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Research Results
Резултати от научни изследвания

PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING IN TOURISM EDUCATION

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Abstract. The paper's emphasis is on education in the field of tourism, highlighting active forms of teaching and knowledge acquisition for the sector. The literature review comes to reveal the importance of practicing while learning and outlines a complex of transformative educational methods, researched by contemporary scientists. It also provides the context for the study case presented, specifically the educational practice led by the Department of Tourism at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo. The aim of the study is to outline some backgrounds for commencing a process of educational transformation from passive to active learning in the field of tourism as well as to trace the process followed in the University of Veliko Turnovo. The methodology includes qualitative and quantitative analytical approaches. The discussions and results show that one way to properly integrate practice-based learning (PBL) in tourism education is to transform it from a passive to an active approach. The set of tools for this purpose includes: changed strategy of the academic department; inclusion of practice-pointed courses and activities; integration of on-the-go monitoring procedures.

Keywords: practice-based learning; tourism; education; PBL; passive-active transformation

Introduction

Educational process in the sphere of tourism is a comparatively new phenomenon. With the development of this sector, being an important and for some countries and regions even a key one, the need for specialized workforce, ready to cope with the challenges in the tourism enterprises, raises. Hence, adequate educational process was to take its place in the institutions of secondary and high education. Many lecturers with generally new stock of knowledge were to be included in this process and meanwhile many students were attracted by tourism as a sphere of career development. It is believed that the educational process in tourism began to be considered and discussed more than 50 years ago, when it was established as an independent field of study. In the 1960s, significant changes occurred in society and in higher education. They gave grounds for tourism to be perceived as a new

field of study in which different levels can be covered and diplomas can be obtained accordingly. Until now, the study of tourism has undergone a change, according to the requirements of the market and the tourist organizations on it. A thorough examination of the current situation in this field reveals that, more than ever before, both global and local tourism require a creative and active workforce, skilled not only to serve but also to manage current and future processes in the tourism market; to lead tourist enterprises and destinations to success. Such a workforce can be produced by applying an educational model where university lecturers, from the academy, meet practitioners from the business. Thus, a practice-based learning (PBL) process becomes a reliable instrument for the transition from education to practice in tourism.

Literature review

The literature review focuses on currently used teaching methods, applied in units of high education. The sources retrieved are with emphasis on tourism and are based by researchers on contemporary programs and curriculums in the field of travel and tourism, hospitality, event and restaurant business, entrepreneurship and tourism sustainability. The role of the current review is to trace some changes that inevitably take place in academic units, offering tourism courses and to highlight the impact of active forms of learning and some key methods used. In this context is put a case-studied tourism program before being considered its specifics, forms of testing and real time effectiveness monitoring.

Delivering knowledge in hospitality and tourism programs requires a combination of methods (Ahmad et al. 2018). What's more, in order for future innovations in hospitality and tourism programs to be guaranteed, an essential *link between theory and practice* should be made (Ahmad et al. 2018). Beskorovanya et al. (2022) propose a novel pedagogical approach for institutions of higher education that offer tourism programs. They claim that future professionals should be trained in a new, holistic, and integrative way that meets social and educational requirements, the demands of the tourism market, and the individual needs of learners (Beskorovanya et al. 2022). Ahmad et al. (2018) compare traditional methods to innovative ones, assuming the first group as "passive" and the second as "active" methods. The author argues that active methods emphasize on value creation and action. (Ahmad et al. 2018). According to Cummings (2023), contemporary tourism knowledge needs a balance between theory and practice. It is possible by applying knowledge in the workplace outside the academic hall. The author examines the concept of "authentic teaching" and its application in tourism, hospitality, and the event sector. Such a method fills the gap between the classroom and the labour market and provokes students' high motivation, self-esteem and feelings of intellectual agency (Cummings 2023). Shchuka and Bezruchenkov (2021) argue that a transition from information-rich to reflective and transformative learning should be integrated into

the training programs of tourism specialists. This also requires changing the role of the teacher in the process, together with the used methods and techniques (Shchuka and Bezruchenkov 2021). According to Edelheim (2020) academic institutions offering tourism courses have problem – often academics have never worked full-time in tourism. In this case they have to apply fruitful approaches to make connection between the two realities (Edelheim 2020).

