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Perceptions and Career Goals of Tourism Undergraduate Students: Universitat de Girona case study.

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ABSTRACT

Some research has been conducted regarding students' perceptions and career goals in several education institutions but no work of this kind has been undertaken in our country. This study explored the perceptions and career goals of undergraduate students currently enrolled in a degree in Tourism in the Universitat de Girona, in Catalunya, Spain. 122 students completed a questionnaire of 19 questions. In one question, they were asked to indicate their level of agreement with 11 statements about career perceptions. The survey also included some questions about career goals. The results show that, overall, students' perceptions are neither positive nor negative and that most of them (73%) were willing to continue working in Tourism after graduating. This work will serve to guide improvements in the tourism industry, ensuring highly qualified professionals.

Keywords: Tourism career, Students' perceptions, Students' career goals, Tourism jobs

1. INTRODUCTION

The service industry has been raising exponentially over the past few years, and consumer's needs and expectations have increased as well. This growing sector has led to issues surrounding the number of trained personnel available to fill the exponential number of positions that are becoming available in the industry (Richardson & Butler, 2012). They stated that one of the main concerns of the tourism industry is the difficulty attracting and retaining quality employees, which has led to a shortage of skilled personnel (Richardson & Butler, 2012).

Walmsley et al. (2020) agree on the fact that hospitality businesses are known for facing recruitment and retention challenges regarding the number of people available and quality of talent supply. Labour shortages surface a mismatch between what employers require and the skills graduates bring (Richardson and Butler 2012), uncovering skill gaps.

The recruiting and inducting process represents a major cost for organizations, constituting. This means that the company invests a lot of money in the apprenticeship of the employee and only do they retrieve the expense when the employee is fully trained, moment when this cost is amortized (Casado, 1992).

Penny & Frances (2011) claim that in order to accomplish a good attraction and retention of the tourism graduates, a positive attitude is needed. Other studies on the topic have argued that in the service industries, without employees' positive attitude toward their jobs, it is impossible to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty (Rosentbluth, 1991; Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996, as cited in Richardson, 2009). Given that most services in tourism are based on human performance in a face-to-face exchange where employees and customers are physically and psychologically close enough to influence each other (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000), employees' performance and behaviour is a key determinant of service quality and excellence, and consequently results in customer satisfaction and loyalty (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1994, as cited in Richardson, 2008).

Pfeffer (1994, 2005, as cited in Kusluvan and Kusluvan 2000) argues that due to the increased competition among destinations and firms, gaining competitive advantage through employees has become a long-term source of differentiation and competitive superiority. Therefore, becoming an important and unreplaceable input that is difficult to be copied by, makes it is important to provide and retain a well-qualified work-force (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000).

The tourism industry must adapt and prepare their workforce in order to deal with the constant changes in consumer's behaviour and to cope with the future demands. To provide them with

the best service, the industry requires a skilled and qualified staff (Rahman, 2010). For this reason, it is crucial to understand the needs and demands of the workforce in order to recruit and retain them (Chen, Chu, & Wu, 2000; Ng & Burke, 2006, as cited in Lu and Adler, 2009).

As the hospitality industry is service based, the personnel need to be competent enough so as to achieve customers' satisfaction (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000). Career goals and expectations of students provide industry with a clear picture of the preferences and demands that future professionals will hold. (Baum, 2007)

Through discovering interests, abilities, career values, and needs of the recruitment pool, employers will be able to gain competitive advantages and develop successful human resource strategies, considering that this satisfaction is attained through them (Baum, 2007; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000). It is also needed that we pay more attention to employees' skills, motivation and education, as well as their commitment to the industry. Employees' commitment to the industry depends on their perceptions and attitudes toward working in the industry and the types of jobs available (Richardson, 2008). This means education and training are the key to quality employees. In order to attract future workers and meet their expectations, education providers need to do further research in students' perceptions and career goals, in view of the fact that this may influence directly their career choices.

In spite of being essential for the tourism workforce, little research has been conducted to date concerning the overall perceptions and attitudes of tourism students (Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge, & Ogden, 2007; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Ross, 1994). This Girona case study is intended to fill all these gaps and provide a source of information for further investigation in this area.

1.1 Objectives

The main objective of this research is to determine the student's career perceptions, career goals and their perception towards the industry. The research will also analyse what they expect from their professional future.

In addition, the research will analyse the influencing factors of perceptions taking into account, for instance, work experience, friends or relatives in the tourism industry, year of study, etc., in order to detect the differences on career and tourism sector perceptions.

In order to fil the gap between students' expectations and reality shown in other studies (Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge, & Ogden, 2007; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000), this study intends to discern between undergraduates and graduates' perceptions and aims to find out the factors that influence their perceptions over the four years of degree, given that their expectations and first impression of the tourism industry may vary from the reality. Among others, some research questions in this study are the following: How does their first contact with the tourism industry affect their willingness to work in the tourism sector? Is their level of interest related to their familiarity with the industry?

One important purpose is to determine what motivates students to pursue a career in tourism and what factors do they find important when pursuing a career in this sector. Does this career offer these factors? Are they likely to seek employment and continue in the industry after graduation?

Since their preparation is significant, another research question is about the qualifications to work in the sector and to know if the students' curriculum assessment is suitable for their success in their future career and the skills obtained during their degree. Also, this study aims to analyse the interest of students on postgraduate studies.

Given the multidisciplinary nature of tourism field, attention should be paid to the diverse occupations that students want to perform within this sector and which ones they tend to choose more, since there are quite a few functional areas. For instance, which position students expect to hold five years after their graduation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review of literature provides a look at the authors view and findings of students' perceptions and career goals. First, we will have an overview of the recruitment problems and the "generation Y" characteristics. Second, we will tackle students' career choices, Third, we will have a look at the image of the industry and students' perceptions. Fourth, we will address students experience with internships and work. Finally, we will explain career goals, job mobility, mentoring, and management positions.

Richardson and Butler (2012) stated that the problem of attracting and retaining quality employees is given by many contributing factors. These characteristics include a young transient workforce, low levels of pay and formal qualifications, high levels of female, student, part-time and casual workers, a high proportion of low-skilled jobs, a large proportion of hours worked outside normal business hours, a negative industry image in the eyes of potential employees, a large number of migrant staff, poor utilization of student labour and high levels of staff turnover (Baum, 2006; Brien, 2004; Fraser, 2003; Riley, Ladkin, & Szivas, 2002; Service Skills Victoria, 2005; Tourism Division, 2002, as cited in Richardson and Butler, 2012).
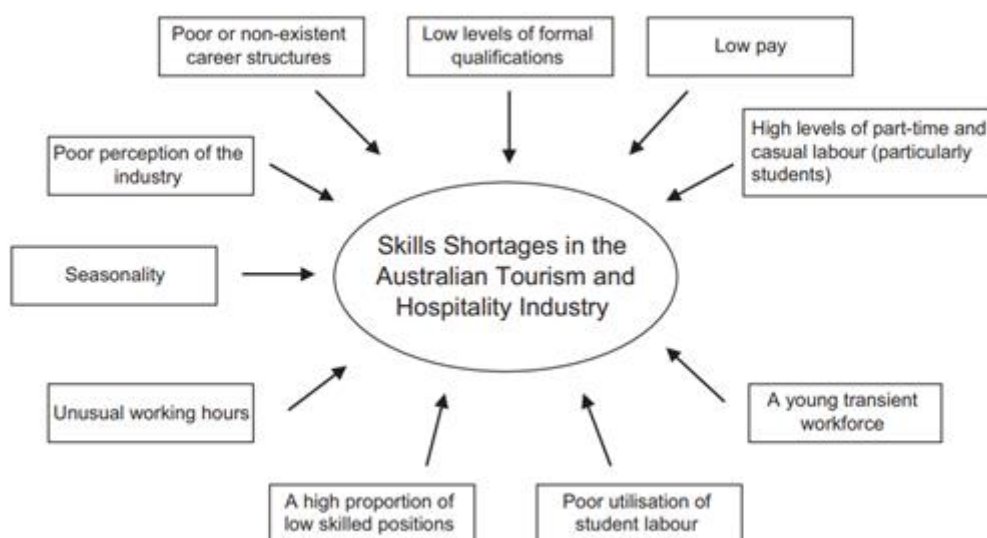

Figure 1: Factors Influencing Skills Shortages in the Australian Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

Source: Richardson, 2008

One of the main aims of employers is understanding the new employees entering the workforce. Ayres (2006) did a research on Career Development in Tourism and Leisure. He believes that the

days of having a career-for-life have come to an end. This belief has been replaced by an uncertain career structure, which is characterised by intra-organisation, inter-organisation and even inter-industry career moves (Inkson, Arthur, & Pringle, 1999, as cited in Ayres, 2006). This change has coincided with generation Y entering the workforce. "Generation Y" worker is seeking flexibility and work–life balance (Oliver, 2006 as cited in Richardson and Butler, 2012). This generation is characterized for valuing diversity, equality and tolerance in their workplace as well as managers who empower workers and who are open and honest with them (Morton, 2002, as cited in Richardson and Butler, 2012). They also may challenge female inequality in the hospitality industry. Morton also claims that they seek positions that provide good opportunities for training, reasonable wages and a positive company culture. In other words, they seen to have much higher expectations of a job than previous generations regarding pay, conditions, promotion and advancement.

Nevertheless, there is a general feeling that not only is the pay poor in comparison to other industries, but that the level of work routinely expected by the industry is high (Barron et al, 2007).

The participants of the research felt the need to be committed to the position, understanding they may be required to spend more time working without being rewarded and be demanded to work more efficiently through creative and independent thought (Barron et al, 2007).

"Generation Y" workers are very loyal and dedicated, provided that they achieve their personal goals meanwhile they are working in the organization. When this condition is not met, they will probably pursue other avenues for employment so as to find new challenges (Kerslake, 2005 as cited in Barron et al, 2007).

"Generation Y" employees are self-reliant and independent, technologically knowledgeable, entrepreneurial thinkers, having an urgent sense of immediacy, wanting to increase responsibility, seeking flexibility and managerial support yet detesting micromanagement due to the fact that they have a preference to achieve tasks in their own way, at their own pace (Martin, 2005). Ladkin acknowledges "changes in career structures and individualism which structures involve self-directed development." (Ladkin, 2002:379, as cited in Barron et al, 2007)

Many participants commented on the opportunities for students who are interested in working with a variety of like-minded and friendly colleagues and the positive aspects of working with the public (Lewis and Airey 2000, as cited in Barron et al, 2007). Generation Ys value leisure time and want to have a balance between work and non-work time (Kerslake, 2005; Morton, 2002, as cited in Barron et al., 2007).

2.1 Career choice

Career choices are not reached at a single time, but through a series of decisions taken over a period of many years. Students might reconsider or support their initial career choices during senior year (Ginzberg, 1951, as cited in UKEssays, 2018).

A study made by Walmsley et al. (2020) about "Generation Z" and hospitality careers pointed out that the actual decision-making may be more intuitive and not so rational. They acknowledge students' career decisions are shaped not only by attitudes towards individual occupations, but also by perceptions of their own ability to meet the occupations' requirements. They also found that respondents were as undecided about their careers as were decided and that many of them weren't clear about their occupational choices. Usually, people who are insecure about their own aptitudes, interests, goals and what types of jobs suit them, may lack of self-confidence or decision-making skills and thus feel anxious about their career undecidedness or disorganized (Tsai et al., 2017).

Personal factors, as well as education and experience factors often play a role in a student's decision-making and desire to remain at a job (Schoffstall et al. 2017). While for some students, their early and current job may influence positively due to realistic expectations and career goals (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Chuang et al., 2007, as cited in Schoffstall et al. 2017), for others, personal factors and perceptions (Wen & Madera, 2013) and early work experiences (Alonso & O'Neill, 2009; Richardson, 2009, as cited in Schoffstall et al. 2017) may influence negatively. According to Chuang et al. (2007) a student's gender, academic status, and employment status are indicators of future career retention.

Contrary to Chuang et al. (2007), Wen et al. (2018) found that academic standing did not influence students' career intentions. They also reported that career intentions were positively influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control.

Lee et al. (2018) explored different career decision-making factors (advisors, industry mentors, parents, faculty members, and social media). Traditional factors turned out to be a greater influence on students' career decisions than social media.

