Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Studies

ISSN (print): 2644-0490, ISSN (online): 2644-0504

Volume 5 Issue 12 December 2022

Article DOI: 10.47191/jefms/v5-i12-11, Impact Factor: 6.274

Page No. 3543-3551

Skills for Employability in Tourism and Hospitality: Overviewof the Challenges and Needs After Covid-19

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ABSTRACT: The covid-19 epidemic is leading to a huge economic crisis in the short and medium term, with tourism and hospitality industry being one of the hardest hit sectors in terms of income and employment with a great amount of decline of international demand amid global travel restrictions to constrain the virus. In this context, this studyattempts to draw attention to the effects of covid-19 on tourism and hospitality employment. Specifically, two major impacts on the workforce are detected and discussed within this scope: job losses and the issue of skills in the international tourism sector (challenges and needs after covid-19). Following the examination of these effects,some suggestions for the future of employment in the tourism sector were presented. The implications of this research can affect tertiary professional training institutions, which need to address necessary changes to employability skills in the curriculum. These findings provide information for development of curriculum to meetthe respective needs as the industry moves through this pandemic era.

KEYWORDS: Tourism, Hospitality, Covid-19, Employability, Skills

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry represents an important source of income for the economies of the countries, in particular by contributing to the entry of foreign currencies, the balance of payments and by creating a multiplier effect for other sectors. In addition, tourism is one of the major job-creating industries duetoits labor-intensive nature. A large number of people are employed in the industry and therefore, the tourism and hospitality industry is seen more in terms of its contribution to reducing unemployment. However, tourism is highly vulnerable to crisis events such as health issues, natural disasters, economic downturns and political instabilities, which will negatively affect the perception of security and preventpeople from travelling. These incidents result in lower tourist arrivals, business closures or reductions, and inevitably a number of job losses.

The year 2020 began with a major pandemic crisis, and tourism and hospitality are among the first industries affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. To prevent the global spread of the disease. Decisions regarding international travel restrictions have been announced by a number of countries. Inbound travelhas also been restricted in many countries from time to time. In addition, tourism and hospitality businesses have been closed or are restricted based on social distancing measures. Although more than two years have passed since the first outbreak began, travel restrictions and industry closures continue or are increasing due to new situations such as new mutations or variants. This has caused many job losses in the tourism and hospitality industry. During this period, industry and its employees have benefited from government subsidies and support programs, but they differ by region and do not respond to all the negative effects of the crisis. It is therefore crucial to examine how this crisis affects employeesand what the consequences of these effects are for the industry. Because of these discussions, it will be possible to develop a number of technical implications for employee support and to provide some managerial implications for relaunching companies.

This study aims to provide an overview of the tourism sector in the world in terms of employment and to estimate how the slowdown in tourism activity affects local economies. This study was carried out based on work carried out by several DGs of the European Commission as well as UNWTO reports overthe past few months, in order to provide decision-makers with a concrete picture of the past, current andpotential impacts of the epidemic of COVID-19 on the economy. In addition, it contributes to the

existing literature by combining quantitative and qualitative data with analysis based on the UNWTO scenarios.
To do this, a brief introduction to the literature on the Covid-19 crisis and how it is affecting the tourismand hospitality workforce is presented. Two major impacts are being examined to affect the workforce during COVID-19; job losses and deterioration of working conditions as well as changes in consumer behaviour. These two effects and their implications for industry are discussed in detail under the main title of the chapter. Following the examination of these effects, some solutions and implications are proposed to overcome the problems of the workforce. The ultimate section summarizes the main conclusions and findings of the study.