Active learning strategies contribute for the adaptive changes in the educational travel and tourism programs (O'Connor 2021). According to O'Connor (2021) the "*learning by doing" method* turns undergraduate students to lifelong ones. This learning technique facilitates the process of active learning and includes: written projects, case study analysis, multimedia aids, student presentation, group work and student led seminars/events (O'Connor 2021). A variety of active learning techniques need to be applied which develops a specific skill in learners – the ability to process and assess information from diverse channels (O'Connor 2021).

Some authors squint contemporary tourism education through changed current generations. Mosca (2019) claims that young people today prefer "*doing hands-on experience*" rather than accepting lecture-based knowledge. According to Sándorová et al (2020) today students differ in their behaviour and expectations from their predecessors. They prefer *simulating environments* and *collaborative learning* and test how the method of *design thinking* can build up cooperative and motivated professionals (Sándorová et al. 2020). In this line, Yordanova (2022) claims that another possible way for students to be engaged inside the business structures turns to be establishing of professional networks where resources, knowledge and experience can be shared. Cummings's (2023) method of authentic teaching also puts an impact over collaborative manner of work. According to the author "working cooperatively with students faces real-world practices" (Cummings 2023, p. 72). An expression of another kind of connection between theory and practice in tourism represent Makenov (2023) with a team of scientists, who outline the functional model of collaboration within an "educational cluster". Its benefits are revealed through the interconnection between tourist enterprises and educational institutions which leads to sustainable regional development of the sector (Makenov et al. 2023). This model can be defined as *business-centred* as it arises out of the idea about fostering local tourism economics rather than the one of adding value to tourism education.

Amangeldi et al. (2023) concentrate their work around the issue of *problem-based learning*. *Student-led activities* are put under research, in which students themselves are allowed to visit chosen tourist area, to indicate persisting tourism problems, then conduct researches and give their own solutions (Amangeldi et al. 2023). According to the researcher, the implementation of this pedagogical approach can lead to improved student engagement and a better understanding of the county's diverse resources for developing tourism (Amangeldi et al. 2023, p. 1631).

Similarly, Aleksieva (2018) treats such field work as experimental or training type of student activity and ranks it among the "most useful practical forms" (Aleksieva, 2018), during which effective working interaction with the business is realized. About problem-based learning writes Gregory (2008) in a group of scientific researchers, concluding that the problem-solving skills of students that were educated upon that kind of learning methodology, opposed to lecture-based one, are much more developed (Gregory et al. 2008, p. 313).

Vasconcelos and Melo (2023) are treating the method of *project-based learning* and research its impact over students' perception, experience, motivation and agency. The scientists trace the learning journey and prove its impact over the sustainability of tourism education (Vasconcelos and Melo 2023). In the light of project and situational practical training Mancheva-Ali (2006) develops the idea about "training company". Within the established system, called by the author "laboratory" certain conditions are created for the trainees to work in a real operating enterprise with strictly placed established rules, structure, goals and tasks (Mancheva-Ali 2006).

Another treated method, belonging to the group of active methods in tourism education, is the so-called *case-based learning*. It is defined as series of "entrepreneurial questions or informative presentation of a complex open-ended entrepreneurial case" (Stoyanov 2023, p. 21) and is "an effective and easy-to-understand educational tool for students" (Stoyanov 2023, p. 21). According to the editors of the book "Case Based Research in Tourism, Travel, Hospitality and Events" (2022), this approach is limitedly applied as a research method in tourism and hospitality, and educators are lacking current case studies from the tourism business to be used and complement the process in higher education institutions.

