

Insertion of Tourism Graduates in the Brazilian Job Market¹

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Abstract

The tourist activity has always been present in the speech of managers and government leaders as an important ally to national economic development due to its capacity to generate employment. However, despite the growing demand for tourism and the consequent incentive to training programs in the area, tourism graduates have struggled entering the job market. The imbalance between supply and demand of skilled labor, employers' lack of knowledge of what a tourism program is, and higher education misaligned with the needs of tourism businesses are examples of problems that shaped the evolution of tourism in Brazil. Given these problems, this study aims to investigate the insertion of Brazilian tourism graduates in the job market. A quantitative study through an online survey was conducted and resulted in 322 complete questionnaires from respondents from different regions of Brazil. The respondents' profile is mainly composed of females, aged between 20 and 30 years, with an undergraduate degree and English and/or Spanish fluency. The main areas of the investigated tourism graduates are teaching and working in travel agencies, and the monthly wage of the majority is about one to three minimum wages (approximately US\$295 to US\$885 in October 2017). The respondents consider higher education in tourism as important or very important for professional practice and they see their professional position as either satisfactory or partially satisfactory.

Abstract: Tourism graduates; Labour market; Absorption; Brazil.

Resumo

Inserção dos Turismólogos Brasileiros no Mercado de Trabalho

Pela elevada capacidade de gerar empregos, o turismo esteve sempre presente no discurso governamental como vetor de desenvolvimento econômico no país. Entretanto, apesar da crescente demanda turística e do consequente incentivo aos programas de formação profissional para a atividade turística, os turismólogos enfrentam dificuldades em inserir-se no mercado de trabalho. O desequilíbrio entre oferta e demanda de mão de obra qualificada, o desconhecimento dos empregadores

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sobre em que consiste um curso superior em turismo e a formação superior desalinhada com as necessidades das empresas turísticas são alguns dos problemas que marcam o cenário do turismo no Brasil. Diante dessa problemática, o presente estudo investigou a inserção dos turismólogos formados no Brasil no mercado de trabalho por meio de uma *survey* on-line com 322 respondentes de diversas regiões do país. Os respondentes, predominantemente, do gênero feminino, com idade entre 20 e 30 anos, nível de graduação e domínio de inglês ou espanhol, atuam, principalmente, na docência e agenciamento de viagens e recebem uma remuneração mensal de um a três salários mínimos. Os pesquisados qualificam o curso superior de turismo como importante ou muito importante para a prática profissional e se consideram satisfeitos ou pouco satisfeitos com sua atuação no mercado de trabalho.

Palavras-chave: Bacharéis em turismo; Mercado de trabalho; Absorção; Brasil.

Resumen

Inserción de los turismólogos en el mercado de trabajo brasileño

Por su gran capacidad de generar puestos de trabajo, la actividad turística siempre estuvo presente en el discurso de los gerentes y líderes del poder público como un importante aliado para el desarrollo económico en el país. Sin embargo, a pesar de la creciente demanda de turismo y el consiguiente fomento de programas de formación profesional para el área, los turismólogos han enfrentado dificultades en relación con su inserción en el mercado laboral. El desequilibrio entre la oferta y la demanda de mano de obra especializada, y la educación superior distante de las necesidades de las empresas turísticas son los problemas que marcan el escenario del turismo en Brasil. Ante este problema, el presente estudio se propuso investigar la inserción de turismólogos formados en Brasil en el mercado laboral. Para tanto, se llevó a cabo una encuesta electrónica donde se obtuvo una muestra de 322 participantes de diversas regiones del país. Los encuestados, en su mayoría mujeres entre 20 y 30 años de edad, poseen el nivel de grado y dominio de inglés y/o español, actúan, principalmente, en los segmentos de enseñanza y agencia de viajes, reciben un pago mensual entre uno y tres sueldos mínimos, califican el curso superior de turismo como muy importante o importante para la práctica profesional y se consideran satisfechos o algo satisfechos con su desempeño en el mercado laboral.

Palabras clave: Licenciados en turismo; Mercado de trabajo; Absorción; Brasil.

INTRODUCTION

The tourist activity has always been present in the governmental speech as an important ally to promote the development of a country. In economic and social terms, the importance of tourism is increasingly recognized for its impact on the balance of payments, currency generation, job creation, multiplier effect, income distribution and on the improvement of daily living conditions of the receiving communities.

Compared with other capital-intensive economic sectors, tourism is highly intense in workforce and has a high capacity to generate jobs at different levels of qualification (Ladkin, 2008; Matias & Costa, 2010; International Labour Organization [ILO], 2011). In 2016, tourism generated 292 million jobs, corresponding to one in every 10 jobs in the global economy (World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], 2017).

In Brazil, from 2003 to 2009, the number of occupations in Atividades Características do Turismo (ACT – Tourism Characteristic Activities) was responsible for 9.9% of the services sector and 6.1% of the entire economy of the country, being recreational, cultural and sporting activities, and food services the main responsible for this growth (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics [IBGE], 2012). In 2016, tourism contributed to 8.4 million of direct, indirect, and induced jobs, mainly in the accommodation, transportation, and travel agency sectors (WTTC, 2017).

The recognition of the great potential of generating tourism jobs and the necessity for qualified workforce to work in the tourist activity have legitimized and influenced the training of professionals in the area (Sogayar & Rejowski, 2011), leading Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to create higher education courses in tourism. In Brazil, in addition to the global context of tourism activity development, the country's political, economic and social conditions (such as government incentives, the “economic miracle” and the middle-class growth) have led to the emergence of these courses, initially offered by private HEIs.

Ansarah (2002) divides the chronology of the Brazilian's tourism higher education courses in four phases. The first one is characterized by the advent of the first courses in the decade of 1970; the second by the stagnation of the courses due to the economic problems of the country in the 1980s; the third by the valorization and great expansion of the courses in the 1990s, and the fourth and last by the balance between quality and quantity, through the increase of different offers in areas such as events and leisure since 2000. A decade after the publication of Ansarah's (2002) study, Leal, Panosso Netto and Trigo (2012) expanded and updated the chronology of the tourism higher education courses in Brazil, suggesting a fifth phase, characterized by the internationalization of studies and courses in the area.

Between the fourth and fifth stages of development, more specifically in the second half of the decade of 2000, the tourism higher education courses in Brazil faced challenges, exemplified by the reduction in the number of students and the closure of some courses in private institutions. These challenges reflected on the survival problems of the courses or accommodations in the market, such as those listed by Carvalho (2008), and may also be related to problems of workforce absorption by the job market, according to Silveira, Medaglia and Gândara (2012, p. 11).

