VIRTUAL EXCURSION'S ROLE IN TRAINING FUTURE TOURISM EMPLOYEES

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Summary. Historical and cultural tourist resources are often used in training future tourism specialists. Their use in virtual excursions is substantial. University research and teaching staff are trying to use the educational potential of virtual excursions. To help them be aware of the available virtual excursions, the article describes their assortment. The authors reveal the difficulties in understanding the terminology related to virtual excursions; the meaning of the term "virtual excursion" is specified to avoid any misunderstandings. There were analyzed the proposals of virtual excursions in the Ukrainian tourist services market and classified into thematic groups: museums, separate tourist attractions, and art. Each group was illustrated with examples of available virtual excursions. It was found out that in Ukraine the virtual excursions to ethnographic museums prevail over the other types. At the same time, new types are appearing with the help of free online services thanks to which the educational potential of virtual excursions increases greatly.
Keywords: virtual excursion, tourist resources, educational potential, thematic groups, future tourism employees.

Historical and cultural tourist resources (museums, monuments, and memorials related to historical events, life and work of prominent representatives of science, technology, culture, as well as unique architectural and ethnographic monuments) are perhaps the most representative tourist resources in comparison to natural and those ones that demonstrate the country's modern achievements in the industry, construction, agriculture, science and culture, medicine and sports. The process of acquainting future specialists in tourism with tourist resources of all groups, their study and use in tourism have powerful educational potential. In the educational process of specialized higher educational institutions, future tourism specialists not only get acquainted with historical and cultural tourist resources and receive the necessary knowledge. They are formed as people who love the history of their native land and are able to love and promote the motherland as a tourist destination and are able to share their love with others. Thus, the use of historical and cultural resources in the educational process promotes patriotism, respect, and

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a desire to preserve folk traditions and crafts, and increase the spiritual and cultural heritage of their homeland.

To achieve it, university research and teaching staff are actively implementing innovative methods in teaching professional disciplines, including the method of virtual excursions. These excursions have become not only a means of interesting and informative leisure for getting acquainted with world-famous museums but also they help tourism students acquire useful practical skills for their future profession. Thanks to virtual excursions, the world has become more accessible and open, which made it possible for virtual tourists to visit various tourist destinations and famous and unknown places in any chosen country. Their range is quite rich, but to adequately use them in the educational process university pedagogical staff should know their assortment.

Virtual excursions are the subject of research by foreign and domestic scholars. However, it should be noted that they are studied in other contexts, namely in the context of tourism digitalization. In the Ukrainian scientific field, the issues of using digital technologies in excursion activities are researched by O. Akhmedova [1], T. Marusei [2], O. Kovalenko [3], A. Anishchenko [4] and many others.

The analysis of scientific works by Ukrainian researchers shows that their interests include studying the market of 3D excursion services, finding out the demand, methods of creating virtual excursions, and using virtual excursions as innovative teaching aids. In view of the above, the purpose of the article is to analyze the range of virtual excursion proposals in the Ukrainian market of tourist services and determine which tourist resources are most often used to create virtual excursions.

It should be noted that new terms related to virtual excursion activity have rapidly entered the scientific community. The terms "3D tour", "virtual tour", and "virtual excursion" have become extremely popular. However, according to the analysis, their essence is still not clearly defined. Moreover, they are used interchangeably. It is rather confusing in the Ukrainian context as the terms "tour" and "excursion" are the Ukrainian language have different meanings. However, dictionaries give the word "tour" when translated into English. This creates various misunderstandings and confusion. In addition, there is another difficulty in interpreting. For instance, the term "virtual" in English means "created by computer modeling to simulate/reproduce real objects and activities [5]. Hence, it is not correct to call "virtual" "3 D" since using a different technology than 3D will completely change the meaning.

In this article, we use the term "virtual excursion" which is understood as the simulation of a place that exists in reality through the video display of consecutive still or moving images accompanied by multimedia elements such as story, text, music, and other sound effects.

In our analysis, we pay attention, first of all, to the possibilities of creating and conducting virtual excursions that do not require additional tools or specialized equipment to support the virtual reality system. All that a person needs is a personal computer, high-speed Internet access, a Google Chrome browser, and a Google Account. These necessary requirements are few because this browser is one of the most popular among consumers, including Ukrainian, as it is used on both

computers and mobile devices. In addition, Google's media products are quite diverse, free, easy to use, and therefore popular.

