

**LATIP 2021****International Conference on Language and Technology in the Interdisciplinary Paradigm****PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES IN TERRITORIAL TOURISM  
INDUSTRY IN THE CONTEXT OF VIRAL RISKS**

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**Abstract**

The article presents a regional model of personnel training in the sphere of service and tourism, built taking into account the territorial and recreational characteristics of the Altai Territory, as well as modern risk factors that affect the formation of professional competencies. The authors substantiated key professional competencies in terms of economic and socio-political crisis that arose as a result of the spread of viral risks and the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. By the example of the Altai Territory, the analysis of the development system of the tourist region is carried out from the point of view of its structural components, connections and significant elements, one of which is personnel training as a condition for the stable functioning of the system. The authors of the article consider the trajectory of personnel training in the field of service and tourism in the course of the formation of its professional competencies in the context of modernization and digitalization of the territorial tourism system, taking into account viral risks. The hypothesis of the study is based on the demand to correlate the appropriate training of personnel for service and tourism sectors with the required adequate regional competencies based on regional changes in the territorial tourist and recreational system and the modern environment, including those associated with various types of risks

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## 1. Introduction

Modernization of education at the present stage of its development is associated with the transition to a multi-level system of qualified personnel training. Currently, training in the field of service and tourism in the Altai Territory is largely based on the study of the general theory of economic risks, without taking into account the specifics of tourism risks.

The first encounter with the COVID-19 pandemic and the crisis situation in tourism caused by it made it possible to obtain the initial experience of the operation of the national and regional tourist systems in the context of a viral threat. At the same time, there was an urgent need not only to analyze this experience, to determine the effectiveness of the measures taken, but also to develop further strategies and tactics for getting the tourism industry out of the crisis.

According to experts' forecasts, the viral risk factor is defined as long-term, and therefore one of the key factors in the work of the regional tourism system as a whole and human resources in particular. At the present stage of development, there is no generally accepted theoretical approach to the problem of risk management in the field of tourism services and accordingly, there is no training system that takes into account this approach to education in the field of tourism, especially at the regional level. In this regard, it becomes more urgent to consider regional challenges in the formation of competencies in the context of modernization of the territorial tourist system, taking into account viral risks. This article has conducted a study based on the experience of the development of the regional tourist system of the Altai Territory as the most promising destination.

## 2. Problem Statement

### 2.1. Professional training in the field of tourism as an object of scientific understanding: historiography of the problem

The scientific understanding of tourism as a specific type of activity was dictated by practice and the need to solve problems affecting the stability and future of the industry, which, during its existence, more than once had to experience the negative consequences of global and local economic, political and socio-cultural upheavals.

In the former USSR, teaching tourism in higher educational institutions began in the mid-50s. (Dvornichenko, 1985; Dolzhenko, 1988; Korchagina, 2015).

The systematic study of the problem of training personnel for the tourism industry in 1990s was led by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the scientific community (Airy, Middleton, Cooper, Westlake, Lawson, Jafari, Ritchie and others), as well as a number of specialized scientific journals. The result of it was the development and implementation of quality standards for tourism education, the introduction of the international quality certification system TedQual.

The first standards in the field of tourist and excursion services appeared in Russia in 1994. (Korchagina, 2015).

Modern Russian researchers in their works solve the issues caused by the challenges of the modern reality. All publications on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry can be roughly divided into the following groups:

- study of social risks and the impact of the industry crisis caused by the pandemic, including the study of social costs (Baum & Hai, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Qiu et al., 2020, etc.);
- crisis management and practical recommendations for overcoming the crisis (approaches to the development of anti-crisis strategies, characteristics and assessment of specific measures used by the government or the private sector) (Fillimonau & De Coteau, 2020; Yeh, 2020);
- issues of sustainability of the industry and individual destinations to challenges (Prayag, 2020; Prayag et al., 2020, etc.);
- country-based approach to studying the development of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Gaffney & Eeckels, 2020);
- general issues of assessing the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry, assessing the consequences and prospects (Afanasyev & Afanasyeva, 2020; Gills, 2020).

However, the problem of training tourist personnel in the context of the global COVID threat, which is not included in the above groups, deserves special attention and sets the direction of our research.