After almost five decades of tourism undergraduate courses, Associação Brasileira de Turismólogos e Profissionais do Turismo (Brazilian Association of Tourism Professionals – ABBTUR, 2013) estimates about 200,000 tourism graduates in the country, of which 58.5% work in the tourism field. In other words, almost half of the tourism graduates work in areas other than tourism. These data corroborate discussions in scientific tourism events that evidence the challenges faced by tourism graduates in their insertion in job market. Barretto, Tamanini and Silva (2004) found that professionals graduated from the Universidade do Vale do Itajaí (Univali) were not absorbed by the tourist market. Comparing with international data in Spain, 51.7% of the professionals with a tourism degree work in the tourist field while 20.8% work in another economic activity (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación, 2005). However, in Australia

only 5% and in the UK only 10% of the positions were occupied by tourism graduates (Barretto et al., 2004).

Studies on the absorption of tourism graduates by the job market indicate several factors that may be related to this problem, such as the characteristics of the job market, the imbalance between supply and demand of qualified workforce, professional education in line with the needs of tourism companies (Arbache, 2001; Barretto et al., 2004; Fonseca & Petit, 2002; Lima & Silva, 2007; Silveira et al., 2012; Sogayar & Rejowski, 2011).

Due to the amount of professionals in the market, resulted from the explosion of tourism courses, a profession that was practically unknown became massified and the number of professionals in the market became greater than the amount of positions offered, causing many graduates to work in operational positions, which little require their education in college and that devalue these professionals with wages that are incompatible with their expectations (Silveira et al., 2012; Sogayar & Rejowski, 2011).

Another aspect is the lack of adequacy of tourism education to the needs of the tourism sector. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) recommends that tourism education and training should contribute to the competitiveness of the sector and, therefore, should really respond to the needs of the human capital of tourism organizations. However, according to Ansarah (2002), the pedagogical proposal of most of higher education courses seems inadequate, training professionals who will not meet the real market needs. Kong (2015) indicates that employers complain that graduates in tourism and hospitality are not well prepared and lack knowledge, skills and attitudes required by the tourism market. A dilemma that requires coordination between the curriculum of the courses and the market needs (Kong, 2015).

Considering that tourism qualification and the inclusion of these professionals in the job market are primordial factors for the structured development of the tourism activity (Mota & Anjos, 2012), this study sought to analyze the performance of tourism professionals graduated in Brazil, identifying their occupation areas, profile, monthly remuneration and satisfaction regarding their performance in the job market.

TOURISM JOB MARKET IN BRAZIL

Tourism is characterized by the range and diversity of possibilities in the professional activity. The tourism market consists of many organizations, such as accommodation facilities, travel agencies, tour operators, airlines, tour companies, event organizers, restaurants, entertainment and leisure companies, handicraft trade, among others, that participate in the elaboration, organization, and commercialization of tourism products. In addition to sale and provision of services, trade associations and official agencies that plan, finance, and regulate the tourism activity are also job providers.

All these organizations form the tourism job market, which includes paid positions to work in some of the tourist activities. This market shows similar characteristics in several countries, such as high percentage of temporary workers, low presence of women in positions of greater responsibility, strong presence

of young people with low qualification, low remuneration and extensive weekly workload (Barretto et al., 2004).

The working conditions in the tourist activity, as Costa indicates (2008, p. 120), follow the prevailing tendency in the world of work, with specificities of the sector. Due to the seasonality inherent to the tourist activity, a high percentage of workers have part-time, temporary, sporadic, and occasional jobs (Barretto et al., 2004; Coelho & Sakowski, 2014; Cunha, 1997; UNWTO, 1997). The offer of employment in tourism generally falls within the modalities of full-time, part-time, temporary, occasional, and seasonal work and often crosses the tenuous boundaries between informal and formal economy (ILO, 2011).

Most of the employees in tourism have low education level (Coelho & Sakowski, 2014; Fonseca & Petit, 2002) and low qualification, often coming from other economic sectors without any specific education in tourism (UNWTO, 1997). In Brazil, data seem to confirm this scenario. The education of employees in tourism is lower than the average of the Brazilian economy; only 7% of the formal tourism employees in Brazil have higher education level, 34% have basic education level, while the others have secondary education level or some higher education level, but no degree (Coelho & Sakowski, 2014). According to Oganauskas, Gomes and Andrukiu (2012), the tourism area is one of the few that enables professional insertion of poorly trained people in the market, which could be, to some extent, even an advantage for the local economy.

Regarding remuneration and work hours, the job market in tourism is characterized by low wages (Fonseca & Petit, 2002) and a higher number of weekly hours of work (UNWTO, 1997). In Brazil, 67% of the formal tourism employees receive up to two minimum wages per month, less than other sectors and the average of the economy (Coelho & Sakowski, 2014). An online survey conducted with 215 tourism professionals graduated in Curitiba (PR, Brazil) indicated that most employees receive from 1 to 3 minimum wages per month (Silveira & Medaglia, 2010).

Working conditions are considered painful and unattractive due to extensive work hours and inadequate schedules (Cunha, 1997). In hotels and restaurants, for example, working conditions are often described as anti-social, with weekend and nighttime expedients, irregular shifts, or work during vacation (ILO, 2011). In Brazil, 89% of the formal tourism employees work more than 40 hours per week, above the average of the economy (Coelho & Sakowski, 2014).

The high turnover rate is another characteristic of the tourism job market (Arbache, 2001; Coelho & Sakowski, 2014; UNWTO, 1997). Tourist activities, in general, are characterized by fluctuation of personnel and by work only as transitional interest (Cunha, 1997). In Brazil, 43% of the formal tourism employees have been employed for less than 12 months, reflecting the high turnover (Coelho & Sakowski, 2014). Moreover, a significant part of tourism employees is at the operational level and only a small portion at the management level (Paiva, 1995).

In a study conducted in João Pessoa (PB), Lima & Silva (2007) showed the demands of the tourist market differ from the education offered by the Bachelor in Tourism courses, since the competencies and skills listed by the tourism trade do not need to be developed in a higher level course. An aggravating factor for this situation is the fact that many tourist products and services are mainly offered by small businesses and entrepreneurs without specific training in tourism that disregard the necessity for professionalism in the area (Sogayar & Rejowski, 2011).

