

# *Athens Journal of Tourism*



*Quarterly Academic Periodical, Volume 9, Issue 1, March 2022*  
URL: <https://www.athensjournals.gr/ajt> Email: [journals@atiner.gr](mailto:journals@atiner.gr)

## **Front Pages**

*PETER JONES*

**[A Review of the UK's Tourism Recovery Plans Post COVID-19](#)**

*BOITUMELO CAROLINE RASETHUN TSA*

**[The Tourism Industry and Economic Growth Nexus in Lesotho](#)**

*MASOOMA AL-BALUSHI & TAMER MOHAMED ATEF*

**[Hospitality Management Specialization Practical Courses Evaluation and Development](#)**

*GREGORY T. PAPANIKOS*

**[The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Greek Tourism-Updates and Comparisons](#)**

# Athens Journal of Tourism

*Published by the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER)*

## Editors

- Dr. Peter Jones, Professor of Management, University of Gloucestershire, U.K.
- Dr. Valia Kasimati, Head, [Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit](#), ATINER & Researcher, Department of Economic Analysis & Research, Central Bank of Greece, Greece.
- Dr. Vincenzo Asero, Academic Member, ATINER & Assistant Professor, University of Catania, Italy.

## Editorial & Reviewers' Board

<https://www.athensjournals.gr/ajt/eb>

## Administration of the Journal

1. Vice President of Publications: Dr Zoe Boutsoli
2. General Managing Editor of all ATINER's Publications: Ms. Afrodete Papanikou
3. ICT Managing Editor of all ATINER's Publications: Mr. Kostas Spyropoulos
4. Managing Editor of this Journal: Ms. Eirini Lentzou

\*\*\*\*\*

*ATINER is an Athens-based World Association of Academics and Researchers based in Athens. ATINER is an independent and non-profit Association with a Mission to become a forum where Academics and Researchers from all over the world can meet in Athens, exchange ideas on their research and discuss future developments in their disciplines, as well as engage with professionals from other fields. Athens was chosen because of its long history of academic gatherings, which go back thousands of years to Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum. Both these historic places are within walking distance from ATINER's downtown offices. Since antiquity, Athens was an open city. In the words of Pericles, Athens "...is open to the world, we never expel a foreigner from learning or seeing". ("Pericles' Funeral Oration", in Thucydides, The History of the Peloponnesian War). It is ATINER's mission to revive the glory of Ancient Athens by inviting the World Academic Community to the city, to learn from each other in an environment of freedom and respect for other people's opinions and beliefs. After all, the free expression of one's opinion formed the basis for the development of democracy, and Athens was its cradle. As it turned out, the Golden Age of Athens was in fact, the Golden Age of the Western Civilization. Education and (Re)searching for the 'truth' are the pillars of any free (democratic) society. This is the reason why Education and Research are the two core words in ATINER's name.*

\*\*\*\*\*

The *Athens Journal of Tourism (AJT)* is an Open Access quarterly double-blind peer reviewed journal and considers papers from all areas of tourism and related disciplines such as culture, leisure, recreation, geography, urban planning, heritage, sports, historical cities, landscape, architecture etc. The AJT considers theoretical and empirical papers as well as case studies and policy papers. The journal's aim is to be useful to both academics of tourism research and the practitioners of the tourism industry. Many of the papers published in this journal have been presented at the various conferences sponsored by [the Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit](#) of the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER). All papers are subject to ATINER's Publication Ethical Policy and Statement. A journal publication might take from a minimum of six months up to one year to appear. All papers are subject to ATINER's [Publication Ethical Policy and Statement](#).

The Athens Journal of Tourism  
ISSN NUMBER: 2241-8148- DOI: 10.30958/ajt  
Volume 9, Issue 1, March 2022  
Download the Entire Issue ([PDF](#))

<b><u>Front Pages</u></b>	i-viii
<b><u><a href="#">A Review of the UK's Tourism Recovery Plans Post COVID-19</a></u></b>	9
<i>Peter Jones</i>	
<b><u><a href="#">The Tourism Industry and Economic Growth Nexus in Lesotho</a></u></b>	19
<i>Boitumelo Caroline Rasethuntsa</i>	
<b><u><a href="#">Hospitality Management Specialization Practical Courses Evaluation and Development</a></u></b>	33
<i>Masooma Al-Balushi &amp; Tamer Mohamed Atef</i>	
<b><u><a href="#">The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Greek Tourism-Updates and Comparisons</a></u></b>	51
<i>Gregory T. Papanikos</i>	

# Athens Journal of Tourism

## Editorial and Reviewers' Board

### Editors

- **Dr. Peter Jones**, Professor of Management, University of Gloucestershire, U.K.
- **Dr. Valia Kasimati**, Head, [Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit](#), ATINER & Researcher, Department of Economic Analysis & Research, Central Bank of Greece, Greece.
- **Dr. Vincenzo Asero**, Academic Member, ATINER & Assistant Professor, University of Catania, Italy.

### Editorial Board

- Dr. Francesco Favia, Academic Member, ATINER & President, Apulia Open University, Italy.
- Dr. Mary L. Tanke, Distinguished Professor, Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management Biscayne Bay Campus, Florida International University, USA.
- Dr. Cláudia Ribeiro de Almeida, Adjunct Professor, University of Algarve, Portugal.
- Dr. Cinthia Rolim de Albuquerque Meneguel, Teacher and Researcher, Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- Dr. Kevin Mearns, Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences, UNISA, South Africa.
- Dr. Ige Pirnar, Professor and Member, University Executive Board, Department of Business Administration, Yasar University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Studies, Turkey.
- Dr. Henry Thompson, Professor Emeritus, Department of Economics, Auburn University, USA.
- Dr. Andrew Yiannakis, Professor, University of New Mexico, USA.
- Dr. Mzobanzi Erasmus Mnguni, Head, Department of Hospitality and Tourism, Durban University of Technology, South Africa.
- Dr. Kathryn Velandar, Academic Member, ATINER & Reader, Edinburgh Napier University, UK.
- Dr. Moustafa Ahmed El-Sayed Ahmed Mekawy, Associate Professor, University of Sadat City, Egypt.
- Dr. Graham Busby, Associate Professor, Faculty of Business, School of Tourism and Hospitality, Plymouth University, UK.
- Dr. Phylis Floyd, Academic Member, ATINER & Associate Professor, Department of Art, Art History & Design, Michigan State University, USA.
- Dr. Michael Scantlebury, Academic Member, ATINER & Associate Professor, Grand Valley State University, USA.
- Dr. Rodanthi Tzanelli, Academic Member, ATINER & Associate Professor of Cultural Sociology, School of Sociology & Social Policy, University of Leeds, U.K.
- Dr. Essam Abdel Salam Gouda, Academic Member, ATINER & Assistant Professor, College of Engineering, Al-Azhar University, Egypt.
- Dr. Tarek Abdelsalam, Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, University of Modern Sciences and Arts (MSA), Egypt.
- Dr. Aytug Arslan, Assistant Professor, İzmir Katip Çelebi University, Tourism Faculty, Department of Tourist Guidance, Turkey.
- Dr. Sonia Khan, Assistant Professor in Tourism, H.P. University, Shimla, India.
- Dr. Ozlem Karakul, Associate Professor, Faculty of Arts, Selçuk University, Turkey.
- Dr. Per Ake Nilsson, Assistant Professor in Tourism Science, Mid Sweden University, Sweden.
- Dr. Roselyne N. Okech, Assistant Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada.
- Dr. Marianna Strzelecka, Assistant Professor, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, College of Merchandising, Hospitality and Tourism, University of North Texas, USA.
- Dr. Maria Belen Kraser, Teacher in Seminary Gestion of natural resources and environment, and Didactic of Geography, Universidad Nacional del Sur- UNS, Brazil.
- Dr. Azila Azmi, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, University of Technology MARA (Pulau Pinang), Malaysia.
- Dr. Lois Ann Burgess, Lecturer, School of Management and Marketing, University of Wollongong, Australia.
- Dr. Joseph Mensah-Ansah, Lecturer, GIMPA Business School, Ghana.
- Ms. Suchitra Wagle, Academic Member, ATINER & PhD and Researcher, Indian Institute of Technology, India.
- Ms. Hatice Ozgul Ozhisar, Academic Member, ATINER & Ph.D. Candidate, Middle East Technical University, & Expert, Ministry of Tourism, Turkey.

- **Vice President of Publications:** Dr Zoe Boutsioli
- **General Managing Editor of all ATINER's Publications:** Ms. Afrodete Papanikou
- **ICT Managing Editor of all ATINER's Publications:** Mr. Kostas Spyropoulos
- **Managing Editor of this Journal:** Ms. Eirini Lentzou ([bio](#))

### **Reviewers' Board**

[Click Here](#)

# President's Message

All ATINER's publications including its e-journals are open access without any costs (submission, processing, publishing, open access paid by authors, open access paid by readers etc.) and is independent of presentations at any of the many small events (conferences, symposiums, forums, colloquiums, courses, roundtable discussions) organized by ATINER throughout the year and entail significant costs of participating. The intellectual property rights of the submitting papers remain with the author. Before you submit, please make sure your paper meets the [basic academic standards](#), which includes proper English. Some articles will be selected from the numerous papers that have been presented at the various annual international academic conferences organized by the different divisions and units of the Athens Institute for Education and Research. The plethora of papers presented every year will enable the editorial board of each journal to select the best, and in so doing produce a top-quality academic journal. In addition to papers presented, ATINER will encourage the independent submission of papers to be evaluated for publication.

The current issue is the first of the ninth volume of the *Athens Journal of Tourism*, published by the [Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit](#) of ATINER.

Gregory T. Papanikos  
President  
ATINER



## Athens Institute for Education and Research

### *A World Association of Academics and Researchers*

#### 15<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies

11-14 April 2022, Athens, Greece

The [Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs](https://www.atiner.gr) organizes the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies, 11-14 April 2022, Athens, Greece sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies](https://www.atiner.gr). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers from all areas of Mediterranean Studies, such as history, arts, archaeology, philosophy, culture, sociology, politics, international relations, economics, business, sports, environment and ecology, etc. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2022/FORM-MDT.doc>).

#### Academic Members Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos**, President, ATINER & Honorary Professor, University of Stirling, U.K.
- **Dr. Steven Oberhelman**, Professor of Classics, Holder of the George Sumey Jr Endowed Professorship of Liberal Arts, and Associate Dean, Texas A&M University, USA, Vice President of International Programs, ATINER and Editor of the Athens Journal of History.
- **Dr. Nicholas Pappas**, Vice President of Academic Membership, ATINER & Professor of History, Sam Houston University, USA.
- **Dr. David Philip Wick**, Director, Arts, Humanities and Education Division, ATINER & Professor of History, Gordon College, USA.
- **Dr. Yannis Stivachtis**, Director, Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs and Associate Professor, Jean Monnet Chair & Director of International Studies Program, Virginia Tech - Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, USA.

#### Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **28 February 2022**
- Submission of Paper: **14 March 2022**

#### Conference Fees

Conference fees vary from 400€ to 2000€  
Details can be found at: <https://www.atiner.gr/fees>

#### Social and Educational Program

The Social Program Emphasizes the Educational Aspect of the Academic Meetings of Atiner.

- Greek Night Entertainment (This is the official dinner of the conference)
- Athens Sightseeing: Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk
- Social Dinner
- Mycenae Visit
- Exploration of the Aegean Islands
- Delphi Visit
- Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion



## **Athens Institute for Education and Research** *A World Association of Academics and Researchers*

### **18<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Tourism** **6-9 June 2022, Athens, Greece**

The [Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit](#) of ATINER organizes its **18<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Tourism, 6-9 June 2022, Athens, Greece** sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Tourism](#). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers from all areas of Tourism. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2022/FORM-TOU.doc>).

#### **Important Dates**

- Abstract Submission: **25 April 2022**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **9 May 2022**

#### **Academic Member Responsible for the Conference**

- **Dr. Valia Kasimati**, Head, [Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit](#), ATINER & Researcher, Department of Economic Analysis & Research, Central Bank of Greece, Greece.
- **Dr. Peter Jones**, Co-Editor, [Athens Journal of Tourism](#) & Professor of Management, University of Gloucestershire, UK.

#### **Social and Educational Program**

The Social Program Emphasizes the Educational Aspect of the Academic Meetings of Atiner.

- Greek Night Entertainment (This is the official dinner of the conference)
- Athens Sightseeing: Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk
- Social Dinner
- Mycenae Visit
- Exploration of the Aegean Islands
- Delphi Visit
- Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

More information can be found here: <https://www.atiner.gr/social-program>

#### **Conference Fees**

Conference fees vary from 400€ to 2000€

Details can be found at: <https://www.atiner.gr/fees>









## **A Review of the UK's Tourism Recovery Plans Post COVID-19**

*By Peter Jones\**

*The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked global economic havoc and disrupted the lives of the majority of the world's population, and many governments have pursued a wide range of measures to stimulate economic and social recovery. In June 2021 the UK government published a tourism recovery plan, which set out the role that it hopes to play in assisting and accelerating the tourism sector's recovery from COVID-19 and a framework for how the government will work with the sector to rebuild and revitalise tourism within the UK. This paper focuses on this plan, and includes a short literature review, a summary of the plan, and some concluding reflections.*

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, recovery plan, tourism sector, UK government*

### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked global economic havoc and disrupted the lives of the majority of the world's population, and many governments have pursued a wide range of measures to stimulate economic and social recovery. The tourism industry has been particularly severely hit by the pandemic, and the United Nations World Tourist Organisation (2021), for example, argued that “tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting economies, livelihoods, public services and opportunities on all continents”, and that “all parts of its vast value-chain have been affected”. In a similar vein, Pangetsu (2021) argued that “tourism is among the industries that have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis”, that “over a year since the onset of the pandemic, the numbers are staggering: Tourism destinations recorded one billion fewer international arrivals in 2020 than in 2019”, and that “100 to 120 million tourism jobs were put at risk, a large proportion in small and medium-sized enterprises”. At the national level, governments have looked to boost their nations' tourist industries, on the one hand by economy-wide stimulus packages, and on the other by tourism specific measures. A number of European governments including Spain, Ireland, Greece, and the Netherlands have introduced tourism recovery plans, designed to build a more resilient tourist economy post COVID-19.

Tourism is a major element in the UK's economy, it includes tourist visitors from other countries and domestic tourism, and it embraces a wide variety of activities and business enterprises including international, national and local travel, hotel and accommodation services, food and beverages, sport and recreational activity, tourism attractions and products, exhibitions, conferences, cultural activities, and a wide range of retail outlets. The COVID-19 pandemic severely

---

\*Associate Professor, School of Business, University of Gloucestershire, UK.

affected all the elements of the UK's tourism industry, not least because of the range of government measures to tackle the spread of the virus, including the introduction of restrictions on overseas travel, of social distancing and lockdown, and of the closure of a number of types of shops and hospitality venues, and also because of many people's reluctance to travel. By way of two summary illustrations, the Office for National Statistics (2021) estimated that overseas residents made 73% less visits to the UK in 2020 than in 2019, and Visit Britain Visit England (2021) estimated that domestic tourist spending in 2020 was 63% lower than in 2019.

The UK Government has pursued a wide range of measures to support the tourism, hospitality and leisure industries. In producing a briefing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourist industry for the House of Lords, Newson (2021), for example, catalogued a range of measures including, £12 billion from the COVID-19 job retention scheme, £5 billion in bounceback loans, a temporary reduction in Value Added Tax for hospitality, accommodation and attractions, funding to support communities that depend heavily on tourism, and funding to help destination management organisations deemed to be at severe risk of closure. More strategically, in June 2021, the UK Government published "The Tourism Recovery Plan" (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport 2021). This plan "sets out the role that the UK government will play in assisting and accelerating the tourism sector's recovery from COVID-19", and "it also sets out a framework for how the government will work with the sector to build back better" (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport 2021).

