



From Training to Employment: How Vocational Education Shapes Job Search Outcomes for Spa Tourism Graduates

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Abstract: The global rise of spa tourism has spurred a growing demand for a workforce that is not only skilled but also adaptable to evolving industry standards. In response, vocational education has been promoted as a key mechanism to bridge the gap between academic training and professional needs.

• Introduction

Through the design and delivery of programs that blend strong theoretical foundations with substantial practical exposure, vocational education institutions aim to bridge the gap between classroom learning and workplace realities [4, 5]. In this context, is considered that the emphasis on experiential learning, whether through internships, apprenticeships, or simulation-based training, seeks to equip graduates with the adaptability, technical expertise, and interpersonal skills essential for success in a highly competitive labor market [6].

• Material and method

Research component	Purpose	Methods and tools	Interconnection	Key contribution
Quantitative survey	Gather structured data on demographics, education, employment outcomes	Structured questionnaire administered to 250 graduates	Forms statistical baseline for employment trends	Identifies general patterns and key correlations
Semi-structured interviews	Obtain in-depth, contextualized insights into graduate experiences	40 interviews with a regionally and institutionally diverse subsample	Complements survey findings; uncovers nuances	Reveals personal narratives, barriers, and opportunities
Descriptive statistical analysis	Summarize distribution and frequency of variables	SPSS Version 28	Enables clear profiling of the graduate cohort	Supports generalizations about training outcomes
Ethical safeguards	Ensure participant privacy and data protection	Informed consent, GDPR compliance, anonymization protocols	Maintains research integrity and credibility	Protects participant rights and builds trust

• Results and discussions

Interconnection of development policies for enhancing spa tourism workforce outcomes:

Policy initiative	Main objective	Interconnections	Expected impact	Potential challenges
Strengthen industry–academic collaboration	Align curricula with industry needs	Supports structured training, mentorship, and digital skills integration	Higher employability, curriculum relevance	Requires sustained commitment from private sector
Mandatory structured practical training	Provide meaningful, evaluated work experience	Depends on strong industry collaboration	Improved readiness; faster employment	Availability of quality internships in rural areas
Develop regional workforce hubs	Reduce regional disparities	Linked to mobility programs and local economic strategies	Boosts local employment; reduces migration	Funding and infrastructure challenges
Expand Mentorship and Career Guidance	Improve school-to-work transitions	Complements internships and workforce hub development	Better career matching, increased job satisfaction	Resource-intensive to scale nationally
Integrate Digital and Entrepreneurial Training	Prepare graduates for evolving market demands	Enhances entrepreneurship and national competitiveness	New business creation; modernization of sector	Resistance to curricular change; training costs
Promote national mobility programs	Facilitate graduate relocation to strong labor markets	Mitigates impact of regional disparities	Balanced workforce distribution; reduced unemployment	Ensuring equitable access and social integration

• Conclusions

The research highlights the pivotal role vocational education plays in shaping employment outcomes for graduates aspiring to enter Romania's dynamic spa tourism sector.