In short, the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2011, p. 4, *free translation*) characterizes the tourism job market by “the predominance of specific jobs to meet last-minute, casual, temporary, seasonal or part-time needs”, which generates “unsafe situations, comparatively low wages (often below the national average), job instability, limited career opportunities, high levels of subcontracting and outsourcing and a high turnover rate”.

Thus, the tourism job market is generally characterized by seasonality, low qualification, low remuneration, extensive work hours, high turnover, as well as by the majority of employers being small businesses, the greater supply of jobs is at the operational level and constant devaluation of the professional with higher education in tourism. As Tomazoni recalls (2007), tourism has a wide production chain and many possibilities of segmentation but suffers from the fragility of job offer, being one of the areas that less value their workforce.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE TOURIST MARKET VS. HIGHER EDUCATION IN TOURISM

The growth of tourism as an economic activity that depends on skilled workforce does not seem to be linked to its valuation and remuneration, since the professionals in the sector are not appropriately absorbed by the job market (Oganauskas et al., 2012). Lima e Silva (2007, p. 13, *free translation*), for example, emphasize that as “most of the tourist market do not know the responsibilities of the tourism graduate, it does not feel the need to have this professional in their organizations”.

In a study in Natal (RN, Brazil), Fornari (2006) found that the competences developed by the tourism higher education courses only partially meet the requirements of the hotel market of Natal, reflecting a very low index of insertion of tourism graduates in the job market in the local hospitality sector. In addition, a high number of hotel managers ignore the professional training developed in tourism higher education. Therefore, a gap separates the training expected by the job market and the training provided by the HEI, as well as between the positions desired by the graduates and those offered by the market.

Tourism encompasses complex and diverse activities. Therefore, the performance in the sector requires multiple educational backgrounds, gathered in the same professional (Ansarah, 2002; Tomazoni, 2007). The market is demanding qualified professionals to work in diversified business relations as well as in the planning and sustainable management of the activity in all its dimensions – economic, environmental, social, cultural and political, as if it were possible to have multiple backgrounds gathered in the same professional (Ansarah, 2002; Tomazoni, 2007).

Being a tourism professional has become a broad concept, since it can define several types of professionals that relate to the area, due to its great coverage. Barretto et al. (2004) question whether the bachelor in tourism might be this “super professional”, someone who could work both as a waiter and a state secretary, and whether it would be really possible to have that much flexibility and versatility. In their opinion, tourism requires different professionals for different functions. Given the tourist activity diversity of components, the tourism courses would be educating people to exercise hundreds of different functions. This multi-capacitation exceeds the human capacity and results in the “formation of generalists with a superficial

notion of the system mechanism and with superficial notions of how to perform some tasks, which does not fulfil the requirements neither to reflect on tourism nor to provide quality services” (Barretto et al., 2004, p. 75, *free translation*).

Based on the premise that a legal competence guaranteed by a diploma may not be a real competence, Barretto et al. (2004) understand that if the diploma holders are qualified to perform certain functions, but do not have the training required to perform them, the jobs will not be fulfilled as expected. Regarding this, Onzi & Botomê (2005) question whether undergraduate courses in tourism are even developing in the students the skills necessary to work in a professional field with such characteristics, problematizing the idea that the investments in professional training directly influence the inclusion of workers in the job market.

According to Yázigi,

The tourism course does not fully sustain itself in many work types, which is why the only professional option in this area should be enabled by graduate courses that offer different possibilities associated to the world of tourism. (2011, p. 425, *free translation*)

Unemployment and divergent reality of the job market, found by the tourism graduates when they complete higher education courses, intensify the discussions about professional training in the area, because they reflect the contradictions faced by professionals in their field.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Initially, a bibliographic research was conducted via books and scientific articles published in Brazil to justify the study problem, and then a documentary research was performed in which ILO, UNWTO, Ministry of Tourism and *Sistema de Informações sobre o Mercado de Trabalho no Setor Turismo* (Information System on the Job market in the Tourism Sector – SIMT²) reports were analyzed, aiming to characterize the tourism job market in Brazil. Subsequently, a field survey was performed, consisting of a quantitative-nature and descriptive-character online survey. The data collection instrument was built on the Google docs platform, with 19 closed and open questions.

To achieve the universe of this research – all the tourism professionals who graduated in the Brazilian territory, about 200,000 in the Abbtur’s (2013) estimate –, we opted to send, electronically, the survey to: a) a network of researchers in tourism (Repetur³), which gathers professionals from all over Brazil, requesting the course coordinators, who are part of it, to forward the survey to their undergraduates; b) communities on *Facebook* that comprise the tourism professionals in the country

2. SIMT was developed by Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (Institute of Applied Economic Research – IPEA), supported by MTUR. It uses data from *Relação Anual de Informações Sociais* (Annual Social Information Report – RAIS) and from *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios* (Brazilian Household Sample Survey – PNAD). SIMT encompasses eight of the 12 activities characteristic of tourism (ACT) listed by the UNWTO (2011): accommodation, travel agencies, road transport, air transport, water transport, transport rental, food and culture, and leisure.
3. Virtual group that was initially named “mailing list” of the Associação Nacional de Pesquisa e Pós-Graduação em Turismo (Brazilian Association of Research and Postgraduate in Tourism – Anptur) whose nomenclature was changed in 12/29/13 to create a discussion group without connection to any entity (repetur@googlegroups.com).

(*Turismólogos and afins; Turismo – Turismólogo – Turismologia; Pesquisadores do turismo no Brasil; Turismólogos por excelência; Vida de Turismólogo; DHT-UFPE; Bacharéis em Turismo – Unifor*); c) circle of authors' contacts.

To maximize the response rate, respondents were asked to send the survey to their contacts, therefore creating a snowball effect⁴. Thus, a non-probability sample of 321 tourism professionals was obtained. In the data treatment, nine cases were excluded⁵; thus, the sample was composed of 312 graduates. The data were tabulated in the SPSS software package and the graphs were generated in Excel. Descriptive statistics was the analysis technique used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained in the study indicated professionals graduated in 90 institutions, 19 public and 71 private institutions. Among the public HEI, 10 are federal universities, one is a federal institute⁶, seven are state universities and one is a municipal university. Among the private HEI, 23 are universities, 11 are university centers and 37 are colleges. A prevalence of professionals graduated in private education institutions is observed, in agreement with the history of the development of higher education in the area.