Learning tourism in a contemporary educational environment inevitably brings the question about the impact of new technologies on the educational process. Current innovations and transformations in the tourism context influence curricula and applied teaching methods (Mandalia 2023). According to Mandalia (2023) technology in tourism education has a transformative role with the following effects over the trainees: they receive real-time industry insights; their access to industry information is easier; they enrich their technological learning experience; they benefit the uses of simulation and gamification of reality; they improve their online learning skills. Balula et al. (2019, p. 61) claim that the digital competences of both teachers and learners should be upgraded, and they also highlight the additional advantages of using digital technology in tourism education. They list among them time and space flexibility, the development of technical/systemic competencies, and the possibilities it opens for authentic/situated teaching and learning (Baluala et al. 2019). A "compulsory innovation" (Çetin et al. 2024, p. 86) at tourism higher education programs in developing countries, according to some authors, is distance education, stemming from the fact that it serves for one of the most important issues

in the teaching process – communication between the instructor and the students (Çetin et al. 2024).

A diverse complex of learning experiences comes to practice nowadays in institutions of higher education, pretending to offer contemporary courses serving the supply of an adequate workforce for the tourism sector. It comes to transform the processes of teaching and perceiving knowledge for the industry. Tourism in higher education is the final link in the education circle, allocating trained personnel to this sector (Şimşek and Kalıpçı 2023), and it should be approached proactively with concern for its future development.

The active process of learning tourism is obviously strongly related to practising tourism while learning. That's why PBL itself reflects the active, vital and dynamic part in university tourism curricula.

Methodology

The research uses a qualitative and quantitative approach based on case study. The purpose of this research is to reveal the background for the transformation of active tourism learning practices, as well as to investigate the case of Veliko Turnovo University in this field, representing institutional practices and the work algorithm. Some research questions can be outlined. What is the contemporary educational environment in tourism like? How is the PBL process currently led in the presented institution, and which key points are monitored to influence it? To what extent do students contribute to the most proper adaptation of the PBL process?

Backgrounds for "passive-active" learning transition in the University of Veliko Turnovo

This paper analyses a specific case of practice-based learning in tourism education. Under investigation falls the Tourism Department belonging to St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo. The institution has been preparing students with specialized knowledge in the field of tourism since 1983. From 1989 to 1994, the title of the program was Organisation and Management of Tourism, Hospitality and Restaurant business, and it exists both in full-time and part-time courses. Until 1997, it bore the name Geography of Tourism, and since 1997, the speciality has taken its place in the Faculty of Economics at the University of Veliko Turnovo (VTU). Now the purpose of the speciality has changed, from cadres with more executive functions, the students are qualified to occupy work positions with management functions. The main scientific directions in the tourism program are economics and management. Lectures are provided by academicians within the "Marketing and Tourism" department. Two educational and qualification degrees are offered – "Bachelor" and "Master". Until here, the university ecosystem bears the signs of a place where the principal value is academic spirit and science itself. The leading method of transferring knowledge is learner-centred learning, also known as

LB learning. Lecturers are highly qualified professors with a distinct scientific profile and strict authority among trainees. The improvement of students is achieved by demonstrating specialised professional knowledge in the concrete scientific field, a responsible attitude to auditory and determined autonomy (Panagiotopoulos 2019), which Panagiotopoulos names "educational professionalism" (2019).