## **2.2. Professional competence of a specialist in the tourism industry**

The use of the competence-based approach in the training of specialists today is not only one of the main trends in education, but also the field of pedagogical and, more broadly, interdisciplinary research.

The development of professional standards indicated the need to form both applied skills and competencies in the tourist staff, as well as a number of general and special knowledge.

International experience in identifying and formulating professional competencies of specialists for service and tourism was taken into account in the formation of the first educational standards and became the subject of scientific discussion in the Russian educational space in the 2000s - 2010s (Gadzhieva, 2017; Frolova, 2011; Lobysheva, 2012; Zagorskaya, 2015).

Zagorskaya (2015) identifies three main groups in the composition of professional competencies of specialists for the service and tourism sectors and establishes the principle of complementarity in their formation: communicative, general cultural (intercultural) and creative competencies, defined by employers as professional, complement each other.

In 2017, Gadzhieva (2017) defines professional competencies as one of basic approaches in training personnel for the tourism industry.

Both international and Russian experience in training specialists for the tourism sector indicate that tourism requires non-traditional approaches to training, especially in the context of viral risks. This problem has become most acute now, in the crisis conditions of the tourism industry, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, when domestic tourism is becoming a priority area for the development of the industry

### **3. Research Questions**

The following questions were raised during the study:

- What does the concept of "regional professional competence" include? What is their role in the training of specialists in the tourism industry?
- What is the impact of the spread of viral risks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, on the training system for the tourism industry in the context of the modernization of the tourist regional system of the Altai Territory?
- What is the role of the regional model of training personnel in the sphere of service and tourism, taking into account the territorial and recreational characteristics of the Altai Territory, and modern risk factors in the formation of professional competencies?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the article is to develop a model for training personnel for the tourism industry, taking into account the peculiarities of the territorial tourism system and its modernization in the context of the spread of viral risks.

### **5. Research Methods**

The study was carried out on the basis of system and competence-based approaches as the most suitable for the analysis of complex systems, which fully include the territorial tourism industry and the territorial system of personnel training for this industry. The main research method is a system analysis, as well as a questionnaire method used to identify the expectations of employers and adhere to the subject-target approach to solving the problem of training personnel for the territorial tourism industry in crisis conditions.

### **6. Findings**

At the moment, education systems around the world are taking measures to organize education in the context of the coronavirus (COVID -19) pandemic, as well as the impact of other social and economic risks. The problems that have arisen in education have provoked the need to mobilize the education system in a critical situation, the transition to distance learning (Afanasyev & Afanasyeva, 2020).

At the same time, along with the obvious challenges and problems, the new teaching format provides a wide range of opportunities and prospects for changing and improving educational systems for which a critical situation creates forced conditions (Lutfullaev et al., 2020).

Currently a number of scientists identify the following problems that hinder the effective training of professional personnel for the tourism sector:

1) insufficient professional qualifications of the teaching staff, who do not have an adequate level of knowledge of modern professional technologies and do not have professional practical experience in the tourism sector;

- 2) prevalence of academic character of specialized higher education;
- 3) poor provision of the educational process with innovative technologies;
- 4) low formation of professional competencies for work in the field of tourism during the period of study.

The features of post-imaginary tourism oriented to regional specificity include the following: individualization (the development of travel in small groups); demand for cheap and short-term tours; development of new directions; boom of city excursions; demand for car travel; demand for medical and health tourism. They also include growing interest in ecotourism; development of marketing technologies for distance travel; closer interaction of tourist business and destination, diversification of services and types of tourist business; development of new products and optimization of existing tourism products; increase in the number of trips in the off-season and on unusual tour routes.

It is obvious that the training of a regional tourist business specialist who is ready to adapt to all these challenges and risks requires the formation of a new type of professional competence in him - regional competencies, i.e. those professional competencies that will be most in demand by the regional tourism system in the face of crisis modernization. We can say that these are professional competences and general cultural competences, classified as professional in tourism, multiplied by the needs and capabilities of the region.

In order to develop regional professional competencies among tourism specialists, taking into account the regional modernization of the territorial tourist and recreational system, it is important to define the concepts of "professional competence" and "professional competence" (Gershunsky, 2003).