In terms of geographic location, the five Brazilian regions were included in the sample. The Southeast and Northeast regions gathered a larger number of HEI whose graduates participated in the research, with 38.6% and 37.5%, respectively, followed by the South region (15.9%), North (4.5%) and Central-West (3.4%), with emphasis on the states of São Paulo (18.1%), Pernambuco (14.7%) and Bahia (12.5%). In the study sample, no record shows any tourism professional graduated in the following Brazilian states: AM, RO, RN, MA, PI, TO e MT.

Among the cited HEI, the ones who had the most graduates participating in the study were UFPE (14.4%), Unesp (8.3%), USP (7.7%), Uneb (4.2%), Estácio da Bahia – FIB (3.8%) and Faculdade Joaquim Nabuco (3.5%). The others obtained a percentage lower than 3% and composed the category “others” that totaled 58% of the participants in the study⁷.

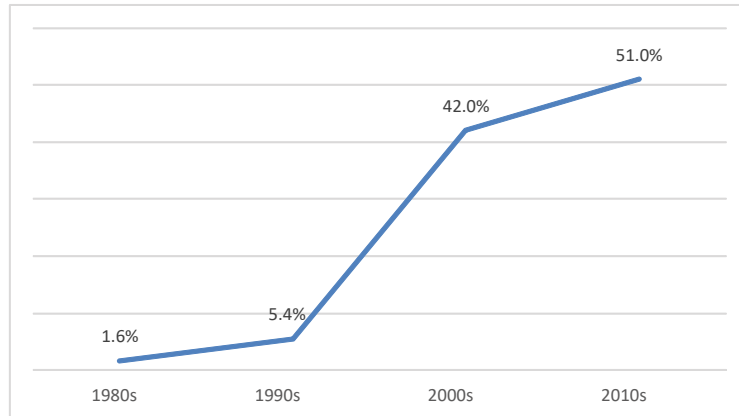
Regarding the year of completion of the bachelor degree in tourism, tourism professionals that graduated from 1980 to 2014 participated in this survey. Only 7% of the respondents graduated until 1999. Figure 1 shows the growth of graduates from the 2000s on. We highlight the year 2013 that obtained a higher percentage of graduates (16.7%), followed by the year 2011 (10.9%) and 2010 (9.6%).

Considering the first tourism courses emerged in the 1970s, this study was able to include some of the first graduates in the country, but most of the sample consisted

4. As the strategy used was the non-probability sample, due to the lack of a database of Brazilian tourism graduates to perform a random drawing, the results of this study cannot be generalized.
5. Cases number 48, 52, 149, 179, 196, 204 and 212 were excluded because they had a bachelor of technology degree (IFAL, IFPE, IFSE and IFGO) and the case 158, for having graduated in Portugal, being therefore out of the profile established by this study, which limited to investigate Tourism graduates in Brazil. Case 273 was excluded because the respondent filled out the survey in duplicate (identical responses in a 1-minute interval).
6. Respondent graduated from IFGO that offers bachelor's degree in tourism.
7. The predominance of respondents from UFPE is justified because it is the HEI from where the study originated.

of professionals graduated from the 2000s, period in which the HEI began to face challenges to maintain the courses and that may be related to the adversities of the market in absorbing such work force (Carvalho, 2008; Silveira et al., 2012). As many students have graduated in this period, it is probable that the job positions offered have not been sufficient, causing the devaluation of the profession.

Figure 1 – Conclusion of Bachelor’s degree in tourism by decade

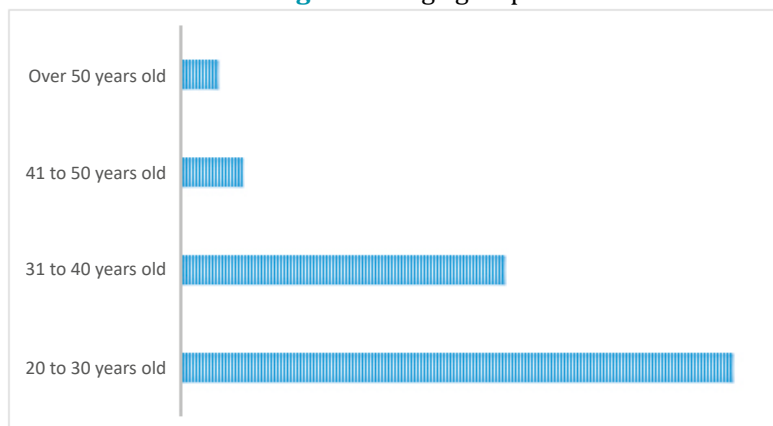


Source – Research data

Regarding gender, the predominance of females was observed, corresponding to 72% of respondents. This data corroborates the Synthesis of the Profile of the Bachelor in Tourism registered at Embratur (Brazilian Tourist Board) in 1999, in which 76.3% were female (Matias, 2002), as well as the study conducted in Curitiba (PR, Brazil) in which 73% of respondents were female (Silveira & Medaglia, 2010). The predominance of women is not only a Brazilian characteristic, since in a survey conducted in Spain (Aneca, 2005) this percentage reached 80%.

Regarding the age group, most of the tourism professionals participating in the study are 20 to 30 years old, representing 61% of the graduates. A considerable percentage of respondents were in the range between 31 and 40 years of age (31%). In other words, the tourism job market in the country is formed by young professionals, as shown in Figure 2. This result corroborates data from the study of Silveira and Medaglia (2010) in Curitiba (PR, Brazil), as well as data from SIMT that indicate that 67% of the formal workers in tourism are 25 to 49 years old (Coelho & Sakowski, 2014).

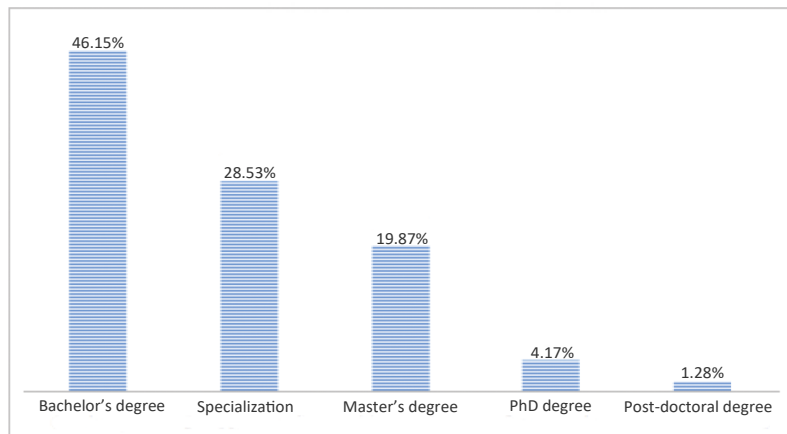
Figure 2 – Age group



Source – Research data

Regarding education, 46% of the respondents have only the bachelor's degree, which indicates that a little more than half of the sample (54%) continued studying at the graduate level (Figure 3), investing in their education. This investment may indicate the professionals' search for specializing according to the market requirements, since the course provides ample and sometimes generalist education. The fact that few tourism professionals have PhD (4.17%) and post-doctorate (1.28%) levels is interesting, since a large part works in teaching, as will be discussed below.