I- THE EFFECT OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY ON EMPLOYMENT

Tourism is one of the major sectors of the economy as it helps to generate national revenue and create huge job opportunities. The tourism industry has the potential to create direct and indirect jobs for skilled and unskilled workers. Increasing tourism trends can lead to a variety of positive economic developments across countries, primarily on gross domestic product, employment opportunities, national income and international trade. In addition, the direct effect in the travel and tourism sector generates employment opportunities because of its indirect and induced effects on various sectors, whichare favorable to tourism.
The development of tourism, and its contribution to the national economy by generating tourism revenues, employment opportunities and others, has created general recognition of tourism as the mainjob creator. At the same time, most countries have generally accepted that the tourism sector is a majorgenerator of jobs, as there are many reasons rooted in such a prominent image. As it is generally acceptedthat the tourism sector is a diversified regional industry generating employment opportunities in severalareas where traditional economic activities are hesitant. Second, tourism facilitates employment opportunities for groups vulnerable to unemployment, including youth, low-skilled workers, unskilled workers, students and women. The third reason is that this is a labor-intensive industry that uses awiderange of skills, which is crucial to alleviating poverty. In general, it could be argued that the tourism sector provides solutions to unforeseen problems. This sector is an important source of jobs for low-skilled and highly skilled workers. A considerable number of seasonal, part-time and temporarypositions are available in the sector. Under normal conditions, the tourism sector could present variousemployment opportunities for diverse populations such as migrants, women, students and older workers.In addition, employment opportunities in the tourism sector are available not only in large cities, but also in rural areas, including coastal towns and other regions where fragile economic conditions lead to limited employment opportunities. When considering the share of tourism in total employment in somecountries, it can be noted that this share is 15.7% in Iceland, while it is 13.5% in Spain, 10.3% in Ireland,10% in Greece, 9.8% in Portugal and 7.7% in Turkey. In contrast, this rate is only 5.5% in Morocco (OECD, 2020: 5-6).
According to (S. Fauzel; 2016), tourism is considered to have major impacts on other sectors of the economy, generating substantial benefits for local economies. This can be explained by the fact that when tourists visit a specific country, the demand for local goods and services increases, mainly throughdirect expenditure and indirectly through multiplier effects. Being a labor-intensive sector, tourism provides employment opportunities for people entering the labor market for the first time or who have difficulty finding employment elsewhere. Thus, tourism plays a role in providing opportunities for skilled and low-skilled workers, ethnic minority groups and migrants, young unemployed, long-term unemployed, as well as women with family responsibilities who cannot hold only a part-time job. In addition, these types of employment opportunities are an important additional component of income forretirees and others who are in work transition.
Tourism businesses tend to encourage individuals to adopt entrepreneurial behavior. Thus, applied sociological research suggests that many people access tourism jobs in other industries and that tourismskill sets tend to have a substantive impact on supportive positions, while enabling motivated individualsto move up the ladder to higher managerial and professional positions. Mobility patterns, work orientation and self-evaluation are the characteristics of successful tourism workers. In particular, accelerated advancement opportunities and incentives to entrepreneurship lead to the general satisfaction of those who manage to remain employed by tourism businesses.
In the hospitality industry specially the accommodation sector, there is an average of one employee for each hotel room. One job in the basic tourism industry creates about one and a half additional (indirect) jobs in the tourism-related economy. In addition, three workers depend indirectly on each person working in hotels, such as travel agency staff, guides, taxi and bus drivers, food and beverage suppliers, launderers, textile workers, gardeners, souvenir shop staff and others, as well as airport employees. Similarly, on the employment side, tourism industries generally employed 270 million people in 2019, one in eleven jobs was from tourism and 10% of new jobs were in the sector. As a result, the World Tourism Organization expects that travel and tourism will create new jobs directly in the sector, makingtourism a strong contributor to job creation.

II- COVID-19 AND TOURISM EMPLOYMENT: SCENARIO-BASED ANALYSIS

The COVID-19 epidemic is leading to a huge economic crisis in the short and medium term, with tourism being one of the hardest hit sectors in terms of income and employment (Del Rio-Chanona et al. 2020; Fana et al. 2020). To stop the spread of the disease, tourism destinations have adopted extrememeasures starting in spring 2020, such as lockdowns and travel restrictions. Such policy measureshave an impact on both demand and supply in the value chain, resulting in a shrinking economy, job losses, and reduced incomes. The public health crisis has become an economic crisis. The drastic reduction in demand for goods and services due to lockdowns, closures of shops, hotels, restaurants and other related services leads to a significant increase in unemployment and business failure, affecting all tourist destinations. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimated that the global economic impact on the tourism industry would be more than five times greater than the impact of the 2008 global financial crisis (WTTC, 2020).

