

THE MUNICIPALIZATION OF TOURISM AND QUALIFICATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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ABSTRACT: The tourism industry has developed particularly after the second half of the twentieth century and has assumed progressively the role of anchor on the economy of many cities, reflecting positively on regions and countries, in various aspects. Today it is undeniable its economic, social, cultural and environmental relevance on the sustainable development of destinations. In this paper two lines of thought are followed in the areas of tourism development at the local level and the training and qualification of human resources within the municipal public sector, validating the importance of the study on Human Resources in the Tourism Sector in Portuguese Municipalities. The methodology is based on the literature review to contextualize the discussion thematic of the paper and is underpinned by a field study conducted among 308 Portuguese municipalities where some disparities in the definition of policies and strategies relating to the qualification and training of staff in the tourism sector have been observed, with all the ensuing consequences for tourism development in their territories. After this analysis it seems clear that municipalities cannot stand aside from and indemnify themselves from the issue of tourism since it will be an essential industry for economic growth and social well-being, especially because it will be necessary to create wealth and skilled jobs. We believe the role and special responsibilities of local government in tourism development in each municipality has to be assumed, as this sector can be an effective lever for the development of local economies. Keywords: Development, Tourism Training, Qualification, Municipalities.

RESUMEN: El sector turístico se desarrolló de forma más intensa después de la mitad del siglo XX y viene asumiendo, progresivamente, el rol de ancla en la economía de muchos municipios, reflejándose positivamente en las regiones y países, en diversas vertientes. Hoy es incontestable su relevancia económica, social, cultural y ambiental en el desarrollo sostenible de los destinos. En este artículo seguimos dos líneas de reflexión en los dominios del desarrollo turístico a nivel local y de la formación y calificación de los recursos humanos en el ámbito del sector público autárquico, validando la importancia del estudio sobre los Recursos Humanos afectos al Sector del Turismo en las Autarquías Portuguesas. La metodología adoptada se apoya en la revisión bibliográfica para contextualizar las temáticas de reflexión del artículo y se apoya en un estudio de campo efectuado junto de los 308 municipios portugueses, donde se verifican algunas disparidades en relación a la definición de políticas y estrategias relativas a la calificación y formación de los cuadros afectos al sector del turismo, con todas las consecuencias que vienen de ahí para el desarrollo turístico de sus territorios. Después del análisis nos parece evidente que las Autarquías no se pueden enajenar y no responsabilizarse por la problemática del turismo pues será una industria fundamental para el crecimiento económico y el bienestar social, sobretudo porque será indispensable crear riqueza y puestos de trabajo calificados. Creemos que se tiene que asumir el rol y las responsabilidades especiales del poder autárquico en el desarrollo del turismo de cada municipio, pues este sector podrá ser una efi-

caz palanca para el desarrollo de las economías locales. Palabras-clave: Desarrollo, Formación en Turismo, Calificación, Municipios.

RESUMO: O setor turístico desenvolveu-se de modo mais intenso após a segunda metade do século XX e tem assumido, progressivamente, o papel de âncora na economia de muitos municípios, refletindo-se positivamente nas regiões e países, em diversas vertentes. Hoje é incontestável a sua relevância económica, social, cultural e ambiental no desenvolvimento sustentável dos destinos. Neste artigo seguimos duas linhas de reflexão nos domínios do desenvolvimento turístico ao nível local e da formação e qualificação dos recursos humanos no âmbito do setor público autárquico, validando a importância do estudo sobre os Recursos Humanos afetos ao Setor do Turismo nas Autarquias Portuguesas. A metodologia adotada apoia-se na revisão bibliográfica para contextualizar as temáticas de reflexão do artigo e sustenta-se num estudo de campo efetuado junto dos 308 municípios portugueses, onde se verificaram algumas disparidades em relação à definição de políticas e estratégias relativas à qualificação e formação dos quadros afetos ao setor do turismo, com todas as consequências que daí advêm para o desenvolvimento turístico dos seus territórios. Após esta análise parece-nos evidente que as Autarquias não se podem alhear e desresponsabilizar da problemática do turismo pois será uma indústria fundamental para o crescimento económico e o bem-estar social, sobretudo porque será indispensável criar riqueza e postos de trabalho qualificados. Acreditamos que tem que se assumir o papel e as especiais responsabilidades do poder autárquico no desenvolvimento do turismo de cada município, pois este setor poderá ser uma eficaz alavanca para o desenvolvimento das economias locais. Palavras chave: Desenvolvimento, Formação em Turismo, Qualificação, Municípios.