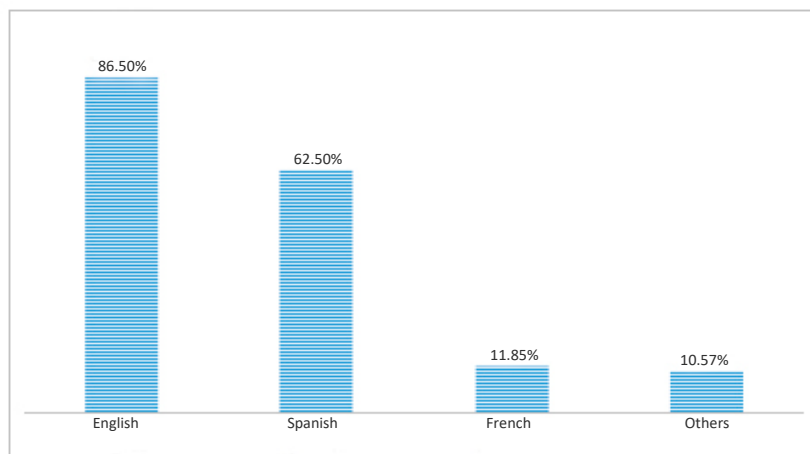
Figure 3 – Current education level



Source – Research data

In relation to knowledge of foreign languages, respondents were asked to indicate those in which they have fluency, advanced or intermediate level. The most common were English (86.5%), Spanish (62.5%) and French (11.85%). With small frequency, other languages (10.57%) were also mentioned: Italian, German, Hungarian, Czech, Romanian, Urdu, Mandarin, Korean, Malay, Arabic and Sign Language. Most respondents speak at least one language and 65.7% speak two languages (Figure 4). These data reinforce the importance of foreign language knowledge for tourism, especially English because it is the commercially adopted language worldwide, and Spanish due to Brazil's geographic location.

Figure 4 – Languages spoken by tourism professionals



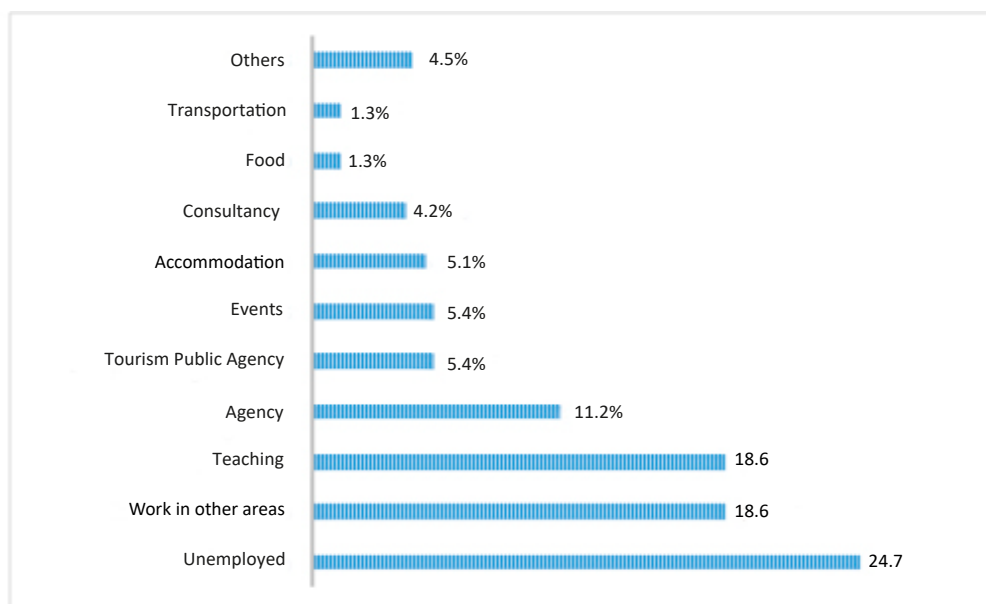
Source – Research data

Concerning experience abroad, 26% of the tourism professionals completed some kind of study in other countries, 19.2% worked outside Brazil and 10.6% had both study and work experiences abroad. This reflects an endogeneity in the professional background, since the minority had study and/or work experience at the international level.

Regarding the professional performance of the tourism professionals, 75.3% of the respondents were working and 24.7% were unemployed at the time of the study. Of those who were active, 54.8% worked in tourism, 19.9% did not work directly with the tourist activity and 25.3% did not respond, which may be an indication of unemployment. These data corroborate the estimate of ABBTUR (2013).

Most of the respondents were in the teaching (18.6%) and travel agency (11.2%) areas, as Figure 5 shows. The “others” option (4.5%) gathered areas of activity that obtained a lower than 1% percentage, comprising entities (trade associations and CVB), cruises, cultural equipment, leisure equipment, tourism guides, tourism-specialized journalism, research, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), family farming and product development.

Figure 5 – Occupation areas

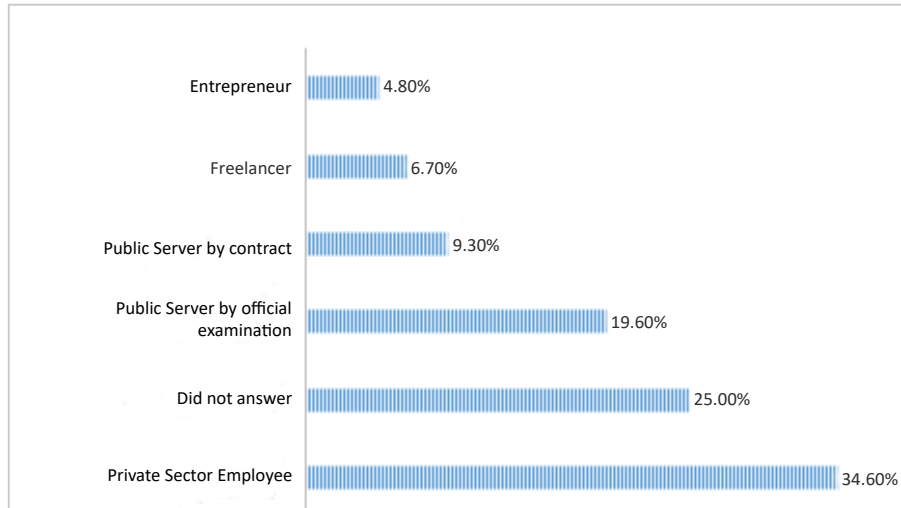


Source – Research data

The results corroborate the profile synthesis of the Bachelor in Tourism registered in Embratur (Matias, 2002) whose main areas are education (21.7%), agency (17.8%) and public tourism agencies (15.6%). Differently, SIMT data indicate food (38.4%), accommodation (26%) and road transport (20.1%) as the activities that most employ in tourism (Coelho, 2011; Coelho & Sakowski, 2014).