Tourism is one of the most vulnerable sectors to crises, natural and human disasters (Pforr and Hosie, 2008). Its recovery period is often longer compared to other sectors, especially if the attractiveness image of the destination is affected by the crisis or disaster (Cassedy, 1992; Liu and Pratt, 2017), particularly in terms of tourism security. As a result, the countries and regions that will be most affected by COVID-19 are those where the tourism sector is most relevant to their economies. However, the uniqueness of the current health crisis also lies in the measures adopted by various governments to stopthe pandemic and the spread of the virus, such as lockdowns, isolation and travel restrictions. BetweenApril and May 2020, 100% of global destinations imposed travel restrictions in response to the COVID- 19 pandemic, through border closures for tourists and the suspension of international flights (UNWTO,2020).

Between April and May 2020, 100% of all destinations around the world introduced travel restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, through border closures for tourists and the suspension of international flights (UNWTO, 2020). After a period of closure of about 3 months (between mid-March and June 2020, depending on the country) in the first half of 2020, hotels, restaurants, historic and recreational sites and other tourism-related activities have reopened but imposed several health and safety measures. Some examples are the reduction of the number of people in the same area, the cleaning/disinfection of the spaces several times a day, the mandatory use of masks by staff and tourists,the prohibition of buffets in hotels and restaurants, among other things. Such measures should continueto exist as long as the disease is active in the world.

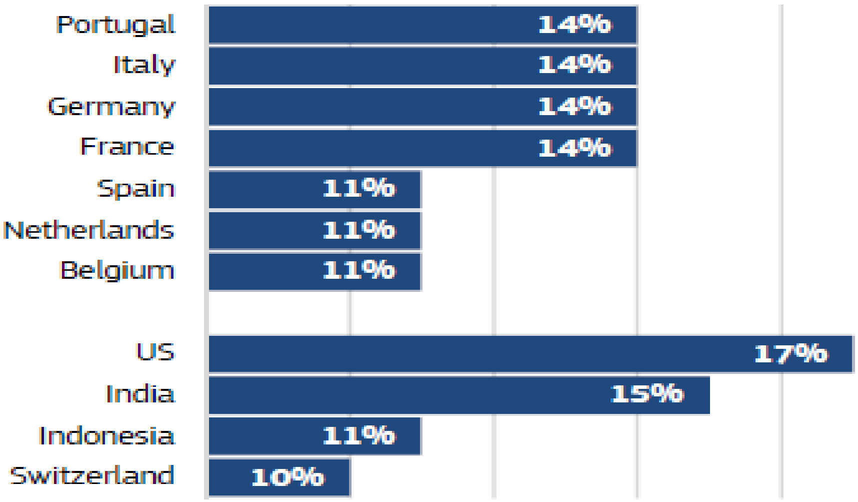
Unlike most other economic sectors, the tourism sector is having difficulty maintaining business during the lockdown. For example, under certain restrictions, the agricultural sector must continue its activity to provide food to the population, as well as the agri-food industry (at least a part). The food distributionsector could remain open and purchases have even increased [due to new consumption behaviors duringthe lockdown]. The non-food distribution sector, although closed, relies on online sales as an escape plan, even though infrastructure and transportation services are sometimes unable to meet rising demand. Some non-food manufacturing industries such as clothing or machinery/equipment have chosen (because of a market need) to develop another activity, like the production of surgical masks and gowns or respirators, respectively. Telework has also been an alternative for some businesses, primarilyin the service sectors, to continue to operate and mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 crisis. However, the tourism industry, such as accommodation and air transportation, does not have a plan B, no options, once the spring lockdown forced them to shut down and telework was no longer possible. For all these reasons, the tourism sector is more exposed to the shocks of lockdowns than any other industry. This is particularly dramatic, as in some countries the direct effect of accommodation activity alone accounts for between 5% and 10% of their total employment. In addition, economic activities included in the tourism sector have a significant multiplier effect on the economy, both downstream and upstream along the value chain. For example, in the EU, employment in air transport activities has a multiplier effect between 2 and 3.5 (InterVISTAS, 2015), which means that each job in this sector can generate between 1 and 2.5 additional jobs in the economy.