## **Literature Review**

The COVID-19 pandemic has, without doubt, been the biggest, and the most damaging, issue for the tourist industry in the past two years and, not surprisingly, plans, initiatives, and strategies designed to respond to the pandemic, and to support the recovery of the tourism industry have attracted considerable attention in the academic hospitality literature. The aim here is to offer some illustrative examples of this literature, to reference and provide some academic context for this paper. Sharma et al. (2021), for example, proposed a resilience-based framework for reviving the global tourism industry post COVID-19. More specifically, this framework outlined "four prominent factors for building resilience in the industry", namely "government response, technology innovation, local belongingness, and consumer and employee confidence", and Sharma et al. (2021) rather optimistically argued that by that using such inclusive resilience, "the tourism industry may transform into a new global economic order characterized by sustainable tourism, society's well-being, climate action, and the involvement of local communities".

Sigala (2020) reviewed past and emerging literature in an attempt to better help professionals and researchers understand, manage, and valorize both the tourism impacts and the transformational affordance of COVID-19. In conclusion Sigala (2020) argued that the COVID-19 pandemic has created a fertile new context that could stimulate research which may have valuable end-user benefits.

A wide range of transformational opportunities are identified, including developing greater understanding of how the attitudes of tourists that have been exposed to their own, or others', COVID-19 travel traumas, may influence future travel attitudes and intentions, and may also help the tourism industry to reimagine and create an operating environment that is human-centred and that incorporates sustainability and well-being values.

Kuscer et al. (2021) looked to explore how different countries and destinations responded to the initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the belief that such an approach might help in choosing the right path by addressing the negative, and taking advantage of the positive, repercussions. The research emphasised the importance not only of government interventions and stimulus packages for destinations to enable them to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, but also of developing resilience and sustainability as integral elements in recovery strategies. Further, it was argued that resilience management can only be developed using a participative process that involves all stakeholders, and that enhancements in destination-wide management of employees, quality management, digitalisation, internal communication, and support for tourism businesses, are all essential in developing resilient tourism destinations.

Pardo and Ladeiras (2020) employed a series of virtual forums to explore the perceptions of travel and tourism experts, drawn from across the globe, of how the COVID-19 pandemic was influencing regional or national tourism activity, and of how they were preparing for the recovery of tourism. The authors identified a number of pillars that should be a priority for tourism authorities, including smart specialisation, enhanced tourism intelligence, new governance, digital skills, and greater cooperation. In addressing smart specialisation, for example, Pardo and Ladeiras (2020) argued that while cultural and natural resources are unique elements with the potential to attract visitors, in an increasingly competitive tourism market, it will be necessary to design and introduce novel experiences, and that investing in smart specialisation in tourism makes sound economic sense. Here the argument is that differentiation comes from unique, authentic, indigenous resources, ideally, exclusive to a particular area, where they can be a more permanent contributory factor to long-term tourism success.

Khalid et al. (2021) investigated if the size of a country's tourism sector influenced the economic policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and their findings revealed that the more important the tourism sector, the larger the economic stimulus package introduced by governments. Further, the authors suggested that a more targeted economic package may be required in countries where the travel and tourism sector is an major part of the overall economy, and argued that such countries should look to support the domestic tourism sector, to serve as a buffer for the industry as a whole, because it will easier to kick start compared to the international tourism sector.

Some of the research on responses to the COVID-19 pandemic has focused on specific countries, but a number of general implications can often be identified. Collins- Kreiner and Ram (2021), for example, looked to outline national COVID-19 exit strategies and to analyse recovery strategies in seven countries, namely Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, Israel, Italy and Japan. The authors concluded

that all countries were implementing tactical measures to contend with the crisis as part of their national tourism policies, but that there was little evidence that countries had formalised comprehensive exit strategies and plans for the tourism sector. At the same time, Collins-Kreiner and Ram (2021) also emphasised that no single policy or strategy is appropriate for all countries. While this is seen to be understandable in that each country has its own unique set of tourism attractions, and in that the pandemic has affected different countries in different ways, the authors argued that without international commitment to sustainable tourism, the sector will not become more resilient and better prepared for future crises.

Zhang et al. (2021) argued that the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic had rendered forecasts of tourism demand in Hong Kong obsolete, but that such forecasting was a fundamental step in the recovery process, as it informs decisions about the appropriate phases of action. With this in mind, they explored combining econometric and judgmental methods to forecast possible paths to tourism recovery. More specifically, the authors used autoregressive correction models to generate baseline forecasts, and Delphi adjustments to evaluate the economic effects of the pandemic on the tourism industry. In outlining the implications of their work, Zhang et al. (2021) suggested that due to the uncertainty and volatility of the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism recovery should involve a gradual process and the rebranding of destination imagery would be a critical factor in domestic and short-haul market recovery.

Rogerson and Rogerson (2021) recognised that the tourism sector in South Africa had experienced the scale and the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, that this would reshape existing patterns of tourism, and that understanding these changes was essential in designing appropriate policy interventions. The authors stressed the importance of domestic tourism in the recovery process and here, and by way of conclusion, they made a number of recommendations. They argued, for example, that there were opportunities not only to address the uneven geographical spread of tourism, because in the wake of COVID-19, many tourists would seek out less crowded places, but also to market natural open space, tranquillity, and seclusion to potential domestic tourists.

## **Planning for Recovery**

In introducing the framework for “The Tourism Recovery Plan”, the UK government rightly recognised that “COVID-19 will continue to present challenges and uncertainties to the tourism sector for some time”, but that it “wants to see a growing, dynamic and sustainable tourism sector reaching its full potential and driving growth in every nation and region of the UK” (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport 2021). By way of introduction, the plan emphasised that the UK’s tourist industry was a national asset, that the UK was a world leading tourist destination, and that an important part of the UK’s attraction was that it had something for everyone. At the same time, the government also recognised that the UK’s tourist industry must be seen in its wider international context and that in the

wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, attracting tourists back and retaining tourist markets, will be fiercely competitive.

The government's goal in drawing up its tourism recovery plan is "to build on the UK's position as one of the most effective tourist destinations in the world and to enhance the UK's offer even further by effectively showcasing and marketing the country's tourist assets" (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport 2021). This overall goal was distilled down into a number of short to medium term objectives, which included to help to see a swift return to 2019 levels of tourism activity and visitor expenditure, the sharing of tourism benefits to all parts of the UK, a tourism industry that contributes to the enhancement and conservation of the country's cultural, natural and historic heritage, a tourism industry that is inclusive and accessible to all, and for the UK to be the leading European nation for hosting business exhibitions and conferences.

These objectives are certainly ambitious and there is an explicit recognition that they will not be achieved overnight, and that, as such, the plan is seen as the first steps towards recovery. Here the first priorities are to reopen safely and profitably, by taking "a scientific and evidence-based approach to restarting both business tourism and inbound/domestic tourism"; to support businesses; and to stimulate demand (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport 2021). Here, the government recognises the importance of working in partnership both across government departments and with a wide range of private sector organisations, and argues that the British Tourist Authority and the National Tourism Board will lead much of the recovery.

Stimulating demand is identified as a major challenge, and while there is a clear recognition not only that demand has been artificially suppressed by restrictions put in place in an attempt to control the virus, but also that many people have become risk averse to protect themselves and others. On the domestic side, the plan catalogued a number of financial packages, including a £5 million marketing campaign, £10 million for the British Tourist Authority to deliver consumer promotions to support the tourism industry, a scheme to pursue the development of domestic rail tourism, and the launch of a refreshed version of the Countryside Code to encourage people to enjoy the countryside safely and respectfully. The recovery plan also emphasises the need to drive demand back to large cities, such as Manchester and Coventry and also on supporting recovery in London.

The plan acknowledges the vital role that international tourism will have to play in tourism recovery, but it also suggests that the return of inbound tourism will be slower than that of domestic tourism, and that the competition for inbound tourism will be fierce. While the government argues that the success of its vaccine programme will provide a competitive advantage, the plan lists a number of initiatives designed to consolidate that advantage. Here, marketing campaigns will look not only to respond to changes in consumer behavior in the wake of the pandemic, not least the perceived demand for experiential travel, but also to ensure that the UK is well represented overseas. At the same time, the government affirmed its commitment to support the country's assets that draw in both international and domestic tourists in new ways, for example, by raising awareness of the rich variety of food and drink cultures throughout the UK.

In addressing “Building Back Better”, the recovery plan sets out “how the UK government will work with and support the tourism sector to build back better from this pandemic”, and here the emphasis is a “more innovative, data-driven, accessible and resilient tourism -with less reliance on the peak season” and on developing “a thriving tourism sector which is able to attract, train and retain a more skilled workforce all year round” (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 2021). Geographically, the government is looking to spread the benefits of tourism development throughout the UK, and particularly to less well-known attractions and destinations.

More specifically the recovery plan emphasises the importance of investing in local visitor economies, of having a solid structural foundation for tourism, and of the importance of investing in transport to underpin the country’s tourism industry. In addressing investment in local visitor economies, a wide variety of existing funding sources, including support packages both for towns and their High Streets, for community renewal, and for coastal communities, were cataloged in the recovery plan. The plan also stresses the importance of having a solid foundation for tourism and reported that work was underway on the best way to structure and support Destination Management Organisations supporting, and driving, local, regional and national tourism in England. This review reported in August 2021 (de Bois 2021) and made a number of recommendations to support Destination Management Organisations undertaking a wide range of activities that combine “to ensure their destination remains sustainable, competitive and compelling”.

Transport is highlighted as having a vital role to play in underpinning the success of the tourism industry. Here, the recovery plan reports that the government is working on a strategic framework for the aviation sector, which will include consideration of the workforce, skills, regional connectivity, regulation, consumers, and a number of environmental issues, while looking to ensure that growth is consistent with the UK’s carbon budget and with targets for carbon dioxide emissions. The plan also catalogues its continuing investment in the UK’s rail network and emphasises the importance of developing a national bus strategy and promoting such services to visitors, and reported that the government would look to work with tourist bodies and coach operators to facilitate and improve coach access to tourist destinations.

As part of its approach to building back better, the recovery plan also emphasises the importance innovation, resilience, sustainability and inclusivity. Innovation is seen to be vitally important in continuing to embrace the opportunities provided by developments in digital technology. Such developments may, for example, look to build on the virtual and augmented reality tourism and visitor experiences pioneered during lockdown in 2019 and 2020, and may prove vitally important in marketing a wide range of tourism attractions and destinations. In arguing that “protecting and enhancing the environment is at the heart of this government’s agenda”, the recovery plan suggests that tourism must play its part in “the overall sustainability agenda”, which “means pursuing a tourism industry that contributes to the enhancement and conservation of cultural, natural and historic heritage and minimises damage to the environment” (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport 2021). The plan also argues that an inclusive and



accessible tourism industry, that meets the needs of a wide range of consumers, is good for business and for people.

### **Concluding Reflections**

A number of concluding reflections merit attention. In the face of the continuing unpredictability of the future of the COVID-19 pandemic, planning for the recovery of the tourism sector, poses a complex series of challenges for the UK government. On the one hand, the pandemic has caused a major global economic crisis which continues to pose a wide range of seemingly growing problems for the tourism industry. On the other hand, the diversity of the tourism industry means that recovery planning must address a wide range of issues. That said, the government has committed itself to work collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders to achieve the ambitious goal of helping the tourism industry to recover as quickly as possible, with a return to pre-COVID-19 numbers as soon as possible. While the recovery plan is clearly specific to the UK, it can also be seen to provide a template against which to view government plans for the recovery of tourism in other countries.

That said, perhaps reassuringly, the UK's recovery plan mirrors a number of the themes raised earlier in the literature review, and that in turn provides some sense of general academic, and more specific policy, consensus on planning for the future of the UK tourism industry in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pardo and Ladeiras' (2020) emphasis on the importance of tourism intelligence, digital skills, and greater cooperation, for example, are certainly reflected in the UK's recovery plan, as is, the focus on the importance of government response, technology innovation, and local ownership, in Sharma et al.'s (2021) framework for reviving the tourism industry.

More specifically, sustainability, an important theme in the UK's recovery plan, is consistently stressed in the academic literature. As, for example, in Sharma et al.'s (2021) assertion that the tourism industry will increasingly be characterised by sustainable tourism. In a similar vein, there is Sigala's (2020) belief that the transformational opportunities effectively presented by the pandemic will create an operating environment for tourism that incorporates sustainability. At the same time, while Kuscer et al.'s (2021) work emphasised the importance of government interventions and stimulus packages in helping the tourism industry to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, they also saw sustainability and resilience as integral to recovery strategies. Collins-Kreiner and Ram's (2021) assertion that without a commitment to sustainable tourism the sector will not become more resilient and better prepared for future crises, also resonates. However, by way of a note of caution, Pardo and Ladeiras (2020), suggested that at that time, no single government had prioritised environmentally, socially or economically sustainable efforts

As such, the UK government's commitment to develop a sustainable tourism sector, might be seen to merit further attention. Here, there are initial issues in that sustainable development is a contested concept which means different things to different people. While the most common definition of sustainable development is

“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), there are a variety of definitions of sustainable development. There are, for example, definitions based in ecology, and there are broader definitions, which embrace economic social and environmental goals. At the same time, a conceptual distinction is often made between weak and strong sustainability. Here, Roper (2012), for example, suggested that the former gives priority to economic growth while the latter recognises the environmental limits to such growth and argued that “strong sustainability subordinates economies to the natural environment and society”. On the one hand, the UK's tourism recovery plan looks to accommodate economic and social, as well as environmental, objectives under its sustainability umbrella, without any explicit recognition, for example, that protecting the physical environment may be at odds with the goal of economic growth. On the other hand, the recovery plan would seem consistent with the weak, rather than strong, characterisation of sustainability, in that it privileges economic recovery, and renewed economic growth, over the enhancement and conservation of natural capital.

More generally, and more fundamentally, Cohen (2020) claimed that the COVID-19 crisis offered an important opportunity to step back from the pursuit of conspicuous consumption, and the increasing depletion of the earth's finite resources, on which such patterns of consumption ultimately depend. Further, Cohen (2020) emphasised the importance of looking to ensure that the COVID-19 pandemic both informs, and contributes to, policies designed to promote the transition to more sustainable patterns of consumption. Any such transition would see the leading players, perhaps the majority of the players, within the tourism industry making major changes to their traditional business models, often built around the virtually unregulated use of natural resources, high volumes of visitors, and low cost labour. However, in spite of the severity of the COVID-19 crisis, there is little evidence that the UK government, the leading players within its tourism industry, or the vast majority of consumers, genuinely have the enthusiasm to pursue this transition.