Referring to the type of professional relationship, most of the professionals participating in this study are working in the private sector (46%), predominantly as an employee, and the minority as freelancer and entrepreneur. 29% work in the public service, either by contract or by the Brazilian official examination. A considerable percentage (25%) did not answer this question (Figure 6), probably because they are unemployed, as the percentage is close to the 24.7% of unemployed people in the item about occupation areas.

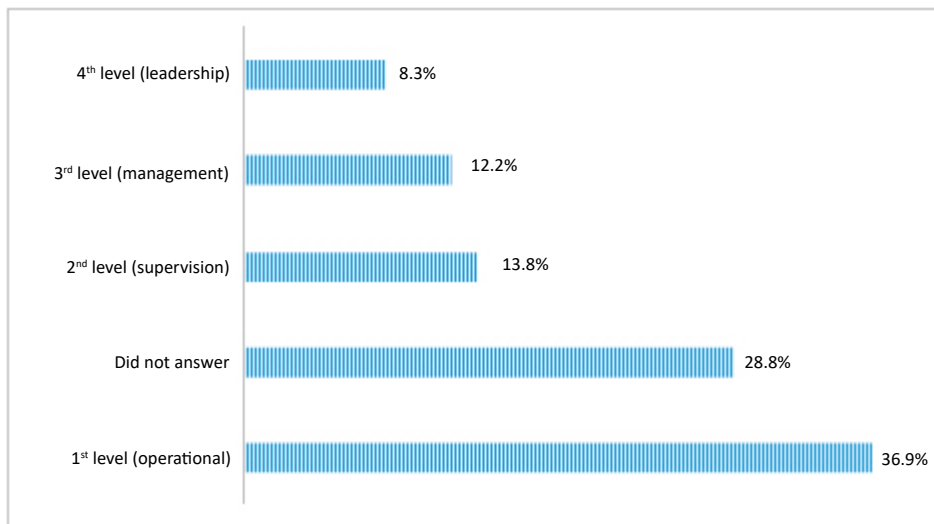
Figure 6 – Professional relationship of tourism professionals



Source – Research data

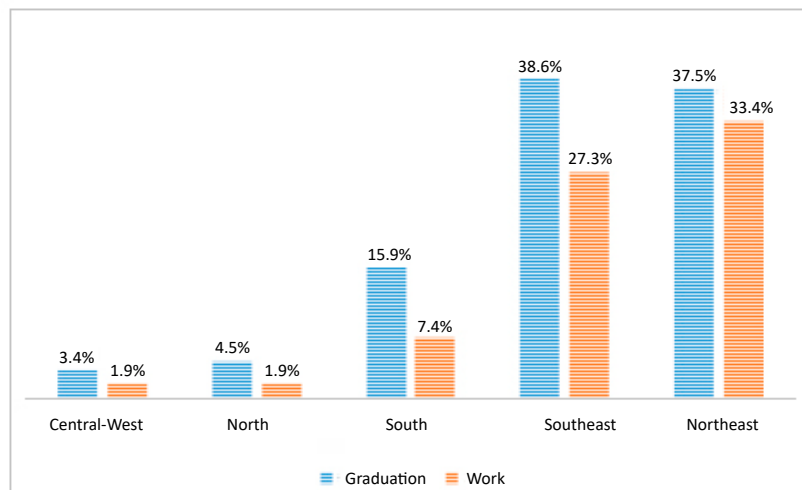
On the position level they occupy, the highest concentration of professionals is in the first level, the operational (36.9%). The levels of supervision and management had similar frequency, 13.8% and 12.2%, respectively. Only 8.3% occupy leadership positions. The fact that 28.8% of respondents left this question blank (Figure 7), similar to the previous topic, drew our attention. These results confirm the discussions found in the literature on the underemployment of the graduates in operational level positions, for which the knowledge acquired during the undergraduate program would be irrelevant.

Figure 7 – Position level



Source – Research data

Almost all tourism professionals graduated in Brazil were working professionally in the country. Only a single record showed one professional working abroad, in Santiago, Chile. Little mobility occurred between regions where tourism professionals graduated and where they work professionally, as shown in Figure 8, in which the first column is the place where they graduated and the second is the place where they are working at the time of the survey.

Figure 8 – Graduation and work regions of tourism professionals

Source – Research data

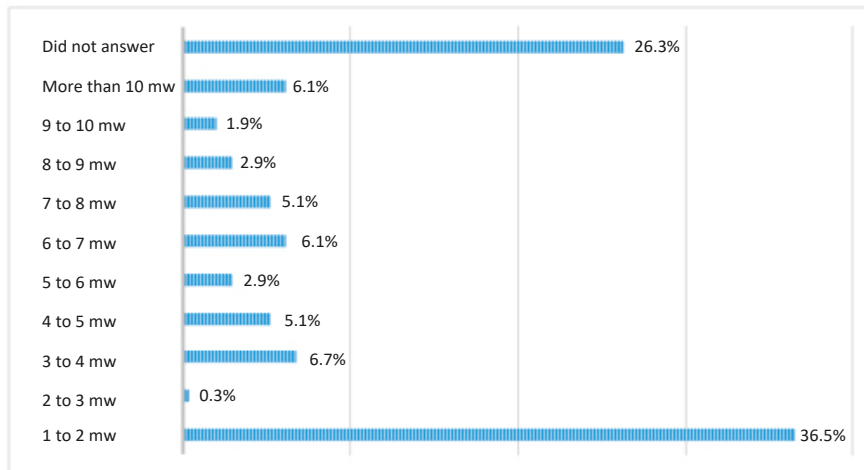
The same situation of low mobility was also noticed at the state level. The three states that stood out in the sample with the highest number of graduated professionals were also the same where the majority work: Pernambuco, São Paulo e Bahia, and less frequently, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul. The same seems to occur at the municipal level. The study conducted by Silveira & Medaglia (2010) in Curitiba (PR, Brazil) revealed that few tourism professionals left the city after graduating. The percentage of graduates from Curitiba that remained in the city after graduation was 89%, which may indicate that these graduation sites manage to keep their professionals, offering them work opportunities.