Each decision made may influence the person considerably. Thus, people normally weigh the advantages and disadvantages of their options before making their most valuable career decision (Walsh & Osipow, 2014, as cited in Tsai et al. 2017).

Numerous researchers have examined student attitudes, expectations and career choices.

The factors that students find more important when choosing to work in the tourism and hospitality industry: (1) interesting work; (2) advancement potential; (3) secure future; (4) good salary; (5) opportunity for service to society; and (6) social prestige (Domonte and Vaden,1987, as cited in Richardson, 2008).

Other authors have also ranked the 10 greatest influences on a graduate's acceptance of a position, which are: (1) type of work; (2) advancement opportunities; (3) company reputation; (4) salary; (5) job security; (6) hours of work; (7) benefits; (8) working conditions; (9) nature of co-workers; and (10) nature of supervisors. (Blumenfeld, Kent, Shock, and Jourdan,1987, as cited in Richardson and Butler, 2012)

McCleary and Weaver (1988) and Sciarini (1997), as cited in Richardson and Butler (2012) agree that type of work and advancement opportunities are the most important factors in a graduate's decision to accept a position, with most graduates expecting promotions within 2 years of graduation.

Richardson (2009), found that students' most important career factors were enjoyability of the job, positive relationships with colleagues, work environment, and job security.
Travel was also one of the more important factors when asked to describe their dream job, which uncovers the unrealistic expectations students hold of the industry (Robinson, 2015).
Other results show that the opportunity for career advancement was one of the most expected work values for the students. Specifically, they expected to have power and authority, a peaceful work environment, and good salaries (Aycan and Fikret-Pasa, 2003, as cited in Lu and Adler, 2009).

Amissah et al. (2020) observed that opportunity to care for others, establish own jobs, gain transferable skills, further training and education are important factors students consider in their career choices. However, Amissah et al. (2020) revealed that most students didn't believe they would find these factors in a career in tourism, meaning that if the industry doesn't meet their expectations, one's job satisfaction and turnover intentions are consequently affected. This reality generates disappointment among graduates.

The mismatch between what a person recognizes as important in their career and the extent to which they perceive a particular career will offer these factors will affect career choices directly. As a result, in the light of attracting future employees, it is required that educators work on offering these factors they look for in a career (Richardson, 2008).

2.2 Image & Perceptions

Perceptions are judgements made by regarding the phenomenon in our environment by interpreting the stimulus sensed from our environment. They can be either positive or negative (Kumiarwan, 2015).

It is widely spread that the hospitality industry is suffering from a problem of image, being it the belief that is a low-skills, low-paid sector. Long hours and poor pay are the themes which are more repeated by most authors.

Powell (1999) agrees on this but points out that these situations are given in many entry-level positions. With that being said, qualifications and experience facilitate well-paid management positions. To his viewpoint, the real problem is that of a lack of skills, qualifications and professionalism. He states that this conception of the industry hinders recruitment.

Riley et al. (2002), concur with this by stating that the negative image of this sector will have a bad effect on recruiters' perceptions and, by extension, on the quality and quantity of future staff (Getz, 1994; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Aksu & Koksal, 2005, as cited in Richardson, 2009). Koko and Guerrier (1994) as cited in Airey and Frontistis (1997) add that jobs in the hospitality industry are perceived as "physically repetitive, poorly paid, controlled by task-oriented managers and providing limited opportunities for participation and development". A lack of understanding on the opportunities offered (Ahmad et al., 2009, as cited in Elhoushy, 2014), and the conception of long, unsociable hours, low pay, personal sacrifice, low status and high staff turnover (Wood, 1993, 1995, as cited in Barron et al., 2007) were also found.

It is also common for students to think that the industry's image reflects exhausting and unstable work, low social status, unsatisfactory and unfair promotions, low pay, insufficient benefits, and poor physical working conditions, stressful, family-life sacrificing, with long working hours, (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000).

In Wen et al.'s study (2019), respondents were aware of the stress, low starting salaries, long working hours and limited opportunities for promotion. Attracting youth is a problem when there is a low entry-level pay. Graduate expectations of employment, therefore, need to be managed in terms of accepting that entry-level positions may be low, but with the right attitude, they can progress quickly. Walmsley (2020).

Students with already work experience see the tourism industry as a poor employer. Their images of the industry included, little or no training given, effort outweighing rewards, and poor

treatment of staff (Barron and Maxwell, 1993). Charles (2013) study indicates that even though most students were satisfied with their career choice, they were worried about the working conditions and stress associated.

Poor treatment by management or supervisory staff was also among the main issues discussed for the lack of appreciation and a despotic attitude towards workers (Barron et al., 2007). Moreover, students believed managers and co-workers were unqualified and noticed poor attitudes and behaviour towards them (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000).

The International Society of Hospitality Consultants (2006), as cited in Richardson and Butler (2012) claims that demography, wage levels, failure to address worker satisfaction and a reputation for long hours and low pay are all contributing factors.

According to Brien (2004) as cited in Richardson (2009), the poor image conceived of the hospitality industry in U.K has its beginning in 1990, when a BBC television series exposed various hotels working conditions, showing an alarming negative image.

Furthermore, research demonstrates that a substantial number of graduates fail to enter the industry upon graduation due to low job satisfaction, poor employment conditions and lack of motivation (Pavesic & Brymer, 1990; Zacerelli, 1985, as cited in Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000) resulting in high staff turnover and wastage of trained and experienced personnel. Hence, Deery (2002) as cited in Barron et al. (2007) observed a turnover culture to appear common in the UK and Australia, with rates up to 300% per year.

Many students enrol in a Tourism degree without having true career aspirations and goals (Lu and Adler, 2009). This provokes an expectation gap (Kusluvan & Kusluvan,2000) due to the lack of commitment to a career in tourism or hospitality (Koyuncu et al.,2008 as cited in Robinson, 2015).

Airey and Frontistis (1997) compared the attitudes of secondary school pupils towards careers in tourism in Greece and the United Kingdom. They revealed that in the UK pupils have a less-positive attitude due to a more realistic view of the nature of employment conditions.

Sciarini and Wood (1997), as cited in Jenkins (2001) indicate that the company's standing has a great influence on students' perception of the industry. McMahon and Quinn (1995:15) as cited in Barron et al. (2007) describe the working life of the industry as a combination of "inadequate knowledge of the nature of the industry, poor employee - organization fit, poor working conditions and an introduction to the hard knocks syndrome".

According to some studies, students' attitudes do not necessarily relate to the sector as a whole, but to certain job roles or sub-sectors within it (Airey and Frontistis 1997; Chuang et al. 2007; Jenkins 2001). Baum (2007) agrees and states this view of the industry doesn't do justice to the diversity of employment within the industry. This perception may just represent the accommodation and food-related sectors, especially regarding small businesses. This theory is supported by Getz (1994), who discovered that the hotel and catering sector was an unattractive choice for students. He as well compared 1978 and 1992 and came across a drop in the interest of this sectors of over one half (falling from 43% to 29%). This happened in a context where, in 1992, 42% of respondents had a parent working in the tourism industry and a high proportion of respondents had had direct experience working in the industry.

Airey and Frontistis (1997) bring an interesting viewpoint and call attention to the wide range from glamorous and exciting to poorly paid and mundane careers. Riley et al. (2002) also expose the duality of the industry. While the industry employment image is seen as glamorous, there is evidence of low pay, low skills and low status. Hence, students' perceptions about the industry are influenced by the so-called glamour of this sector. Barron and Maxwell (1993) claim that most new students in tourism have little, if any, real experience of working in the industry and, therefore, they have largely unrealistic views of what working in the industry entails, with their perception of the industry being clouded by the glamorous images of the hotel and travel industry projected by the media.

Robinson (2015) also comments on the positive views about Tourism jobs, exposing the tendency to glamorize the industry, but he also observed that students working in the industry held negative expectations about the nature of the work. Students who had no work experience, however, had little understanding about the opportunities for them (Robinson, 2015). Walmsley et al. (2020) and Richardson (2009) agreed with Robinson and noticed awareness of the types of work available and employment conditions was a major barrier to youth employment in the sector, rather than negative attitudes. By contrast, Jaswal's (2020) findings indicated students understood the potential job opportunities and stated that the majority of final year students held the same optimistic target, proving that students concentrate on their job plans.

Casado (1992) blames hospitality schools for creating false expectations (regarding working conditions and compensation) and overselling themselves. He adds that recruiting companies might also create false expectations during interviews about future promotions or the nature of the job, and lack an adequate induction program once hired.

Having unrealistic expectations, therefore, leads to dissatisfaction with students' first positions (Dickerson, 2009, as cited in Schoffstall et al., 2017) and discouragement in career prospects (Maxwell et al., 2010, as cited in Schoffstall et al.,2017). This is why it is crucial for students to have more real-world focused courses with hands-on experiences. Schoffstall et al. (2017). Jaswal's (2020) findings, on the contrary, conclude that students were aware of the sort of work they had to do, and even decided to continue in the industry after experiencing the lengthy hours in hotels. As they entered in the hospitality industry, they became fully informed of this.

2.3 Internships and Work Experience

In the 80s, educators in Australia agreed on the importance of including internships in education programs to prepare students for engagement as future professionals in Tourism (Morrison and O'Mahony,2003, as cited in Le et al., 2018).

Internships are work-based learning programmes which provide labour at a low cost for employers, in addition to opportunities to involve in training future managers and recruit potential employees without making long-term commitments and (Ju et al. 1998; Petrillose and Montgomery 1997, as cited in Lee et al., 2018). These workers are academically-trained (Beggs et al. 2008) enthusiastic and willing to start their journey in the industry, and bring fresh ideas to the workplace (Walo 2001), thus helping to avoid staff turnover(Le et al., 2018).

As Fazio (1986) as cited in Richardson (2008) affirms, perceptions and attitudes based upon direct experience will make students create a more realistic view of the industry and thus be more predictive of future behaviour.

Research shows that interns who are given graduate positions in the company where they did their internship manifest greater job satisfaction and more realistic expectations (Hiltebeitel et al. 2000, as cited in Le et al., 2018).

Interns do earn managerial skills via this program (Walo 2001, as cited in Le et al., 2018) in addition to teamwork, human resources, problem solving, decision-making among other skills (Molseed et al. 2003, as cited in Le et al., 2018). Other advantages for students include a better understanding of an organisation's structure and functions, a wider professional network, an increased ability to adapt to change, and improved leadership skills (Lee 2008, as cited in Le et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, the experience is not satisfactory for all students, whose expectations prior to internships exceed their perceptions after finishing the internship (Lam and Ching 2007; Singh and Dutta 2010.; Cho 2006, as cited in Le et al., 2018).

Educators can also benefit from internships, given that they can strengthen links with the industry, collaborating on research, raising an institutions' profile, and establishing long term relationships between industry and institutions for future graduate employment opportunities (Bell and Schmidt 1996; Walo 1999, as cited in Le et al., 2018). This link would also result in curriculum improvement and competitive advantage, (Leslie and Richardson 2000; Yiu and Law 2012 as cited in Le et al.,2018),and , therefore, the credibility of an institution may then be acknowledged by industry through enhanced student performance (Le et al., 2018).

There needs to be a balance between the theory and the practice. Internships offer putting into practice the theory acknowledged in class, understanding the industry requirements, exploring career choices and developing important hands-on, work-related skills (e.g., Barron 1999; Singh and Dutta 2010; Velde and Cooper 2000, as cited in Le et al., 2018).

Internship experiences are likely to influence students' attitudes towards working in the hospitality industry, meaning that their commitment and motivation depend on these experiences (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000; Wang and Huang, 2014). Thus, maintaining students' satisfaction with their practical experience has proven to be essential (Chen et al., 2009; Fong et al., 2014; Lam and Ching, 2007; Singh and Dutta, 2010, as cited in Le et al., 2018).

Only when they begin experiencing first-hand working in the industry do they get a clear picture of what this industry is truly like (Barron & Maxwell, 1993). West and Jameson (1990) as cited in Richardson and Butler (2012) among other authors agree with this statement and add that the more exposure hospitality students have to the industry, the less commitment they show. As a matter of fact, Domonte and Vaden (1987), cited in Richardson, (2008) prove this affirmation by claiming that work experience was the factor that had the greatest influence on career decisions. Jenkins (2001) compared hospitality students' future perceptions at two different universities in the UK and the Netherlands and discovered students' perceptions of the industry tended to deteriorate as they advanced in their studies too. Thus, we can confirm that, through exposure, students become much less interested in pursuing a career in tourism. (Getz, 1994; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000).