## References

- Cohen MJ (2020) Does the COVID-10 outbreak mark the onset of a sustainable consumption transition? *Sustainability, Science, Politics and Policy* 16(1): 1–3.
- Collins-Kreiner N, Ram Y (2021) National tourism strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Annals of Tourism Research* 89(C): 103076.
- de Bois N (2021) *The de Bois review; an independent review of destination management organisations in England*. UK: Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. Retrieved from: <https://www.visitbritain.org/de-bois-review-independent-review-destination-management-organisations-england-published>. [Accessed 20 September 2021]
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2021) *The Tourism Recovery Plan*. UK: Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. Retrieved from: <https://assets.Pub>

- lishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/992974/Tourism\_Recovery\_Plan\_\_Web\_Accessible\_.pdf. [Accessed 9 September 2021]
- Khalid U, Okafor KE, Burzynska K (2021) Does the size of the tourism sector influence the economic policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic? *Current Issues in Tourism*. 24(19): 2801–2820.
- Kuscer K, Eichelberger S, Petts M (2021) Tourism organizations' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic: an investigation of the lockdown period. *Current Issues in Tourism* (May).
- Newson N (2021) *Promoting tourism in the UK*. UK Parliament. Retrieved from: <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/promoting-tourism-in-the-uk/>. [Accessed 17 September 2021]
- Office for National Statistics (2021) *Overseas travel and tourism 2020*. Office for National Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism/articles/overseastravelandtourism2020/2021-05-24>. [Accessed 17 September 2021]
- Pangestu ME (2021, April 30) *Tourism in the post-COVID world: three steps to build better forward*. World Bank Blogs. Retrieved from: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/tourism-post-covid-world-three-steps-build-better-forward>. [Accessed 16 September 2021]
- Pardo C, Ladeiras A (2020) COVID-19 “tourism in flight mode”: a lost opportunity to rethink tourism – Towards a more sustainable and inclusive society. *Worldwide Hospitality Tourism Themes* 12(6): 671–678.
- Rogerson CM, Rogerson JM (2021) COVID-19 and changing tourism demand: research review and policy implications for South Africa. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* 10(1): 1–21.
- Roper J (2012) Environmental risk, sustainability discourses and public relations. *Public Relations Inquiry* 1(1): 69–87.
- Sharma GD, Thomas A, Paul J (2021) Reviving tourism industry: a resilience-based framework. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 37(Jan): 100786.
- Sigala M (2020) Tourism and COVID-19: impacts and implications for resetting industry and research. *Journal of Business Research* 117(Sep): 312–321.
- United Nations World Tourism Organization (2021) *Secretary general's policy brief on tourism and COVID-19*. United Nations World Tourism Organization. Retrieved from: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-and-covid-19-unprecedented-economic-impacts>. [Accessed 16 September 2021]
- Visit Britain Visit England (2021) *2021 Tourism forecast*. Visit Britain Visit England. Retrieved from: <https://www.visitbritain.org/2021-tourism-forecast>. [Accessed 17 September 2021]
- World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our common future*. World Commission on Environment and Development. Retrieved from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>. [Accessed 23 September 2021]
- Zhang H, Song H, Wen L, Liu C (2021) Forecasting tourism recovery amid COVID-19. *Annals of Tourism Research* 87(Mar): 103149.



## The Tourism Industry and Economic Growth Nexus in Lesotho

By Boitumelo Caroline Rasethuntsa<sup>\*</sup>

*Tourism-led economic growth hypothesis has been a widely studied topic yet Africa has been slow to generate information in this area. Almost all economies globally utilise tourism to accelerate economic growth because the industry is linked with foreign exchange income, employment opportunities, and increased foreign investment. Therefore, this study focuses on exploring and demonstrating the economic impact of the tourism industry on Lesotho's economy by specifically focusing on tourism as a source of income, employment, investment, and export. Secondary research approach was utilised by conducting a comprehensive literature review to generate information for this research. The findings of this study revealed that tourism activities positively influenced Lesotho's economy from 2014 to 2019. The results support the tourism-led economic growth hypothesis by noting a positive contribution to Lesotho's economy in terms of the gross domestic product, employment and investment. Furthermore, Lesotho's tourism development impediments were noted to include infrastructure inadequacy, low levels of tourism collaborations and investment, and improper marketing and management of tourism organisations.*

**Keywords:** *secondary data, tourism industry, economic development, tourism development drawbacks, Lesotho*

### Introduction

The tourism industry plays a vital role in the economic success of many countries globally and has received attention of researchers for many years (Naseem 2021). In order to advance economically, most developing countries have targeted the tourism sector with a perspective that it carries forward the desired economic benefits (Samimi et al. 2017). However, many African countries might not be gaining much economic benefits as they have a weaker global competitiveness position as evidenced from the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index reports from 2007 to 2019, which shows that the majority of African countries are ranking in the bottom 100 on an average of 140 countries globally (World Economic Forum 2007, 2015, 2017, 2019). An extensive literature review identified that tourism activities have a long-term influence on economic growth, and, this is generally known as the tourism-led growth hypothesis (Naseem 2021). Studies supporting tourism-led growth hypothesis include those of Akinboade and Lydia (2010), Selimi et al. (2017), Manzoor et al. (2019), Songling et al. (2019), and Naseem (2021). On the other hand, few studies have identified a negative correlation between tourism activities and economic growth and these include the studies of Tang and Soocheong (2009), and Lee (2021). Brida et al. (2016)

---

<sup>\*</sup>Lecturer, Lerotholi Polytechnic, Lesotho.

conducted an exhaustive review of approximately 100 peer-reviewed published papers on the tourism-led growth hypothesis and identified that with a few exceptions, the empirical findings suggest that overall international tourism drives economic growth

This study intends to assess the impact of tourism on Lesotho's economic development. As much as tourism has been noted to be a widely researched area, there is no comprehensive study focusing on the economic impact of tourism in Lesotho, therefore, this study shall close this research gap. In particular, the study focuses on tourism impact on revenue, employment, investment, and export. The study shall further investigate the drawbacks prohibiting tourism development in Lesotho. It is believed that the identification of these tourism development drawbacks shall channel the Lesotho tourism decision-makers towards critical areas requiring more attention in order to accelerate the country's tourism competitiveness.

Lesotho is an African country that provides a unique tourism experience due to appealing natural landscape, rich flora and fauna, towering peaks, rich culture, water streams, and magnificent mountain range (Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation 2016). Unique tourism assets possessed by Lesotho include Thabana Ntlenyana which is Africa's highest peak (Lesotho Review 2018) and the majestic Maletsunyane Falls; one of the highest waterfalls in Southern Africa (Travel Weekly 2014). According to Stage et al. (2011), resources such as rocks, mountains, caves, scenic views, and other natural resources are what draw visitors to a destination. The government of Lesotho is embarking on putting appropriate measures to elevate the country's tourism performance with a belief that this sector has a potential to emancipate Lesotho's economy (Yiu et al. 2015). With relevance to its tourism assets, Lesotho's tourism industry has a high potential to contribute significantly to the country's economic development and job creation. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2018), tourism has the potential to contribute immensely to Lesotho's GDP and employment; hence, the Lesotho government has attempted to eliminate potential factors that could hamper the sector's development.

## **Literature Review**

Economic development is a crucial determinant of economic welfare (Shihab et al. 2014). Tourism is an economic activity that leads to economic benefits such as income generation, employment creation, and source of export (Hall and Lew 2009), and the World Travel and Tourism Council (2017) added that tourism is also a source of investment which in-turn serve as an economic advantage. The next discussion shall provide details relating to tourism as a source of income, employment, export earnings, and investment.

*Tourism as a Source of Income*

The economic significance of the tourism industry occurs because travellers earn money in their own countries but spend it in the host destination (Cooper 2012). The influences of tourism in an economy differ from country to country and mainly depend on how the tourism sector is structured and how the actions of various players in the local economy are interlinked (Lemma 2014). One of the purposes of engaging in tourism operations is to promote economic benefits and to meet the daily needs of host communities through improved living standards (Hashemkhani Zolfani et al. 2012). The World Travel and Tourism Council (2018b) explains that the tourism industry's direct contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is calculated consistently with the amount produced as indicated in the national accounting of tourism sub-sectors like accommodation, commercial airlines, travel agencies, and other related services that deal directly with tourists. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2017), the total contribution to the GDP is supported by these activities inclusive of travel and tourism investment spending, government collective spending, and domestic purchases of products sold by the sub-sectors directly linked with tourism.

*Tourism as a Source of Employment*

According to Dayananda (2014), employment is a crucial macroeconomic concept that describes the physiology and anatomy of economic development. It is an instrument utilised to attain development; thus, total employment is a target for all countries. Employment offers a chance to earn income, a tool for self-respect and provides entitlement and command over goods and services. The Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account Programme (2010) acknowledged that if supported by relevant regulations, tourism could be an instrument of fighting unemployment. Tourism forms a wide range of employment opportunities in various sectors including lodging, eateries, transport services, travel agencies, tour operators, natural, and cultural attractions sites (Aynalem et al. 2016). Among other key industries that contribute to economic growth, the tourism industry had been ranked as the second-largest employer across the world (Esakki 2015). Aynalem, et al. (2016) emphasised that the whole tourism industry can only prosper if it employs qualified personnel or own a sustainable workforce, which is considered as the main source of excellence and speedy service delivery. Tourism also usually injects money into the local community, leading to secondary economic development; for example, successful resorts may generate employment through the engagement of a local commercial laundry facility or a pet boarding business (Westcott 2016).

*Tourism as a Source of Export Earnings*

Money spent by a foreign traveller at a tourist destination or visitor exports is a significant element of the direct contribution to the tourism industry (World Travel and Tourism Council 2018b). According to Okodua and Ewetan (2013),

the connection from exports to economic development is often described by the literature as export-led growth. Goods and services exported are an important foundation of foreign exchange earnings that ease the pressure on the balance of payments and generates wealth (Shihab et al. 2014). Exports can improve intra-industry trade, incorporate the local economy into the world economy, and shield the local economy from the impact of external shocks (Okodua and Ewetan 2013). The study of Elbeydi et al. (2010) and Bakari and Krit (2017) found that an increment in the amount of export leads to a positive impact on economic development. Yuksel and Zengin (2016) agree that there is a positive relationship caused by an increment in export, though this strategy might bring dissimilar implications for different countries. For example, Elmakki et al. (2017) indicate that a negative connection between export and economic development could be the result of weak economic strategies and unfocused international trade policies.

#### *Tourism as a Source of Investment*

Investment in tourism holds the potential to accelerate economic growth and lessen the poverty levels as it targets various sectors within this industry (Banerjee et al. 2015). Investing in tourism infrastructure increases the capacity to meet the demand of tourists and upsurge their satisfaction in a tourist destination (Jovanovic and Ivana 2016). Yazdi et al. (2017b) highlight that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is one of the mechanisms that developing countries can utilise to strengthen their tourism position, this area of research requires further exploration. Also, the findings of Nawaz and Hassan (2016) also shed light on the issue that there is insufficient research on the effects of tourism investment for both the private and public sectors. Correspondingly, Yazdi et al. (2017a) acknowledge that much has been studied about FDI globally, but yet again, researchers have been slow to deliver new knowledge on the relationship between tourism and FDI. There is a wide belief that FDI carries positive spill-over effects to host economies in terms of knowledge transfer, employment generation, and improvement of competition. For example, engaging in FDI in host countries has also been referred to as sustainable investment which invites the appropriate type of investment that brings significant socio-economic development (Wentworth et al. 2015).

As a giant economic activity, tourism encompasses many economic and social sectors, turning it into an attractive development sector for foreign investors hence it is a high priority industry for investment promotion agencies throughout the world. There is mounting global competition between tourism destinations and increasing contestability of foreign investment, making effective promotion strategies a key element for attracting investors (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2010). The Ministry of Tourism Egypt (2016) also contributed to this view by highlighting that tourism can be an instrumental force towards economic development through its potential to attract foreign investment. Bezuidenhout and Sonja (2016) indicate that though international investment in tourism is still lagging in some African countries, a higher share of the present investment in the tourism industry is made in the lodging facilities. Taking the example of Fiji, the improvement of the tourism sector in this country has largely



been enhanced by foreign investment in lodging facilities, resorts and other infrastructural facilities (Jayaraman et al. 2014). However, when evaluating the dimensions of tourism FDI in the Gambian lodging establishment sector, Davidson and Sahli (2015) discovered that foreign investment was notably dominant in larger and more high-class lodging establishments.

### **Research Methodology**

A literature review approach was adopted to guide this study. Blaikie (2009) highlights that research data can be collected through primary, secondary, and tertiary data sources. The study mainly utilised secondary data and as noted by Greenhoot and Dowsett (2012), secondary data sets are a well-organised and are an excellent resource for addressing issues in developmental sciences. Secondary data also refers to data that has been collected before by other individuals which are either published or unpublished (Kapur 2018). The first step in conducting this research was an exploration of a wide literature on the economic impact of tourism in Lesotho. The study mainly utilised the information collected from the World Travel and Tourism Council reports from 2015 to 2020 which indicated the tourism performance of the year 2014, 2016, 2017, and 2019 (it is important to note that at the time of the research, the 2020 economic performance could not be located). The literature relating to drawbacks prohibiting tourism development in Lesotho was gathered by exploring online databases such as journals and government and non-governmental organisations reports.

### **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 demonstrates Lesotho's tourism industry's economic impact between 2014 and 2019. It is important to note that the 2015 and 2018 performances were not reported because of information unavailability. The information shown on the table comprises of the industry's total contribution to the GDP, employment, visitor export, and tourism investment. These are reported in both percentages and financial values.

**Table 1.** *Contribution of the Tourism Industry to Lesotho's Economy in Rands*

Contribution to the economy	Year 2014		Year 2016		Year 2017		Year 2019	
	Value or number	% of value or number	Value or number	% of Value or number	Value or number	% of value or number	Value or number	% of value or number
GDP: total contribution	R2,886.2 million	12.1% of GDP	R3,348.7 million	12.2% of GDP	R4,190.3 million	13.8% of GDP	R4,953.0 million	12.3% of GDP
Employment: total contribution	53,000 jobs	10.5% of total jobs	79,000 jobs	11.4% of total jobs	94,500 jobs	13% of total jobs	92,900 jobs	12.6% of total jobs
Visitor exports	R386.5 million	3.3% of total exports	R405.8 million	2.9% of total exports	R792.6 million	5.5% of total exports	R345.7 million	2.1% of total exports
Investment	R423.2 million	6.3% of total investment	R707.9 million	7.2% of total investment	R639 million 7.3%	7.3% of total investment	n/a	n/a

Adapted from: World Travel and Tourism Council (2015), (2017), (2018a), (2020).

From Table 1, it can be observed that tourism activities contribution to Lesotho's total GDP had progressed slightly from the year 2014 to 2017 with a growth of 1.7%. However, the country witnessed a slight decline of 1.5% in tourism contribution to the total GDP between 2017 and 2019; though the decline was observed in the percentage form, an upward financial surge from R4,190.3 to R4,959.0 million was attained in this period. It was projected that the industry's contribution to the GDP would decline by 1.2% in the year 2017 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018a), however, Lesotho realised a growth of 1% during this period. As noted from the table, between 2014 to 2019, the tourism industry's contribution to the country's GDP grew from R2,886.2 to R4,953.0 million, which indicates the industry's financial value expanded by R2,066.8 million in this period, accounting to a growth of 71.6%. A steady expansion of the industry's financial value can therefore be noticed from the year 2014 to 2019, and according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2018a), the contribution was still expected to grow by 3.4% per annum from 2018 to 2028. Generally, the growth rates varied mostly between 2005 and 2007 and started to stabilise from 2008 onwards (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2013). The tourism's industry's contribution to the national GDP in Lesotho mostly results from the input of lodging establishments and eateries which experienced a moderate annual growth of 4% between 2012 and 2013 (United Nations Development Programme 2017).

Lesotho has a high unemployment rate. From 2013 to 2019 unemployment stood at 24.58% (2013), 24.4% (2015), 24.13% (2017), and 23.96% (2019) (Statista.Com 2021). Lesotho had been over-dependent on South Africa for job opportunities, specifically on the mining industry (Country Watch Lesotho 2018), however, South Africa's on-going decline of deep-gold-mine operations in the previous years has influenced Lesotho's high unemployment rate (Barry 2017). As shown in Table 1, tourism activities managed to expand the number of jobs in Lesotho, and tourism employment had been steadily growing between 2014 and 2017. However, the number of jobs declined by 0.4% between 2017 and 2019; according to the statistics, the industry's total contribution to employment declined from 94,500 in 2017 to 92,900 jobs in 2019, which indicates a 1,600 number of jobs lost.