From 2016 until today, the department of Tourism is already an independent unit of the Faculty of Economics of the University. Being such, it needs specific distinguishable outlook in order to be attractive and competitive on the educational market. The academic staff of the unit, in coordination with the management bodies of the university, undertake certain changes in the policy, so groups currently consist of quite a limited number of students, often up to 10 – 15 people. The importance of the individual approach is reinforced and working over generating talents becomes a specific aim of the lecturers in the Tourism Department. The way and methodology in educational process need current changes in accordance with characteristics of new generations and the profile of a nowadays learner. The picture of reality shows that eventually, in new generations, the thirst for scientific knowledge wanes, and what's more, it loses its authority among them. Instinctively young people feel that this kind of passively accepting large amounts of information does not work for them in their realization on the labor market. Very clear and conscious distinction is already made between propositional knowledge and practical know-how (Pring 2007), between "knowing that" and "knowing how" (Ryle 2003). Modern education in tourism is rooted on the concept defined by Richard Pring (2007) that those who progress up the vocational route are unlikely to succeed in the academic route. In Bulgarian education as a whole, this statement becomes a fundamental and national strategic policy, concerning education, which is tangibly based on the vital, working connection between business and academia. The model of learning in high education, respectively in tourism high education supposes tangible presence of tourism business representatives in tourism curriculums and classes.

Since this last-mentioned period and following the current tendencies both on tourism and educational market, the department of Tourism belonging to VTU strives to put a strong emphasis on practical forms of learning. Practitioners from the tourism business are integrated in the academic team – hospitality professionals, event organisers, specialists in digital marketing for hospitality and tourism, etc. Some are even inclined to move their professional field from the tourism business to tourism education, motivated by the need for a deep understanding of tourism processes. They commence their academic path by acquiring a PhD degree and gradually integrate their professional profile into the academic system standards. The speciality becomes an attractive sphere for upgrading vocational knowledge and turning it into an academic one. A quite interesting model of interaction is observed, showing two reciprocal directions, in the correlation between the tourism industry and tourism education. (Figure 1) While tourism learning students need

to be transformed from an academic to a more vocationally-centred approach, tourism business representatives have to move in the opposite direction to take their adequate place in higher education units, shifting from practice to academism. Thus, sooner or later the cross point at a certain level between the two parties is to be found and the proper educational environment formed.

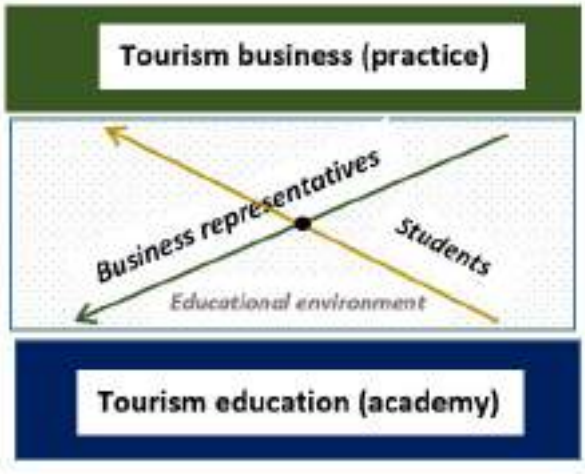


Figure 1. Model of interaction in forming the educational environment in tourism
Source: author's own elaboration

Finding cross-points at different levels inside the educational environment (Figure 1) is inevitable as the sector of tourism and processes at all levels inside it, not only on the national but on the world level, becomes more and more dynamic. For the sake of result-oriented work in tourism enterprises and their responsive, flexible behaviour on the tourism market, management teams need a contemporary, educated workforce. The universal knowledge for tourism is no longer applicable. Business needs a renewed set of skills and competencies, including soft and transferable skills, personal assets (such as loyalty, willingness for personal development, and internal motivation), and contemporary technical (hard) skills.

