sales and promotion of hotel and tourist products
Service	ensuring the quality of the provision of hotel and tourist products to various categories and groups of consumers, compliance with standards and other legal and regulatory documents of the operation of hotels, catering enterprises and travel agencies; effective communication with consumers of the product offered; management of leisure and entertainment venues
Research	collection, analysis and generalization of foreign and domestic experience in the hospitality field, adaptation of innovative technologies to the activities of hospitality enterprises, research and monitoring of the service market, study of consumer psychology
Projective	setting goals and objectives of projective hotel and tourism products, designing functional production processes of hotels and other accommodation facilities; development of innovative products, including the projection of contact zones, advertising, enterprise development strategies, business planning

Along with the classroom teaching activities, of great importance is the training and production (including pre-thesis) practice of future specialists, which involves the inclusion of students in various types of professional activities directly at hospitality enterprises, and contributes to the formation of necessary professional competencies. The implementation of the activity approach is promoted by the technologies of network interaction and information dissemination, on-line training and remote cooperation, collegial spaces created by educational institutions and Internet startups supported by network users. Thus, students at Petrozavodsk State University are actively participating in the projects and activities of the university Business incubator, the Science Park, and the “Boiling Point” Center for Innovation Development. Increasing value for employers is represented by student projects that offer original solutions to production problems that increase the economic efficiency of organizational and managerial solutions and give enterprises a real competitive advantage in the hospitality market. Consequently, all of the above allows to conclude that, in order to implement the activity approach in the educational process, it is important not only to organize educational and professional

activities, but also to give it a professionally oriented character, in other words, to write all its types in the context of the occupational category, taking into account its features, methods and conditions necessary for further implementation.

Now, the science and practice of vocational education is widely used competence approach, which is regarded as a methodological basis for the development of the social establishment of the occupational category. In the context of modernization of education, the appeal to the problem of the implementation of the competence approach model is regarded to the definition and development of key competencies, both teacher and students. Competence signifies a range of issues and problems in which a person is well-oriented; and has sufficient knowledge and experience in their implementation. Competence includes an assembly of interrelated qualities of the individual (knowledge, skills, experiences, and ways of performance), set in relation to a certain range of issues and processes necessary for the implementation of related quality productive activities. Competence is considered as possession by the individual of the appropriate knowledge, including personal relation to and a subject of activity. "A person competent in a certain professional area has the appropriate knowledge and abilities that enable his/her reasonable judgements and effective actions within such area of expertise. The key educational competencies are specified at the level of educational areas and academic disciplines for each grade of study. The list of key educational competencies is determined on the basis of the main goals of education, the structural representation of social and personal experiences, as well as the main activities of the student, allowing him/her to master social experience, acquire skills of learned behavior and practical activity in modern society[13, p. 21-22]. The key educational competencies that characterize the semantic-value, general knowledge, social-labor, information, communication, educational, cognitive self-improvement of a personality are essential in determination of the professional training of prospective experts.

In pedagogical science, the essence of the concept of "professional competence" is considered as "the assembly of knowledge, skills and competencies that determine the professional labor efficiency; a combination of personal qualities and features; vector of professionalization; unity of theoretical and practical commitment to carry out required actions; ability to implement complex culturally appropriate types of activities etc." [2, p. 20]. In the aspect of the problem of the professional formation of students in educational institutions, of special importance is the utterance of Aelita Markova, who defines the following types of professional competencies:

1) Personality competence, which is expressed in a person's ability to plan, organize, regulate and control own professional activities; to an independent and original solution of the problems that arise in the process of such activity (creativity); in the flexibility of theoretical and practical thinking; active demand to acquire new knowledge, skills, and experience in the field of the chosen occupational category;

2) Individual competence, which is manifested in motivation for professional achievements, success, qualitative results based on the developed individual style of activity; and, in optimism and ability for self-fulfillment and self-confidence;

3) Social competence - the grasp of joint (group, cooperative) occupational activities, cooperation, as well as the professionally appropriate methods of interaction; social responsibility for the outcome of own professional work;

4) Special competence, which presupposes the presence of single purpose abilities ("pedagogical", "artistic", "technical", etc.) and personal qualities conditioned by the specifics of one or another professional activity [4, p. 35]. The above-mentioned types of

competence signify, as a matter of fact, the maturity of a person in professional activity, in professional communication, in the formation of a professional personality.

In the context of modernization of the system of domestic education, the competence approach is considered “as one of the mechanisms of professional training of specialists - one of the objectives of which is to minimize or eliminate the existing gap between employers' demands in the labor market and the level of professional competence of university/college graduates” [14, p. 145]. Nowadays it is legitimate to state “the existing relationship between the quality of vocational training and the demands of employers for the professionalism of prospective experts of the hospitality services. Enterprises management declares requirements to not only to the level of candidates' knowledge, skills and experiences, but also to personal qualities: business, moral, entrepreneurial, creative, communicative, commitment to constant professional growth, and social and professional mobility” [15, p. 88]. Competence approach to the professional training of future specialists in the hospitality services field is aimed at the formation of their soft skills, general professional and vocational competencies. Thus, the competence in soft skills include the ability to use the basics of philosophical knowledge to form a mindset position; utilization of the basics of economic and legal knowledge in various spheres of life; ability to communicate in Russian and foreign languages to solve problems of interpersonal and intercultural interaction, work in a team, tolerate social, ethnic, confessional and cultural differences; and ability for self-organization and further self-education. Among the general professional competencies, it is possible to distinguish the ability to solve standard tasks of professional activity with the use of information and communication technologies, and also the utilization of various sources of information in the area of the hospitality industry products; commitment to apply regulatory-legal and technological documentation regulating the hotel industry activity. Vocational competencies include the ability and commitment for the implementation of the main activities of prospective experts in the hospitality industry: production and technological, organizational, managerial, service, research and projective, corresponding to the students' teaching program in the higher educational establishment.