Furthermore, the tourism industry also boosts the exportation of domestic products. The main Lesotho exports include apparel, diamonds, water, wool, and tobacco (Cross-Border Road Transport Agency 2017). The statistics highlight that the country witnessed a steady growth of tourists' contribution to Lesotho's exports. Between 2014 to 2017, Lesotho realised a 2.2% export growth stimulated by visitors, however, tourism led exports declined between 2017 and 2019 accounting to a downfall of 3.4% of the country's total export; signifying a total decline of R446.9 million from 2017 to 2019. Moreover, FDI is considered as an instrument to fund new structures, permits transmission of advanced technology and forms of management, and enables multiplier effects (Yazdi et al. 2017a). Further, the results of Işık (2015) noted a positive correlation between FDI and tourism development. The government of Lesotho has noted the importance of investment to advance its economy, hence it developed mechanisms of promoting

local and international investment (Ministry of Trade and Industry 2015). However, it can be drawn from the table that the country's tourism industry investment has not been steady, as noted from the weakening investment in 2017 as compared to 2016. It can be drawn that industry suffered a downturn of 0.1% between 2016 and 2017; however, the 2018 forecasts indicated that investment in the industry was likely to escalate by 4.7% per year till 2028 (World Travel and Tourism Council 2018a).

### *Challenges Facing the Lesotho Tourism Industry*

According to the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (2017), the country's tourism industry strived to attain the five dimensions of quality service namely, tangibility, responsiveness, reliability empathy, and assurance. As much as Lesotho plans to improve its tourism performance, there are notable impediments prohibiting the country's tourism development. According to Rasethuntsa (2021a) and the Cross-Border Road Transport Agency (2017), adequate accommodation services standards in key tourism areas are lacking. Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme (2017) also highlights that Lesotho has under-developed infrastructure, limited tourism skills, and low financial access to support the industry. Also, Yiu et al. (2015) further identified that under-utilisation of information and communication technology in lodging facilities as one major infrastructural challenge prohibiting efficiency in this industry.

On the other hand, the Cross-Border Road Transport Agency (2017) brings-forth the fact that Lesotho is under resourced relating to investment in health and wellness resorts. Lesotho's landscape of high altitude, clean mountain air, and water, among other provides the country an opportunity to attract a high number of tourists. Private investment across tourism industry however considered inadequate, and tourism service provisions also considered lagging (United Nations Development Programme 2017). Furthermore, Rasethuntsa (2021b) and the United Nations Development Programme (2017) indicate that in Lesotho, there are no business relationships between accommodation facilities and tourist attractions and the tourism industry consists of poorly developed value-chains across all sub-sectors. Furthermore, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2013) highlights that the country fails to prioritise tourism collaborations at a regional level and collaborations between tourism- and non-tourism organisations are weak.

The United Nations Development Programme (2017) shed light that the tourism industry in Lesotho offers low quality services to its clientele, and there is no proper packaging, branding, and marketing strategies in place; making the destination unattractive to tourists. Lesotho's tourism products do not meet the required standards (Yiu et al. 2015). According to the United Nations Development Programme (2017), there are less community-based tourism products in the country. Also, limited protection of cultural heritage from destruction and loss of flora and fauna due to less protection is one major challenge prohibiting Lesotho's tourism development (United Nations Development Programme 2017). According to Yiu et al. (2015), the Lesotho tour operator sector is very weak, resulting in

major monetary leakages and overly relying on South African based tour operators to manage and coordinate tours around Lesotho. Also, harassment of tourists inside the country has been noted as one of the challenges facing the country's tourism industry (Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation 2016).

Encapsulating what this literature has brought-forth, it is evident that Lesotho is facing several challenges in this industry. These range from low investment, poor infrastructure, low levels of collaborations at the regional and local level, limited marketing of the country's tourism products, improper management of the sector, low quality products, lack of community involvement in tourism activities, and skills shortages.

### **Limitations, Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study explored the economic impact of the tourism sector in Lesotho and further identified challenges that are hindering the country's tourism development. The statistics indicated that tourism has positively contributed to the country's GDP from the year 2014 to 2019 from the financial amount of R4,190.3 million to 4,959.0 million. The findings also indicate that tourism jobs expanded from 53,000 jobs in 2014 to 92,900 in 2019. Investment in the tourism sector in Lesotho also increased from R423.2 million in 2014 to R639.0 million in 2019. However, visitor exports declined from R386.5 million in 2014 to R345.7 million in 2019. The study has achieved its intention of shedding light on the economic impact of tourism in the Lesotho's economy. It could be concluded that there are moderate improvements regarding tourism earnings, job creation, export revenues, and investment which all contribute positively towards the overall economic development in the country. Selimi et al. (2017), Donihue et al. (2015) and Naseem (2021) also found a positive relationship between tourism and economic growth. The study therefore supports the tourism-led economic growth hypothesis.

Tourism challenges in Lesotho seem to be affecting both the public and the private sector and shortcomings also seem to be coming from both parties. It is therefore recommended that Lesotho should consider benchmarking studies to learn strategies it could adopt to overcome these various challenges. It is also recommended that the Lesotho public and private sectors should form collaborations with other neighbouring countries to learn best practices and share tourism development strategies. The Lesotho government is also urged to improve the country's tourism marketing as Lesotho has some unique features to showcase to potential tourists. The public sector in collaboration with the private sector could also engage in educational programmes to sensitize the local community about the importance of preserving nature. This would result in more tourists coming into the country and yield positive returns especially to the business and public community, for example, through job creation and high revenue as a result of an upsurge of visits.

It is acknowledged that there might be other tourism challenges affecting the industry that could have been missed by the study because of less documentation regarding tourism industry in Lesotho. This study has however, contributed in

developing a platform for further research as it has opened doors for fresh information regarding tourism economic development impact and challenges in Lesotho. Future research could concentrate more on the challenges faced by different sectors within the Lesotho tourism industry inclusive of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the sectors performance. As noted by Papanikos (2020) and Jones and Comfort (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic brought-forth multiple challenges for the tourism industry. Again, because this research data relied mainly on secondary data, future research could focus on generating primary data to analyse the impact of tourism in the country's economic growth and also identify challenges faced by the Lesotho tourism industry.

The study's results are significant to policy makers in Lesotho as they highlight areas that prohibit tourism development in the country and also areas that need critical attention such as the observed decline in visitors' exports. It is proposed that the government should develop appropriate marketing skills to promote tourism exports and further assist tourism businesses in developing marketing skills to upsurge visitors' exports.

## Acknowledgments

This article is an extract from a Ph.D. thesis that was supervised by Prof Sandra Perks at the Nelson Mandela University, South Africa.

## References

- Akinboade OA, Lydia AB (2010) International tourism and economic development in South Africa: a Granger causality test. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 12(2): 149–63.
- Aynalem S, Birhanu K, Tesefay S (2016) Employment opportunities and challenges in tourism and hospitality sectors. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality* 5(6):1–5.
- Bakari S, Krit M (2017) The nexus between exports, imports and economic growth: evidence from Mauritania. *International Journal of Economics and Empirical Research* 5(1):10–17.
- Banerjee O, Cicowiez M, Gachot S (2015) A quantitative framework for assessing public investment in tourism: an application to Haiti. *Tourism Management* 51(Dec): 157–173.
- Barry JJ (2017) *The mineral industry of Lesotho 2014*. Retrieved from: <https://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2014/myb3-2014-lt.pdf>. [Accessed 15 October 2021]
- Bezuidenhout H, Sonja G (2016) The dimensions of FDI in the tourism sector in Africa. *The Journal of Applied Business Research* 32(4): 1115–1136.
- Blaikie N (2009) *Designing social research*. 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Brida JG, Cortes-Jimenez I, Pulina M (2016) Has the tourism-led growth hypothesis been validated? A literature review. *Current Issues in Tourism* 19(5): 394–430.
- Cooper C (2012) *Essentials of tourism*. Harlow: Pearson Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- Country Watch Lesotho (2018) *Lesotho country review*. Retrieved from: [www.countrywatch.com/Content/pdfs/reviews/B3M8MZML.01c.pdf](http://www.countrywatch.com/Content/pdfs/reviews/B3M8MZML.01c.pdf). [Accessed 8 October 2021].

- Cross-Border Road Transport Agency (2017) *Lesotho country profile report*. Pretoria: Cross-Border Road Transport Agency.
- Davidson L, Sahli M (2015) Foreign direct investment in tourism, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development: a review of the Gambian hotel sector. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 23(2): 167–187.
- Dayananda KC (2014) Tourism employment: opportunities and challenges in Karnataka – special reference to Kodagu district. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 9(11): 1–11.
- Donihue M, Dissanayake TMS, O’Keeff L (2015) A case study of the economic impact of seasonal visitors to a lake watershed environment. *Athens Journal of Tourism* 2(2): 81–92.
- Elbeydi KR, Hamuda AM, Gazda V (2010) The relationship between export and economic growth in Libya Arab Jamahiriya. *Theoretical and Applied Economics* 1(542): 69–76.
- Elmakki A, Bakari S, Mabrouki M (2017) *The Nexus between industrial exports and economic growth in Tunisia: Empirical analysis*. Munich Personal RePEc Archive, Paper 79360. Munich, Germany: University Library of Munich.
- Esakki T (2015) Role of tourism industry in employment generation: a case study of Nagaland. In *Emerging Innovative Marketing Strategies in the Tourism Industry*, 359–368. IGI Global.
- Greenhoot AF, Dowsett CJ (2012) Secondary data analysis: an important tool for addressing developmental questions. *Journal of Cognition and Development* 13(1): 2–18.
- Hall CM, Lew AA (2009) *Understanding and managing tourism impacts: an integrated approach*. New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Hashemkhani Zolfani S, Sedaghat M, Maknoon R, Zavadskas EK (2015) Sustainable tourism: a comprehensive literature review on frameworks and applications. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja* 28(1): 1–30.
- İşik C (2015) Foreign direct investment in tourism: panel data analysis of D7 Countries. *Athens Journal of Tourism* 2(2): 93–104.
- Jayaraman TK, Chen H, Bhatt M (2014) Contribution of foreign direct investment to the tourism sector in Fiji: an empirical study. *Tourism Economics* 20(6): 1357–1362.
- Jones P, Comfort D (2020) The COVID-19 crisis, tourism and sustainable development. *Athens Journal of Tourism* 7(2): 75–86.
- Jovanovic S, Ivana I (2016) Infrastructure as important determinant of tourism development in the countries of Southeast Europe. *Ecoforum Journal* 5(1): 228–294.
- Kapur R (2018) *Research methodology: methods and strategies*. Delhi, India: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Delhi.
- Lee CG (2021) Tourism-led growth hypothesis: international tourism versus domestic tourism-Evidence from China. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 23(5): 881–890.
- Lemma AF (2014) *Tourism impacts: evidence of impacts on employment, gender, income*. Retrieved from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089f2ed915d622c000495/Tourism\\_Impacts\\_employment\\_gender\\_income\\_A\\_Lemma.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089f2ed915d622c000495/Tourism_Impacts_employment_gender_income_A_Lemma.pdf). [Accessed 18 October 2021]
- Lesotho Review (2018) *An overview of the Kingdom of Lesotho’s economy*. 2018th Edition. Umdloti Beach: Wade Publications CC.
- Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (2016) *Lesotho tourism news report*. Maseru: Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation
- Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (2017) *Lesotho tourism news*. Retrieved from: <https://visitlesotho.travel/custom/flipping/LTDC-Newsletter-2017/files/.../page-4.html>. [Accessed 6 October 2021]

- Manzoor F, Wei L, Asif M (2019) The contribution of sustainable tourism to economic growth and employment in Pakistan. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 16(19): 3785.
- Ministry of Tourism Egypt (2016) *Promoting tourism as an engine of inclusive growth and sustainable growth in Africa*. Retrieved from: [www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/events/20160721/egypt-tourism.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/events/20160721/egypt-tourism.pdf). [Accessed 6 October 2021]
- Ministry of Trade and Industry (2015) *National investment policy Lesotho*. Maseru: Government Printing.
- Naseem S (2021) The role of tourism in economic growth: empirical evidence from Saudi Arabia. *Economies* 9(117):1–12.
- Nawaz MA, Hassan S (2016) Investment and tourism: insights from the literature. *International Journal of Economic Perspectives* 10(4): 581–590.
- Okodua H, Ewetan OO (2013) Econometric analysis of exports and economic growth in Nigeria. *Journal of Business Management and Applied Economics* 2(3): 1–14.
- Papanikos GT (2020) The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Greek tourism. *Athens Journal of Tourism* 7(2): 87–100.
- Rasethuntsa BC (2021a) Service delivery in Lesotho tourist attractions: are tourists satisfied with the service provision? *Journal of Business and Management Review* 2(10): 677–691.
- Rasethuntsa BC (2021b) The dimensions of tourism businesses- and associations collaborations to promote tourism development Lesotho. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 11(9): 392–406.
- Samimi AJ, Sadeghi S, Sadeghi S (2017) The relationship between foreign direct investment and tourism development: evidence from developing countries. *Institutions and Economies* 5(2): 59–68.
- Selimi N, Sadiku M, Sadiku L (2017) The impact of tourism on economic growth in the Western Balkan countries: an empirical analysis. *International Journal of Business and Economic Sciences Applied Research* 10(2): 19–25.
- Shihab RA, Soufan T, Abdul-Khaliq S (2014) The causal relationship between exports and economic growth in Jordan. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research* 14(1): 119–124.
- Songling Y, Ishtiaq M, Thanh BT (2019) Tourism industry and economic growth Nexus in Beijing, China. *Economies* 7(1): 1–15.
- Stage J, Brown D, Hawkin S (2011) *Tourism destination management: achieving sustainable and competitive results*. Washington DC: USAID.
- Statista.Com (2021) *Lesotho: unemployment rate from 1999 to 2020*. Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/448024/unemployment-rate-in-lesotho/>. [Accessed 7 October 2021]
- Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account Programme (2010) Questionnaire on tourism and employment: overview of results. In *United Nations World Tourism Organisation 2nd T.20 Ministers Meeting*, 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> October 2010, Republic of Korea.
- Tang C, Soocheong J (2009) The tourism–economy causality in the United States: a sub-industry level examination. *Tourism Management* 30(4): 553–558.
- Travel Weekly (2014) *Lesotho offers a high-altitude escape from modern-life*. Retrieved from: <http://www.travelweekly.com/Middle-East-Africa-Travel/Lesotho-offers-a-high-altitude-escape-from-modern-life>. [Accessed 16 May 2021]
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2010) *Promoting foreign investment in tourism: investment advisory service a, number 5*. Geneva: United Nations on Trade and Development.
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2013) *Services policies review of Lesotho*. Geneva: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.



- United Nations Development Programme (2017) *Lesotho country analysis working document final draft*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.
- Wentworth L, Schoeman M, Langalanga A (2015) *Foreign direct investment and inclusive growth in Southern Africa*. Economic Diplomacy Programme, South African Institute of International Affairs.
- Westcott M (2016) *Fundamentals of business: hospitality and tourism*. Retrieved from: <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/70961/Chapter%2015%20Hospitality%20and%20Tourism.pdf>. [Accessed 16 October 2021]
- World Economic Forum (2007). *Travel and tourism competitive index report 2007*. Cologne: World Economic Forum.
- World Economic Forum (2015) *Travel and tourism competitive index report 2015*. Cologne: World Economic Forum.
- World Economic Forum (2017) *Travel and tourism competitive index report 2017*. Cologne: World Economic Forum.
- World Economic Forum (2019) *Travel and tourism competitive index report 2019*. Cologne: World Economic Forum.
- World Travel and Tourism Council (2015) *Travel and tourism economic impact Lesotho*. London: World Travel and Tourism Council.
- World Travel and Tourism Council (2017) *Travel and tourism economic impact: World*. London: World Travel and Tourism Council.
- World Travel and Tourism Council (2018a) *Travel and tourism economic impact 2018 Lesotho*. London: World Travel and Tourism Council.
- World Travel and Tourism Council (2018b) *Travel and tourism economic impact 2018 world*. London: World Travel and Tourism Council.
- World Travel and Tourism Council (2020) *Lesotho 2020 annual research: key highlights*. London: World Travel and Tourism Council.
- Yazdi SK, Nateghian N, Rezaie NS (2017a) The causality relationships between tourism development and foreign direct investment: an empirical study in EU countries. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events* 9(3): 247–263.
- Yazdi SK, Salehi HK, Soheilzad M (2017b) The relationship between tourism, foreign direct investment and economic growth: evidence from Iran. *Current Issues in Tourism* 20(1): 15–26.
- Yiu L, Saner R, Lee MR (2015) *Lesotho, a tourism destination: an analysis of Lesotho's current tourism products and potential for growth*. In AA Camillo, *Handbook of Research on Global Hospitality and Tourism Management*. Harshey: IGI Global.
- Yuksel S, Zengin S (2016) Causality relationship between import, export and growth rate in developing countries. *International Journal of Commerce and Finance* 2(1): 147–156.