In the face of a decrease in the number of tourists, the current and usual level of employment may not be sustainable for businesses operating and/or dependent on tourism-related activities. As a result, between 6.6 and 11.7 million jobs, depending on the UNWTO scenarios, could be at risk of reduced working time (and therefore reduced benefits) or permanent job losses. These estimated effects are consistent with the results of other studies. For example, the European Commission's science and knowledge service estimated the loss of 6 million jobs in the tourism sector, with COVID-19 and Statista(2020a) results predicting a loss of 13 million jobs (tourism and travel industry) in Europe for 2020.

Furthermore, the slowdown in tourism-related activity may also represent a loss of opportunity for temporary/seasonal workers, who are unemployed or who supplement their annual income with summer jobs. These threatened jobs represent between 3.2% and 5.6% of the total EU labor force.

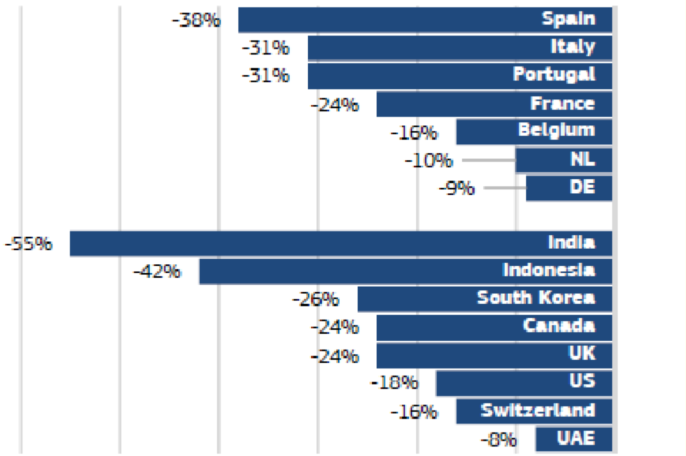
III- CHANGES IN CONSUMERS, TRAVELERS AND ENTREPRENEURS BEHAVIOR IN TIMES OF COVID-19

Recent surveys and trend analyses have shown that the COVID-19 health crisis is affecting consumer behaviour. Changes are being observed in the short term (e.g. during lockdown, sales and online serviceshave increased significantly – Global Data, 2020) and are also expected to persist over the medium term. For example, some citizens wait for a vaccine or treatment before returning regularly to out-of-home activities (Figure 1). International travel expectations post-COVID-19 are also lower than pre-COVID travel expectations (Figure 2).



Source: McKinsey & Company (2020a, e, f, g, h, i, k, l, m, n and p).

Figure 1. Waiting for a vaccine or treatment before returning regularly to stores, restaurantsand other outdoor activities (% of respondents)



Source: McKinsey & Company (2020a, b, c, d, e, f, g, i, j, k, m, n, o and p).

Figure 2. Expectations for consumer behavior after COVID-19, compared to the pre-crisisperiod, regarding international travel.

For the 2020 summer vacation and beyond, travellers are expected to change their travel readiness and destination preferences. Recent surveys have revealed that there is still a willingness to travel despite the COVID-19 emergency (EY, 2020b; DNA, 2020). However, when choosing a holiday destination, low tourist density and health conditions are the main attributes (Figure 3) that a destination must have. By avoiding crowded places, tourists show preferences for destinations with outdoor activities and direct contact with nature (DNA, 2020; Interface Tourism, 2020c; Gursoy et al., 2020), away from major cities(VVF, 2020). Price does not appear to be the main criterion for selecting the destination (Figure 3). Preference will be given to domestic destinations, although there is still a willingness to travel outside the country of origin for holidays (EY, 2020b; DNA, 2020; Interface Tourism, 2020c). Outside the home country, preference is higher for destinations less affected by COVID-19 (HES-SO, 2020; Interface Tourism, 2020c). There are also expected to be changes in the duration of trips, that is, shorter or the same duration, but divided into several smaller trips (Figure 4). Vacation household budgets would alsobe lower (Azurite Consulting 2020; Interface Tourism, 2020a and 2020c; Roland Berger, 2020) due to uncertainty and economic instability.