This matter possibly lies on the fact that employers are using students as casual and part-time workers (much higher in females than males throughout the European Union (Baum, 2007) as well as in internships, and, if students are given menial, boring tasks instead of exciting and

worthwhile projects (Richardson, 2008), it will eventually cause their willingness to pursue or continue their career in the industry to fall. Hence, instead of encouraging to gain useful skills for the future, it actually does the opposite (Boud, Solomon, & Symes, 2001; Busby, 2003, as cited in Richardson, 2008).

Year of study has also been linked to negative perceptions of a career in tourism. Blomme, Van Rheede, and Tromp (2009) survey shows that first-year students have a perception that salary was higher than graduates were making. Barron and Maxwell's (1993) findings report that first-year students and students with direct experience had a very different perception of the industry. While new students held a more positive view, experienced students held a more negative view.

In contrast to the author's findings, Ross (1994) found that experience leads to a more favourable evaluation. He comments on the level of interest, which in that case was high due to the influence of familiarity and involvement with the industry. This point is also made by Murphy (1985), as cited in Ross (1994). Purcell and Quinn (1996) also support this theory evidencing that in their study, graduates' main contributing factor for being attracted to tourism industry was the positive experience and perceptions of the industry.

The experiences and skills students gained by working in the industry meanwhile they were studying have been found to influence them when they begin interviewing for entry level management after finishing their degree (Schoffstall and Arendt 2016). This means that if their industry experiences are not favourable or beneficial, it may have a negative effect on their perceptions (Schoffstall and Arendt 2016).

Literature evidences the influence of family members on career decisions (e.g. Whiston and Keller 2004), but it is required to understand how having a close family member working in tourism affects students' attitudes (Walmsley et al. 2020).

2.4 Career Goals

Most respondents of Barron et al.'s (2007) study were realistic concerning the expectations of entry-positions they could get but they saw great opportunities for rapid promotion. For instance, in Knutson's study, (1989), cited in Charles, (2013), students expected to receive their first promotion within a year.

In Schoffstall et al. (2017)'s study, students had a longer expectation period for when they would receive a promotion to supervisor or manager. This wait would eventually cause discouragement. This is explained by the fact that students nowadays are not willing to start

their career in low-paying jobs and work for many years to get promoted (Zhang & Gu, 2000; Zou et al., 2002, as cited in Lu and Adler, 2009). Another accounting factor is academic performance. Students who were categorized as high academic achievers and those already with experience within the industry tended to expect better positions, higher salaries and were stricter in terms of accepting low-level positions (Schoffstall et al., 2017).

Wen et al.'s (2019) findings showed "compensation, benefits, and promotion opportunities in the hospitality industry were below students' expectations and in need of improvement, but they still wanted to work in the hospitality industry after graduation [...] participants expected to be promoted equitably to management positions based on their capabilities".

Ross' (1994) work indicates that secondary students in Australia were indeed pretty interested in management positions in the tourism and hospitality industry, and that, in order to reach such high levels, they were very willing to undertake vocational preparation.

A large proportion of students expected be general managers 10 years after graduating (Chen et al., 2000). In Jenkin's (2001) study, however, 70% of students expected to be employed as a corporate or general manager 10 years upon graduation and 65% expected to be employed as a department manager 5 years upon graduation.

As a curious fact, the number of managers or employees with a university degree in tourism is low compared with other industries (Purcell & Quinn, 1996).

Regarding the preferences for sectors after graduations, the most chosen sectors were Hotels, travel agencies and airlines (Chen et al., 2000; Gu et al., 2007). Knutson (1989a) as cited in Charles (2013) in his study found that most students preferred to work in operations and sales and marketing.

50% of students wanted to start their own hospitality business. This finding matches Martin's (2005) point about Generation Ys being entrepreneurial (Barron et al., 2007).

By contrast, Gu et al. (2007) evidenced that students thought career development in the hospitality and tourism industry was not promising enough and wanted to pursue their career in other industries that had more competitive salaries. Richardson (2008) shared the same concern and was worried about 50% of his respondents wanting to leave the industry and explore other careers. Amissah et al (2019) ratifies this by saying that overall perception of students toward careers in hospitality and tourism were negative, to the extent that most of them were not sure whether to continue or not in the same career path.

41 per cent of the students will continue working in tourism and hospitality in the short term, only 21.6 per cent were willing to consider tourism and hospitality in the long run as their chosen career path (Atef and Al Balushi, 2017)

Pavesic and Brymer (1990) discovered that nearly one-third of the participants in their study were no longer in the sector. Actually, only a small number of students continue in the tourism industry after graduating. and an even smaller percentage remain after 5 years of working in the industry (McKercher et al., 1995; King et al., 2003, as cited in Elhoushy, 2014).

Lu & Adler (2009) indicated that 50% of the surveyed quit their first job after 2 years working in hospitality and found employment in another industry. These results revealed high staff turnover and waste of trained and experienced personnel (Pavesic & Brymer, 1990; Jenkins, 2001). The fact of quitting becomes a problem for the different parts involved: the government that has invested money in tertiary education, students who spent years studying tourism courses, tourists receiving the services from the employees, and also national economy from receiving any revenue from the repeat tourists (Ahmad et al., 2009, as cited in Elhoushy, 2014).

2.5 Management

Little research has been conducted regarding the career development of managers in the tourism industry, even though some investigations comment on career paths of hotel managers (Ayres, 2006).

Ross (1994) acknowledges a high level of interest in management positions in the tourism industry. According to Harkison (2004), a hospitality degree qualification is needed for entering management levels.   Nevertheless, in the moment of hiring a new employee, employers consider to be more relevant work experience rather than a degree As Raybould & Wilkins (2005, p. 211) as cited in Wang and Huang (2014) said, "students are over qualified but under experienced for even entry-level management positions".

A study of "Generation Y"'s experiences and expectations showed that students used their degree in order to obtain a management position, understanding the increase in responsibility of this kind of job positions (Barron et al. 2007).

Casado (1992) and Sciarini (1997) see eye to eye over this subject. They stated most students considered themselves "well qualified" to work as an assistant manager on graduation and that they were searching a position of a managerial level instead of an hourly operational position.

However, Purcell and Quinn (1995) exhibit that former students were concerned about not being given enough opportunities to develop their managerial skills.

On the contrary, Rimmington (1999, p. 187) as cited in Elhoushy (2014) believes that "all graduates should be prepared to work in kitchens and restaurants to acquire practical skills. They should recognize that with that kind of grounding they will be in an excellent position to reach a senior level". According to Ladkin (2002), as cited in Barron et al. (2007), numbers of industry entrants have a vocational qualification, experience in food and beverage functions is important to achieving general management positions, and personal mobility is important to career building.

Concerning their preparedness, Powell observes that the industry needs more prepared people to come at management level, as they need a lot more. She then adds that from the ones already in management, only 16% are properly trained. Another issue she highlights it's the "brain drain" suffered towards other sectors attributable to the transferable nature of the learned skills and gained qualifications (Powell and Wood 1999).

Nowlis (1996) as cited in Jenkins (2001) affirms that hospitality education must assume curriculum reform to better serve the industry and Ford and Bach (1996) as cited in Jenkins (2001) have written that "the traditional skill-based focus of hospitality programs is being challenged by the rapidly changing needs of industry for more general managerial skills and interpersonal competencies".

Ross (2013) as cited in Baum (2015) noticed a leadership deficit due to the growing seek for talent and Deloitte (2014:26) as cited in Baum (2015) manifested that "leadership remains the No. 1 talent issue for organizations.

A study found managers had seven jobs in their careers and they changed jobs approximately every 3 to 4 years (Ladkin & Riley, 1996, as cited in Ayres, 2006).

Kattara (2005:239) as cited in Barron et al. (2007) stated females' status and career advancement in hospitality is an important issue given that the unequal representation of female managers is evident in the industry around the world.

Baum (2015) points out that tourism has been under study regarding gender-balance, especially in restaurant kitchens as well as at senior management and leadership. Baum (2015) also noticed that female employment in tourism is strongly influenced by cultural, social, religious and political factors as well as by demographic and economic factors.

2.6 Mentoring:

Mentoring is a clear management and motivational tool which makes workers more aware of the increasing career responsibility they need to take (Ayres 2006).

A mentor is normally a higher-ranking worker who is committed to providing upward mobility and assisting employees throughout all stages of their career (Kram,1983, as cited in Ayres, 2006), and also acts as a friend or counsellor, empowering them to feel more confident and capable (Sampson & Daft, 2003, as cited in Ayres, 2006). At first, mentoring programs were unstructured and informal relationships based more in luck rather than in strategy, but nowadays it is recognized as an important tool for management (Nankivell & Shoolbred, 1997, as cited in Ayres, 2006).

Some of the advantages employees could get through mentorships are: promotions, salary increases and higher levels of job satisfaction. (Kram, 1983; Murphy & Ensher, 2001, as cited in Ayres 2006). Other benefits include organizational commitment and staff retention or reduced staff turnover (Raabe & Beehr, 2003, as cited in Ayres, 2006).

There are three types of mentoring programs. Firstly, the relationship that provides career development support. Secondly, the psychosocial relationship that offers the mentee friendship or counselling to help cope with difficult situations at the workplace. Finally, the relationship where the mentor is a role model and the mentee tries to follow his path and behaviour. (Scandura, 1992, as cited in Ayres, 2006). However, this type of relationships must occur naturally because otherwise it would be difficult to create them artificially. For this reason, dedication and effort of senior staff are crucial if we are to meet this need (Waddell et al.,2000, as cited in Ayres, 2006)

It has been exposed that one of the main limitations for career development is not having access to a mentor (Ayres, 2006).

Mentoring demonstrates that employees are important team members and that the business wants to invest time and effort in them and values professionalism and personal growth. It can also reduce frustration within younger employees are going through a slow progression (Sharpes & Marcon-Clarke, 2019).

Most managers understood the aspirations of junior employees to get to a higher level of management and that's why they took their role seriously and supported their career ambitions, enabling them to make sound decisions throughout their working life (Ayres, 2006).

Sharpes & Marcon-Clarke (2019) expose that it can be difficult to have spare time to invest in mentoring due to high workloads and tight timelines. They also highlight that mentoring is a high-level capacity which requires training, which sometimes is not always readily available and can be costly.

2.7 Mobility

Ayres (2006) specifically linked mentorship to career mobility and explained that some agile forms of training are cross-training and job-rotation.

Job mobility is a common strategy for rapid promotion graduates use in this field (McCabe, 2001, and Baruch, 2004, as cited in Barron et al, 2007).

Workers will show commitment to an organization but they will move jobs as a means of providing interesting work and career advancement (Kerslake, 2005, as cited in Barron et al, 2007). However, types of barriers to career development include age, access to a mentor, limited education, female gender, Indigenous background, willingness to be geographically mobile (Ayres, 2006).

Human resources management have been marked by high staff turnover (especially owing to a lack of opportunity as employees reach a higher management level) and low retention rates

(Ayres, 2006). Senior managers have reported the need to change geographical location, change organization or even leave the industry for a period of time in order to get better opportunities. All managers exposed both intra-organizational and inter-organizational moves (Ayres, 2006).

3. TOURISM INDUSTRY AND TOURISM EDUCATION OFFER

The Tourism industry is one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world, generating millions of either direct or indirect jobs, with a high share of women (up to 54% of the tourism workforce) and young people (UNWTO, 2019).

Tourism is the main force of economic contribution in Spain, reaching 154,487 million euros and 12.4% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Each year, the tourism industry is responsible for millions of jobs, creating 2.72 million job posts, being 12.9% of the total employment (INE, 2019).

The number of international arrivals in Spain continues to grow. In 2019 it received 84 million visitors, making it the second top destination in tourist arrivals and the second top destination concerning the receipts, with a 3% of growth in regard to the previous year and with 66,5 billion euros earned (UNWTO, 2019).

The interannual variation of the employed population in the tourism sector places Catalonia almost three points ahead of Spain. In the fourth semester of 2019, the number of people employed in the tourism sector was 471 thousand people, constituting the 13,6% of the total employed population (IDESCAT, 2019).