At the same time, the formation of professional competencies occurs under the influence of training practice, professional activity. The formation of the competence of personnel in the tourism system is influenced by the presence of the necessary specialized professional knowledge in a specific field, intellectual and practical skills, as well as the desire for a prestigious professional position.

Thus, regional professional competencies are formed in the conditions of regional practice, while obtaining professional knowledge, skills and abilities focused on the resources and needs of a particular region.

The analysis of the tourist system of the Altai Territory in the aspect of the problem stated in the study gives indicative results. Over the past decade the region has managed to position itself as a successful brand in the domestic and international tourism markets.

Currently the development of the tourism sector in the Altai Territory is associated with the implementation of large investment projects. This will serve the fact that, according to the expert assessment, it will be necessary to additionally attract more than 8 thousand people. There is a shortage of specialists with competencies in the field of tourism and hospitality, who also have the necessary knowledge of the specifics of the tourism industry of the Altai Territory (Bitter et al., 2020).

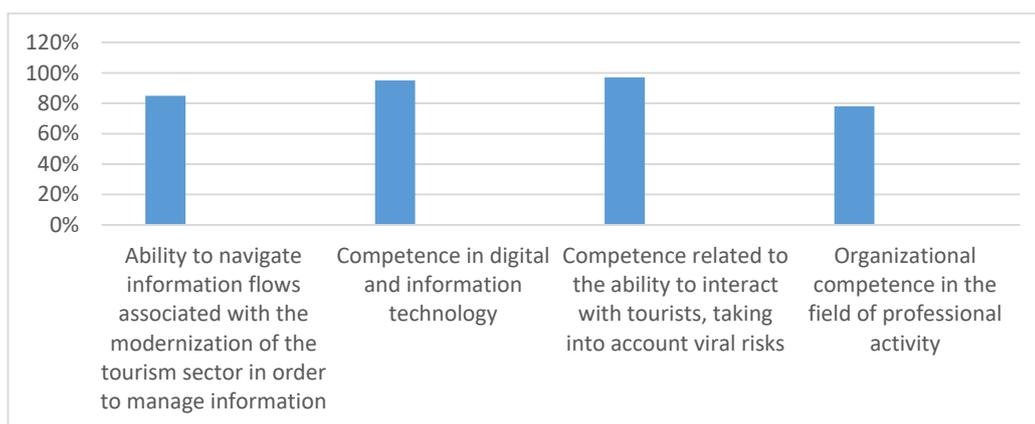
In our opinion, the formation of professional competencies among future specialists in the field of tourism should be carried out taking into account the ongoing modernization of the tourism industry and the impact of viral risks, regional features of the Altai Territory, a built-up system of horizontal and vertical management system in this area. In modern conditions, the most effective is the use of systemic

and competence-based approaches in the formation of a model of professional competencies of a tourism specialist, taking into account viral risks.

The specificity of the formation of professional competencies should be determined not only by the framework of educational and professional standards, but also by the current state of the tourism industry in the region.

We analyzed the organization of the tourism industry in the Altai Territory, as a territorial tourism system developing under the conditions of modernization and under the influence of viral risks. In recent years, digitalization and the speed of modernization, the impact of viral risks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have laid the foundation for the required changes in personnel training, taking into account the competence-based approach.

In developing a competence-based regional model for training service and tourism specialists, we followed a business-oriented subject-target approach. In order to obtain an expert opinion, representatives from 35 travel agencies and service enterprises took part in the survey. The results of the respondents' answers are presented in the diagram (Figure 01).