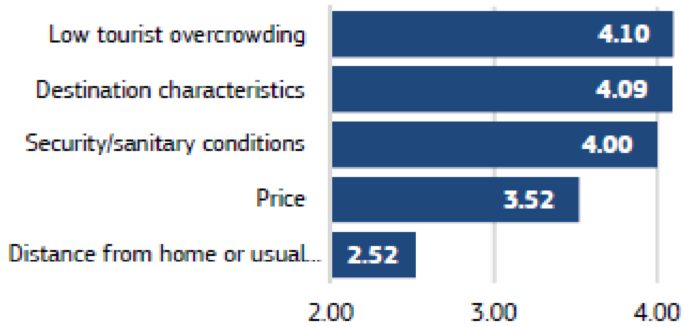


Figure 3. Preferences when choosing destination (key attributes) post COVID-19 lockdown
Source: DNA turismo y ocio (2020).

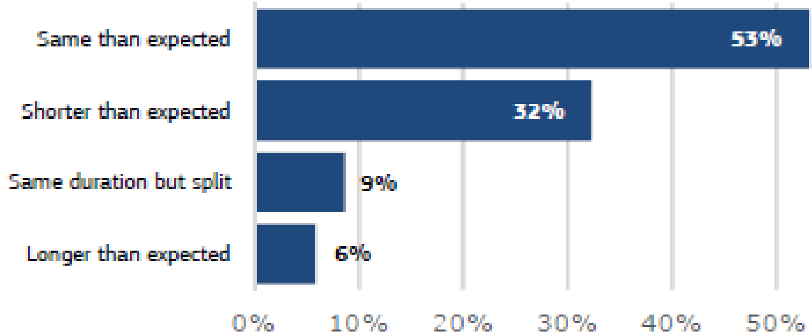


Figure 4. Changes in duration of vacation post-COVID19 lockdown
Source: DNA turismo y ocio (2020).

IV- SKILLS IN THE INTERNATIONAL TOURISM SECTOR: AN OVERVIEW OF THECHALLENGES AND NEEDS AFTER COVID-19.

Until a little over two years ago, tourism was one of the most powerful economic sectors in the world, growing faster than the global economy and providing more than 300 million jobs, and one in 11jobs in the world was dedicated to tourism. However, when the Covid-19 pandemic came the sector sank, and tourism was one of the hardest hit industries by the pandemic. International tourist arrivals have fallen by 75% worldwide (to go back to the number of tourists in the 1990s) and some 170 millionjobs have been lost. An unprecedented disaster.

This will situation force destinations, businesses and tourism professionals to rethink their market position and reinvent themselves. The global tourism sector is in hibernation, but it will come back strong, as travel is a vital activity in the lives of most people. However, that will not be the way we leftit in 2019, it will be a much smaller and more competitive tourism sector.

For those working in the tourism industry, it should be a priority to take advantage of this period of lowactivity, to improve their skills and professional qualities. Whether it is to look for a job that has been lost, to stay in which it is still kept or to advance in the professional career. To say that the Covid-19 pandemic has required the tourism labor market to mobilize new categories of skills and quality in termsof hard-skills, soft-skills, green-skills and even life-skills. The way tourism businesses are organized will have to change and adapt to the pandemic of Covid-19. This change concerns work habits, the working environment, the prioritization of tasks, decision-making and above all the essential skills andfuturistic qualities. As the labor market is undergoing an accelerated change that is transforming both skills and trades, some occupations have emerged while others have strengthened as a result of the crisis.

- **Training to Adapt to a Changing Sector**

Prior to this pandemic, it was already clear that tourism professionals would need to be constantly updated (due to technology, new business models or changing tourism motivations), and integrate training as a basic element throughout their working lives. The pandemic has only reinforced the need for professionals to improve their professional skills (hard skills, soft-skills, green-skills and life-skills),to stand out in a much more competitive tourism sector.