## Hospitality Management Specialization Practical Courses Evaluation and Development

By Masooma Al-Balushi\* & Tamer Mohamed Atef<sup>±</sup>

*Students registered in the Tourism Department undergraduate program at the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) study 12 specialization requirements courses (36 credit hours) in one of the department specializations (Tourism Management - Hospitality Management) for 4 semesters. The Hospitality Management specialization study plan comprises two practical courses “Food Production” and “Service in Hospitality”. Both courses have a weekly 50-minute theoretical (In-class) foundation part complemented by a weekly 4-hour practical application part. Over the years, the location for the two courses practical application part has been a major concern, commercial properties as a training location or catering facilities on SQU premises? many questions were posed seeking to determine which location better enhances students learning experience and helps the accomplishment of courses objectives and learning outcomes. The current study aims to evaluate the teaching and learning experience of the two practical Hospitality Management Specialization courses: “Food Production” and “Service in Hospitality”. End of practical application reports of students enrolled in the “Food Production” course in Fall 2018 and Fall 2019 were analyzed. A survey was distributed to Spring 2020 “Service in Hospitality” course students. Then finally, interviews with the two courses instructors were conducted in Spring 2020. Students’ evaluations and responses were straight forward while instructors’ comments were thorough, correlating the investigated courses to the other study plan courses showing their wholistic effect on the program sustainability. The study outcomes are important in evaluating the practical courses status leading to an enhanced teaching and learning experience and is a step towards the undergraduate program study plan reformulation and update.*

**Keywords:** tourism, hospitality, practical courses, study plan, education, training, Oman

### Introduction

All students registering in the Tourism Department at the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) study the major requirements courses, which include 12 courses (34 credit hours). Students usually receive these courses during their first four semesters in the department. Students will then proceed towards the specialization requirements courses, which includes

---

\* Assistant Professor, Tourism Department, College of Arts and Social Sciences, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman.

<sup>±</sup> Associate Professor, Hotel Studies Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, University of Sadat City, Egypt.

12 courses (36 credit hours) in one of the department specializations (Tourism Management - Hospitality Management) for 4 semesters.

The current study aims to evaluate the teaching and learning experience of the two practical Hospitality Management Specialization courses:

- Food Production Course.
- Service in Hospitality Course.

Both courses have a weekly 50-minute theoretical foundation part complemented by a weekly 4-hour practical application<sup>1</sup> part. Currently, the theoretical foundation takes place in a classroom setting and the practical application takes place at the SQU students' services center kitchen for the "Food Production" course and at the SQU faculty club restaurant for the "Service in Hospitality" course. It is worth noting that the maximum enrollment number for each of these two courses is set at 15 students (Please check the following link as an example of the Tourism Department enrollment figures: <https://portal.squ.edu.om/sectioncounts>).

### **Arrangements for the Practical Application Part of the Courses**

- Course file is given to the field trainer, followed by an explanation of the course objectives, learning outcomes, and course topics that are going to be covered during the practical application sessions.
- The course instructor is usually present at the beginning of each training session to assure discipline and punctuality.

### **Course Evaluation Methods**

- Classroom Questions and Answers allowed to gain continuous feedback on students learning progress and the achievement of the course objectives and learning outcomes.
- End of practical application period report is required from students to assure achievement of course objectives and learning outcomes, in addition to assessing the practical application experience status.
- A standard end of semester courses evaluation survey is sent to all students by SQU administration.

### **Course Practical Application Location**

Based on students' feedback, the courses practical application location was changed from commercial properties to SQU onsite catering facilities (Academic

---

<sup>1</sup>The word "Training" is used to indicate the practical application part of the courses as well.

Year: 2012-2013). The following were concerns and issues raised by students about commercial properties experience that directed the change:

- Students were trained in commercial properties which required the services of SQU transportation department to move students from SQU to the training location and vice-versa.
- Field trainers were not free to train students due to work pressure and demands.
- Students were given minimal/hard labor tasks.

The SQU onsite catering facilities usage allowed students to experience institutional operations environment while commercial operations environment is to be experienced during internship 1 & 2 courses.

## **Literature Review**

Although the tourism and hospitality industry is a gold mine of employment opportunities, the industry faces challenges due to skills shortages, high turnover rates, business fluctuations, and of course costs of training (Ryan et al. 2016). Therefore, the industry seeks the help of academic institutions to provide a work-ready graduate with the skills and capabilities to deal with real-world challenges (Balula et al. 2019, Patiar et al. 2019).

Students themselves also expect that their tertiary education will provide them with industry-oriented curricula with real-world focused courses that include hands-on learning opportunities and thus, increase their employability chances (Schoffstall et al. 2017).

Equipping students with industry needed competences is the role of tourism and hospitality educational institutions. In the context of tourism and hospitality education, students' competencies can be understood as a collection of cognitive, functional, social, and emotional skills required for success. The tourism and hospitality curricula and competencies development and success are dependent on the efficiency of the interaction between academics, students, and industry affiliates (Dawson 2014, Mahmoud 2018).

Enrolment rates for an academic program is greatly affected by employability. Higher education institutions are under pressure to prepare students to be employable (Harvey 2010, Jauhari and Manaktola 2006). The tourism and hospitality academic programs are preoccupied by balancing theory with practical application in response to the industry ever-changing manpower skillsets (Ruhanen 2005).

While recognizing that the employability of students should be a primary goal of tourism and hospitality academic programs, curricula should be well structured and balanced including philosophical, sociological, managerial, and entrepreneurial courses to enhance students decision-making capabilities, as well as their professional work ethics (Inui et al. 2006, Atef and Al-Balushi 2015).

Academics and instructors develop and deliver curricula, manage the educational teaching and learning experience, they play an important role in engaging students throughout courses (Nguyen and LeBlanc 2021, Odio et al. 2014, Tucker and Clarke 2014). But this is only one side of the coin, the students' own motivation and enthusiasm makes the difference (Wang 2013, Chen et al. 2018).

Growth in numbers of tourism and hospitality academic programs has increased the demand for faculty positions. Colleges and universities look for distinctive faculty members. The lack of practical industry work experience among academics is a pressing issue. This would negatively affect students learning experience, and of course, would not guarantee them a smooth transition to the industry workforce (Nguyen and LeBlanc 2021, Tepeci et al. 2001, Wu et al. 2014).

Ongoing efforts have been made to address the needs of stakeholders in terms of learning outcomes, curricula, educational conceptual models, and teaching methods. Traditionally, hotels, restaurants, and resorts were dominant study areas within tourism and hospitality education. New study areas have been introduced to cope with the ever-changing industry demands such as convention and exhibition management, events, cruises, theme parks, and clubs, widening the spectrum of hospitality and tourism curricula (Cho et al. 2006, Lee et al. 2010).

The following are suggested perspectives to be considered for tourism and hospitality curricula development (Ring et al. 2009, Atef and Al-Balushi 2017):

1. Global tourism and hospitality trends.
2. Critical and flexible thinking.
3. Professionalism and Business ethics.
4. Management and entrepreneurial orientation.
5. Information Technology.

Education and Training do not refer to the same activity. Education is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and moral values on a broad level, whereas Training is directed towards development of specific skills and applied knowledge leading to change in behaviour and attitude. The hospitality industry uses training to improve current job skills, prepare for career advancement, teach new or changing occupational requirements (Tannenbaum et al. 1991, Peterson and Hicks 1996, Statt 2000). Evaluation is a must in training as it is in education. Training evaluation is the attempt to obtain feedback on the training program conducted and to assess its efficiency (Go et al. 1996, Sommerville 2007).

Tourism and hospitality academic institutions place great importance on practical applications and forms of training programs. A well-educated, well trained, and skilled graduate is the demand of today's tourism and hospitality job market (Canny 2002, Ng and Burke 2006, Koc et al. 2014).

Generally, training methods could be gathered under the following categories (Forrest 1996, Go et al. 1996, Statt 2000, Boella and Goss-Turner 2005, Sommerville 2007):

- On the job training: Training is delivered directly to employees while on the job.
- Job rotation or cross-training: Train employees in other areas out of their direct jobs.
- Off the job training: Usually training is provided in a traditional classroom setting.
- Other training methods: Which include internships, role playing, case studies, etc.

One of the most effective progressive on the job training techniques is “Job Shadowing” defined as the practice of accompanying a designated employee to see and learn from this employee’s on-the-job skills demonstration. In job shadowing for education, a student would accompany an experienced employee during performing his job duties and responsibilities. Shadowing is an important practice for college students to experience a particular position to ascertain its suitability for them and is one of the more holistic ways to ensure readiness for practice (Shardlow and Doel 1996, Gould 2000, Rony 2019).

Shadowing is a superior educational activity. Its benefits exceed those of speeches, speakers, cases, and educational videos (McCarthy and McCarthy 2006). It can be a great tool for college students to explore potential careers prior to committing to a specific one by finding out what happens in a particular job on daily basis (Mader et al. 2017, Heathfield 2020).

## **Methodology**

End of practical application reports of students enrolled in the “Food Production” course in Fall 2018 (8 reports) and Fall 2019 (9 reports) were analyzed. A survey was distributed to Spring 2020 “Service in Hospitality” course students (10 students). Then finally interviews with the two courses instructors (2 instructors - 2 interviews) were conducted in Spring 2020. The application of different research tools on the two courses allowed the evaluation of several aspects through different perspectives:

- Course practical application location.
- Course practical application learning experience.
- In class teaching and learning experience.
- Overall students’ perceptions.
- Overall instructors’ perceptions.
- Pros and cons of the current practical courses model.
- Overall study plan amendment and development.

### *Food Production Course*

This course is offered as part of the Fall courses. Upon the end of the practical application sessions, students are required to prepare and submit a report that

entails various aspect of the training experience and their overall perceptions. For the course instructors those reports are a means to assure the achievement of course objectives and learning outcomes and to assess the practical training experience status. Reports of students enrolled in the course in Fall 2018 and Fall 2019 were analyzed; see Table 1. A six-stage content analysis process suggested by Finn et al. (2000) was applied on students' reports which includes: aim and object identification, sample selection, recording scheme development, data reduction, analysis, and findings reporting. Furthermore, students' reflections were grouped and analyzed following SWOT analysis approach, to assess training experience strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

**Table 1.** *Respondents Status (Food Production Course)*

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Fall 2018</b>	<b>Fall 2019</b>
<b>Enrolled Students</b>	8	9
<b>Number of Papers Analyzed</b>	8	9

#### *Service in Hospitality course*

This course is offered as part of the Spring courses. A survey was distributed to Spring 2020 "Service in Hospitality" course students on week 6 of study to evaluate the ongoing course status allowing for any necessary corrective actions and amendments to be taken when required; see Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Respondents Status (Service in Hospitality Course)*

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Spring 2020</b>
<b>Enrolled Students</b>	11
<b>Number of Surveys Returned and Analyzed</b>	10

#### *Instructors Interviews*

For nearly 10 years (Fall 2009 till Spring 2020) two instructors were responsible for teaching those two courses. Semi structured interviews were conducted with the two instructors in Spring 2020, their comments were quoted and analyzed.

## **Discussion**

At the beginning of each semester the students are given a course file for each course they are registered in. The course file contains the course description, objectives, and learning outcomes.

#### *Part A: Food Production Course*

This course covers management considerations on quantity food production for schools, health care, hotels and other large volume institutions.



*The Course Objectives*

The course intends to:

- Demonstrate principles of sanitation and food safety.
- Explain the types of food production operations.
- Demonstrate the use of quantity food production equipment.
- Explain principles of menu planning.
- Explain the basic cooking principles and techniques of quantity food production.
- Discuss methods and procedures for purchasing, receiving, storage and issuing.

*The Course Learning Outcomes*

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

- Apply principles of sanitation and food safety.
- Demonstrate an understanding of quantity and quality food planning and production.
- Analyze menus for types, content, costs and profitability.
- Demonstrate an understanding of quantity food production equipment.
- Identify and solve food management issues.

The following section conveys the points raised by students and their perception of the educational experience (ST=Student, FL=Fall Semester):

*Course and Practical Training Aim and Objectives*

Based on the students statements it was clear that course objectives and learning outcomes were adhered to and collectively achieved which poses no problem when it comes to teaching and learning practices.

- “...see and apply what we got in the lecture...” (St1-FL18) (St4-FL19)  
“...I learned about machines and equipment...” (St3-FL18) (St5-FL19)  
“...I learned about personal hygiene and HACCP ...” (St3-FL18) (St2-FL19)  
“...I know what types of tools they use like knives, peelers, drainers, and blenders...” (St5-FL18)  
“...I became more familiar with the kitchen sections...” (St6-FL18)  
“...I learned how to organize the work...” (St1-FL18) (St5-FL19)  
“...I learned how to respect the staff and being polite and smiley with them...” (St5-FL18)  
“...we learned how the kitchen staff are divided...” (St2-FL18) (St7-FL19)  
“...I have learned how to work in groups...” (St3-FL18) (St7-FL19)  
“...they showed us what we studied in real life...” (St1-FL18) (St4-FL19)

*Pretraining/Personal Hygiene and Safety*

As arranged with the trainers, the executive chef (field trainer) explained to the students the basic essential kitchen rules, started with some sanitation, safety, and hygiene rules, then talked about the handling of food items:

- Safe lifting.
- Hands washing and no smoking policy.
- Handling kitchen tools and equipment.
- Safe food handling.
- Food contamination.

“...there was an orientation around the kitchen, but first they gave us some safety tips...” (St2-FL18) (St6-FL19)

“...everyone should wear the appropriate uniform, and this includes coats, aprons, and hair covers...” (St2-FL18) (St9-FL19)

“...first, we met the supervisor, we discussed the training method, we were briefed about the dress code...we had to wear the right outfit...non-slip shoes...” (St7-FL18) (St1-FL19)

“...the chef took us on a tour around the kitchen sections, and they are: hot kitchen, cold kitchen, butcher, bakery, dry store, chiller store...” (St4-FL18) (St7-FL18)

“...the chef told us about personal hygiene, we already studied in class...” (St7-FL18)

“...we tried to use some equipment in the right way...” (St2-FL18) (St8-FL19)

*Practical Work and Learning Experience*

Students were distributed over the various kitchen sections each with his own training schedule. This rotation scheme allowed the students the benefits of one on one training experience, giving a chance for students to pose questions and get answers without crowding the area or the trainer feeling under the stress of supervising many trainees at the same time.