The work positions occupied by the participants are mostly in capitals (51.1%), probably due to the greater supply of jobs in general and offer of courses. The minority works in inland cities (21.2%), which may be related to coast or country towns, in which jobs in tourism are often offered. Again, it is worth emphasizing the percentage of non-responses to the question of workplace (27.7%).

Regarding the monthly remuneration, 36.5% of the tourism professionals claimed to earn between one and two minimum wages, which can be considered a low remuneration, especially when related to the workload and the education background of the professionals (Figure 9). According to SIMT's data (2015), the low remuneration is the reality of 67% of the formal workers in tourism who receive up to two monthly minimum wages. This data also agrees with the information found in the literature and in this study, reinforcing this reality.

On facing challenges to enter the job market after completing the course, the responses were divided as the following: 49.7% of the participants stated that they did, and 50.3% did not. Of the half who declared no challenges, 27% were already working before completing the course. The fact that students do internships during graduation can contribute to minimize the challenges entering the job market, since it enables having professional experience during the course. This result corroborates the study of Silveira & Medaglia (2010) who indicated that 43% of the tourism professionals graduated in Curitiba (PR, Brazil) were already working in the tourism area when they completed their courses, thus referring to the importance of the internship and the option to higher education of professionals already employed.

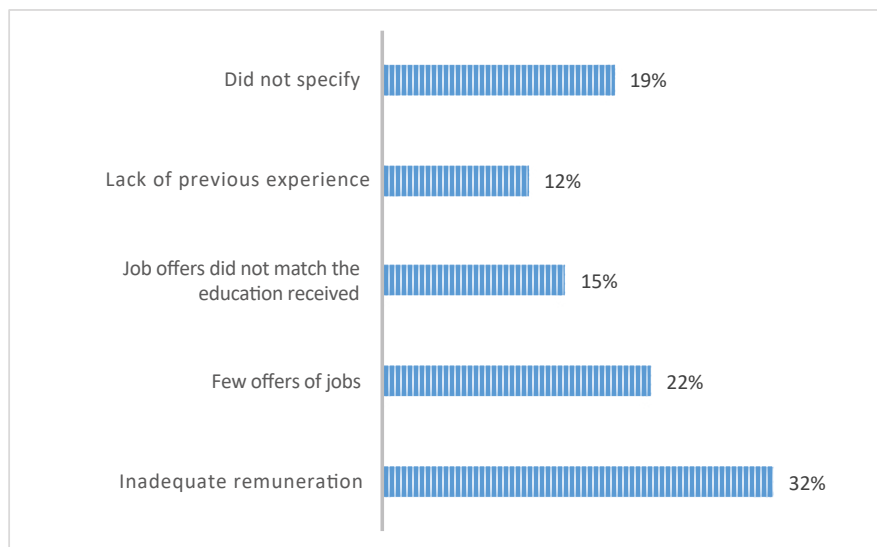
Figure 9 – Monthly remuneration



Source – Research data

The tourism professionals who claimed to have faced challenges entering the job market used as justification, mostly, the inadequate remuneration of jobs (32%) and the few jobs offered by the job market (22%). They also argued that the jobs offered did not match the education received (15%) and lack of previous experience (12%), as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10 – Main challenges entering the job market



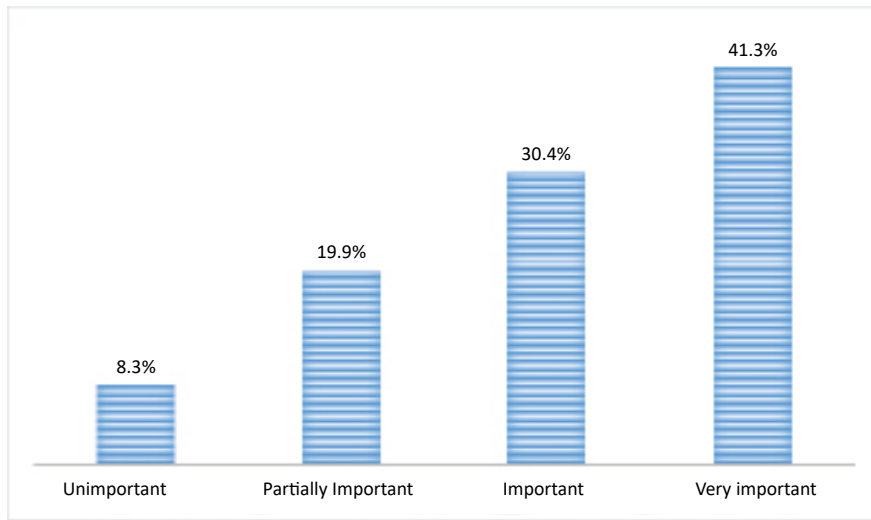
Source – Research data

The inadequate remuneration of jobs shows the dissatisfaction of the professionals regarding the low financial return that the market proposes for their work (Coelho & Sakowski, 2014; Fonseca & Petit, 2002). At the same time, the perception that few jobs are being offered in the area indicates the problem between the number of professionals and the capacity of labor absorption. The information that the jobs offered do not match the education received shows the distance between academic education and the preparation for the job market, which is a subject recurrently discussed in the

literature (Ansarah, 2002; Barretto et al., 2004; Fornari, 2006; Lima & Silva, 2007; Tomazoni, 2007).

Regarding the importance of the bachelor in tourism for working in the job market, the majority qualified the course as very important (41.3%) and important (30.4%). A minority (8.3%) considers the course unimportant for their professional practice, as Figure 11 shows. In this sense, the qualification provided by the course and its relationship with the job market were positively seen by the vast majority of respondents.