Specialization is becoming more and more important and it is necessary to keep abreast of the evolutionof the sector and the needs of tourists (which are constantly and increasingly changing with Covid-19). The pandemic, on the other hand, has also accelerated the digital transformation of companies and workers must keep pace. Retraining in digitization is essential to improve the employability of active professionals (digital-workers.).

- **What skills and qualities for a transformed post-pandemic sector?**

The next generation of job seekers faces a new challenge in the current pandemic environment, which is characterized by low demand from tourism businesses, as well as new labor market demands for skills.According to recruitment experts in the current context, the predominance of the skills most in demandby companies can be summarized as follows:

✓ **Hard Skills : crisis strengthens technical skills**

Technological skills through this crisis are being strengthened and digital technology is becoming a priority, and IT profiles will continue to be one of the recruitment sites despite the health and economic crisis. The new technology market is showing green results and is still growing despite Covid-19, and the industry has never experienced a recession in recent decades. the sector is constantly changing and its businesses are evolving in cloud computing, big data and cybercrime. However, the impact of these trades is not so much on technical skills as on behavioral skills. With the deployment of the «Digital Workplace» several skills are consideredas a must have.

✓ **Soft Skills: very appreciated qualities and highly valued at the moment**

- **Autonomy:** the hybrid mode of working conditions Combining face-to-face work and teleworking is the best way to make the most of the benefits of remote working, and that requires more autonomy in the management of projects without being surrounded by his team,self-feedback and self-study have become an asset for job seekers.
- **Flexibility and agility:** in the face of an uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment, flexibility and agility are the keys to survival or success for companies that are forced to adjust their management and organizational methods to better meet market requirements. This being the case, an employee who is able to accept a sudden change without being disoriented, without opposing it, and to adopt a reactive, constructive and positive state of mind can contribute to the development and maintenance of the activity of his company in a difficult context..
- **Creativity and innovation:** creative spirit and original ideas will be the new weapons of war for tourism businesses. Rethinking the model has become a matter of life or death. Creative candidates are the most sought after by employers. Certainly, some positions require more creativity than others, an employee who brings new ideas and can solve problems using less conventional solutions is an asset to any business.
- **Resilience:** Resilience has become the flagship quality demanded by companies in this difficult psychological context that is characterized by adaptability, the ability to accept changes in work situation, optimism, and tenacity, which transmits the individual ability to overcome difficulties.

✓ **Life Skills: it's time to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life**

- **Solidarity:** The time has come for solidarity; this quality is the result of a change of team spirit that takes all its magnitude from the current context, a solidarity profile brings a psychological and economic value to its work ecosystem and to its colleague's sometimes-in difficulty or in crisis. Some companies have even made it a slogan.
- **Responsibility and civility:** The success of the deployment of the health plan by companies depends entirely on the responsibility and civility of its employees within the company through the respect of barrier gestures, the wearing of the mask or any sanitary instructions. To say that, a responsible profile with a civic spirit avoids serious consequences for his company.

✓ **Green Skills: it's time to understand the GREEN generation**

- Ability to minimize usage and maximize efficiency of energy and water consumption
- Ability to manage waste, waste water, recycling and composting
- Conservation of biodiversity
- Promotion of sustainable modes of transport (Transport 0 Pollution)
- Promotion of environmentally friendly activities and products

➢ **Which professional profiles will be most in demand in the coming years?**

In the current context, jobs will disappear rather than trades. Admittedly, some occupations are more vulnerable compared to others, nevertheless vocational retraining has become necessary have. During my more than 12 years in the tourism sector, I confirm that the trades adapt to their economic, social and societal context. Some occupations have emerged while others have strengthened. The most sought after occupational profiles in the tourism industry in the coming years will be digital and customer- focused profiles. The most requested skills are :

- E-tourism project manager (digital marketing)
- Data Analyst (Tourism Intelligence)

- Content creator
- Design thinking - creation of products adapted to the new specific needs of tourists
- CM/SMM (Social networks and Web positioning).
- Revenue / Yield manager / CRO / Pricing Manager
- Cultural engineering consultant (culturally enhancing a territory to make it more attractive
- Lecturer guide (brings his expertise and knowledge to offer an enriching visit to tourists)
- Tourism product manager (imagine packages and stays, then offered in travel agencies
- Internal Auditors
- GRM/CRM (Consumer knowledge)
- Tourism Experience Manager
- Referent for tourist reception