The analysis of online proposals allowed us to identify and classify the currently available virtual excursions in the creation of which the historical and cultural tourist resources are used.

There is an opinion of some Ukrainian scholars that virtual excursions are possible only to museums of folk architecture and Ukrainian life. For instance, T. Marusei believes that virtual excursions in Ukraine are still limited to historical or ethnographic museums [2]. Despite this opinion, the analysis of the proposals found in the Internet space shows that they have significantly expanded and changed in essence and range. These changes primarily depend on the tourist resources that were used to create them.

The analysis of Internet proposals on the Ukrainian tourist services market allowed us to single out such thematic orientations of them:

- museums;
- separate tourist attractions;
- art.

Virtual excursions in the museums can be divided into 3 categories.

Virtual excursions in museums of folk architecture and Ukrainian life: National Museum of Folk Architecture and Life of Ukraine (Pyrohove); Museum of Folk Architecture and Life in Lviv "Shevchenkivskyi hai (grove)" (Lviv); Transcarpathian Museum of Folk Architecture and Life (Uzhhorod); Center for Ethnology "Mamaieva Sloboda" (Kyiv); Zaporizska Sich – Khortytsia National Reserve (Zaporizhzhia).

Virtual excursions in traditional museums of Ukraine. Newly created virtual excursions are 3D visits to Zirka Polyn Civil Defense Museum in Chornobyl, where visitors can get acquainted with the horrific Chornobyl tragedy; Chornobyl National Museum in Kyiv, which presents almost 9,000 unique exhibits, each of which has been tested for radioactivity, purification, and decontamination; Memorial and Educational Complex in Memory of the Victims of Totalitarianism and Armed Conflict "Family Memory", which tells the life of the people of Shostka during the war, their fate and the history of some families; These virtual excursions were created with the support of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation.

Virtual excursions in memorial museums. The proposal of such excursions is growing rapidly in response to demand. Memorial museums create their own 3D excursions in order to attract more visitors. Among the popular ones are the personal offices of famous scientists, such as Academician P.G. Kostiuk, Academician O.O. Bohomolets, Academician V.M. Hlushkova, Memorial Museum of Academician E.O. Paton, B.Ye. Paton, the museum room of M.M. Grishko, memorial museums O.V. Palladin and Academician G.S. Pisarenko.

Virtual excursions to separate tourist attractions can be divided into 2 groups: separate landmarks or monuments and separate castles or palaces.

The first group includes *virtual excursions to authentic wooden churches* of the Carpathian region of Ukraine, for instance, the Church of the Ascension, Yasinya, Rakhiv district, Transcarpathian region; Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Potelich, Zhovkva district, Lviv region and 6 others that are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

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Virtual excursions in castles and palaces of Ukraine: Zolochiv Castle (Zolochiv), Potoskyi Palace (Lviv), Pidhirtsi Castle (Pidhirtsi), Palace of Kyrylo Rozumovskyi (Baturyn), Olesky Castle (Olesko).

Virtual excursions in exhibitions, art galleries, and art museums. Such 3D tours are on offer: Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko National Museum of Arts where visitors can get acquainted with the art collection of prominent Ukrainian philanthropists and see the paintings in detail, as they are qualitatively digitized; Andriy Sheptytskyi National Museum in Lviv, which contains one of the most complete collections of national culture and art items.

The analysis of the proposals shows that virtual excursions to local lore and ethnographic museums dominate in the Ukrainian tourist services. Instead, virtual excursions in art galleries and exhibitions on the Ukrainian market are still few. In our opinion, the small representation of this category of virtual excursions can be explained by the fact that Ukrainian museum staff have mobilized faster and used the opportunities of ICT in their museum and educational activities.

Conclusions. Thus, virtual excursions are quite diversified in their themes. Their typical variety depends on the type of tourist resources that are used to create them. At the same time, the Ukrainian market still offers virtual excursions mainly to museums. However, new virtual excursions such as scientific ones and excursions to historical places of Ukraine are becoming popular among consumers. The range of virtual excursion services is enriched by free online services that allow people to create their own, individual or author's excursions. And thanks to them, the educational potential of virtual excursions increases greatly, especially for those for whom tourism is a future profession.

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