“...we were distributed, each student in a different section...” (St1-FL19)

“...I have rotated the different areas and learned about them...when I gained an acceptable amount of knowledge, I move to another section...” (St8-FL18)

“...in the kitchen the chef was giving all the information that we need beside answering every question and inquiry we have...” (St3-FL18) (St8-FL19)

“...at the end of every training day we had a meeting with the chef to see if we had any questions or comments...” (St7-FL18)

*Cooking*

Cooking itself is not a course objective nor an outcome but quantity and quality food planning and production is the target. Students' statements show that to a great extent these aspects were covered through the specific kitchen activities they had. Appreciating the staff efforts done to feed a large number of patrons at

the same time and the control done by supervisors and managers was a major goal that was also achieved.

“...I have assisted the chefs in cooking several dishes such as rice, roast chicken, fried chicken, grilled fish, and some pasta dishes...” (St5-FL18)

“...I have learned that size of the vegetable cut matters and has to be precise and consistent...” (St1-FL19)

“...it is not like cooking at home...chefs follow standardized recipes...” (St8-FL18)

“...cooking for thousands every day...” (St6-FL18)

“...it is not only daily meals; they are cooking also for events...” (St6-FL18)

### *Receiving and Storing*

Students were able to see in practice how the procurement cycle takes place. This allowed them to understand the food cycle and how each cycle phase affects the whole food production and service operations.

“...I was helping in the receiving area where all deliveries are checked before storage...” (St7-FL18)

“...they also told me about food storage...” (St1-FL18) (St3-FL19)

“...there are five food stores or freezers in the student services center at Sultan Qaboos University...” (St2-FL18) (St4-FL19)

### *Overall Experience Evaluation*

The overall students' feedback was positive indicating that the practical application complemented the theoretical part harmoniously.

“...training in the student services kitchen at Sultan Qaboos University was a useful one...” (St7-FL18)

“...I have learned from this experience that planning and organizing are the key to success...” (St8-FL18)

“...working in such place gives you the power and the knowledge...” (St3-FL18) (St2-FL19)

### *SWOT Analysis*

Based on the analysis of students feedback the following SWOT analysis was formulated to help identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the practical training course (See Table 3):

**Table 3. SWOT Analysis**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation and induction of students is well executed before training startup.</li> <li>• It is on campus requires no transportation services.</li> <li>• It familiarizes the students with institutional food service operations.</li> <li>• Training supervision is easy being on campus.</li> <li>• Expands students' awareness of areas other than food production to areas like receiving and storage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only 4 hours per week.</li> <li>• The shift work system is not applied.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can make use of other SQU facilities such as, the faculty club and staff club kitchens to train larger numbers of students.</li> <li>• To build an educational kitchen specially designed for students training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interaction with trainers might be uncomfortable to trainees.</li> <li>• Absence and not following practical training scheduled phases.</li> </ul>

*Part B: Service in Hospitality Course*

This course will enable students to concentrate on a comprehensive study of dining service operations within the food and beverage industry that will include American, English, French and Russian service. The student will be able to plan service, write standards, schedule labor, and execute service for groups of customers.

*The Course Objectives*

The course intends to provide students with the ability to:

- Recognize various types of restaurants.
- Describe common and unique tableware used in dining room service.
- Recognize the different types of service.
- Identify customer service requirements in a dining room setting.
- Develop a labor schedule for operations.

*The Course Learning Outcomes*

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

- Identify the various types of restaurants.
- Explain the differences between types of service.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of food and beverage operations management.
- Apply human relations and technical skills required in the service of food and beverage.

*Questionnaire Evaluation**The Teaching Approach Used for the Course*

The second practical course for Hospitality Management Specialization is Service in Hospitality, respondents were asked to indicate their perception of the teaching approach used by the course instructor in class, a concise description of three teaching approaches was provided to overcome any ambiguities as follows:

- Student-centered (Students interact with instructor and one another).
- Teacher-centered (Instructor talks, and students listen).
- Mixed method (Student-centered with Teacher-centered).

Eighty percent of the respondents declared that the approach used was “Mixed Methods”; see Table 4 for course teaching approach. This approach allows students to take role in the teaching and learning experience after the instructor has given some ground information to enhance students’ knowledge of the topic discussed.

**Table 4.** *Course Teaching Approach*

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Student-centered (Students interact with instructor and one another)	0	0
Teacher-centered (Instructor talks, and students listen)	2	20
Mixed Methods (Student-centered with Teacher-centered)	8	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

*Teaching Method(s)*

The course instructor adopted precise teaching methods to facilitate the process of knowledge transference to students and to accommodate the majority of students learning styles. Respondents ranked the teaching methods used as indicated in Table 5. The number one ranked method was discussion followed by lecturing, then demonstration; this ranking is in agreement with the students’ perception of the teaching approach used by instructor (Mixed Methods) as indicated by respondents’ answers of questionnaire first question.

**Table 5.** *Course Teaching Methods*

<b>Teaching Method</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Discussion	9	1
Lecturing	6	2
Demonstration or Experiment	5	3
Case Study	2	4

*Evaluation of Teaching Methods*

Respondents evaluated the teaching methods applied as being “Very helpful” with an overall mean of 4.4 on a five-point Likert scale; see Table 6.

**Table 6.** *Teaching Methods Evaluation*

<b>Evaluation of Teaching Methods</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very helpful	6	60
Extremely helpful	4	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>
Overall Evaluation of Teaching Methods	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
	4.40	0.52

Note: 5=Extremely helpful, 4=Very helpful, 3=Somewhat helpful, 2=Not so helpful, 1=Not at all helpful.

Such results indicate that students learning process was successful and the teaching methods used were effective in providing knowledge to students suiting their learning styles and preferences.

*Practical Application Location Preference*

Based on previous years students feedback a shift from commercial properties as a training location to catering facilities on SQU premises took place. Respondents' answers reveal that there is a growing tendency to switch to commercial properties once more, as 40% of students are in favor of this switch (see Table 7). This tendency could be resolved by splitting practical application weeks into two and conducted at commercial and institutional food and beverage operations equally.

**Table 7.** *Training Location Preference*

<b>Location</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Catering facilities on SQU premises	6	1
Commercial restaurants	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	

*Suggested Course Improvements*

Respondents suggested the following points to improve the course:

- Visiting commercial restaurants/Field trips
- More educational videos related to course topics.
- Tasting food.
- Meeting restaurants managers.

*Part C: Courses Instructors Feedback*

As it is important to assess students' feedback on the practical training of food production and service in hospitality courses, it is also important to study both courses instructors' feedback. Over the last 10 years two instructors were responsible for teaching those courses, their comments tackled three main issues:

*1. Employability and Job Opportunities*

"...Graduates never work in the field..." (Instructor 1 & 2)

"...They may join a management training program or at least, they join as supervisors ... For a while..." (Instructor 1)

Several studies by field specialists (Al-Balushi 2008, UNWTO and MOT 2011) indicated that Omani hospitality discipline graduates do not work in the field, especially, they stand-away of working in food production or service. Tourism Department graduates' enrolment in the industry workforce is so limited, they mainly choose the government (public) sector (Atef 2018). Job opportunities in indirectly related fields is the reason that the Hospitality Management Specialization is still surviving, in many cases, employers do not differentiate between specializations, for them they are all "Tourism Department Graduates".

*2. Specialization Image and Students' Attitude*

"...Students call it "Hospitality", while the other specialization they call it "Tourism Management", perceiving it at a higher level than the Hospitality Management Specialization..." (Instructor 1 & 2)

"...Those courses shut off students...they feel ridiculed by others when going for the course practical application wearing the required uniform..." (Instructor 2)

There exists a problem convincing students to wear the uniforms required for both courses. For the kitchen uniform the problem was solved replacing the chef coat with a lab coat, it suited the students and posed no problem in the kitchen, but for the service pants, white shirt, and bow tie it was not easy, they hide and keep away of serving as much as they can, the absenteeism rate is higher in this course than the Food Production course.

*3. Study Plan Amendments and Development*

"...Avoid problems, do not create them then try to find out solutions...this type of practical courses hinders students from joining the "Hospitality Management Specialization" and even the "Tourism Department" itself..." (Instructor 1 & 2)

"...One F&B Management course...As a solution, a F&B Management course could be offered replacing both courses..." (Instructor 1)

These statements question the benefits behind teaching those courses in the current form. Are we constructing the conceptual model that guides hospitality

curricula formation based on sound solid academic rules and best practices or based on trends, preferences, community, and traditions? We are to serve the community and look for its best interest while adhering to the scientific pillars of the discipline we are affiliated to. The one F&B Management course is a good solution to overcome that low level perception of the two courses that is at the same time affecting the whole Hospitality Management Specialization.

“...We have to reconsider the practical courses but at the same time correlating this with the two Internship Courses...” (Instructor 1 & 2)

“...Shadowing is the key...” (Instructor 1)

Practical courses cannot be discussed or evaluated apart from Internship Courses. Internship1 is a general training course that familiarizes students with the tourism and hospitality industry, while Internship 2 is a specialized course that gives students a closer perspective of the industry branch they chose to study. A wholistic overview of internship courses is in need. The construction of the internship courses could be amended to be both related to students' specialization in the shape of two “Shadowing” programs, so for the Hospitality Management Specialization it would be: F&B Manager Shadowing (Internship1), then Rooms Division Manager Shadowing (Internship 2).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The current study aims to evaluate the teaching and learning experience of the two practical Hospitality Management Specialization courses: Food Production course and Service in Hospitality course.

From a managerial perspective, the study outcomes are important in evaluating the practical courses status leading to an enhanced teaching and learning experience and at the same time is a step towards the reformulation and update of the undergraduate program study plan. Students' evaluations and responses were straight forward while instructors' comments were thorough, correlating the investigated courses to the other study plan courses showing their wholistic effect on the program. There were concerns about the sustainability of the Hospitality Management Specialization and consequently, the Tourism Department itself, which requires reconsidering the academic conceptual model adopted and study plan structure. The following are the study recommendations and proposed courses of action:

### *Tactical Courses of Action*

- Improving practical courses teaching and learning experience and the related logistics. Mixed teaching methods approach should be continuously adopted as it suits the course nature. Besides lecturing: guest speaker and field visits, discussions, and visual aids are the most suitable teaching methods based on the course nature. Movies pertaining to each, and every



course topic should be ready and used. In-class basic practical application could be applied to prepare students to the field training part.

- Practical application weeks could be split into two and conducted at commercial and institutional food and beverage properties equally.
- Training should be horizontal concentrating on hospitality properties departments and functional areas rather than vertical concentrating on levels and positions.
- Amendments to current study plan, introducing new courses to help and support graduates' employability.
- Proper preparation of students creating an understanding of the surrounding social and economic environments that students/graduates will be part of upon their transition to be part of the local workforce.

### *Strategical Courses of Action*

- Tactically the movement between institutional and commercial settings has been smooth and has overcome pressing issues, but strategically an overall reconsideration of the hospitality specialization study plan is urgently needed.
- The study plans should be updated considering the societal constraints and market needs, neither factors should be neglected or else we would be moving in circles that leads to nothing.
- A F&B Management course could be offered replacing both courses (Food Production & Service in Hospitality)
- Internship courses could be amended to be related to students' specialization of choice. Shadowing programs would be a more beneficial and practical alternative to the long-time applied internship courses.
- Academics and stakeholders should have collaborative inputs concerning the structure and conceptual model of the study plan based on each party's experience and track.
- To better structure and implement courses and study plans, instructors should be familiar with industry needs, work environments, and industry mindset. Practical industry experience is an added value. A mechanism should be created and adopted to assure that academics be updated of the industry needs and trends: workshops on regular basis, advisory committee meetings, etc.
- Auditing and peer review practices are to be implemented on regular basis to control and assure teaching and learning experience quality.

### **References**

Al-Balushi M (2008) *Omani employment and the development of careers in the hotel sector in the Sultanate of Oman*. Doctoral Dissertation. Cardiff, Wales, UK: University of Wales.

- Atef T (2018) A tourism and hospitality education management model: the case of the tourism department of Sultan Qaboos University. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management* 6(1): 39–54.
- Atef T, Al-Balushi M (2015) Entrepreneurship as a means for restructuring employment patterns. *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 15(2): 73–90.
- Atef T, Al-Balushi M (2017) Omani tourism and hospitality students' employment intentions and job preferences: ramifications on Omanization plans. *Quality Assurance in Education* 25(4): 440–461.
- Balula A, Moreira G, Moreira A, Kastenholz E, Eusébio C, Breda Z (2019) Digital transformation in tourism education. *Tourism in Southern and Eastern Europe* 5(Sep): 61–72.
- Boella M, Goss-Turner S (2005) *Human resource management in the hospitality industry: an introductory guide*. 8th Edition. Oxford, UK: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Canny A (2002) Flexible Labor? The Growth of Student Employment in the U.K. *Journal of Education and Work* 15(3): 277–301.
- Chen T, Shen C, Gosling M (2018) Does employability increase with internship satisfaction? Enhanced employability and internship satisfaction in a hospitality program. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education* 22(Jun): 88–99.
- Cho S, Erdem M, Johanson M (2006) Hospitality graduate education: a view from three different stakeholder perspectives. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education* 18(4): 45–55.
- Dawson M (2014) Preparing students to fit within the hospitality industry culture: does the educational background make a difference? *Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism* 14(1): 53–68.
- Finn M, Elliot-White M, Walton M (2000) *Tourism and leisure research methods: data collection, analysis and interpretation*. Essex, UK: Pearson Education Limited.
- Forrest L (1996) *Training for the hospitality industry*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Michigan, USA: E.I. of The American Hotel and Motel Association.
- Go F, Monachello M, Baum T (1996) *Human resource management in the hospitality industry*. New York, USA: John Wiley and Sons.
- Gould N (2000) Becoming a learning organization. *Social Work Education* 19(6): 585–596.
- Harvey L (2010) New realities: the relationship between higher education and employment. *Tertiary Education and Management* 6(1): 3–17.
- Heathfield S (2020, January 3) *Job shadowing is effective on-the-job training*. The Balance Careers.
- Inui Y, Wheeler D, Lankford S (2006) Rethinking tourism education: what should schools teach? *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education* 5(2): 25–35.
- Jauhari V, Manaktola K (2006) Comparison of internship experiences in foodservice firms in India and UK. *Journal of Food Service Business Research* 9(2/3): 187–206.
- Koc E, Yumusak S, Ulukoy M, Kilic R, Toptas A (2014) Are internships programs encouraging or discouraging? A viewpoint of tourism and hospitality students in Turkey. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education* 15(Jul): 135–142.
- Lee M, Olds D, Lee C (2010) Why students choose a hospitality and tourism program: a pilot study of U.S. undergraduate students. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education* 22(3): 20–26.
- Mader F, Mader D, Alexander E (2017) Job shadowing experiences as a teaching tool: a new twist on a tried and true technique. *Atlantic Marketing Journal* 5(3): Article 8.