Población ocupada en el sector turístico. Por sexo. Cataluña. T4/2015–T4/2020
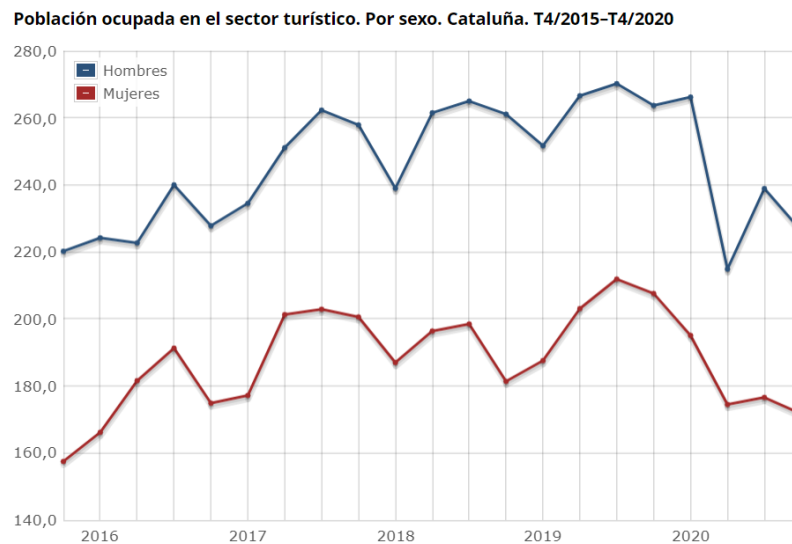
Figure 2: Population employed in the tourism sector in Catalonia

Source: IDESCAT (2020)

According to Patronat de Turisme Costa Brava Girona (2020), 2019 was a record year in Catalonia in terms of annual tourist visits, inasmuch as 19.3 million foreign tourists were received and the total expenditure was of 21.000 million euros, with an increase of 4.3% in comparison to 2018. The province of Girona welcomed 7.9 million visitors (3.7 million foreigners and 4.1 million

domestic visitors), 1.28% more than the previous year, and registered 25.8 million overnight stays.

Tourism industry was growing until 2019, then during 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic, it was the worst year in tourism in terms of international arrivals, dropping by 74% (UNWTO, 2021). The fall in demand and travel restrictions led destinations worldwide to welcome 1 billion fewer international arrivals. This results in a loss of USD 1.3 trillion in export revenues (11 times the loss during the 2009 global economic crisis) (UNWTO, 2021) and translates to a temporary closure of many hospitality businesses, a limitation of operations, and a decline in hotel occupancies and revenues. (Gursoy and G. Chi, 2020).

Even though the reopening process has slowly begun, many countries are reintroducing stricter travel restrictions such as mandatory testing, quarantines and in some cases a closure of borders (UNWTO 2021), apart from the strategies to flatten the curve being community lockdowns, social distancing, stay-at-home orders, travel and mobility restrictions (Gursoy and G. Chi, 2020). The vaccine is expected to help restore consumer confidence, contribute to the easing travel restrictions and slowly normalize travel during the year ahead. (UNWTO, 2021) but this will not bring customers back immediately (Gursoy and G. Chi, 2020).

Concerning the recovery outlook, it seems like the overall prospects are not very positive, since the latest UNWTO Panel of Experts Survey shows that half of the respondents predict that a rebound is not expected to happen before 2022. (UNWTO, 2021). This year's prospects of half of the respondents foresee better prospects, while 30% foresee worse results and 25% expect a similar prospect. Nevertheless, the Panel of Experts forecast a growing demand for open-air and nature-based tourism activities, with domestic tourism and "slow travel" experiences gaining increasing interest (UNWTO, 2021).

A rebound doesn't mean a return to pre-pandemic levels, as this is only contemplated in 2023 by 43% of the respondents and in 2024 or later by 41% of the respondents, meaning it will take between two and a half years and four years for international tourism to return to 2019 level. (UNWTO, 2021)

The crisis has put between 100 and 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk, many of them in small and medium-sized enterprises (UNWTO, 2021), putting to an end nine consecutive years of an increasing number of contributors (reaching 1.9 million employed people in 2019, a maximum record), with direct employment in the tourism sector falling into levels of 2015. (Hosteltur, 2020). According to Randstadt, as cited in Hosteltur, 2019, Catalonia was one of the autonomous

communities who suffered more the pandemic's consequences. This is reflected in the decline of tourism employment, with a fall of -17,5%, over the national average.

Tourism education has increased and specialized with degrees, masters and postgraduate studies in recent years.

In Catalonia, there are 21 undergraduate and double degree courses related to the field of Tourism and Hospitality (Mansilla, 2019).

There are some public centers where you can study the degree in Tourism such as the University of Girona, University of Lleida and Rovira i Virgili University, and most degrees are taught in associated centers. There are also private universities like Ramon Llull University and the Open University of Catalonia (Online Teaching). (Mansilla, 2019).

The history of the studies in Tourism has its beginnings in 1989, when the Official School of Tourism of the Generalitat de Catalunya was originated, an entity that was born with the aim of teaching non-university higher studies in Business and Tourism Activities Technician (TEAT). (Mansilla, 2019).

In the 1997-1998, the University of Girona started giving lessons through the studies of the Diplomatura en Turisme. In the 2001-2002 academic year, the Official School of Tourism was completely integrated into the University of Girona, renamed University School of Tourism, making it the first Catalonian university to offer official tourism studies at a public price. (Mansilla, 2019).

The university degree in Tourism of Universitat de Girona has a duration of four years and a total of 240 credits. Classes are taught in person, except for these last two years due to COVID.

To access university studies, students do not need to take any entrance exams but it is compulsory to take the selectivity. The cut-off mark for recent years at UdG for tourism studies was 5. You can also access it through the CFGS.

The survey made by AQU showed the main reasons why graduates chose the Tourism degree at University of Girona, being the most popular choice, *It was the one I liked* (58.8%), followed by *Good job* (25.5%), *Cut-off grade* (3.9 %) and *Others* (11.8%) (EUC Dades, 2020).

Any Acadèmic	Places ofertes	Demanda 1a opció	Estudiants de nou ingrés	% accés en primera preferència	Estudiants matriculats	Taxa de rendiment	Titulats	Taxa d'eficiència
09-10	120	96	96	ND	109	68,13%	0	ND
10-11	120	102	125	86,79%	216	69,16%	0	ND
11-12	120	137	123	92,08%	316	77,27%	0	ND
12-13	120	135	131	85,5%	408	84,56%	39	96%
13-14	120	138	139	94,85%	477	82,71%	44	90%
14-15	120	155	132	95,45%	513	80,99%	59	92%
15-16	120	130	131	91,74%	530	80,1%	71	90%
16-17	120	133	128	89,17%	525	76,32%	65	90%
17-18	120	103	116	91,89%	511	78,93%	85	92%
18-19	120	136	118	95,65%	498	80,78%	83	89%

Table 1: General Data   *Source of information: Winddat 2018*

The academic year of 2018/2019, 120 places were offered and 136 were demanded in first option. The percentage of access in first preference was 95,65% and finally, new students were a total of 118. That year, 83 people were graduated. (WINDDAT, 2018)

Concerning Student performance, in 2018 there was a 7% of first year degree changes and a 17,3% year drop-out (not including degree changes). First year degree performance (approved credits / enrolled credits) was 78.4% and average performance of the degree was 80.8%. However, the graduation in the expected time was low, specifically between 30% and 60%, with an average of 4,8 years. (WINDDAT, 2018)

Job placement (82,8% women, 17,2% men)

79.3% of graduates were employed 3 years after graduation, of which 72.4% carried out university-level functions. The remaining 27.6% did specific work of the taken degree (EUC Dades, 2020).

Ways of access: 31% got a job on their own initiative by sending a curriculum vitae or by setting up their own company or office; 27% found work through their network of personal and family contacts; 20,7%, obtained employment through internships and university services, and 17.2% through advertisements or selection companies and temporary agencies. Only 3.4% went in for a public competition (EUC Dades, 2020).

For 82.3% it took less than 3 months to find their first job, 13.8% took 3 to 1 year and 3,4 % needed more than 1 year. 86.2% work in the private sector and 78.6% are full-time employed. Concerning the type of contract, 55.2% have a fixed or indefinite contract and 41.4% have a temporary contract. 3.4% are trainees (EUC Dades, 2020).

The majority (63.6%) of graduates' salary working full-time ranges between 1000 and 2,000 gross euros per month; 18.2% earn more than 2,000 euros, and another 18.3% earn less than 1,000. The average gross salary is 1,676 euros (EUC Dades, 2020).

Of those employed, 69% work in the province of Girona, 27,6%, are working in the province of Barcelona and 3.4% work abroad (EUC Dades, 2020).

66.5% of graduates continue to study after graduation, 51.7 of whom study a postgraduate or master's degree. 21% of the graduates who continue their studies decide to study at the same university (EUC Dades, 2020).

A large number of graduates choose to combine their degree with work. 44,8% of them work in a related job and only 6,9% work in an unrelated job, whereas 48,3% are full-time students (EUC Dades, 2020).

Satisfaction rate (78,4% Women, 21,6% Men)

Graduates gave the theoretical training received a 5.7 and the practical training a 5.3. As for the usefulness of the training for the job they are currently at, the theory received a 4.1 and the practice a 4.5. (EUC Dades, 2020).

In this survey, students also evaluated their improved skills attained through their training. In terms of acquired cognitive skills, problem solving scored a 5.1, the level of creativity a 5.7, and the level of critical thinking a 6. With regard to interpersonal skills, graduates rated the level of oral expression (6.9), the level of written expressions (6.6) and the level of teamwork (7.5.) In respect of instrumental skills, the level of management was given a 5.9, and the level of languages an 8.3. Students also gave a mark to communications skills (7.2), personal skills (7.2), and professional skills (6.5). (EUC Dades, 2020).

The majority of students (82,1) stated that their mobility actions had been relevant to their learning. External internships were said to allow to apply the knowledge acquired during the degree (71,4%). (EUC Dades, 2020).

The overall job satisfaction rate was 7.7 in a range from 1 to 10. Job satisfaction is 8.0 out of 10. Satisfaction with the level of work remuneration is 5.9 and satisfaction with the usefulness of knowledge was only 4.8 (EUC Dades, 2020).

With regard to satisfaction with the studies completed and with the university, only 45.1% would return to pursue the same studies but 60.8% would choose the same university (EUC Dades, 2020).

Most participants were satisfied with the structure of the curriculum (64,7%) that allowed a proper progression of their learning. They were not satisfied with the coordination of subjects to avoid overlaps nor the volume of work tough. They were not satisfied either with assessment systems because they didn't reflect their learning (EUC Dades, 2020).

Information regarding the degree on the web appears to be accessible and useful for most of the surveyed participants. (EUC Dades, 2020).

4. METHODOLOGY

This study based on a quantitative approach. A questionnaire was designed with 18 close-ended questions. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was created with Google forms and was written in Catalan language to facilitate the completion of the survey to the Tourism students at the UdG. The results were then translated into English.

The questionnaire was composed of three sections. The first section contained general information of the sample such as gender, career choice, year of study, etc. The second section consisted in 11 statements about career perceptions. These attitudes were measured through a Likert scale with 5 categories ("5"Strongly Agree, "4"Agree, "3" Neither agree or disagree, "2" Disagree, "1"Strongly Disagree) to calculate the level of agreement with each statement. Most of the themes were reverse coded to prevent the response set (bias). Some questions and statements were extracted from other authors previous works like Richardson and Butler (2012), Ortiz Zurita, M. J. (2018), Wang and Huang (2014), Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000), Roney and Öztin (2007) etc.

The third question was composed of 7 questions about career goals, which also included one open-ended question in which students had to list the reasons why they would not continue working in Tourism. Lastly, at the end of the survey, if they wished to receive a summary report of the responses obtained in the survey, they were encouraged to leave their email. Via email and using social networks, it was sent to students. This was also specified and was used as an incentive to motivate their participation.

The initial survey was pre-tested on 4 students. After the pilot testing phase, some questions were rewritten upon request. For example, question 3 (" Why did you choose Tourism") was converted into a multiple-choice question and question 11 was changed from a 5 Likert scale into three phrases.

The sample was chosen through a non-random sampling technique and the survey was conducted at one educational institution. The target population for this study was students studying Tourism from all four years enrolled in *Universitat de Girona*. With a brief introduction with the purpose of this research, they were informed that the participation in the survey was anonymous, voluntary, confidential and to help do a final degree project.