According to a team of scientists that researches the role and impact of design thinking in tourism education (Sándorová et al. 2020), some of the most essential skills in this field are creative thinking, problem-solving skills, communication skills and teamwork. One of the most renowned contemporary European tourism programs at an academic level aims to develop skills that will lead students to

find new opportunities for career and obtain interchangeable skills to simplify their adaptation to new conditions (Bezkorovania et al. 2021)

The organization *Pantour* generated its pact for following tourism generation skills (February, 2024). Researches are led in ten European countries, among which Bulgaria falls. Three groups of essential skills are determined by the researchers (Country Skills Profile Report, February 2024):

1) Digital: digital marketing and online communication, virtual and augmented reality, data analytics, AI and robotics, mobile/smart technologies and IoT, sector-specific software, digital security, computer programming, virtual and tour guiding, adjusting digital equipment;

2) Green: waste management, resource efficiency, sustainable tourism practices, supporting local communities;

3) Social: interpersonal (communication) skills; understanding the needs of others; inclusivity/diversity/accessibility, teamworking, positive attitude, kind and attentive behaviour, handling stressful/critical situations, entrepreneurial skills, self-actualisation, creativity, interpretation of cultural and natural heritage.

All the above-mentioned skills (even though there exists a wide range and classification of such in the scientific literature) form an active and creatively working professional of nowadays, and thus the role of education in tourism is defined. The overall market picture clearly indicates that the executive workforce in the tourism industry will soon be significantly reduced. At the same time, entrepreneurs will prefer job seekers with creative thinking and a current set of skills. Obviously, the successful worker in the tourism sector should incorporate a set of active, personality-forming skills and qualities into their profile. Thus, the transformation of tourism education from a passive to an active approach is underway.

A situational view of the process of transformation in tourism learning is shown on Figure 2.

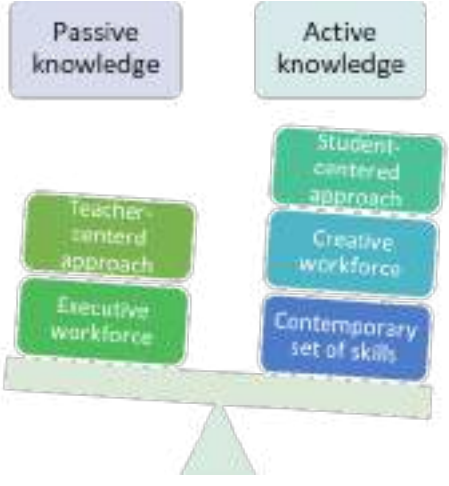


Figure 2. Transformation of knowledge in tourism from passive to active
Source: author's own elaboration

The transformation process involves the application of a student-centred approach, which entails testing, putting into practice, and developing new forms of practice-based learning. As shown in Figure 2, passive knowledge is delivered by a teacher-centred approach and generates mainly an executive workforce on the tourism labour market. Active knowledge is delivered by methods, pointed to students; it supposes creativity in fulfilling, even everyday work duties, and should set a complex contemporary set of skills.

Forms of tourism PBL learning in the University of Veliko Turnovo

In the Tourism speciality of VTU, the concept of the Department regarding practice and vocational education is that it should differ from the practice learning methods applied in secondary vocational schools. In Table 1, some significant differences in the essence of both are exposed, which the lecturers' team of the Department adheres to.

Table 1. Learners' functional comparison between practice tourism education in units of secondary and high education

Practicing learners in secondary schools	Practicing learners in high education
Awareness of standards at certain tourism work position	Awareness of the whole picture at the tourist organization
Learning basic and compulsory for the work position activities	Be able to analyse the witnessed processes at the tourist organization
Demonstrate willingness to learn and careful observation	Demonstrate willingness to add value to ongoing processes
Be executive and strict in doing work position's activities	Be creative and pro-active
Implement certain norms and rules laid down in the organization	Resolve work situations

Source: author's own work.

Based on the above shown, the Department shares the position that the proper form of practice tourism education for secondary learners is the so-called production internships, while the appropriate form of practice in tourism higher education turns to be application of project work and other forms of active/pro-active and "learning by doing" models (Joplin 1981).

Some primary forms that specify the way to PBL, are tested and put into teaching practice. As seen in Figure 3, there are four of them.