➢ **Values sought by companies**

Key values that tourism businesses seek from their talent are:

- Leadership and Decision Making
- Commitment and Involvement to work
- Responsibility, Honesty, Empathy
- Customer orientation
- Creativity and Innovation
- Teamwork and Collective Intelligence

➢ **Technologies that affect jobs in the tourism sector**

The main technologies that can have an impact on the tourism labor market are:

- Management software (PMS /CRS/RMS)
- Data analysis - Big Data, Datamining…
- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
- Technologies related to the environment
- Web and social media environments
- Internet of Things

Over the past two years, the governments of all the tourist regions of the world will work in close collaboration with their partners from different backgrounds and horizons, to better understand these observations and develop the capacities for action of the actors of the labor market in order to support strategic thinking, public decision to develop and strengthen the skills of the professional workforce intourism during this period of great transformation that we are living.

CONCLUSION

The world is in an unprecedented situation. The COVID-19 outbreak is the third recognized disease transmitted from animals to humans in just two decades that has resulted in a major outbreak (Gorbalenya et al. 2020). The other two were MERS in 2012 and SARS in 2003. Nevertheless, the singularity of the current situation lies in the spread of the virus, its geographical coverage and the measures put in place by the governments to stop its diffusion, (lookdown, closure of shops and hotels,etc.).

The tourism sector was strongly impacted by the spring 2020 confinement and the imposed closure of shops and hotels. According to the latest edition of the UNWTO Global Tourism Barometer, the total lockdown imposed in response to the pandemic resulted in a 98% drop in the number of international tourists in May compared to 2019. The Barometer also shows a 56% year-over-year decline in tourist arrivals over the January to May period. This translates into a drop of 300 million tourists and USD 320 billion in losses in terms of international tourism revenues (this is more than triple the losses in international tourism revenues recorded during the global economic crisis of 2009). Hotels began to reopen in the summer of 2020, but they must comply with a series of health measures, as the disease isstill present. On the other hand, many restrictions on mobility and travel between countries and regions have been lifted, but others are still in force. Moreover, the feeling of health insecurity, until there is a high rate of vaccination, and the decline in household incomes, generated by the economic crisis, also lead to changes in consumer preferences for the coming months.

As a result, between 100 million and 150 million jobs, depending on the scenarios, could be at risk worldwide by 2020. Some countries are and will be more affected than others, and within each countrythere are also regional differences. Regions that rely heavily on the tourism sector and the international tourism market will be most affected. As each region is affected differently by COVID-19, the solutionis likely to be local. In addition, changing consumer preferences provide opportunities for more diverse and sustainable forms of tourism, building on the rich territorial and cultural diversity of each region. Smart Specialization Strategies (3S), as a governance model based on local innovation, are well suited as a multi-level governance tool for more sustainable tourism. This Sustainable Smart Specialisation Strategies (4S) realignment model could play a key role in the post COVID-19 recovery process.

COVID-19 will bring changes not only for people, but also for businesses. Faced with an uncertain future, where many workers and entrepreneurs will have to adapt, update and "re-equip" to return to thelabor market, the challenge is to promote training in transversal skills that allow "transferability" between jobs in this context of uncertainty. Thus, work intermediation with preparation for work (job readiness) is essential; and coaching and mentoring charge much more preponderance to help people identify and navigate learning and work options. These include upskilling and reskilling opportunities and certification of skills to be able to live with dignity from work. Addressing the health crisis is an immediate priority, but at the same time, it is necessary to equip those who have lost or will lose their jobs with the skills they need to be able to re-enter the labor market.

This new scenario poses important challenges for policymakers, in order to take advantage of the opportunities offered by these transformations, and avoid potential disruptions in the labor market of thetourism industry. In this context, the study suggests the need to adapt the content and scope of vocational training to improve the match between supply and demand of qualifications, be better prepared for the skills required in the future and reduce the disruptive impacts of technology.

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