To ensure a high response rate, professors from first, second- and third-year subjects were contacted and asked to send the questionnaire. They were responsible for ensuring the distribution via e-mail of the survey among their alumni. It was distributed within the third week

of march. Due to the fact that the author of this research was a former fourth grader, fourth year students were contacted via the Whatsapp group through a link.

After a while, a difference of response rates between years of study was noticed, so a second round through Whatsapp group was made in order to balance them. After one week there were no more responses and on March 25[th]the answer collecting phase was put to an end.

We could have achieved a higher response rate delivering the questionnaires in hand in class, but the present situation of covid has forced colleges to give online classes so an alternative was carried out to obtain as many responses as possible. To obtain as many responses as possible, an incentive was offered which was giving a feedback of the results.

When reviewing the results, an informatics error was perceived: from the 126 responses, 4 were repeated and had to be removed. Thus, a total of 122 valid responses were obtained.

The quantitative method of analysis for descriptive information were proportion (categorial variables) and means (numerical variables). For inferential bivariate analysis, mean differences and proportion differences were used in order to identify whether a numerical variable is different from different categories (for instance, different perception according their year of study). Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. Significant differences were evaluated using an alpha level of 0.05 was used, where a significance level (p-value) lower than 0.05 meant there was a significant difference between the compared variables, and a significance level (p-value) higher than 0,05 showed there was not a relevant difference at 95% confidence level.

5. DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

5.1 Profile of the survey sample

The first section of the survey collected general information of the sample. The next tables present the answers students gave to the first questions.

This study's respondents were mostly females, representing 88,5% of the total respondents (108 females). The rest of respondents were males which only represent 11,5% of the total respondents (14 males). Therefore, we can conclude that females are more likely to choose Tourism than males.

As per the year of study, fourth year respondents constitute 43,4%, followed by third year students, being 20,5%. The least representative group were first year students.

Table 2:Respondents' Year of study

Year of study	Frequency	Percentage
First year	21	17,2
Second year	23	18,9
Third year	25	20,5
Fourth year	53	43,4

Source: Survey results

In table 3 we can see the reasons why they chose to study Tourism. They were allowed to choose more than one option. Most students (59,8%) claimed "Learn new languages and cultures" was their main reason to have picked this degree. 50,8% decided to choose this degree because of the" Employment opportunities". "Opportunity to travel" was the third most chosen reason with 43,4%. With a 41%, students focused their answers to "Opportunity to work abroad". 15,6% of respondents chose the Tourism career due to the "Growth of this sector". 18 students chose Tourism because they "didn't get into the degree I had as my first choice" with 14,8%, meaning probably it was not their main motivation and Tourism was not their vocation. With a smaller percentage, 13,9% of students decided to select this path because they were "advised by their friends and family". The smallest percentage with 4,1% was "Ease of study". Respondents could also add other reasons for their choice (9%). Some examples were: because of the variety of subjects, their familiarity with the sector or because they just like it.

Table 3: Respondents' career choice

Why Tourism career	Frequency	Percentage
Learn new languages and cultures	73	59,8
Employment opportunities	62	50,8
Opportunity to travel	53	43,4
Opportunity to work abroad	50	41,0
Growth of this sector	19	15,6
I didn't get into the degree I had as my first choice	18	14,8
I was advised by my friends and family	17	13,9
Others	11	9,0
Ease of study	5	4,1

*Response categories were not mutually exclusive.

Source: Survey results

With regard to the question" To which extent are you satisfied with having chosen the degree in Tourism?", an average was made to know the satisfaction with their selection. Between a scale of 1(Not at all satisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied), 3,17 was the resulting average. The standard deviation was 1,019.

As it can be seen in the bar graphic below, the highest percentage of respondents were undecided about it. There were more people satisfied than unsatisfied, but few were the ones very satisfied.
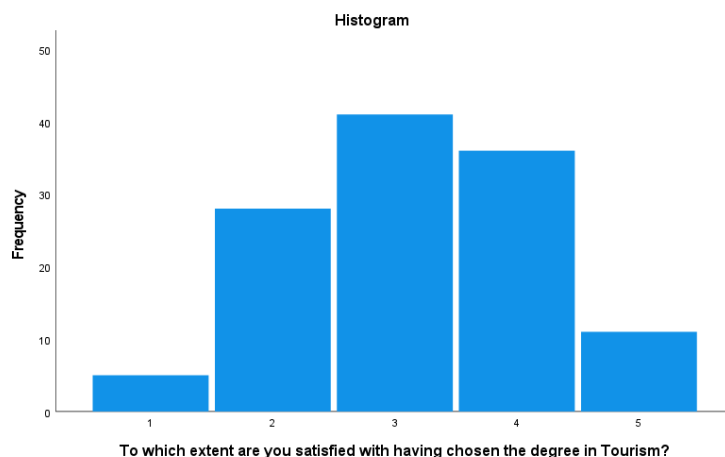

Figure 3: Respondents' career choice satisfaction

Source: Survey results

The following Table indicates that the majority of participants (58,2%) had family or friends working in the Tourism industry.

Table 4: Relatives' or friends' connection to the sector

Family/ Friends	Frequency	Percentage
No	51	41,8
Yes	71	58,2

Source: Survey results

In Table 5, students were asked to mark their current situation at the moment of the survey. Most of them claimed they were full-time students, with 57,5%. Only 15,8% were working in Tourism, apart from studying Tourism, and 26,7% were studying Tourism at the same time they were working in another sector.

Table 5: Students`situation

Current Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Only studying tourism	69	57,5
Studying Tourism and working in Tourism	19	15,8
Studying Tourism and working in another sector	32	26,7

Source: Survey results

Table 6 shows students' work experience within the Tourism sector. A great number of the surveyed were familiar with this field. 33,3% had work experience in the Tourism sector. The smallest percentage were students who only had had pre-professional practices. 21,7% had done both an internship or worked in Tourism. 38,3 % selected that they had no experience at all in the Tourism sector yet.

Table 6: Students' work experience in Tourism

Work experience	Frequency	Percentage
Neither Internship nor work	46	38,3
Internship	8	6,7
Work	40	33,3
Internship and work	26	21,7

Source: Survey results

Students with work experience were required to specify how much time they had been working in Tourism. Table 7 reveals 55,4 % had only been working for 1 year or less. 18,9% had had between 1 and 2 years of experience and 20,3% between 2 and 5 years. Only 5,4 had had more

than 5 years of work experience, which is understandable since they haven't had enough time to gain this much experience.

Table 7: Students' time working in Tourism

Time worked	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 6 months	23	31,1
Between 6 months and 1 year	18	24,3
Between 1 and 2 years	14	18,9
Between 2 and 5 years	15	20,3
More than 5 years	4	5,4

Source: Survey results

Table 8 indicates which subsector students already experienced had been in. Accommodation was the most selected option with 43,4%. The second most chosen choice was Catering, with 27,6 %. With a lower percentage (7,9 %) the next area was Activities and tourism products. With the same percentage, Events and MICE, Intermediation (Travel agencies and Tour operators) and Tourism Planning and Management were chosen by 5,3 %. Transport (Airlines, cruises, etc.) was only chosen by 3,9%. Finally, Animation and Entertainment was the least selected area, with 1,3%.

Table 8: Students' subsector in which they had worked

Subsector	Frequency	Percentage
Accommodation	33	43,4
Catering	21	27,6
Activities and tourism products	6	7,9
Events and MICE	4	5,3
Intermediation (Travel agencies and Tour operators)	4	5,3
Tourism Planning and Management	4	5,3
Transport (Airlines, cruises, etc.)	3	3,9
Animation and entertainment	1	1,3

Source: Survey results

With regard to the question "In case you have professional experience in tourism, how has it influenced your perception of this sector?", the participants that had had work experience were

asked to score their perception of the sector. Between a scale of 1 (Very Negatively) and 5 (Very positively). The average was 3,47 out of 5. The standard deviation was 0,848.

This bar graphic indicates that a lot of respondents' perceptions of the Tourism industry were not affected positively nor negatively by their work experience. Nevertheless, a great number of respondents were affected positively.
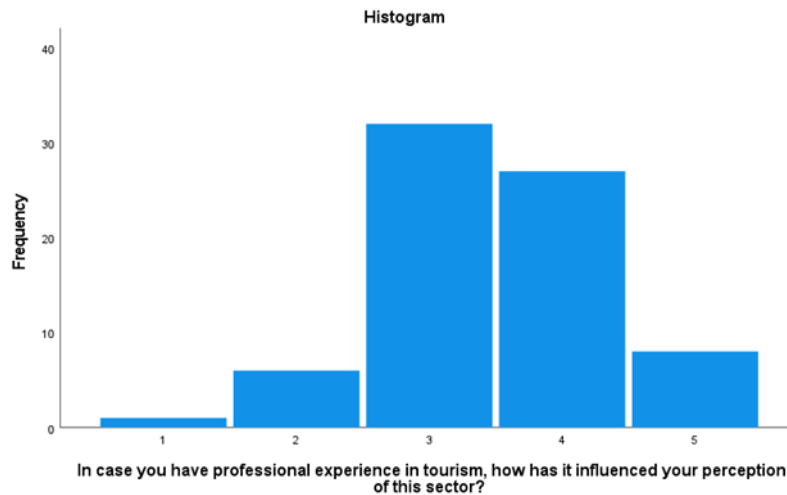

Figure 4: Relationship between work experience and perception of the sector

Source: Survey results

Table 9 illustrates the relationship between expectations and the reality. 45% felt that their expectations were higher than the job reality, and another 45% considered the reality as they expected. With the smallest percentage, 9,5% believed the work reality had exceeded their expectations of the tourism sector.

Table 9: Expectations vs reality

Expectations vs Reality	Frequency	Percentage
My expectations were higher than the job reality of the tourism sector	34	45,9
My expectations have matched the job reality of the tourism sector	33	44,6
The work reality has exceeded my expectations of the tourism sector	7	9,5

Source: Survey results

5.2 Tourism career's perceptions

Table 9 shows data related to the tourism career perceptions students held. In the second part of the survey, students were given a total of 11 statements. In that section, respondents were demanded to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Each item was measured on a five-point Likert scale, being 1 "Strongly Disagree", 2 "Disagree", 3" Neither disagree or agree(neutral), 4 "Agree "and 5 "Strongly Agree". The lowest mean value was "Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good." and the highest was "Tourism

is a profession that gives you the opportunity to grow professionally and get promotions." Most means were around 3, which implies that the perception of the vast majority of students towards their career was neither positive nor negative.

It is clearly seen that no mean score reaches 4. The statement with which they most agreed was "Tourism is a profession that gives you the opportunity to grow professionally and get promotions" (mean score= 3,65). With a very little difference "There is no need to study a university degree to work in Tourism" had a mean score of 3,64. Participants believed "The work environment in Tourism was pleasant" ($\bar{x}$=3,62). Regrettably, students thought "Tourism jobs were stressful and exhausting" ($\bar{x}$=3,52). Participants as well saw eye to eye with the statement "The degree in Tourism presents intellectual challenges" ($\bar{x}$=3,42). To the statement "It is possible to combine the profession of Tourism with family life (motherhood / fatherhood", some answered they agreed ($\bar{x}$=3,23). Some of the participants also expressed they were proud to have chosen the degree in Tourism in front of their family and friends ($\bar{x}$=3,21). For the statement" There is gender discrimination in the workplace of tourism." the mean score was 3,11. Very few agreed that "Tourism offered a stable job" ($\bar{x}$=2,50). Students had a lower level of agreement with this statement" Working in Tourism is a prestigious and respected vocation in society" ($\bar{x}$=2,47). Lastly, "Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary was good", was the statement with the lowest agreement ($\bar{x}$= 2,32).

Table 10: Tourism career's perceptions

Statements	Mean (x)	Standard deviation (s)
Tourism is a profession that gives you the opportunity to grow professionally and get promotions.	3,65	0,913
There is no need to study a university degree to work in Tourism	3,64	1,256
The work environment in Tourism is pleasant.	3,62	0,918
Tourism jobs are stressful and exhausting	3,52	1,145
The degree in Tourism presents intellectual challenges	3,42	1,050
It is possible to combine the profession of Tourism with family life (motherhood / fatherhood.	3,23	1,041
I am proud to have chosen the degree in Tourism in front of my family and friends.	3,21	1,302
There is gender discrimination in the workplace of tourism.	3,11	1,165
Tourism offers a stable job.	2,50	1,045
Working in Tourism is a prestigious and respected vocation in society.	2,47	1,045

Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good.	2,32	0,961

Source: Survey results

5.3 Career goals

The third section gathers data relating to career goals and students' future career plans. The following tables collect the answers students gave.

