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Aspects of team selection and cooperation in tourism

Aspekty selekcji zespołu i znaczenia współpracy zespołu w turystyce

Key words: active tourism, team cooperation

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka aktywna, współpraca zespołowa

INTRODUCTION

Cooperation is one of the main means to get to know an individual, as only cooperating every person learns to understand other society members, as well as himself/herself. People involved in a group hope to satisfy their needs. In the group the individual feels support, although not always feels well.

Tourism is one of the sports and active ways of spending leisure time by people who are more or less familiar to each other (Fiedotov, Vostokov). In tourism groups (teams) cooperation is very important, as well as conformity, mutual relations and trust. In the team work it is important for every team member to be aware of one's belonging to the team in order to realize the aims of the team more effectively and with a better result than while working alone.

The aim of the research is to work out and determine exercise and game routine in order to develop tourism team cooperation. The object is the tourism study process, and the subject – exercise and game routine to develop tourism team cooperation.

The hypothesis: working out and approving in practice the exercise and game routine in order to develop a tourism team, a successful team cooperation will be provided in the tourism technique competitions.

The tourism study at the Latvian Academy of Sport Education (LASE) helps to acquire theoretical knowledge, participate in separate kinds of active tourism, as well as to test one's skills and abilities in the tourism technique competitions.

Tourism educates and develops a person. Besides, tourism is what gives a possibility and helps a person to socialize in the society.

ASPECTS OF TEAM SELECTION AND COOPERATION

The acquiring of the tourism studies by LASE students is planned and organized in two stages:

– the 1st stage – preparation stage, which takes place in the study rooms of LASE and the nearby territory, where the students acquire theory, skills and abilities in the tourism technique;

– the 2nd stage – the mastering of the tourism technique and its practical application in hiking, water tourism and tourism technique competitions.

The second stage is planned and organized in the tourism camp located in the territory of The Gauja National Park. This stage is very important for the students to acquire and master their study tasks and social skills. It is emotionally rich and interesting time, viewing sights and nature formations – caves and historical objects.

As it was already mentioned, during this stage the students take part in the tourism technique competitions – tourism rally and tourism technique obstacle distance. The team of three men and one woman participates in both competitions.

Now we will take a look at two conditions which provide a successful participation of the team in tourism competitions: the team formed already during the 1st stage; the cooperation among the team members.

In the study process today attention is paid to the application of interactive methods. One of the most often used methods is group work (cooperative learning) when students work in groups to solve definite study tasks. The work in groups also gives a unique possibility for students to enrich each other intellectually and emotionally (Robier, Timman 1988).

Group work has the following characteristics: positive interaction, when all group members feel united and have the need to work together to achieve the goal; mutual cooperation, based on the development of social skills – the skill to discuss things together with other group members, the skill to listen to others, the skill to explain i.a., what contributes to effective work in the group; individual responsibility, when all participants of the group learn and help others to understand the material necessary to solve the task; the skills of socializing and acting

in small groups, when there is a good communication, mutual trust and decision making in the group (Mikelsone 1998).

The realization of tourism study tasks can be well carried out using the work in groups – teams. A very important precondition is the pedagogical-psychological aspects of the group – team forming.

In psychology a group is understood as a limited number of people separated from the social entity according to the definite characteristics (activity to be done, character, social layer or class, structure, development level, etc.) (Bennett et al. 1991)

Sociologists define the group as any number of people united according to formal or essential characteristics, having common traits.

The tourism group – team is a small group with a small (4–6) number of people, it is an informal group, which is formed basing on mutual sympathies and antipathies. These sympathies and antipathies are determined by opinions, convictions, authority and competence of individual participants (Karpova, Plotnieks 1984).

As it is proved by the investigation, when forming the tourism team members students consider the following factors according to: belonging to a definite group (61% of the respondents), that is, having previous experience students choose those participants for the team with whom they have already had a successful cooperation in other studies working in the group; participants' competence (64%), as the most important mentioning the participants' intellectual and physical potential; mutual sympathies (36%); personal qualities (76%), emphasizing the ones which facilitate communication qualities such as being kind, responsive; sincere, showing interest and attention, the wish to understand and help others, trust, enthusiasm, the sense of humor; being a leader (46%), but it does not matter whether the person is a formal or informal leader.

Forming of the team – group is an important preparation stage. It is the primary task, often determining the success. The group undergoes several stages in its development, and during these stages the participants become more consolidated, the group's consciousness and the conception "we" develop.

S. Omarova (1996) distinguishes 5-phase conception in group development: Phase 1 – everybody separate, for himself/herself; Phase 2 – defining of others; Phase 3 – interest in power; Phase 4 – we as a group; Phase 5 – we are we – we are for others.

The way of a group development is long, therefore we should say, that in such a short time as one study course the group does not achieve the top phases in its development.

In the development of the group it is very important to consolidate the participants, as well as to have the wish to stay in the team and do the best when executing the tasks.

The consolidation of the team is not possible without the participants' communication. Communication as the process of interaction involves cooperation (Karpova, Plotnieks 1984). In the process of communication the mutual relations can be seen and developed, and the participants get to know each other better, learn and become richer intellectually.