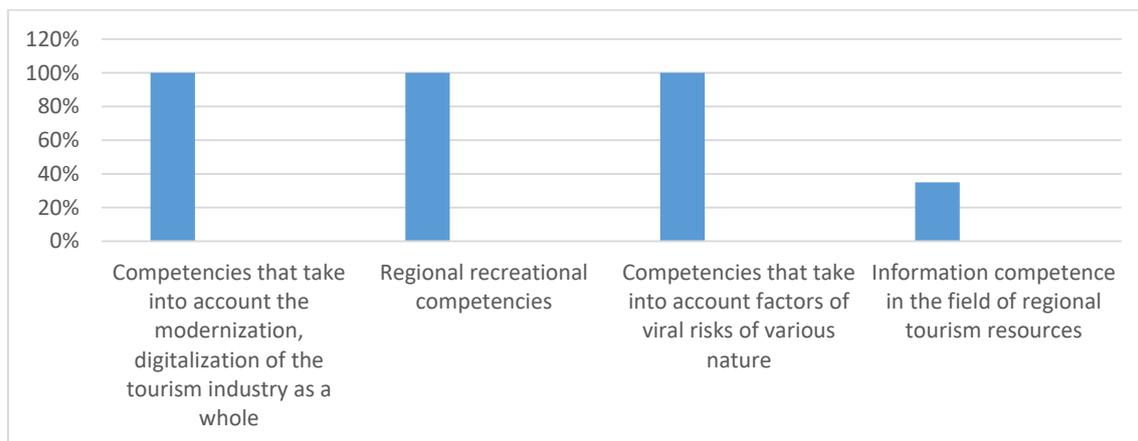


**Figure 1.** Professional competencies of future specialists in the field of tourism and service from the point of view of employers

The analysis showed that the following professional competencies received the highest rating of demand in professional activity:

- ability to navigate information flows associated with the modernization of the tourism sector in order to manage information;
- competence in the field of digital and information technologies (possession of skills in working with various sources of information: analysis, formalization, comparison, generalization, synthesis with existing knowledge bases, knowledge of digital technologies in tourism);
- communicative competence, in terms of building relationships with clients of travel agencies;
- organizational competence (the ability to organize the work of a team, self-organization, master the methods of joint activities in a group, the ability to seek and find compromises).

Further, an analysis was made of the need for the formation of regional professional regional competencies of future specialists in the field of tourism and service in the learning process from the point of view of employers (Figure 02).



**Figure 2.** Professional regional competencies in the field of tourism and service, formed in students in the process of study

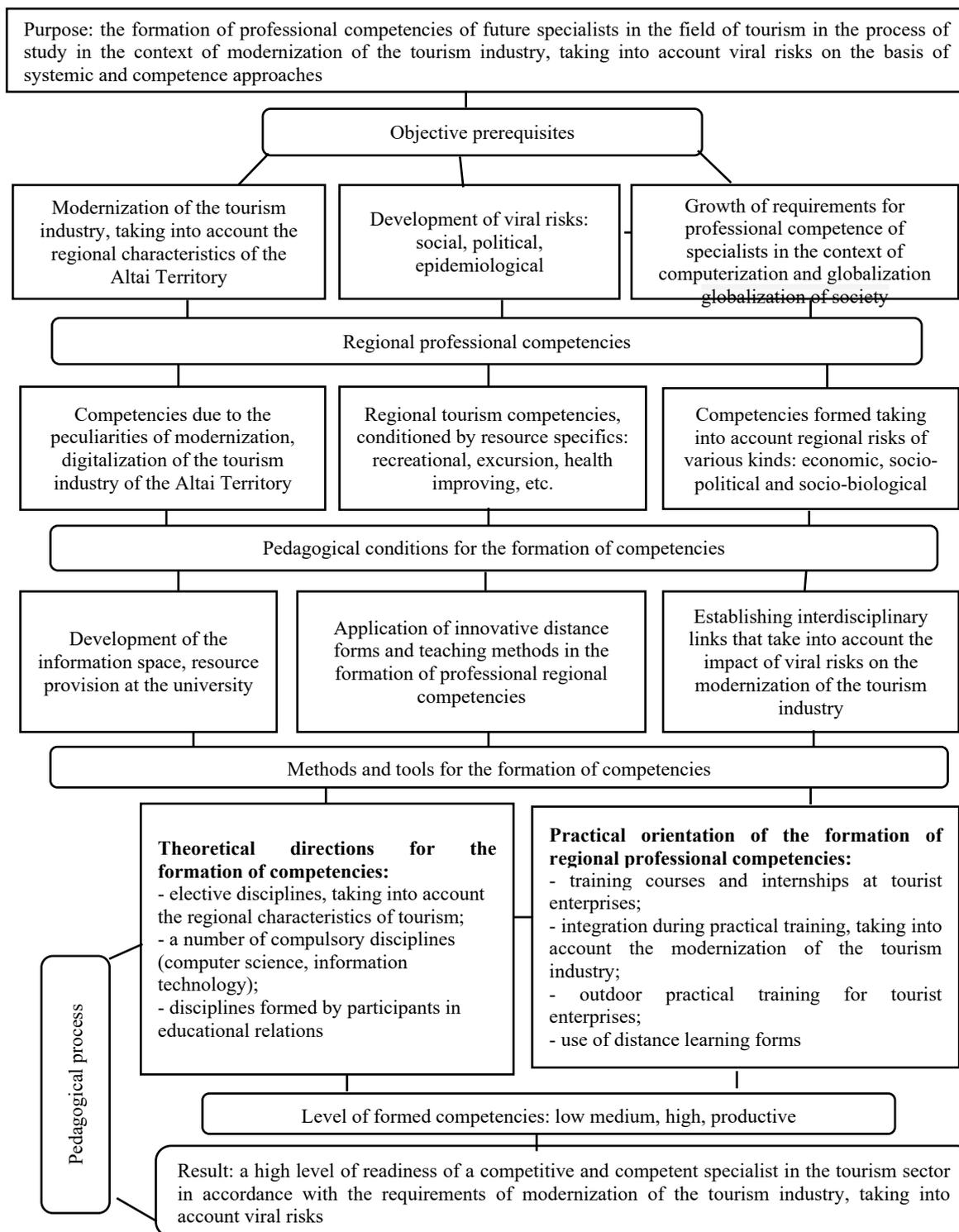
The results obtained indicate that, according to employers, future specialists in the field of tourism need to form key regional professional competencies that take into account the modernization of the tourism industry and the impact of viral risks of various kinds, aimed at mastering knowledge, skills, skills, experience, and developing motivation. It includes the ability of the graduate to act in the future professional tourism activities, taking into account the regional characteristics of the development of the tourism industry in the Altai Territory.