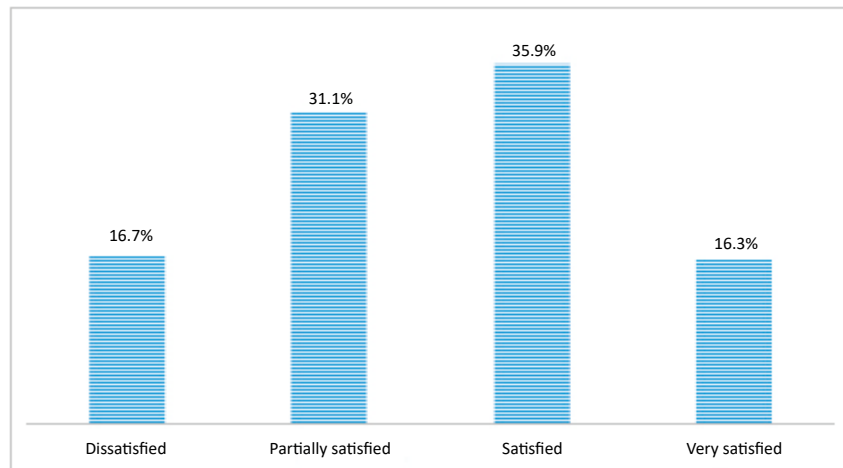
Figure 11 – Level of importance of the bachelor in Tourism for working in the job market



Source – Research data

Finally, the professionals were asked to express their satisfaction concerning their work in the job market. Most respondents were divided between satisfied (35.9%) and partially satisfied (31.1%), with the same percentage of professionals who had an extremely opposite opinion: 16.3% said they were very satisfied and 16.3% dissatisfied (Figure 12). A study conducted in Curitiba (PR, Brazil) revealed that most of tourism professionals remained at the intermediate level of satisfaction, with a tendency to positive (Silveira & Medaglia, 2010).

Figure 12 – Satisfaction regarding work in the job market



Source – Research data

The respondents gave varied justifications for the level of satisfaction. . The diversity of options in the field of tourism and love for the profession, as indicated by respondent 96, deserves to be highlighted: “I see many opportunities in the tourism business, I am learning more every day. I love my profession!” Even the professionals that were satisfied with their work in the job market perceive it is not an area of easy insertion and reveal dissatisfaction regarding wages and non-recognition of the profession: “Despite being very satisfied with my career, I believe I am an exception and know how the market pays poorly and does not correctly select people in many cases” (Respondent 54). In the same perspective, Respondent 303 argued:

“I am very satisfied with my work in the job market, I believe that my education collaborated a lot for me to become the professional I am, but I still think it lacks a little appreciation of the tourism professional. We still earn little and work hard and often see people who are not from the area work in our positions.”

Remuneration is a crucial issue since “the financial return of the service provided is the basic condition for personal survival and the indicator of success of individual efforts” (Ansarah, 1995, p. 61, *free translation*). Among the comments that show dissatisfaction, the respondent 243 highlights that “we work a lot but the remuneration is not proportional to our work”. Low remuneration was associated with a lack of professional appreciation by some respondents:

I earn little, I work a lot and I don't have my job appreciated. I obtained the bachelor's degree in tourism aiming to work in the planning area, seeking to specialize myself in it. However, I struggled a lot to enter the desired field, and because of this I sought the hospitality area, even not identifying myself with it! (Respondent 217)

I spent the four years of my course hearing from all the professors that the tourism professional exists to plan, manage and execute tourist activities in all its aspects. Reality is very different from theory. Most of the positions offered to professionals in the area are operational: Working in the operational or commercial events of a hotel; being a travel agent; an airport agent. . . . While administrators become hotel managers, marketing professionals, creators of events. . . . Positions in tourist entities – Abav, Conventions etc. are mostly by recommendation; and official examinations in the area are almost extinct. Unless you have the capital to be an entrepreneur of some business in the area, today I advise no one else to be a tourism professional.” (Respondent 39) These comments further highlight the low remuneration in tourism and reveal the graduates' search for other work areas and even other graduations. On this issue of dissatisfaction, it is noteworthy that the tourism professionals mentioned, as something negative in the area, the necessary political game to achieve public planning positions, a fact that can emphasize how the public power devaluates the professional.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Analyzing careers and professions in tourism implies understanding the characteristics of its job market, the nature of jobs and the dimensions of this industry, as Ladkin (2008) affirms. In this context, it is understood that the problem

hiring tourism professionals in the job market is not only a Brazilian problem. Data from Australia, United Kingdom (Barretto et al., 2004) and Spain (Aneca, 2005) indicate a low employability rate of professionals.

The results of this study in Brazil indicate a reality compatible with the international scenario. The predominant profile of tourism professionals obtained was female gender, aged between 20 and 30 years, with a bachelor's degree, fluency in English and/or Spanish, without study or work experience abroad and directly working in tourism. Professionals are mostly in the teaching and travel agency occupation areas as employees of the private sector or public service by official examination in operational level positions. Most respondents earn between one and two minimum wages. The half who struggled to enter the job market after the completion of the course complained of inadequate remuneration and the few jobs offered by the job market. Most respondents defined themselves as satisfied and partially satisfied with their work in the job market.

Although the presented scenario refers only to the sample obtained, i.e., it can not have its results generalized to the Brazilian tourism professionals, some questions raised in this study deserve reflection. The low remuneration of professionals and the small number of self-employed professionals or entrepreneurs emphasize the necessity to expand incentives and preparation for entrepreneurship as an option for the few jobs offered by the market for the higher education professionals.

The search for different areas of activity and even other graduations by professionals may indicate the importance of specialization and the acquisition of knowledge in specific areas, which are not acquired in undergraduate studies. Constant dialogue between education and market institutions, as well as internships by undergraduate students, are aspects that can minimize the challenges and create connections with the tourist market (Busby, 2008).

As indicated by the academia and verified in this study, the devaluation of the tourism professional, low wages, strictly operational positions and the low offer of jobs are aspects that affect the scenario of the tourism job market in Brazil. On the other hand, the contradictions in the tourism higher education were not so present in this context, since most respondents defined the bachelor's degree in tourism as important and/or very important for their performance in the job market.

This study aims to show the situation of tourism professionals in the job market, elucidating challenges for students and professionals, but for the HEI as well. In terms of suggestions for future research, it endorses the recommendation of Tomazoni (2007) to analyze the employability of each tourist segment according to specific criteria, since the employability in hospitality, events and agency, for example, may be completely different. Other studies can also be conducted to monitor the development of the job market in tourism and thus to show how it is possible to improve the performance of tourism professionals.

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CONTRIBUTIONS

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Sérgio Rodrigues Leal: Critical review of the manuscript; writing of the manuscript.