Table 11 indicates 82,8% of the surveyed contemplate the possibility to work abroad after graduating. Just 4,1% answered they would not like to go to another country to work in Tourism. 13,1% are not sure about leaving their country to continue their career in Tourism.

Table 11: Students' willingness to work abroad

Work abroad	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	101	82,8
No	5	4,1
I don't know	16	13,1

Source: Survey results

As seen in table 12, a significant number of students (62,3%) expressed their disposition to continue their studies in Tourism. 15,6% were clear that they didn't want to do a Master Degree while 22,1% were undecided whether or not to enrol in a master.

From the ones willing to start a master or a postgraduate degree, 26,3% wanted to do a Master in Tourism ((Tourism Management and Planning, Cultural Tourism, Sustainable Tourism), 23,8% preferred to do it in Event Planning, 21,3% preferred to specialize in Marketing, 17,5% in Hotel Management and 11,3% in other fields. As they could add the topic of master of their choice, they answered masters like "History"," Human resources", "Master of education", etc.

Table 12: Students' willingness to do a master's or postgraduate degree upon graduation

Intention to work in the tourism industry upon graduation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	76	62,3
No	9	15,6
I don't know	27	22,1
Preferred field of specialization		
Tourism (Tourism Management and Planning, Cultural Tourism, Sustainable Tourism)	22	27,5
Event planning	19	23,8
Marketing	17	21,3

Hotel management	14	17,5
Other	8	10

Source: Survey results

Regarding the question "Do you plan to work in the tourism sector after graduating?", the overall mean score was 3,91, which means a great number of students plan to continue in the industry. The standard deviation was 1,037.

In the survey the options were classified on a 5-point Likert scale, where "1 "was Definitely not, "2" Probably not, "3" I don't know, "4" Probably Yes and "5" was Definitely Yes.

In the graphic below, it is noticeable that 41% would probably continue in this sector while 32% were completely sure they would carry on with their Tourism career. Therefore, 3 out of 4 are willing to continue in the Tourism sector.
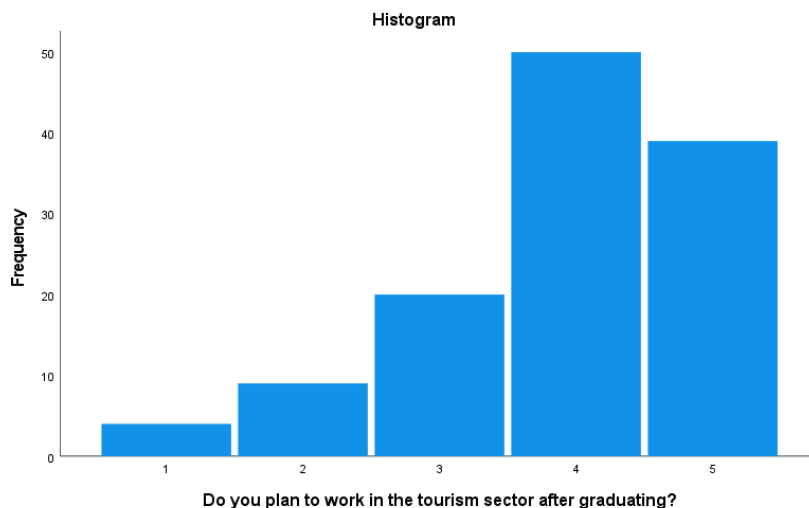
Figure 5: Students' willingness to continue in the tourism sector after graduating

Source: Survey results

Hereunder are the reasons why some students said they would probably not continue in tourism. A total of 15 people answered.

The answers given were codified and classified in 4 representative items. 5 people answered they just "didn't like it and were not motivated", 4 people pointed out "bad conditions (poor pay, low skills and heavy workload, etc.)", 3 people also indicated that the main reason why they decided not to pursue a career in tourism is "due to the pandemic and low labour supply", and finally, 3 other people "would rather explore other career paths" such as science, marketing and education.

Table 13 shows the subsector in which graduates would like to work upon graduation. The variety of answers is noticeable. On the top list is the accommodation sector with 27,9%, followed by the Events and MICE sector with 17,3. Next preferred sector is Tourism Management and Planning with 16,3%. Sales and Marketing was chosen by 12,5% of students. Activities and tourist products and Catering were selected by 5,8% each. With an even lower percentage (4,8%), Transport (Airlines, cruises, etc.) was picked by 4,8%. Only 3,8% chose Human Resources. Among the least demanded were Administration and finance (2,9%), Intermediation (Tour operators and Travel agencies) (1,9%) and Animation and entertainment (1%).

Table 13: Students' preferred subsector to work in the future

Preferred subsector	Frequency	Percentage
Accommodation	29	27,9
Events and MICE	18	17,3
Tourism Management and Planning	17	16,3
Sales and Marketing	13	12,5
Activities and tourist products	6	5,8
Catering	6	5,8
Transport (Airlines, cruises, etc.)	5	4,8
Human resources	4	3,8
Administration and finance	3	2,9
Intermediation (Tour operators and Travel agencies)	2	1,9
Animation and entertainment	1	1,0

Source: Survey results

Table 14 refers to expected job position in 5 years. With the highest percentage (30,6%) students thought they would be "Event Planners". 21,3% expected to be "Head of a hotel department." Remarkably, 19,4% would like to become the "Manager of their own enterprise". 14,8% chose the option "Accommodation Manager". With the lowest percentages "Head of area in a Travel Agency" (3,7%) and "Restaurant Supervisor" (1,9%) were the least popular. "Other" (8,3%) was also an option, in which they could write whatever job position they liked. They see themselves being "Air Hostess", "Destination Project Manager", "Manager of a car rental office", "City Council Tourism Technician", "Touristic Guide" and "Nature Park Worker"

Table 14: Students' expected job in 5 years

Expected job	Frequency	Percentage
Event Planner	33	30,6
Head of a hotel department	23	21,3
Manager of their own enterprise	21	19,4
Accommodation manager (Hotel, camping, etc.)	16	14,8
Other	9	8,3
Head of area in a Travel Agency	4	3,7
Restaurant Supervisor	2	1,9

Source: Survey results

6. RELATIONS BETWEEN VARIABLES

In this part, 12 bi-variant comparisons were carried out. In the first place, students' expectations were compared to their motivation to enter the industry. In the second place, students' satisfaction with their career choice was linked to year of study, professional experience and friends and family working in Tourism. In the third place, the influence of work experience on students' perception of the industry was related to the time worked and the subsector in which they worked. In the fourth place, students' perception of the industry (statements) was connected to year of study, professional experience and friends and family working in tourism. Finally, students' willingness to continue working in Tourism was compared to year of study, professional experience and willingness to do a master or postgraduate degree in Tourism.

6.1 Satisfaction

In the following tables, results in relation with students' satisfactions are shown.

In Table 15 the objective was to discover if some reasons why students chose to study Tourism were related to their expectations. Students whose expectations where higher than the job reality had a higher percentage of "opportunity to work abroad". A relation between "opportunity to travel" and "learn new languages and cultures" and students' expectations was not found. The p-value only considers "opportunity to work abroad" to be significant (p-value=0,046). Thus, we can claim at the population level that students whose expectations where higher than the job reality, also chose Tourism for the opportunity to work abroad.

Table 15: Comparison between expectations vs reality and motivations

In case you have professional experience in tourism, how would you describe the relationship between expectations and reality?		Opportunity to work abroad	Opportunity to travel	Learn new languages and cultures
My expectations were higher than the job reality of the tourism sector	Percentage	56% *	44%	56%
	N	34	34	34
My expectations have matched the job reality of the tourism sector	Percentage	27%*	36%	64%
	N	33	33	33
The work reality has exceeded my expectations of the tourism sector	Percentage	29%*	43%	57%
	N	7	7	7
Total	Percentage	41%	41%	59%
	N	74	74	74

Source: Survey results
*P-value <0,05

The following table puts having friends or family working in Tourism and career choice satisfaction in the spotlight. Having a look at the means, there is almost no difference, though we can see that who has friends and family in the industry has a more positive career choice satisfaction than those who don't. Nevertheless, this small difference is at sample level and cannot be generalized to the population. As the p-value is higher than 0, 05 we can say that with 95% confidence we accept the null hypothesis. Therefore, career choice satisfaction is the same for those who have friends or family working in the industry as for those who do not.

Table 16: Comparison between career choice satisfaction and having friends or family working in the tourism sector

To which extent are you satisfied with having chosen the degree in Tourism?	Mean	N	Sd	P-value
No: friends or family working in the tourism sector	3,12	50	1,100	0,683
Yes: friends or family working in the tourism sector	3,20	71	0,965	
Total	3,17	121	1,019	

Source: Survey results

Table 17 compares students' satisfaction with having chosen Tourism as their career and students' year of study. The worrying fact is that their satisfaction decreases as they progress in their studies. First year students have the highest level of satisfaction ($\bar{x}$=3,62), followed by second year students ($\bar{x}$=3,30). Third- and fourth-year students had a less high career choice satisfaction. The p-value tells us that this difference is not significant enough at population level. However, in the sample.

Table 17: Comparison between career choice satisfaction and Year of study

To which extent are you satisfied with having chosen the degree in Tourism? Year of study	Mean	N	Sd	P-value
First year	3,62	21	1,284	0,081
Second year	3,30	23	0,765	
Third year	2,96	25	0,889	
Fourth year	3,02	52	1,019	
Total	3,17	121	1,019	

Source: Survey results

Table 18 shows that the most satisfied students were the ones that had done an internship ($\bar{x}$=3,71) and the least the ones that had worked ($\bar{x}$=3,05). Students who had done both Internship and Work were less satisfied ($\bar{x}$=3,12) than the ones who hadn't had experience of

any kind ($\bar{x}$=3,26). However, the p-value is not less than 0,05, which means that these differences are not significant at the population level.

Table 18: Comparison between career choice satisfaction and professional experience

To which extent are you satisfied with having chosen the degree in Tourism? Do you have professional experience in the tourism sector?	Mean	N	Sd	P-value
Neither internship nor work experience	3,26	46	0,929	0,399
Internship	3,71	7	0,951	
Work	3,05	40	1,011	
Internship and work	3,12	26	1,177	
Total	3,18	119	1,017	

Source: Survey results

6.2 Perceptions

General Perception

In the following table it is represented the experienced students' perception of the sector ("1" Very Negatively, "2" Negatively, "3"Neither negatively nor positively, "4"Positively", "5" Very Positively). and the time they had worked in the industry. It is observable that as they work longer in tourism, their positive perception of the industry increases, with the exception of those that had worked for more than 5 years (only 4 responses). Considering the P-value, we can't find difference among the time worked categories.

Table 19: Comparison between perception of the sector and time worked in Tourism

In case you have professional experience in tourism, how has it influenced your perception of this sector? In case you have professional experience in tourism, how long have you been working in tourism?	Mean	N	Sd	P-value
Less than 6 months	3,30	23	0,559	0,506
Between 6 months and 1 year	3,33	18	0,907	
Between 1 and 2 years	3,64	14	1,008	
Between 2 and 5 years	3,73	15	0,704	
More than 5 years	3,50	4	1,732	

Total	3,47	74	0,848

Source: Survey results

Table 20 table compares the experienced students' perception of the sector and the subsector in which they worked. The sectors that provided students with a more positive image of the sector were: "Intermediation" ($\bar{x}$=4,25), "Accommodation" ($\bar{x}$=3,58) and "Events & MICE" ($\bar{x}$= 3,50). The sector that had a more negative effect on students' perceptions were: "Activities and Tourism Products" ($\bar{x}$=2,83), "Catering" ($\bar{x}$=3,33) and "Transport" ($\bar{x}$=3,33). Nevertheless, p-value is more than 0,05 and we can't say there is a significant difference between the two variables.