- Mahmoud E (2018) Is private higher education on the right path? The case of hotel studies education in Egypt. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education* 30(1): 19–35.
- McCarthy P, McCarthy H (2006) When case studies are not enough: integrating experiential learning into business curricula. *Journal of Education for Business* 81(4): 201–204.
- Ng E, Burke R (2006) The next generation at work—Business students’ views, values and job search strategy: Implications for universities and employers. *Education and Training* 48(7): 478–492.
- Nguyen N, LeBlanc G (2021) The impact of service employees and servicescape on customers’ perception of quality improvement efforts. *Athens Journal of Business & Economics* 7(2): 123–144.
- Odio M, Wells J, Kervin S (2014) Full-time student, part-time employee: capturing the effects of socialization influences on affective commitment for student employees. *Event Management* 18(3): 325–336.
- Patiar A, Benckendorff P, Kensbock S, Wang Y, Wilkins H, Robinson R, et al. (2019) *Enhancing student employability skills through virtual field trips in the hospitality industry*. Brisbane, Australia: Griffith University.
- Peterson D, Hicks M (1996) *Leader as coach: strategies for coaching and developing others*. Minneapolis, Minn., USA: Personnel Decisions International.
- Ring A, Dickinger A, Wöber K (2009) Designing the ideal undergraduate program in tourism: expectations from industry and educators. *Journal of Travel Research* 48(1): 106–121.
- Rony Z, Lubis F, Rizkyta A (2019) Job shadowing as one of the effective activities in the promotion process creates quality managers. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering (IJRTE)* 8(2S): 388–396.
- Ruhanen L (2005) Bridging the divide between theory and practice: experiential learning approaches for tourism and hospitality management education. *Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism* 5(4): 33–51.
- Ryan P, Horton-Tognazzini L, Williams A (2016) A snapshot of MOOCs in hospitality and tourism. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education* 28(2): 107–112.
- Schoffstall D, Brown E, Arendt S (2017) Hospitality and tourism student and alumni perspectives: promotion expectations, academic and experience adjustments, and career growth. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism* 14(3): 189–207.
- Shardlow S, Doel M (1996) *Practice learning and teaching*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan.
- Sommerville K (2007) *Hospitality employee management and supervision: concepts and practical applications*. New Jersey, USA: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Statt D (2000) *Using psychology in management training*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Tannenbaum S, Mathieu J, Salas E, Cannon-Bowers J (1991) Meeting trainee’s expectations: the influence of training fulfilment on the development of commitment, self-efficacy, and motivation. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 76(6): 759–769.
- Tepeci M, Seo W, Upneja A, DeMicco F (2001) Supply and demand for hospitality/tourism management faculty in the United States. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education* 13(2): 38–48.
- Tucker E, Clarke J (2014) Using Twitter for student engagement and skill learning in a hospitality human resources management course. *Consortium Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 19(1): 1–21.
- United Nations World Tourism Organization - UNWTO, Omani Ministry of Tourism – MOT (2011) *Tourism manpower and training needs analysis and tourism human resources development action plan (2011-2015)*. Unpublished Document. UNWTO, MOT.

- Wang Y (2013) Constructing career competency model of hospitality industry employees for career success. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 25(7): 994–1016.
- Wu B, Morrison A, Yang J, Zhou J, Cong L (2014) Cracks in the Ivory tower? A survey-based analysis of undergraduate tourism education and educators in China. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education* 14(Apr): 26–38.

## The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Greek Tourism-Updates and Comparisons

By Gregory T. Papanikos\*

*This paper updates and compares the results obtained in Papanikos' (2020a) paper published in the Athens Journal of Tourism, which estimated the impact of the current pandemic on international Greek tourism receipts and tourist arrivals. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have negative effects on Greek tourism and the Greek economy. In this paper, newly released data by the Bank of Greece for the entire 2021 period are used to assess the impact on Greek tourism during the two pandemic years of 2020 and 2021. In addition, the actual data from 2020 are compared with the estimates of the three scenarios made in the 2020 paper. One conclusion that emerges from the analysis of the data on international tourism is that in 2021 Greek tourism did much better than in 2020, but still is far away from the record year of 2019. In 2021, international tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts accounted for 48% and 58% of the 2019 values respectively.*

**Keywords:** pandemic, COVID-19, crisis, tourism, Greece, economic impact

### Introduction

COVID-19 has hit all countries in the world showing the dark side of globalization where it matters most, i.e., in the loss of human lives. Only world wars could be considered worse. The global academic community responded immediately by doing research on the various aspects of the virus, producing quite a large number of studies, which at the early stages of the spread of the virus created a number of controversies between nations and international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO). It seems that these animosities have by now subsided and a global consensus has almost emerged, albeit there exist some people who hold heterodoxy views on how to deal with COVID-19. The number of studies has mushroomed and spread around the world faster than the virus itself. For example, the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER) has published, or is about to publish, close to 50 studies on the various aspects of COVID-19— so many that a survey of these studies will be published as a collection in a book to be edited by Boutsioli et al. (2022) (see also Jones & Comfort [2020]). In a series of books, I have examined many aspects of the Greek tourism and hospitality industries (Papanikos, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005). A comparison of the pandemic which hit Athens in 430 BCE with the current one is examined in Papanikos (2020b). Finally, the recent recovery plan of the European Union to deal with COVID-19 is discussed in Papanikos (2021).

---

\*President, Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER), Greece; Honorary Professor of Economics, University of Stirling, UK; and Professor, MLC Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Undoubtedly the most important impact of COVID-19 after the loss in human lives is the negative shock on the economies around the world. The pandemic shattered the world economies because these are so much integrated than never before in world history. The development of transportation technology brought more and more people together which fuelled the spread of the virus. The solution of social distancing and even personal isolation meant that people could not travel, not only internationally, but nationally in different areas within their own national boundaries. For example, in Greece not only was international travel restricted or banned altogether, but moving from one area (prefecture) to another area within Greece was also not allowed. As a result of such harsh measures, unparalleled for peace years, tourism was gravely affected. As a consequence, total output was felt most dramatically. In the case of Greece, this could not have come to a worse time after the Great Recession of 2008, which also hit the Greek economy at an unprecedented rate for a non-war period.

In 2020, I published a paper in this journal where I developed three scenarios of the possible impacts of COVID-19 on Greek tourism, and therefore on the total economy. For that study, I used whatever information was available at the time of February 2020. Therefore, I could not have taken into consideration the complete lockdown of the Greek tourism market for international and national traveling that occurred during the second quarter of 2020. In this current study, I compare my estimates based on the three possible scenarios at the time with the actual performance of the international Greek tourism receipts and arrivals in 2020.

Including this introductory section, this study is organized into five sections. The second section compares the Greek GDP trajectory in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which includes positive and negative shocks. On the positive side, during this period of two decades, Greece became a founding member of the eurozone and successfully organized the Olympic Games of 2004. Even though there are scholars who argue that both events have had a negative effect on Greek economy, the performance of the Greek Gross Domestic Product (GDP) does not vindicate them as I show in the next section. However, by the end of the first decade and by the beginning of the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Greece's economy was badly hit by the Great Recession of 2008 and the pandemic of 2020-2021 respectively. These effects can now be evaluated using the GDP oscillations during the entire period. The third section compares my early estimates of the three scenarios on the impact of pandemic in 2020 with the actual performance of the international Greek tourism using quarterly data of tourism receipts. The fourth section uses monthly data of international travel receipts and arrivals to demonstrate the effect of the pandemic. The last section concludes.

### **The Greek GDP in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

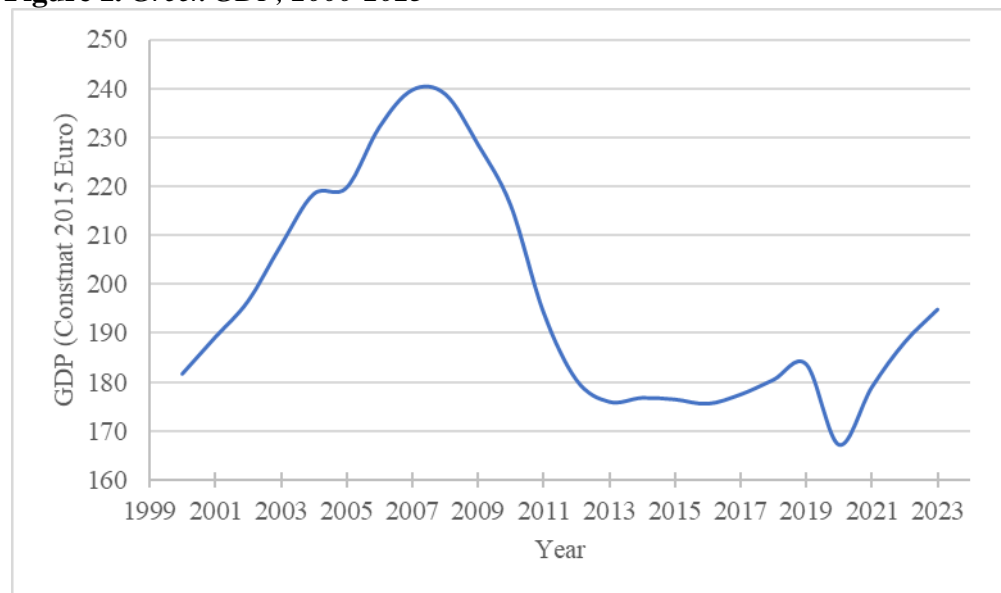
Figure 1 shows total real GDP in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2000-2023). The last two years are the forecast estimates of the European Commission. As far as the Greek economy is concerned, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by four developments, two

of which were predicted and planned because they were the deliberate choices of Greek government authorities.

First, in 2002 Greece became one of the initial members of the eurozone. In Papanikos (2022a), I have evaluated the first two decades of Greece's membership to the eurozone and I concluded that: "Despite the dismal picture painted and the uncertainty surrounding the introduction of the euro, the Greek economy did better in the two decades of the euro, relative to the two decades preceding the introduction of the euro" (Papanikos 2022a, p. 188).

This is obvious if one looks at Figure 1; GDP increased from 2000 up to 2010, but it dropped drastically in the second decade. Nevertheless, the decrease in the GDP even though very deep, was still higher than any other value of the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century (not shown in the graph). This aspect has been discussed in detail in Papanikos (2014).

**Figure 1.** Greek GDP, 2000-2023



Source: Eurostat (AMECO database).

The second significant development was the organization of the Olympic Games in 2004. An *ex-ante* evaluation of the economic and tourism effects of the Olympic Games was presented in Papanikos (1999) and recently these effects were evaluated *ex post* in Papanikos (2022b). Even though I claimed that the Olympic effect was positive, I stated that this conclusion should be interpreted with caution because of the Great Recession of 2008.

The Great Recession was the third development of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which has had a negative effect on the Greek economy. It hit Greece's economy very hard, but, as explained in Papanikos (2015), this was also the result of an overvalued euro. Never before in its history had the Greek economy had to cope with such a hard currency as was the case of the euro in the first decade of its circulation.

The fourth development is the current pandemic of which its effects on the economic and tourism sectors are evaluated in this paper. By examining Figure 1

and Table 1, the conclusion which emerges is that the pandemic had a detrimental effect on Greek GDP, but it was not worse than the impact of the Great Recession of 2008. The last column of Table 1 reports the output loss relative to the previous year.

In 2007, the Greek economy achieved its highest-ever value of GDP of 239.7 billion of constant 2015 euro. From 2000 to 2008, the rate of growth of GDP was positive, reaching its highest rate just the year before the Olympic Games. In 2003 the rate of growth of GDP was 5.8%, primarily because of the huge government spending in public works to prepare Athens and Greece for the Olympic Games of 2004. The strong performance continued into 2004 with 5.05% growth. In 2005, there was only a meagre economic growth of 0.6%, but it jumped to 5.64% in 2006, which is the second highest rate after 2003 of the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Table 1.** *Greek GDP: Total, Growth and Change (bn of 2015 euro)*

Year	GDP	%GDP	D(GDP)
2000	181.6	3.95	6.9
2001	189.1	4.13	7.5
2002	196.5	3.91	7.4
2003	207.9	5.80	11.4
2004	218.4	5.05	10.5
2005	219.7	0.60	1.3
2006	232.1	5.64	12.4
2007	239.7	3.27	7.6
2008	238.9	-0.33	-0.8
2009	228.6	-4.31	-10.3
2010	216.1	-5.47	-12.5
2011	194.2	-10.13	-21.9
2012	180.4	-7.11	-13.8
2013	175.9	-2.49	-4.5
2014	176.7	0.45	0.8
2015	176.4	-0.17	-0.3
2016	175.5	-0.51	-0.9
2017	177.4	1.08	1.9
2018	180.4	1.69	3
2019	183.6	1.77	3.2
2020	167.1	-8.99	-16.5
2021	178.9	7.06	11.8
2022	188.1	5.14	9.2
2023	194.8	3.56	6.7

Source: Eurostat (AMECO database) and author's calculations.

After 2008, the Greek GDP records huge declines in growth rates, first because of the Great Recession (2008-2016), and recently (2020) because of the pandemic. According to the European Commission's estimates, the 2021-2023 years are expected to show strong economic growth. However, it should be noted that in 2020 the loss of output was 16.5 billion euro and a big part of this loss was due to the decline in international tourism receipts. The estimate of 2021 is for only a partial recovery of this amount. It is expected that output will increase by



7.06% which will add 11.8 billion euro to GDP, which is much lower than the loss of the previous year. As a result, the 2021 GDP is lower than the 2019 GDP.

The following two sections look at what extent these changes are due to a decline of tourism receipts in 2020 relative to 2019 and the increase of tourism receipts of 2021 relative to 2020.

### The International Tourism Receipts of 2020

The first year of the pandemic was the worst—not so much for its effect in the loss of human lives but because of the uncertainty it created and the unavailability of any vaccine to cope with the virus. Governments reacted under a tremendous pressure, unsure of their policy intervention.<sup>2</sup> Greece reacted relatively quickly, and by the second quarter of 2020 the Greek borders were locked and all hotels were shut down. They reopened again during the third quarter of 2020. This impact is reflected in the tourism receipts. Table 2 reports the international Greek tourism receipts by quarter and compares them with the three scenarios made and explained in Papanikos (2020a, Table 2, p. 94). The last column reports data of total receipts for the entire year.

**Table 2.** *The Actual Tourism Impact and the Three Scenarios Measured in millions of current euros*

Row	Quarter	I	II	III	IV	Total
1	Actual Receipts 2019	746.5	4,667.2	10,693.4	2,071.7	18,178.8
2	Actual Receipts 2020	593.3	140.4*	2,926.4	658.7	4,318.8
3	Percentage 2020/2019	79.48%	3.01%	27.37%	31.79%	23.76%
4	Scenario A (worst-case)	709	467	1,069	207	2,452.0
5	Scenario B (average)	709	1,167	2,673	518	5,067.0
6	Scenario C (optimistic)	709	1,867	4,277	829	7,682.0
7	Scenario A Difference	-115.7	-326.6	1,857.4	451.7	1,866.8
8	Scenario B Difference	-115.7	-1026.6	253.4	140.7	-748.2
9	Scenario C Difference	-115.7	-1726.6	-1350.6	-170.3	-3363.2

\*Based on estimates of Bank of Greece and on the Survey which was not conducted due to the complete lockdown of the tourism sector.

Source: Bank of Greece and author's calculations.

### *International Tourism Receipts of 2020 and 2019 Compared*

Assuming a normal non-pandemic international tourism environment, the Greek tourism receipts would have been as good as the receipts of 2019, if not higher, based on some anecdotal evidence of prebooking arrangements early on in 2020 and compared with those from 2019. Table 2 measures the impact in terms of the percentage of 2020 tourism receipts to corresponding figures for 2019, as reported in the third row of the table.

All quarters of 2020 realised lower international tourism receipts relative to 2019. In total, the tourism receipts of 2020 were only one-fourth (23.76%) of the

<sup>2</sup>Unlike with the negative shock of the Great Recession, the European Union reacted relatively fast in announcing a massive recovery fund of 750 billion euro. I have evaluated this recovery plan in Papanikos (2021).

2019 receipts. However, there are huge variations among the four quarters of the year. The first quarter of 2020 was not affected as much as the other three quarters. Nevertheless, the receipts of the first quarter of 2020 were 79.48% of the 2019 receipts. The economy was still unaffected by the COVID-19 impact. It was by mid-March that the first measures were taken and spread the fear among the international tourists resulting in immediate cancellations not only for the entire year, but for the remaining few days of the first quarter of the year. The end-of-quarter impact might explain the relatively lower effect. Unfortunately, this has not been the case of the second quarter of 2020. The complete lockdown of the tourism economy has had a devastating effect on international Greek tourism receipts which accounted for only a mere 3.01% of the corresponding receipts of 2019. Historically, and due to the intense seasonality of Greek tourism, the second quarter of the year brings the second largest international tourism revenue. In 2019, the second quarter accounted for 25.67% (not shown in Table 2) of total tourism receipts, which is second to the 58.82% of the third quarter. By the third quarter, there was a partial opening of the tourism economy, but this did not have the positive effect that was expected by the Greek tourism authorities. The international tourism revenues of the third quarter of 2020 were only 27.37% of the receipts of the third quarter of 2019; similar was the performance of the last quarter of 2020 relative to the fourth quarter of 2019. The tourism receipts were only 31.79% of the tourism receipts from 2019.

