



Shaping Tourism Futures®

***Contest of Fresh Ideas:
Tourism systems for a sustainable future!***

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Abstract: This essay seeks to show how to face the challenge of the lack of opportunities for internships in the area of tourism, due to the crisis caused by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. We sought through a short text to elucidate the reader about the importance of bailing out future professionals in the tourism sector, as well as emphasizing the difficulties and uncertainties of undergraduate students in this period of crisis in the tourism sector. Two departures were suggested, one through the collaboration of universities in partnership with private sector companies, the second way out would be the creation of a startup, by tourism students, in which they should create a type of collaborative internship program between students and private sector companies, would be a vacation internship as a way of exchanging experiences where the student would make his time available in exchange for the knowledge that the company could provide. A type of collaboration between companies, students and the academic and scientific environment was also proposed.

Keywords: Tourism. Vacation internship. Students. Pandemic.

1 INTRODUCTION

By 2020, everything seemed fine until confirmation of a pandemic. “The Covid-19 is a disease caused by coronavirus, called SARS-CoV-2, which has a varied clinical spectrum from asymptomatic to severe infections” (MINISTÉRIO DA SAÚDE, 2020, p. 1). With the revelation of the “Covid-19 pandemic, organizations involved with tourism around the world have begun their race against time to generate action guidelines for all actors in the sector” (FÉLIX; REINOSO; VERA, 2020, p. 68), since at the beginning of last year tourism had

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expectations of growth in several areas, but with the stoppage started in mid-March and the picture was another.

Parks, hotels and resorts closed, road routes were banned, flights decreased dramatically, agencies were unable to sell tour packages, among other issues related to the travel sector. More than any other sector of the economy, tourism has as its main feature the “extreme sensitivity to all situational changes, being extremely retractable to oscillations [...]” (BENI, 2020, p. 3). Thus, the crisis caused by coronavirus brought the need to review and reshape the plans that were in progress and, in addition, it has generated many uncertainties about the future of tourism students, many of them are afraid of not getting a job or internship. It is on top of this dilemma of students and the crisis of tourism, caused by the pandemic, that the issues that will be addressed in this essay arise. In the next topic are suggested innovative solutions and visions for such a problem.

Based on these problems that threatened and still threaten the development of the tourism sector, mainly, with regard to workers in the sector and job vacancies, the objective to which I set myself in this essay is to suggest a proposal for collaboration between companies and institutions in the tourism sector and undergraduate students, so that both can employ and be employed in the year 2021.

Seeking solutions to the tourism sector's labor market at this time of pandemic is important, since underemployment in the travel sector was already something very present even before the appearance of Covid-19. According to Abreu (2020), there have been many changes and changes in higher education in Tourism, mainly in Brazil, and with this greater accessibility of students to the higher level in Tourism “the problem of the labour market's absorption capacity of this [high] volume of undergraduates” (ABREU, 2020, p. 6). All this added to the pandemic and the crisis generated in the sector only makes students more apprehensive about their future in the travel business.

2 SOLUTIONS FOR TOURISM

Seeking an inspiration to be able to participate in the contest and write this essay, many were the issues focused on tourism that permeated my mind, however, looking at my classmates, I am a student of Leisure and Tourism at a Brazilian public university, i realized that we were all facing the same dilemma, which is: How to get a job or an internship in the area of Tourism and Leisure if throughout the pandemic we only see people losing their jobs? Should we drop out of the course?

We know that “the impact of this pandemic on tourism activity has been and is being immense, but not isolated, been perceived in several sectors” (SILVEIRA et al., 2020, p. 108). Due to these impacts and the crisis caused by the arrival of coronavirus, the number of vacancies within the tourism sector became even smaller and more uncertain, when you open LinkedIn it is possible to find several offers of internships, but almost never they are in the area of tourism and this discourages undergraduate students in the area. Thinking about it, I come through this essay to propose a reasonable way out, both for companies and for undergraduate students, something similar to a partnership that in the future may lead to a job opening or, who knows, provide improvements in the tourism industry and academia.