Analysis of scientific works on the formation of professional competencies allowed us to distinguish three groups of basic competencies, without which a modern specialist in the tourism industry is not competitive, to build a regional model for training personnel in the field of service and tourism, taking into account pandemic changes:

1. Competencies taking into account the modernization, digitalization of the tourism industry in general and regional, in particular.
2. Competencies set directly by the resource specificity of the regional tourist system.
3. Competencies taking into account risk factors of various kinds: economic, socio-political and socio-biological as the most relevant in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our model (Figure 3) consists of interconnected components that are, in a certain order in relation to each other, united by a set of goals, objectives, principles, content, forms, means, criteria and pedagogical conditions for the formation of professional competencies among future tourism specialists in the context of modernization of the tourism industry taking into account viral risks.

The functioning of the model is determined by the development of the tourism industry in the context of modernization and under the influence of viral risks. When developing the model, we took into account the regional requirements of employers in the tourism industry of the Altai Territory to the level of professional competence of a specialist. The formation of professional competencies of a future specialist in the field of tourism, integrating into regional professional competence, should take place from the first days of study at a university, but taking into account the ongoing changes. Formation is carried out in an integrative approach and practice-oriented environment under the influence of all components of the educational process as a whole (Lobysheva, 2012).



**Figure 3.** Model for the formation of professional regional competencies in the context of modernization of the tourism industry, taking into account viral factors

## 7. Conclusion

The conducted research leads us to the following conclusions.

The training of personnel for the service and tourism sphere in the post-COVID period is focused on the needs of territorial tourist systems and should be carried out within the framework of a competence-based, system and business-oriented approaches.

Modernization of the regional educational system requires the formation of a new type of competence in graduates - regional professional competencies. This is understood as the graduates' possession of certain knowledge, skills, experience in the field of regional tourism and service, professional skills necessary to carry out professional activities. They are formed under the influence of regional training practice, taking into account the resources and needs of the region, directions of development and restructuring of the tourism industry in conditions of crisis risks.

Regional competences include the following:

1. Competencies taking into account the modernization, digitalization of the tourism industry in general and regional, in particular.
2. Competencies set directly by the resource specific character of the regional tourist system: recreational, sightseeing, health-improving, etc.
3. Competencies that take into account risk factors of various kinds in the region: economic, socio-political and socio-biological as the most relevant in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

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