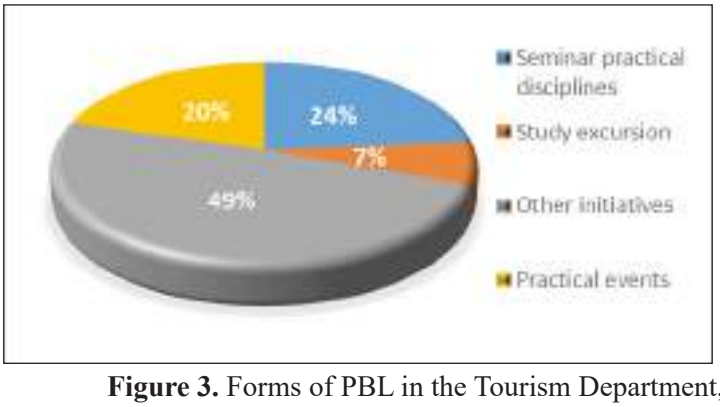


Figure 3. Forms of PBL in the Tourism Department, VTU
Source: author's own research.

The highest share – 49% – comprises initiatives that cannot be categorised into any of the other PBL forms presented. The high share is due to two main reasons. Firstly, there are no normative restrictions on the university's part regarding the number and type of activities with students, beyond those included in their curricula. On the contrary, active work with them encourages the dynamics and diversity of the classroom and extracurricular learning process. Additionally, the lecturers' team has an internal motivation to organise meetings with businesses and other interested parties in the tourism sector. The reasons are rooted in the search for personal satisfaction from the work in the academic unit entrusted to them and, last but not least, the excellent working atmosphere.

Seminar practical disciplines account for 24% of the PBL in the speciality. These are activities that complement theoretical teaching in the relevant discipline. It aims to provide a broader understanding of the studied material and demonstrate its practical value. The aim of the learning practices is to be conducted according to real criteria submitted by the business. In this type of PBL form, educational work projects are used as a teaching method. They are intended for highly motivated students with a strong interest in the field of tourism that the project covers and takes place in a real business environment. Application of this form contributes to fulfilling tasks both in the frames of tourism organisations and the sector on the national level as well. These projects also serve as a platform where students can present/promote their skills and assets to employers, providing real opportunities for career development in the tourism industry. Here they can test and demonstrate skills such as teamwork, communication and interpersonal behaviour, creativity and self-actualization etc. The department aims to further develop educational work projects, diversifying them with additional forms and models to strengthen the practical interaction of learners in a real working environment.

Events are another successful way for students to enrich their vision and opportunities in the tourism branch as well as to show them up. Currently this PBL form holds 20% of practical training in the specialty. These are often lecture and discussion formats with speakers-motivators from tourism organizations, visits and participation (including as interns) at tourism fairs, exhibitions and other key destination events, mentoring appearances by students in front of students and businesses, etc. This form works for establishing students' interest to tourism topics-of-the-day, to take position on them, to train and apply their analytical skills, focused approach, interpersonal and self-aware skill. This form relates academic to business reality and helps for the preparation of students to their future work in the organizations.

Study excursion is a specially developed course for tourism students, within which basic theoretical models are applied in the course of learning the specifics of tour guiding and entertainment activities (tourism animation). Students practice development of tourist routes (as one of the main tasks in touroperators' business),

prepare texts for tour talks. They develop skills such as communication with different types and composition of groups, teamwork, leadership skills, interpretation of cultural and natural heritage etc. are learned. Study excursion holds 7% of the institutional PBL, which is explained with it is taught only one semester, in students' last year at their bachelor's degree learning.

Currently a large part of PBL forms are being put in the context of digitalization. These are turning into quite essential for the successful functioning of tourist enterprises. Good and fruitful application here find forms such as organized master-classes and discussions, mentorships, education work projects, visit of tour fairs and exhibitions and meeting with exhibitors of that kind etc.

