

Educational Mobility as a Factor of Tourism Development in the Regional University

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Abstract—An effective approach to the management of international educational mobility in regional universities with the purpose of increasing tourist activity in the region is considered.

Keywords—Export and import of tourist and educational services, international academic mobility, regional tourist activities.

I. INTRODUCTION

THOUSANDS of Russian citizens are eager to get educational services abroad. Universities are very interested in the fact that students have access to world educational services. The author offers to use the interest of the university community in international educational mobility for the development of tourist activity among the university community with extra-budgetary income.

The purpose of academic mobility is to obtain knowledge and professional development. The task of the universities is to provide access to recognized world community education systems. It is necessary to give students every opportunity to get a quality education in their chosen field of study.

In the last decade thousands of Russian citizens annually have been trained abroad. Meetings and negotiations with key partners of the Russian Ministry of Education (UNESCO, UNICEF, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the British Council, the Council of Baltic Sea States, the APEC Forum, the national Ministries of the Netherlands, France, Austria, Finland, and many others) have demonstrated support from their sides for the objective approaches of the Russian side to issues of the implementation of international cooperation. A lot of work in this area has been carried out by the Center of Comparative Educational Policy and the National Information Centre on Academic Recognition and Mobility.

To underline new tendencies in the activities of higher educational institutions it is possible to use a combination of "University – Enterprise" [2]. "University – Enterprise" takes into account economic and academic dimensions equally, i.e. the university cares equally about prestige and income. The author's approach to educational mobility with an increase of tourist activity might be a meaningful step for a university to become an enterprise.

Such a university would be able to compete with many domestic travel agencies, many of which organize tours of

"relaxation and education", but they are not always qualified to provide their clients with effective educational programs. At the present stage of Russia's integration into world education, a promising and cost-effective way for regional universities is to take the entrepreneurial initiative - to organize joint tourist and educational tours.

II. PERSPECTIVES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY AND TOURISM CENTERS IN THE UNIVERSITIES OF THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST

In the modern world (as noted by a number of competent sources) it is a hard struggle to recruit international students. The educational services market is growing and developing, constantly being innovated with new proposals. More and more countries are ready to accept foreign students.

"By 2025 the total number of students in the world will be increased from today's 97 to 260 million. According to the forecast of UNESCO international students by this time will reach from 5 to 7 million, and two thirds of them are expected to be from Asia. An increase in the number of students from India, China and other countries in East Asia is also expected. "Competition for the export of your educational services will definitely be targeted to these regions. Universities of the Far East are geographically close to these regions and for Far Eastern universities certain prospects appear ..." [9].

With the generally negative ratio of export to import of Russian educational services, universities of the Far East, as a close neighbor of China, have the obvious advantage, as the majority of students come to the Russian Far East from China: "...especially promising in Russia for the nearest future might be education oriented toward China..." [6]-[8]. Vietnam and Korea are the other potential suppliers of foreign students for Far Eastern universities. It is likely that along with educational services, foreign students will be interested in local tours, for example, in ecological tourism.

Low fees, a simple procedure for obtaining a visa, and the absence of requirements for an initial language level provide Russia with competitiveness (in particular in Far Eastern universities) on the Chinese educational market.

The Republic of Korea takes one of the first places in the world in the number of students among the population. For their tourist purposes, Far Eastern universities might use the interest of Koreans in the Far East, the geographical proximity to regions with similar climatic conditions and so on.

In addition to China and Korea, the universities of the Far East might expand tourist services due to the export of educational services to Vietnam, where, in comparison with other developing countries, the population is highly educated,

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and the Russian language is one of the most common foreign languages spoken.

Besides, many foreign universities have departments of Russian language, and the opportunity to study in a Russian-speaking country, at least for one semester, would be appreciated by the students who chose to study Russian as a foreign language, and a tourist excursion would have to make a significant addition to their knowledge of geography, history, and Russian culture. The tendency of the world's universities towards internationalization makes obvious the fact, that Far Eastern universities must not miss any chance of taking their place in the world educational market.

III. EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY AS A FACTOR OF TOURISTIC ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONAL UNIVERSITY (VLADIVOSTOK STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND SERVICE (VSUES) AS AN EXAMPLE)

It has to be admitted that the balance nowadays is not good for the export of Russian educational services, and Russian students prefer to study abroad much more than foreign ones do in Russia "... students from Russian Federation choose to study in Germany, the USA, France, the UK, Canada, Austria, New Zealand, and China [1]-[10]. The present situation might be used for effective educational mobility management, and to get extra income by organizing parallel tours for mobile students.

The idea is to insert self-sustaining Departments of Educational Mobility and Tourism (DEMT) into university structures. Such departments efficiently organizing educational mobility for the university community (academic mobility as a main part of university educational mobility) will encourage the tourist activity of mobile students. As a result, the university will get extra non-budget income for the qualified organization of mobile education, and possible tours in the country chosen by potential students for his/her education.

The combination of educational, tourist and commercial activities will also help to improve the university position as a whole: "improving the university's position means finding ways to streamline the educational, scientific, administrative, economic, commercial, and other activities" [3]-[5].

In order to substantiate the prospects of creating DEMT and of evaluating potential demand for its services the next initial step was made by the author: 450 students of the Foreign Language Institute of VSUES answered questions about their intentions regarding educational mobility in the nearest future.

The results are shown in the figures below.

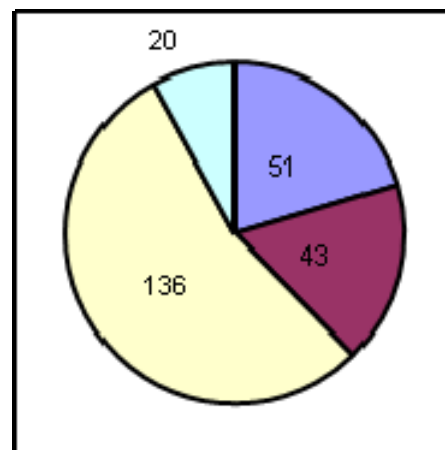


Fig. 1 Distribution of students by prospective types of educational mobility [11]

In accordance with Fig. 1, out of 250 students (200 students did not plan educational mobility in the nearest future), 136 students chose language courses + training in their main specialty, 51 chose only language courses, 43 would like to take only training and 20 students would take after-graduation training to get a master's degree abroad.

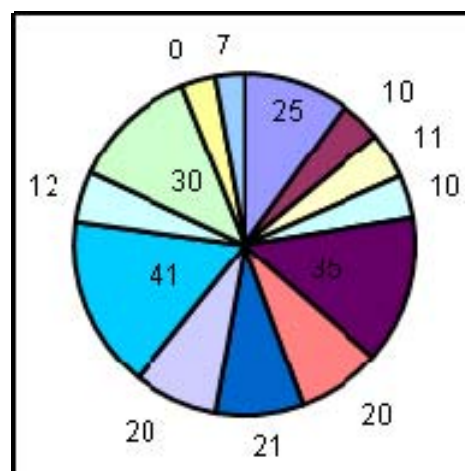


Fig. 2 Distribution of students by countries chosen for education [11]

According to Fig. 2 most students would like to study in USA (41), in second place is China (35), in third place is Malta (30), then in descending order: Japan, Korea, Australia, Singapore, France, Spain, Germany, and Cyprus. 7 students had not decided on their choice of country.

The data show a tendency: students of the Foreign Language Institute are interested in studying in a certain country, and it might prove indirectly a tourist interest in this country.

It should be taken into consideration that the questionnaire was spread only among Foreign Language Institute students, while about 27000 students currently study in VSUES. Besides them there are about 1500 professors, assistant professors and university staff. All of them might be potential clients of DEMT.

IV. CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that higher educational institutions of the Russian Far East, as close neighbors of China have a clear advantage in the export of educational services, the ratio of export to import in the market for educational services is negative for Russia for a number of reasons.

It is obvious that Russian students at the present time are interested in education abroad. Therefore universities should try to find an effective approach to the import of educational services by taking over control the process of educational mobility and by developing tourist activity in the university, increasing its extra-budgetary funds at the same time.

The aim for further work is the development of a detailed 5-year business plan for the opening of DEMENT.

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