#### *An Ex-Post Evaluation of the Three Forecasting Scenarios*

Papanikos (2020a) gave three scenarios of the possible impacts to tourism in 2020 from COVID-19. The impact of these three scenarios was measured in millions of euros in tourism receipts and is reproduced here in Table 2 (rows 4-6). I had assumed that the first quarter would be only mildly affected and would have resulted in a decrease of about 5% of the corresponding 2019 receipts under all three possible scenarios. After all, the first two months of the year were unaffected by the pandemic. By mid-March, some measures were taken. The actual decrease was higher than the one forecasted, which resulted in 593.3 million euro of international tourism receipts instead of the 709 million which were expected according to all three possible scenarios. The loss was 115.7 million euro or 15.5%, three times higher than the 5% suggested by the three-scenario analysis.

At the time of writing the Papanikos (2020a) paper, the possibility of a complete lockdown of the international and national Greek tourism sector was not part of the scenario. Nevertheless, the worst-case scenario asserted that in all quarters of 2020 the total international tourism receipts will account for only 10% of the 2019 receipts. Even this worst-case scenario underestimated the actual impact. According to this worst-case scenario, the second quarter of 2020 would have resulted in a revenue of 467 million euro instead of the actual revenue of 4,667.2 million euro in the second quarter of 2019. The actual tourism receipts were only 140.4 million euro. It should be noted that the Bank of Greece, which is the official authority to collect such data using a survey at the Greek borders, did not do the survey and provided its own *ad hoc* estimates for the second quarter.

Thus, the analysis of underestimation may not be reliable. The other two scenarios gave much worse predictions for the second quarter of 2020. The average or most probable scenario was predicted revenues of 1,167 million euro, a difference of 1,026.6 million of the actual one. The more optimistic third scenario overpredicted the tourism receipts of the second quarter by 1,726.6 million euro.

By the third quarter, the Greek tourism economy was partially opened. The three-scenarios analysis expected a tourism revenue of 1,069, 2,673 and 4,277 million euro. The actual tourism revenue was 2,926.4 million euro, which is very close to average or the most probable second scenario, which underpredicted the actual by 253.4 million euro. The worst-case scenario underpredicted the actual tourism receipts by 1,857.4 million euro and the optimistic scenario over-predicted by 1,350.6 million euro.

Similar with the third quarter are the results of the estimates for the fourth quarter. The second, most probable or average scenario, under-predicted the actual receipts by 140.7 million euro. The other two scenario under-predicted (first scenario) by 451.7 million euro and over-predicted (third scenario) by 170.3 million euro the actual receipts.

For the entire year, the three-scenarios estimated that the international Greek tourism receipts of 2020 would be 2,452 million euro (worst-case), 5,067 million euro (average or most probable) and 7,682 million euro (optimistic). The actual tourism receipts reported by the Bank of Greece was 4,318.8 million euro. The difference between the actual and the estimated by the three scenarios were +1866.8 (worst-case scenario), -748.2 (average or most probable scenario) and finally -3363.2 (optimistic scenario). In percentage terms, the average or the most probable scenario gave an over-prediction of 17% of the actual international tourism receipts. This was primarily due to the complete lock down of the Greek tourism market during the second quarter of 2020.

### **The Tourism Impact in 2021 and 2020 Using Monthly Data**

This section examines the impact of COVID-19 on Greek tourism using actual monthly data on international tourism arrivals and receipts, using 2019 as a benchmark year. In terms of the COVID-19 effect on the number of deaths, in Greece, as in many other countries, the year 2021 was much worse than 2020. In 2020, 4,788 people died from the virus in Greece. In 2021, there were 15,920 deaths. Despite this worsening of the situation, the measures in 2021 were not as restrictive as in the previous year. There are two aspects to that. Firstly, government measures in 2020 were harsher than in 2021. Secondly, people were not as protective in 2021 as they were in 2020. Even the enforcement of measures was not as intense in 2021 as they were in 2020. This may only partially explain the huge difference in the number of deaths between 2021 and 2020. However, the examination of this serious issue goes beyond the scope of this study. I just mention this because many national and international tourists decided to travel around Greece despite the fact that the indicators on COVID-19 were deteriorating. This applied particularly to young people. Also, those who were fully vaccinated

felt safe to travel because it was assumed that being infected by the virus was not posing a threat on their life. For all those reasons, Greek tourism in 2021 was expected to recuperate from its dismal performance in 2020.

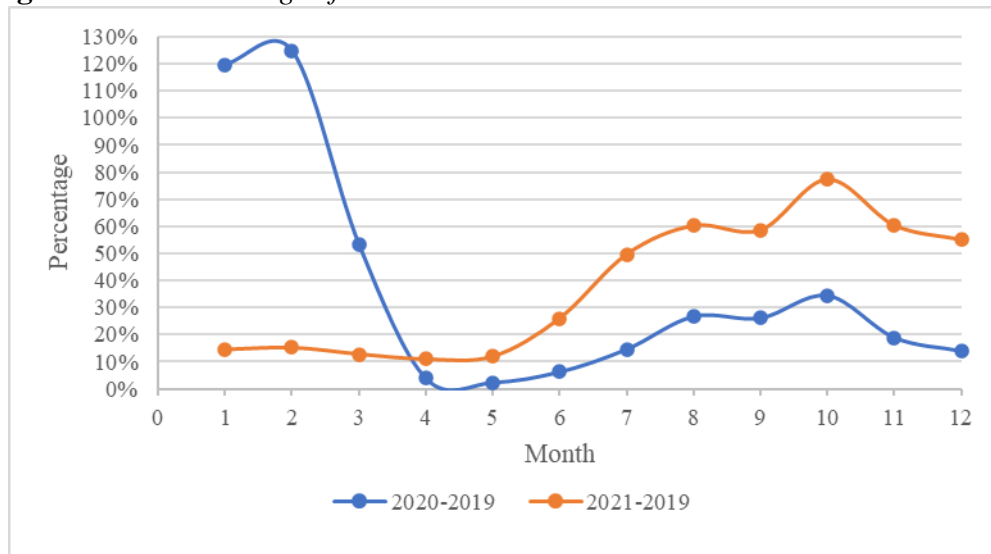
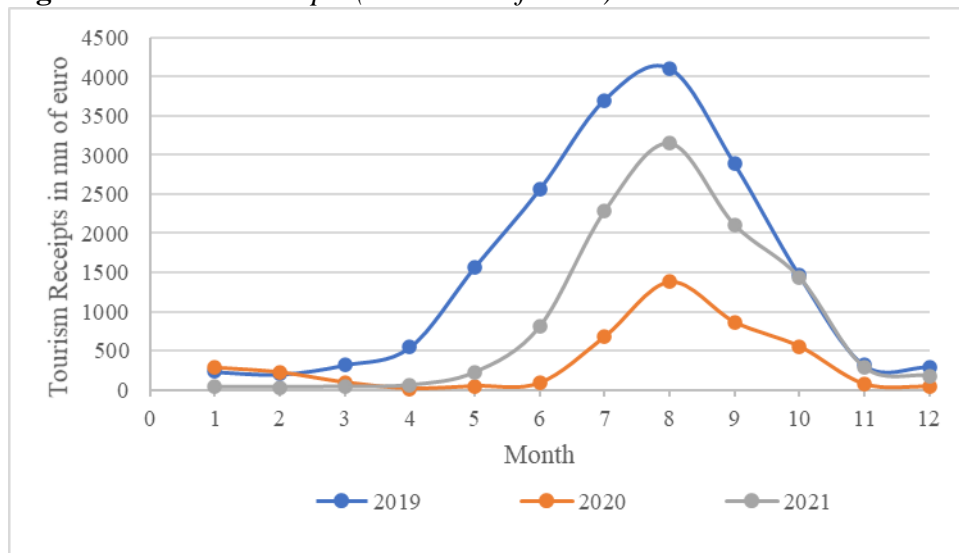
Table 3 shows that this was exactly the case. The table reports monthly data of the 2019-2021 years of international tourism receipts and tourism arrivals. The last two columns show the international tourist arrivals of 2020 and 2021 as a percentage of 2019 arrivals respectively. The data are also depicted in a graphical form in Figures 2-4.

**Table 3. Tourism Receipts and Tourist Arrivals by Month, 2019-2021**

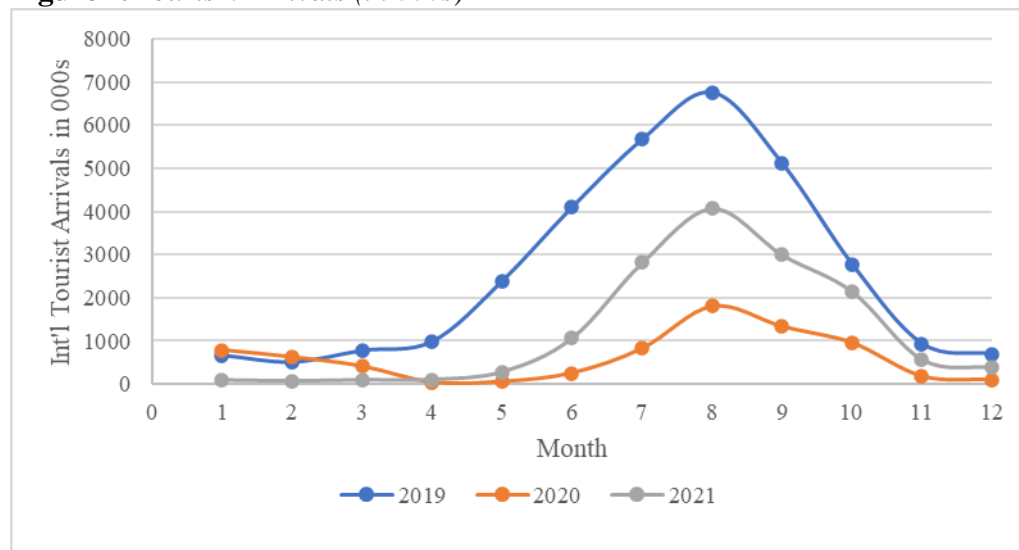
Month	Tourism Receipts (Million's euro)			Tourist Arrivals (000s)			Parentage Changes	
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2020/2019	2021/2019
1	230	281	34	660	790	96	120%	15%
2	198	221	33	504	627	76	125%	15%
3	318	92	39	773	411	99	53%	13%
4	543	14	59	982	38	107	4%	11%
5	1566	44	222	2387	56	285	2%	12%
6	2558	83	807	4102	256	1069	6%	26%
7	3703	678	2288	5673	828	2817	15%	50%
8	4104	1381	3156	6762	1807	4074	27%	60%
9	2886	868	2113	5111	1335	2995	26%	59%
10	1462	554	1438	2773	955	2144	34%	77%
11	315	70	287	930	176	561	19%	60%
12	294	35	177	692	97	380	14%	55%
Total	18179	4319	10653	31348	7374	14705	24%	47%
% of 2019	100%	24%	59%	100%	24%	47%		

A number of observations can be made based on Table 3 and the 3 graphs below. First, in 2020 tourism receipts accounted for 24% of the corresponding receipts of 2019, which is used as the reference year. Tourist arrivals also accounted for only 24%. However, this is not the real cost of the pandemic, i.e., to compare it with the 2019, even though it was a record year for Greek tourism. The real cost can be found if we were able to compare the actual tourism data with what would have been if there was no pandemic. Most probably the tourism receipts and tourist arrivals would have been much higher in 2020 than in 2019. Figure 2 shows the percentages by month. The first two months of 2020 were unaffected by the pandemic. Tourist arrivals in January and February of 2020 were 120% and 125% of the tourist arrivals of the corresponding months of 2019. Higher were also the international tourism receipts in the first two months of 2020 relative to 2019 (not shown in the graphs).

Figure 2 shows that 2021 was a much better year than 2020 despite, as mentioned above, the much worse numbers of deaths due to COVID-19. The second half of 2021 accounted for more than 50% of tourist arrivals in 2019. The month of October 2021 did exceptionally well with 77% of the 2019 tourist arrivals. It looks like there is an upward trend, which many tourism experts expect to continue into 2022.

**Figure 2.** *The Percentage of Tourist Arrivals in 2020 and 2021 Relative to 2019***Figure 3.** *Tourism Receipts (in millions of euros)*

Figures 3 and 4 show, once again, one of the biggest problems of the Greek tourism industry is its seasonality, which despite COVID-19, still appears in the two graphs. The month of August records higher tourism receipts and tourism arrivals. July and September were on equal footing in the two pandemic years, but in 2019 as well as in all previous normal years (not shown in the graphs) the month of July is much better than the month of September.

**Figure 4.** *Tourism Arrivals (in 000s)*

## Conclusions

This study updated Papanikos' (2020a) study which provided some estimates of the economic and tourism impacts of COVID-19. The study here updated and compared those findings. The actual tourism data of 2020 confirm that the average or most probable scenario of the COVID-19 impact did provide the closest predictions. However, there was a 17% over-prediction of the actual international tourism receipts primarily because at the time of the forecast, the complete lock down of the tourism sector could not have been foreseen.

The second conclusion which emerges from examining the 2020 and 2021 data on international tourism receipts and tourist arrivals is that 2021 was a much better year than 2020 despite that the number of deaths was much higher in 2021 relative to 2020. This shows that if the situation with the pandemic does not deteriorate, the Greek tourism will fully recover in 2022 and may quite possibly reach the same receipts and arrivals as in 2019.

## References

- Boutsioli Z, Bigelow V, Gkounta O (2022) *Essays on COVID-19*. Athens: Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER).
- Jones P, Comfort D (2020) The COVID-19 crisis, tourism and sustainable development. *Athens Journal of Tourism* 7(2): 75-86.
- Papanikos GT (1999) *Tourism impact of the 2004 Olympic Games*. Athens: Tourism Research Institute. (In Greek).
- Papanikos GT (2000) *The Greek small and medium sized hotel enterprises*. Athens: Research Institute of Tourism. (In Greek).
- Papanikos GT (2001) *Regional analysis of Greek hotels*. Athens: Research Institute of Tourism. (In Greek).

- Papanikos GT (2002) *Employment in the accommodation sector*. Athens: Research Institute of Tourism. (In Greek).
- Papanikos GT (2005) *The Greek tourist receipts*. Athens: Research Institute of Tourism. (In Greek).
- Papanikos GT (2014) *The Greek economic crisis: a class analysis in favor of the memorandum*. Athens: Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER). (In Greek).
- Papanikos GT (2015) The real exchange rate of euro and Greek economic growth. *The Journal of Economic Asymmetries* 12 (Nov): 100–109.
- Papanikos GT (2020a) The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Greek tourism. *Athens Journal of Tourism* 7(2): 87–100.
- Papanikos GT (2020b) Thucydides and the synchronous pandemic. *Athens Journal of History* 7(1): 71–94.
- Papanikos GT (2021) The European Union's recovery plan: a critical evaluation. *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 7(2): 85–102.
- Papanikos GT (2022a) Greece in the Eurozone: an evaluation of the first two decades. *Athens Journal of Business & Economics* 8(2): 177–192.
- Papanikos GT (2022b) An ex-post analysis of the 2004 Olympic effect. *Athens Journal of Sports* 9(1): 51–58.