RESULTS

The obtained results of the research on the identification of the professional values in the hospitality industry within their significance for students made it possible to conclude that the leading values for the prospective experts appears to be spiritual satisfaction, financial well-being, self-development, professionalism, interaction, and care and concern for people. From the results of the study to identify students' attitudes toward multicultural dialogue, it can be concluded that in the implementation of intercultural interaction with representatives of other cultures, nationalities and religions, first of all students place the knowledge and skills to communicate in foreign languages; on the second position is a tolerant attitude towards representatives of other cultures and confessions; and the third place is occupied by the knowledge of religious and national features of the guests and use of such features in prospective professional activities. The main types of activity considered in the article are: production-technological, organizational-managerial, service, research and projective in relation to the setting of professional tasks in the process of training of prospective experts of the hospitality industry, as well as various types of professional practices at the hotel service enterprises. The paper reveals the essential characteristics of the soft skills, general

professional and occupational competencies of students, which are the determining factors in their professional training.

DISCUSSION

The mechanisms of professional training of specialists in the field of hospitality were studied in the works of V.G. Gulyaev, A.P. Durovich, M.A. Zhukovskaya, I.V. Zorin, E.N. Ilyina, V.S. Senin, T.M. Sergeeva, A.I. Seselkin, I.D. Solodukhin et.al. Thus, T.V. Perova and Z.V. Guseva in their “Professional Competencies of Hospitality Specialists” article examine the essence and classification of professional competencies of hotel service specialists, and the formation of such competencies within the college/ university educational process. The authors in their classification distinguish three groups of professional competencies of hospitality experts, as follows: 1) competencies of the subject’s life-sustaining activity; 2) competencies of social interaction; 3) competencies of professional activity[7]. In the study presented, the requirements for the personal and professional qualities of the prospective specialist are analyzed, as well as pedagogical conditions for the formation of the professional competencies of hospitality experts.

Assistant professor of the Hospitality and Tourism Department of Ural State Pedagogical University Evgeniya Radygina in her “Formation of Service Competencies of the Hospitality Employee” article notes that the professional training should focus not only on acquiring the knowledge, skills and experiences by the student, but also on “forming on their basis the methods of activity and professional experience”[8, p. 48]. And this is the statement one must agree with. In the process of forming the competence approach based professional competencies of future hospitality specialists, E. Radygina justifiably singles out the following directions: 1) Academic training (knowledge of service standards and basic principles of contact zone organization of consumer interaction); 2) Technological training (acquisition of customer service skills, study of their needs satisfaction, formation of effective communication skills); 3) Psychological training (formation of “service” qualities of personality). In our opinion, the concept of “service” personality qualities used by the author is not entirely correct, since personal qualities are universal and only reflect the specificity of service competencies. Traditionally, the qualities of the personality are an assembly of all socially and biologically conditioned components of the personality, predetermining its stable behavior in the social and professional environment. E. Radygina also singles out the pedagogical conditions for forming the service competencies of students in the educational process. One of the important conditions for the effectiveness of this process is interactive training, which includes group projects, analysis and solution of situational tasks, simulations and business games, psychological trainings and discussions.

Academic College faculty member Olga Nivinskaya in her “Formation of the professional competencies of the hospitality industry specialists: situational training” article notes that “the training of specialists in hotel business is currently possible only with the use of forms of active learning, including situational ones”[5, p. 36]. The essence of situational training lies in the method of independent search by students to find the ways to solve a practice-oriented situation based on a fact or event occurring in the real conditions of professional activity at a hotel service enterprise. Utilization of the methods of situational training in educational practice allows acquiring knowledge and professional skills “on the basis of students’ activities in conditions proximate to actual practice” [5, p. 38]. The efficiency of situational training methods cannot be doubted, their

use in the educational process demonstrates positive results in the formation of professional competencies of prospective specialists of the hotel services industry [15].

Thus, the analysis of scientific publications on the considered problem allows concluding that the authors, who turn to the study of issues related to the formation of professional competencies of prospective hospitality experts, carry out this process on the basis of the methodological provisions of the competence approach. In our opinion, it is more justified that the formation of professional competencies of the future specialist should be carried out systematically and in a complex of axiological, culturological, activity and competence approaches as the methodological foundations of this process. This aspect of the studies we analyzed was not previously considered.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, innovative approaches to the professional training of prospective experts of the hospitality industry make it possible to implement such training systematically, with the interconnection of substantial, processual, resource, managerial and evaluation components in the following main areas: Firstly, this is the increase in the professionalism and competence of students on the basis of the formation of their life-meanings, attitudes, culture-congruent views on social and moral standards and ideals, and the value-motivational attitude to the prospective professional activity in the field of hotel services industry. Secondly, it is the formation not only of professionally required knowledge, skills and experiences, but also the improvement of professionally important personal qualities of prospective experts of the hospitality industry; on the strength of such qualities the productivity and final result of their professional development largely depends. Thirdly, this is the “arming” of students with effective technologies in organizing various types of activity in the field of hotel services industry; such technologies will enhance cultural, cognitive, productive and creative functions in students’ education, they will also contribute to the formation and development of professional competencies of future specialists.

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