Monitoring and control of tourism PBL in VTU

For the sake of controlling adequately the applied forms of practice-based methods, a survey is processed. The survey form persists in the online digital system used for distance courses in VTU. After fulfilling each practice task/project/event, students are asked to fill the questionnaire form. This feedback aims to receive real-time information about the attitudes of students towards their current practical course. The filled surveys are being analysed periodically and thus a controlled informed decision-making process on PBL in the Tourism Department is led.

Survey efficiency analysis

The survey form consists of three main sections, described in Table 2. The Table presents the generalised outlook matrix of the survey to ease its further functional perception.

Table 2. Survey matrix

1	2	3	4	5	6
Section	**Number of questions in the section**	**Type of questions**	**Relative share in the survey**	**Total share**	**Key points of survey of PBL forms**
S1. Students' profile	*5*	*determinant choice*	*20%*	*25%*	*– Demographics – Form of education (part-time/full-time) – Secondary education institution – discipline*
		text	*5%*		*– Semester when the survey is filled*
S2. Questions defining the type of PBL	*2*	*determinant choice*	*5%*	*10%*	*– Clear vision – Profile determination*
		multiple choice	*5%*		*– Reasons for choosing alternative task*

S3. Questions defining attitude, opinion and quality of the tested PBL	*13*	*multiple choice*	*25%*	*65%*	*– Overall perception of assessed PBL form – Positive elements – Acquired skills – Qualities of the business representative – Qualities of the lecturer*
		rating	*20%*		*– Level of usefulness; – Level of interest – Adequateness and actuality of teaching methods – Adequateness and actuality of business representative*
		likert	*10%*		*– Statements regarding applied PBL form – Statements regarding the level of difficulty of PBL form*
		text	*10%*		*– Opinion, comments, recommendations – Students' ideas about the desired PBL*

Source: author's own work.

By its nature, the survey matrix consists of both quantity (columns 2, 4, 5) and quality (column 6) factors. The role of the first ones is to help the critical thinking (Albers 2017) on influence of each group of questions (sections/S) over respondents' answers and to reveal the underlying pattern (Albers 2017) of the most appropriate applicable forms of PBL according to students' perception. The role of the second ones is to determine the semantic context within a concrete range of meaning (Shava et al. 2021) regarding key points of efficiency for each type of question.

The survey is to be divided into three sections. The questions in the first section (S1) account for 25% of the entire questionnaire. Its role is to determine the students' profiles taking part in the survey. The main point of this section is the

question “Where did you get your high school education?” Its answers turn to be key for the target segment of students that the department has.

The second section (S2) can be defined as a filter section. Its role is to divide the group of students that are willing to take part at different forms of suggested and tested PBL forms from those who are not motivated to be involved in such. S2 accounts for only 5% of the entire survey due to its barrier function. Another important moment is to define the specific reason for the students’ lack of willingness to work on such practice tasks. Thus, a certain percentage can be excluded that can be defined as the group of passive students. Data about them can be further processed and specific results worked up to serve for the decision-making process of the Department.

The third section (S3) gives the most essential information about PBL educational approaches. The expected feedback concerns the attitudes and opinion of students on practiced PBL forms. That’s why here is the largest variety of type-questions – multiple choice, practice, likert, rating.

Multiple choice questions are designed in order to best matches the expected outcome in the best way (https://www.questionpro.com/, 2024) In our survey they take the largest part – 35% of all questions. This type of questions can be easily understood by the respondents, require little efforts from and are giving easy-to-analyze answers (https://userreport.com/, 2024). Namely for this reason they prevail and their detailed analysis can lead the researchers to a useful information about applied PBL.

Rating questions are a kind of intuitive questions and are also fast and easy to be covered. They are used to make possible comparison of different research items such as:

how useful student find the applied PBL method; how large is their interest to it; how actual they find the practice-based form, how adequate is the representative from the tourist business, mentoring/organizing it.

Answers of likert-type questions can give visual information about the prevailing answer by pointing it in a different color positioned in a linear scale. This reveals the possibility to define the answers in three main groups: mostly positive; neutral; mostly negative.