“The current labour market has changed in several areas, because it has been marked by a technological transformation that has mainly changed the way of thinking about business models” (SILVEIRA et al., 2020, p. 114). And it is based on this, besides also understanding that at the present time most companies look for people with previous experiences, I come to propose a new internship model, called: Holiday Experience in Tourism.

We know that tourism companies are not doing very well financially, this is due to the crisis generated by the pandemic, so what I suggest is a type of partnership between students, academia and the tourism industry. Many established companies, mainly in the United States and Europe, carry out internships or exchanges on vacations, but they are hardly ever tourism companies. Thinking about it and how difficult it is for tourism companies to offer internship vacancies in the middle of the pandemic, my proposal is that all universities that offer tourism courses create a network of partnership with hotels, travel agencies, event companies, resorts, cruises, etc., so that together they can create a partnership network that provides vacation internships for undergraduate students in tourism. Once this is done, students will gain experience, even if fast, but will have the opportunity to experience tourism in some way and companies will have the opportunity to see what a "inexperienced" undergraduate student performs, enabling companies to take an interest in students and revert the vacation internship to a long-term internship.

Universities can also use this short stage as a way of collecting data for future research, encouraging their students to write articles about the experiences they had during the vacation internship experience. We know that the collaborative and shared economy is on the rise and they can favor both parties, because students can offer their time during the vacation period and companies can offer opportunities for them to acquire experiences in the field of tourism and leisure, furthermore, companies need to offer a small cost aid for the feeding and transport of students, something that won't weigh heavily on the company's accounts, but of course this kind

of agreement would be valid only for the holiday internships, which must have a maximum duration of one and a half months. It is important to remember that if companies are interested in students and want to keep them employed for longer they need to be hired for the long term, following all the necessary procedures, offering a salary and all the benefits that students are entitled to according to the internship law of each country.

If universities do not want to commit to this feat it is possible for tourism students to create a startup to move this type of project, they can contact all tourism-related companies in the region or city and verify their interest in participating in this idea of vacation internship. The students who are going to create the startup should try to understand how each company intends to get involved in the project, what vacancies they intend to offer, what amount of "assistance" they can pay for that one month or a month and a half of service. With this information students can create an application where they will appear, for the undergraduates interested, all partner companies, the number of vacancies, the value of the "aid", the beginning of the holiday internship and the termination, among other information, so that tourism students can register and apply for vacancies.

The creators of the startup may charge a symbolic amount of students so that they have access to the summer internship program via application, provided that it gives them a whole support for the registration, something similar to what happens on job vacancies sites, however it would be something geared only to tourism students with an interest in conducting a vacation internship to gain professional experience in the short term. The creators of the startup can also charge companies an advertising fee for vacancies and thereby mediate between companies and candidates, with this the link of the startup with students and companies would go until the end of the vacation internship, for this to happen it needs the app to have a tab where students can post feedbacks about the companies and tell how was your vacation internship, this will serve as an incentive for other students and other companies to participate in the project.

This project can also create partnerships with scientific journals, where students who participate in the vacation internship choose whether or not to commit to writing an article on a subject related to their experience. Scientific journals would be responsible for choosing the best articles for publication, as well as encouraging scholars to carry out more in-depth research on specific subjects.

Another relevant point for the application of this type of project is that the "tourism and hospitality courses, need travel references and technical visits, as well as the development of laboratory self-practices" (FERREIRA; FONSECA, 2020, p. 46) and it has become more difficult to happen since a pandemic started. This type of internship that was proposed in this

essay could again bring a yearning for hope in the hearts of graduates in tourism, given that companies have a high chance of becoming interested in those students and ending up hiring them or taking them on at a more lasting stage. So, what started through a partnership, exchange or network, may end up generating jobs, income, experience and science, since graduates in tourism may be interested in research to improve industry practices, among other things.

3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

“A concern that has affected tourism teachers is the possibility of students abandoning the course, due to the paralysis of tourist activity [...], in addition to the uncertainty regarding the normalization of the situation” (FERREIRA; FONSECA, 2020, p. 46), that’s why it’s so important to encourage new forms of collaborative internships in tourism so that the graduate student has the opportunity to show his potential, as well as the possibility to undertake in tourism from the creation of a vacation internship startup, in which you can help countless students to find an internship or, who knows, a reason for not giving up on the tourism course.

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