Table 20: Comparison between perception of the sector and subsector worked

In case you have professional experience in tourism, how has it influenced your perception of this sector? In case you have professional experience in tourism, in which subsector in Tourism have you worked mainly?	Mean	N	Sd	P-value
Intermediation (Travel agencies and Tour operators)	4,25	4	0,500	0,309
Accommodation	3,58	33	0,830	
Events and MICE	3,50	4	1,291	
Transport (Airlines, cruises, etc.)	3,33	3	0,577	
Catering	3,33	21	0,856	
Activities and tourism products	2,83	6	0,753	
Total	3,47	71	0,848	

Source: Survey findings

Statements (Perceptions)

In table 21, it is seen the comparison between having friends or family working in Tourism and some perceptions of the industry. Students who had friends or family working in Tourism agreed more with the statements "Working in Tourism is a prestigious and respected vocation in society", "Tourism offers a stable job", "Tourism Jobs Are Stressful and Exhausting", and "Tourism is a profession that gives you the opportunity to grow professionally and get promotions.". Those who had not friends or family working in the tourism sector agreed more with the statements "Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good" and "The work environment in Tourism is pleasant". However, the means differences are not very unalike and don't discern much one from the other. As a matter of fact, the p-values of none of the numeric variables are less than 0,05, which means that the slight difference between the perceptions of people who had or had not family and friends working in Tourism is not significant.

Table 21: Comparison between having friends or family working in the tourism sector and some perceptions

Do you have friends or family working in the tourism sector?	No	Yes	Total
	Mean	Mean	Mean
Working in Tourism is a prestigious and respected vocation in society.	2,41	2,54	2,48
Tourism offers a stable job.	2,43	2,56	2,5
Tourism Jobs Are Stressful and Exhausting.	3,33	3,63	3,51
Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good.	2,39	2,27	2,32
The work environment in Tourism is pleasant.	3,65	3,59	3,61
Tourism is a profession that gives you the opportunity to grow professionally and get promotions.	3,63	3,68	3,66

Source: Survey findings

Table 22 sets side by side students' year of study and some perceptions of the Tourism industry ("12" Strongly disagree, "2" Disagree", "3" Neither agree nor disagree, "4" Agree and "5" Strongly agree"). The statement "Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good" was the one with the most differences between years of study. First year students were the most optimistic ($\bar{x}$=2,81), followed by second year students ($\bar{x}$=2,48). Third year students agreed less than third year students ($\bar{x}$=2,4). Fourth year students ($\bar{x}$=2,02) disagreed with this statement.

The level of agreement in "Working in Tourism is a prestigious and respected vocation in society", "Tourism offers a stable job", "The work environment in Tourism is pleasant", and "Tourism is a profession that gives you the opportunity to grow professionally and get promotions" declines more gradually. First year students tend to be more positive, second- and third-year students a bit less, and fourth year students are the most prone to have the worst perception of the industry. Hence, it is evident that as they progress through their studies their perception of the industry decreases. Contrarily, as "Tourism Jobs Are Stressful and Exhausting." is a negative statement, the mean increases as students advance in their career.

The p-value (0,008) highlights the significant difference between the means of "Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good."

Table 22: Comparison between Year of study and some perceptions

Year of study	First year		Second year		Third year		Fourth year		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Working in Tourism is a prestigious and respected vocation in society.	2,76	21	2,61	23	2,64	25	2,25	53	2,48	122
Tourism offers a stable job.	2,95	21	2,73	22	2,28	25	2,34	53	2,5	121

Tourism Jobs Are Stressful and Exhausting.	3,24	21	3,3	23	3,44	25	3,74	53	3,51	122
Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good.	2,81*	21	2,48*	23	2,4*	25	2,02*	53	2,32	122
The work environment in Tourism is pleasant.	4	21	3,61	23	3,76	25	3,4	53	3,61	122
Tourism is a profession that gives you the opportunity to grow professionally and get promotions.	4	21	3,83	23	3,68	25	3,43	53	3,66	122

*P-value <0,05

Table 23 indicates that students with work and internship experience, have a worse perception of the industry than those without any kind of experience.

The perceptions which have significance at the population level are "Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good" (p-value=0,02), "The degree in Tourism presents intellectual challenges" (p-value=0,017), "It is possible to combine the profession of Tourism with family life (motherhood / fatherhood)" (p-value=0,030), and "There is no need to study a university degree to work in Tourism" (p-value=0,001).

Concerning "The degree in Tourism presented intellectual challenges", participants who did internships didn't agree ($\bar{x}$=2,13). Students who did both internships and work had a mean value of 2,92. Students with work experience were less positive ($\bar{x}$=3,55). Students without any kind of experience agreed with this statement with a mean value of 3,70.

Referring to the statement "It is possible to combine the profession of Tourism with family life (motherhood / fatherhood)", students who did internships didn't agree much. Those who worked were a bit more positive ($\bar{x}$=3,02), as well as those who did both ($\bar{x}$=3,12). The more optimistic were those who did none ($\bar{x}$=3,57).

For the statement "Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good", students who made internships and worked pretty disagreed ($\bar{x}$=1,88). People who did work ($\bar{x}$=2,23) and internship ($\bar{x}$=2,25), didn't agree as well. Those who had no experience had the highest mean value with 2,72.

With reference to "There is no need to study a university degree to work in Tourism", students who did internships didn't agree much with this statement ($\bar{x}$=2,87), as well as Students without any experience ($\bar{x}$=2,98). Instead, those who had work experience ($\bar{x}$=4,02) or both ($\bar{x}$=4,08) did agree.

On the contrary, "Tourism Jobs Are Stressful and Exhausting" presents an increasing mean. Those who didn't have any experience agreed the least with this statement ($\bar{x}$=3,24). Those who worked agreed a bit more ($\bar{x}$=3,63), followed by students who had internship and work experience ($\bar{x}$=3,73). Finally, those who had only done internships agreed with a 3,88 mean. As the previous statement, a more positive perception meant a lower mean value.

Table 23: Comparison between professional experience and some perceptions

Do you have professional experience in the tourism sector?	None		Internship		Work		Internship and work		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Working in Tourism is a prestigious and respected vocation in society.	2,65	46	2,00	8	2,55	40	2,35	26	2,51	120
Tourism offers a stable job.	2,72	46	2,38	8	2,26	39	2,58	26	2,51	119
Tourism Jobs Are Stressful and Exhausting.	3,24	46	3,88	8	3,63	40	3,73	26	3,52	120
Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good.	2,72*	46	2,25*	8	2,23*	40	1,88*	26	2,34	120
The work environment in Tourism is pleasant.	3,63	46	4,25	8	3,70	40	3,31	26	3,63	120
Tourism is a profession that gives you the opportunity to grow professionally and get promotions.	3,78	46	3,88	8	3,70	40	3,35	26	3,67	120
The degree in Tourism presents intellectual challenges.	3,70*	46	2,13*	8	3,55*	40	2,92*	26	3,44*	120
It is possible to combine the profession of Tourism with family life (motherhood / fatherhood).	3,57*	46	2,63*	8	3,02*	40	3,12*	26	3,23	120
There is no need to study a university degree to work in Tourism	2,98*	45	2,87*	8	4,02*	40	4,08*	26	3,63	119

Source: Survey results

*P-value<0,05

A comparison between students' willingness to continue in the sector and "Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good" was undertaken through Pearson's correlation. This correlation turned out to be 0,296 (p-value<0,05), which is positive. Students who would continue thought that considering the workload and hours worked, the salary was good, and the people who would not continue thought that the salary was not good.

6.3 Willingness to continue in tourism

Table 24 shows the connection of students' year of study and their willingness to continue working in Tourism ("1" Definitely Not, "2" Probably Not, "3" I don't know, "4" Probably Yes, "5" Definitely Yes). The only slight difference found was in the means of each year. Fourth year students are less likely to continue working in the industry than first, second- and third-year students. The p-value is too high to consider this a significant difference at the population level.

Table 24: Comparison between students' willingness to continue in the industry and their year of study

Do you plan to work in the tourism sector after graduating? Year of study	Mean	N	Sd	P-value
First year	3,95	21	1,244	0,567
Second year	4,13	23	,920	
Third year	3,96	25	,841	
Fourth year	3,77	53	1,086	
Total	3,91	122	1,037	

Source: Survey results

Table 25 contrasts students' willingness to continue working in Tourism and their professional experience. Students that had undertaken internships were the most likely to continue in the industry ($\bar{x}$=4,25), followed by those who had work experience ($\bar{x}$=4,03). Next were those with no experience at all ($\bar{x}$=3,91) and finally, those with both internship and work experience were the less likely to continue working in the industry. The p-value is bigger than 0,05, which means there is no significance.

Table 25: Comparison between students' willingness to continue in the sector and their professional experience

Do you plan to work in the tourism sector after graduating? Do you have professional experience in the tourism sector?	Mean	N	Sd	P-value
Neither Internship nor work experience	3,91	46	,962	O,621
Internship	4,25	8	,707	
Work	4,03	40	1,165	
Internship and work	3,77	26	,951	
Total	3,94	120	1,015	

Source: Survey results

The table below studies the relation between students' willingness to continue working in Tourism and their willingness to do a master's or postgraduate degree after graduating. Students who wanted to do a master's or postgraduate degree upon graduation or undecided were a bit more likely to continue in the Tourism industry than those who didn't want to. However, the p-value points out that this difference between means is not significant.

Table 26: Comparison between students' willingness to continue in the sector and their willingness to do a master's or postgraduate degree upon graduation

Do you plan to work in the tourism sector after graduating? Would you like to do a master's or postgraduate degree upon graduation?	Mean	N	Sd	P-value
No	3,63	19	1,212	0,361
Yes	3,92	76	1,004	
I don't know	4,07	27	,997	
Total	3,91	122	1,037	

Source: Survey results

6.4 Summary of results

To sum up, there has been found that some factors may influence students' career satisfaction, perceptions of the industry and willingness to continue working in Tourism.

A factor which has been found to be noteworthy is the year of study. First year students were the most satisfied with their career choice, unlike third- and fourth-year students. This is added to the fact that as they work more years, their perception of the sector gets worse. Thus, first year students seem to be more optimistic, second year students a less so, and so on until fourth year students, whose perceptions are the lowest. An example of this is that the statement Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good" has a different level of agreement between grades according to what has been said above. With reference to this statement, students who would continue working in Tourism agreed with it and those who prefer to change paths consider that they don't get enough paid. Moreover, first, second- and third-year students are more likely to continue in the sector than fourth year students.

Another determinant factor of students' perceptions is their prior experience in the industry. Students with work and internship experience have a worse perception of the industry than those without any kind of experience. At the same time, students who had done both Internship and Work were less satisfied with their career choice than those who didn't have any kind of

experience. The most satisfied with their career choice were those who did internship and the least were the ones who worked.

The subsector in which they worked also plays a key role in their perception of the sector. The most positive image was from students who worked in intermediation, accommodation, and events. The worst image was from students that worked in catering, transport, activities and tourism products.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

Walmsley et al. (2020) found that respondents were as undecided about their careers as were decided and that many of them weren't clear about their occupational choices. This matches with the fact that the highest percentage of the survey respondents were undecided about their career choice satisfaction. Between a scale of 1(Not at all satisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied), 3,17 was the resulting average of career choice satisfaction. In addition, 16,4 of surveyed were undecided about continuing to work in tourism upon graduation and 22,1% were not sure neither whether to do a master degree or not. Tsai et al. (2017) highlight that usually people who are insecure about their own aptitudes, interests, goals and what types of jobs suit them may lack of self-confidence or decision-making skills, causing them to feel anxious about their career undecidedness or disorganized.

Among students most contributing factors when choosing to work in Tourism or a Tourism company are social prestige, good salary, advancement potential, travel, job security, working conditions, type of work, enjoyability of the job, work environment. However, Amissah et al, 2019 revealed that most students didn't believe they would actually find these factors in a career in tourism, leading to disappointment, low job satisfaction and high turnover intentions.

In general, the participants of this study (the overall mean value was 3,15 out of 5) have neither a positive nor negative perception about their career. It has been proven that as they work more years, their perception of the sector gets worse.

Another important factor is work experience. Students who undertake internships create a more realistic view of the industry and gain skills that help them in their professional future. A great number of students of Universitat de Girona (20,7% in 2020) obtain employment through their internship (AQU, 2020). Research shows that interns who are given graduate positions in the company where they did their internship manifest greater job satisfaction and more realistic expectations (Hiltebeitel et al. 2000).