In the process of tourism studies, as a result of the team participant cooperation the students acquire tourism technique better, evaluate the situations and use definite technical elements according to the situation, also the team's cooperation is more creative when working out the tactics.

While preparing to the 2nd study stage, to facilitate the team's cooperation already during the 1st stage eight teams (the Experimental group teams where team formation is already completed) carried out the routine of the worked out exercises and games. When teaching the kinds of tourism techniques and developing the team cooperation the following exercises and games were taken part in:

- 7 exercises – making knots, making and pulling down a tent, tensioning of a rope, performing of the team tasks, crossing of the glen with the help of parallel ropes, crossing of the glen by walking on the log and ascending the slope;
- 15 games facilitating the acquiring of the knot making, as well as consolidating the participants and promoting team cooperation.

Evaluating the participation of Experimental and Control group teams (the teams were formed completely only in the end of the 1st stage) in the tourism relay competitions, the importance of team development and cooperation was observed (Fig. 1).

The length of tourism relay course was 8 km, the control time to cover it – 4 hours. Eight additional competition places were arranged in the course where the teams had to arrive at the definite time marked in the card and had to execute a tourism technique task with time control. The execution of the task was estimated by summing time points and penalty points for the mistakes. So, the less the number of points, the result of the team is better.

Among 16 teams the Experimental group teams got the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 13th place, but the Control group teams – the 5th, 6th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th, 15th and 16th place. The average number of points won by the Experimental group teams was 405.6 including 99.4 penalty points for the additional tasks. But the average number of points by the Control group teams was 517.4 including 156.8 penalty points.

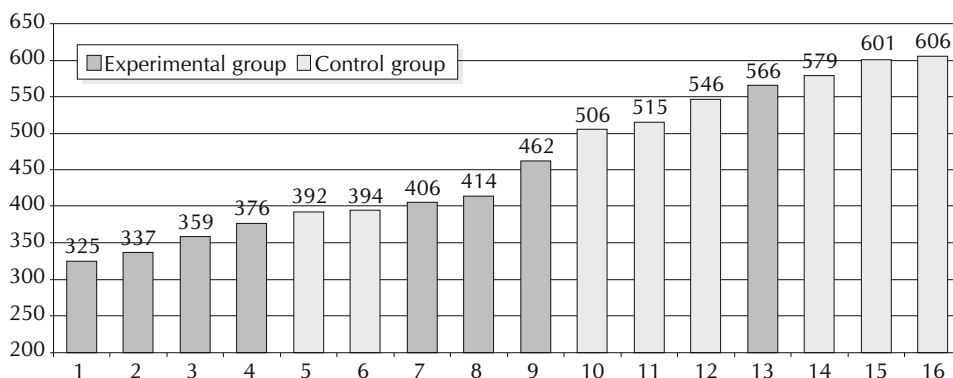


Fig. 1. Evaluating the participation of the Experimental and Control group teams in the tourism rally competitions

Ocena współpracy grup zespołów doświadczalnego i kontrolnego w obozach turystycznych

The experimental group teams – winners have shown good results in tourism relay developing a successful team cooperation and good tourism technique, the team participants were also highly assessed (9 points). The 4 – 6th place teams have done the tasks comparatively well and got 8 points. Two teams of the Control groups also got 8 points.

CONCLUSIONS

Individual skills and abilities in the tourism technique of every student are very important for the team success. An analysis of tourism relay cards helped to make a conclusion that especially in the individual tasks some participants have got many penalty points. For example, only 2 participants from the runner-up team have got 60 penalty points for knot making. In the additional competitions where team cooperation is important, the Experimental group teams had less penalty points than Control group teams.

The obtained results have proved that in the tourism study process it is very important to form the team in time and to develop the cooperation and consolidation among the team participants. The exercise and game routine included in the 1st stage is methodologically correct. As a result we observed in each individual the responsibility for the acquiring of the tourism technique, the skills to evaluate the work by himself/herself and others, helping others and a successful mutual cooperation in the team.

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STRESZCZENIE

Celem studiów w zakresie turystyki w Łotewskiej Akademii Sportu jest wzbudzenie wśród studentów zainteresowania turystyką aktywną, metodologiczne przygotowanie ich do organizowania imprez turystycznych, jak również uświadomienie roli turystyki w rozwoju społeczeństwa. Celem badań jest określenie kryteriów doboru zespołu i znaczenia współpracy grupowej w zakresie turystyki. Bardzo charakterystyczna jest praca w grupie podczas analizowania materiału badawczego. Praca w zespole daje unikatową możliwość rozwinięcia pozytywnego współdziałania, wzajemnej współpracy i indywidualnej odpowiedzialności. Wyniki badań pokazują, że prawidłowo dobrany zespół zapewnia pomyślną współpracę między jego członkami. Zastosowanie poprawnych metodologicznie zestawów ćwiczeń i gier w pierwszym – przygotowawczym – etapie studiów daje zespołowi możliwość doskonalenia warsztatu współpracy w turystyce.