Text questions in S3 account for 10% of the entire survey. They purposefully pointed to provoke students to write in their own words for a clearer view of their understandings about PBL. They contain text that can be processed using the method of content analysis, and complementary feedback information can be derived from it. They are the added value of our survey matrix and can give the initiators of the research a different perspective and clarify unclear points of view.

Index analysis on multiple-choice questions

Multiple choice questions are met in S1 and S3. In S1 the function of the question is to track the educational path of incoming tourism students. This information can

serve for organizing a more purposeful and well-pointed campaign for applying students and moreover an attractive checked information about PBL forms in the specialty to be presented in front of them. Thus, for example, we can point out several reasons, consisting of several questions, for the lack of attractiveness of the PBL form in some groups of students. To clarify, our results show that respondents' answers are divided into three main groups: "I consider this practical task difficult"; "I have no time to follow and fulfil this task"; and "Other". So, the role of S1 is fulfilled – 31 students (nearly 20%) out of 162 respondents can be divided as not interested by PBL during their education. Omitting such a question would cause skewed and thus manipulated results.

Concerning multiple choice questions in S3, our aim is to track how inclined the students are to give detailed answers to five types of questions, in which five key points are laid down. An index of intensity (I_i) is derived. It shows how intense their answers are for each of the questions. I_i depends on the number of respondents (N_r) answering the question and the total given number of answers (N_a).

$$I_i = N_a/N_r$$

Table 3. Intensity of answers in multiple-choice questions in S3 according to the defined key points

Key point of surveyed PBL	**Number of respondents/** (N_r)	**Number of answers/** (N_a)	**Index of intensity/** I_i	**Low / L Middle / M High / H**
Overall perception of assessed PBL form	130	363	2,79	**M**
Positive elements	130	341	2,62	**M**
Acquired skills	130	499	**3,83**	**H**
Qualities of the business representative	124	359	**2,89**	**M** ↖
Qualities of the lecturer	130	529	**4,06**	**H** ↖
Mode			**3,24**	**H** ↖

Source: author's own work.

Legend:
If I_i *ranges from* 100% to 150%: **L**
If I_i *ranges from* 150% to 200%: **M**
If $I_i \geq 200\%$: **H**
↖ – indicates values towards the upper limit

The highest $/I_i$ belongs to the key point "Qualities of the lecturer" which gives evidence that students value highly the lecturer responsible for the given PBL form and can evaluate at least 4 (four) assets of him/her. Secondly, the results show that they find in those practices a rich and complex set of skills, acquired during the PBL form. The key point with the lowest index of intensity is "positive elements". Here the students rarely give more than two answers – an average 2,62 per person is the $/I_i$. Survey-makers should reconsider the set of positive elements that are given as multiple-choice answers. It is possible a new questionnaire among students to be organized for example using "text questions" where code words can be extrapolated by respondents' answers which would form that new kit of multiple-choice questions.

A lack of "L" (low index of intensity) indicates that this section is adequately prepared, with knowledge that supports students' overall attitudes. The *Mode* result is on the upper limit (**H**) which makes multiple-choice questions in S1 reliable as a base for informed decision-making process in the Department.

Conclusions

PBL forms in the tourism academy learning already take their proper place and are an essential element for transforming the process of knowledge acquiring to an active one. However, the complex means of interaction in the educational environment are further to be enriched and developed by the stakeholders. The current paper demonstrates that a complex array of more intense means and tools is necessary to facilitate the transformation from passive to active. The function of PBL forms is to present young people with an attractive, diverse, and challenging tourism experience that matches their profile, attitudes, and comprehension for successful career development. The above-presented institutional expertise is an example of transformation aimed at putting into practice active, practice-based approaches. A test period is needed to reliably determine outcomes that will drive the most effective model of PBL. Adding fresh data with actual feedback from students enhances this process and, in real-time, builds the contemporary form of tourism learning on the educational market.

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