Our study shows that they were the most likely to continue in the industry ($\bar{x}$=4,25) and the most satisfied in terms of their career choice ($\bar{x}$=3,71), work environment ($\bar{x}$=4,25) and promotions ($\bar{x}$=3,88).

However not all students are satisfied with their internship experience. For some, their prior expectations exceed their perceptions upon finishing the internship. (Lam and Ching 2007; Singh and Dutta 2010.; Cho 2006.)

However, we found that concerning the statement "The degree in Tourism presented intellectual challenges", participants who did internships disagreed the most. A study made by Universidad de Juan Carlos (Madrid) in 2013, exposed that the activities less valued in the students' internships were the ones related to repetitive and monotonous tasks. This makes us think that some students are given boring and insignificant tasks which decreases commitment and motivation.

It is thus important that students are given meaningful tasks and an opportunity to train in various departments or sectors of the business. (Richardson 2004). Moreover, for the statements "Considering the workload and hours worked, the salary is good" ($\bar{x}$=2,25) and "Tourism Jobs Are Stressful and Exhausting" ($\bar{x}$=3,88) students who did internship also held the worst perceptions.

Referring to the statements "It is possible to combine the profession of Tourism with family life (motherhood / fatherhood" and "There is no need to study a university degree to work in Tourism", students who did internships didn't agree much.

Unfortunately, West and Jameson (1990) claim the more exposure hospitality students have to the industry, the less commitment they show and Domonte and Vaden (1987) prove that work experience was the factor that had the greatest influence on career decisions. Nevertheless, the majority of students who did work in Tourism were likely to continue in Tourism ($\bar{x}$=4,03).

Year of study has also been linked to negative perceptions of a career in tourism. As they work more years, their perception of the sector gets worse, first graders being the most optimistic and fourth graders having the lowest perceptions. First-year students had a perception that salary was higher than it actually was. A large number of people (45,9%) felt that their expectations were higher than the job reality.

It was noticed that there was a high level of interest in reaching management positions such as hotel manager (14,8%), which according to Harkison (2004), requires a degree qualification. Purcell and Quinn (1995) exhibit that former students were concerned about not being given enough opportunities to develop their managerial skills.

Unlike respondents of gen y study, other reports show that respondents were not realistic concerning the expectations of entry-positions they could get since they are not willing to start in low-paying jobs and work many years in order to get promoted (Zhang & Gu, 2000; Zou et al., 2002). Those with already experience tended to be more demanding in terms of salaries (Ng et al., 2010). Schoffstall et al. 2017. Students in our case study thought that considering the

workload and hours worked, the salary was not good.Wen et al.'s (2019) findings showed "compensation, benefits, and promotion opportunities in the hospitality industry were below students' expectations but they still wanted to work in the hospitality industry after graduation. Unlike in Wen et al.'s study, our results reveal that those students who didn't think the salary was good were not likely to continue working in Tourism. The current average of UdG graduates' gross salary is 1,676 euros (AQU, 2020).

One out of four students that didn't see Tourism as a promising career, decided to leave the industry and pursue other paths. Those who wanted to stay in the sector wanted to work in Accommodation, Events and MICE sector, Tourism Management and Planning, and Sales and Marketing. 19,4% wanted to start their own business, which matches the point that Generation Y students are entrepreneurial.

Likewise, 62,3% of participants wanted to continue studying doing a Master or postgraduate degree, preferably in Tourism.

Job mobility has been proven to be important for career advancement and a common strategy for getting promotion and better opportunities. 82,8% of students in our study were sure that they were willing to work abroad.

As accentuated by some authors, family members influence students career decisions. In our study, findings show a little difference of career choice satisfaction between those who had family or friends working in the sector (higher satisfaction level) and those who didn't have.

To sum up, we find that from the results obtained in the study and the literature review researched, we can conclude that some areas are in need of improvement. Studying students' perceptions and career goals can help predict whether they plan to work in tourism and what factors influence their perceptions in a good or bad way, and some gaps regarding recruitment, expectations, perceptions and image, etc.

7.2 Implications

Zopiatis and Constanti (2007), as cited in Le et al. (2018) noted five gaps in the tourism industry and expressed the importance of examining these gaps from all perspectives (hospitality industry, students and educators). The UWTO (2004) supports this by pointing out "a competitive education system must respond to the needs and expectations of those involved, including industry employers, students, and educational providers".

According to AQU (2020), graduates gave the theoretical training received a 5.7 and the practical training a 5.3. As for the usefulness of the training for the job they are currently at, the theory received a 4.1 and the practice a 4.5. With regard to the structure of the curriculum, 64,7% were satisfied. With regard to satisfaction with the studies completed in Universitat de Girona, only 45.1% would return to pursue the same studies.

Understanding all these factors, educators can adjust their curriculum and guidance in order to fit better with students' demands, provide them with realistic and effective courses and inform and counsel students better of the employment opportunities (types of careers, promotion opportunities, pay levels, etc.) upon graduation at an early stage so as to avoid a high dropout rate. Educators must also expose them earlier to real-life industry experiences in their curriculum. As Raybould & Wilkins (2005", p. 211) as cited in Wang and Huang (2014 said, "students are over qualified but under experienced for even entry-level management positions".

It is also recommended that in order to decrease students' motivation and satisfaction with internships, academic mentors monitor effectively students' progress. The company mentor, for its part, should also consider providing a quality training and monitoring to the intern. This shouldn't only apply to internship programs, but also in workplaces. Mentoring programs are a guidance method for junior employees trying to reach higher level positions. The mentor is responsible for providing assistance to the mentee in all stages of their professional career and upward mobility, helping them cope with difficult situations. Mentoring is said to increase job satisfaction and motivation, reduce frustration and staff turnover. As one of the main limitations for career development is not having access to a mentor, employers should ensure that every new employee is adjudicated a higher-ranking worker.

Employers, with the information provided, must be able to better attract and retain quality employers. Needless to say, the industry shall work in offering the factors that students find important for entering a job position.

Therefore, the hospitality industry and education providers should work side by side for guaranteeing that the labour supply matches labour demand.

Students play an important role in this research, and after the findings, from now on, they can benefit from learning and better understanding the work reality and working conditions. They need to use employment consultation resources and also continue learning and gaining skills to meet the labour market requirements.

A recent study of AQU (2019), says that speaking languages is the most valued factor employers take into account when hiring employees. They state that Tourism is one of the sectors with the most problems with hiring due to lack of skills, non-acceptance of the type of working day and salary, non-availability of geographical mobility, lack of graduates in a specific field, etc.

The companies consider that the degree should improve the skills of problem solving, decision making, ability to work in intense and complex situations, and languages. The competences that will acquire more importance are the ones related to technology. The most important occupations for the future will be customer service.

In a seminar made by Universitat de Girona, employers explained that students lack of commitment to the company, given the job mobility they experienced. Customer service, communication skills, conflict resolution, knowledge of the territory, teamwork, leadership, creativity are a few of the competences they need from students. They also expressed that some areas of improvement are passion, work more by goals and not so much by schedule, proactive attitude, etc.

Some recommendations made by professionals were to lengthen internships and made them compulsory since first grade. They also suggested that students specialized in some field, as their skills are too general. The fact that students lack of will to work and work experience worries professionals. Besides, they are concerned about them having unrealistic and high work expectations. The reality is that they must work hard and on weekends or nights. Employers are aware that students backtrack when they see this, but they make clear that who has vocation will not care about this.

Consequently, our advice for students is to continue studying languages, specialize in the field they like the most, do more voluntary internships in order to gain more experience and skills and finally be prepared to work night-shifts, weekends and whenever it is required without a big reward. In short, get more involved. Educators can also use this information to better prepare

students "mentally" and "practically" for the employment reality, for instance, by doing orientation sessions since the beginning of the degree.

There are so many questions that still need to be answered. It is very clear that further research needs to be done, especially given the importance of this sector in our country and the little investigation undertaken of this topic.

This study has also some limitations. It only applies to one institution and in the future, it would be interesting to conduct more studies in more education institutions in order to compare Tourism students' career goals and perceptions among institutions and locations. For this reason, the results found in this research cannot be generalized to other populations. Sample size, in normal circumstances, could have been larger, however with COVID-19 pandemic it was difficult to do the survey in person, which provide higher response rates.

Therefore, future studies shall use larger samples. In order to know the evolution of tourism students over the years, it could also be interesting to include graduates into the sample (for example 1 or 3 years upon graduation).

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9. APPENDIX

Informació general

1. Gènere

○ Masculí

○ Femení

○ Otro: _____

2. Any d'estudi

○ 1er any

○ 2n any

○ 3er any

○ 4rt any

3. Per què vas escollir turisme?

☐ Sortides laborals

☐ No vaig entrar al grau que tenia com a primera opció

☐ Aprendre noves llengües i cultures

☐ Oportunitat per treballar a l'estranger

☐ Oportunitat de viatjar

☐ Creixement d'aquest sector

☐ Vaig ser aconsellat pels meus amics i familiars

☐ Facilitat d'estudi del grau

☐ Otro: _____

4. En quin grau estàs satisfet d'haver escollit el grau en Turisme?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Gens satisfet	○	○	○	○	○	Molt satisfet

5. Tens amics o familiars treballant en el sector turístic?

○ Sí

○ No

6. Actualment...

○ Només estudio Turisme

○ Estudio Turisme i treballo en Turisme

○ Estudio Turisme i treballo en un altre sector

7. Tens experiència professional en el sector turístic?

○ Pràctiques

○ Treball

○ Pràctiques i treball

○ Ni pràctiques ni Treball. PASSA A LA SEGÜENT SECCIÓ (PERCEPCIONS DEL GRAU)

8. En cas que tinguis experiència professional en turisme, durant quant de temps has estat treballant en turisme?

○ Menys de 6 mesos

○ Entre 6 mesos i 1 any

○ Entre 1 i 2 anys

○ Entre 2 i 5 anys

○ Més de 5 anys

9. En cas que tinguis experiència professional en turisme, en quin subsector en Turisme has treballat principalment?

| Elige ▼ |

10. En el cas que tinguis experiència professional en turisme, com ha influït en la teva percepció del sector turístic?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Molt negativament	○	○	○	○	○	Molt positivament

11. En el cas que tinguis experiència professional en turisme, com qualificaries la relació expectatives-realitat

○ Les meves expectatives eren més altes que la realitat laboral del sector turístic

○ Les meves expectatives han igualat la realitat laboral del sector turístic

○ La realitat laboral ha superat les meves expectatives del sector turístic

Percepcions del grau

12. Indica el teu nivell d'acord o desacord de cada enunciat, essent 1 "Totalment en desacord" i 5 "Totalment d'acord"

	Totalment en desacord (1)	En desacord (2)	Ni en desacord ni d'acord (3)	D'acord (4)	Totalment d'acord (5)
Em mostro orgullós/a d'haver triat el grau en Turisme enfront de familiars i amics.	○	○	○	○	○
Treballar en Turisme és una vocació prestigiosa i respectada en la societat.	○	○	○	○	○
El grau en Turisme presenta reptes intel·lectuals.	○	○	○	○	○
És possible combinar la professió de Turisme amb la vida familiar (maternitat / paternitat)	○	○	○	○	○

El turisme m'ofereix una feina estable.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Els Treballs en turisme són estressants i esgotadors	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Hi ha discriminació de gènere en l'àmbit laboral del turisme.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
No és necessari estudiar un grau universitari per treballar en Turisme	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Considerant la càrrega de treball i les hores treballades, el salari és bo.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
El Turisme és una professió que et dóna l'oportunitat de créixer laboralment i obtenir promocions	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
L'ambient de treball en Turisme és agradable.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Objectius professionals

13. Estaries disposat/da a treballar fora del teu país?

○ Sí

○ No

○ No ho sé

14. T'agradaria realitzar un màster o postgrau en acabar el grau?

○ Sí

○ No

○ No ho sé

15. Si la resposta anterior és "Sí", en quin àmbit voldries especialitzar-te?

○ Turisme (Direcció i Planificació de Turisme, Turisme Cultural, Turisme Sostenible)

○ Organització d'esdeveniments

○ Màrqueting

○ Gestió Hotelera

○ Otro: _____

16. Preveus treballar en el sector turístic després de graduar-te?

○ Definitivament sí

○ És probable que sí

○ No ho sé

○ És probable que no

○ Definitivament no