INTRODUCTION

Taking into consideration two main thoughts in the article, in the areas of tourism development at a local level and in terms of education and training in Tourism, lead us to consider with interest the National Education Monitoring Project in Tourism (ONET) in the context information management and building knowledge within the knowledge society, as well as in building a support model of differentiation strategies of tourism at a local level. Within this framework the interest of the study on the Market Employment in Tourism in Portuguese municipalities, held in ESTH in early 2009 stands out.

The main discussion focuses on tourism as a scientific area in the context of the national education system. The main objective is to understand the importance of education and training in tourism and its consequences in the process of increasing municipalization of the tourism sector. In addition, it intends to interpret the interest of optimizing the management of information within the national education and training context. In fact, we found that the current knowledge society is essential to organize the information on technological platforms that allow different results to respond effectively to the needs of participants in education and local development in tourism.

The methodology is based on the literature review to contextualize the issues of tourism development at the local level, as well as educa-

tion and training of tourism professionals. This review also applies to contexts of new technologies and information management in the current context. The presentation of some data concerning the reality of higher education in tourism serves to illustrate its importance now and shows the relevance of the ONET project development in particular. As a complement, relevant data to the situation of human resources who work in tourism in the Portuguese municipalities is presented, so as to constitute a landmark study that will provide a useful reflection according to the real potential of tourism at a local level.

TOURISM AND MUNICIPALITIES

Living in troubled times of rapid change, as a result of the economic crisis now verified in the real economy, it is important to take into account a tendency for the development of the tourism industry, compared to other sectors that have lost importance in some economic indicators, namely in terms of creating jobs. In fact, over the last decades, tourism has been consolidating itself as one of the strongest sectors of the economy, since it is on a counter cycle in terms of creating employment.

Tourism is a major global economic activity, experiencing a steady growth since the second half of the twentieth century. It has also assumed the anchor role on the economy of a large number of regions and municipalities directly contributing to the growth of numerous activities, including public and private transport, construction, agriculture and services, among others. Simultaneously, it generated direct impact on environmental, social and cultural aspects in the destination, which are undisputed by its relevance today.

The growing demand for diverse and unique tourism experiences, combined with new innovative mindset of tourists in this millennium, have boosted the growth of tourist typologies on the supply side, which lies in the diversity of tourism resources used to develop this activity, since that originality and innovation in this area are an asset. In this context, the need for protection of indigenous resources, the maintenance of regional and local diversity and on the other hand, the attempt to maximize the revenue-generating effect in this industry, have substantiated the importance of the decentralization of tourism, which has been accentuated in recent years with the delegation of powers once belonging to the central and regional government.

In response to the new set of challenges that tourism faces today, the Portuguese government has contributed with a set of normative acts, which for better or worse, has profoundly changed the organization of tourism in the territory. Thus, we cannot forget that many of the decisions are also in the hands of elected mayors who are responsible for defining the city's model of development for the following strategic sector.

In this study it is suggested that the role of the local government responsible person with special responsibilities in the development of tourism in their municipality, is assumed by having an endogenous vocation as a tourist destination. Let's look into the following question: How much importance is attached to tourism and economic development of the county? Probably, their response may reflect a high degree of importance.

However, by changing the question and, objectively, by seeking an answer: Do you consider that at the level of this territory, there is a sustainable use of tourism resources accomplished and its citizens benefit from the economic growth generated by tourism? We believe that the answer to this question may reflect an increasing diversity of responses.

In the academic study conducted among 308 Portuguese municipalities, there are visible disparities in the definition of strategies for tourism development in their territories and the recognition of the role of human resources that belong to the functional area of Tourism. After this analysis and, as a conclusion, it seems clear that local authorities cannot stand aside from it and indemnify the issue of tourism because, whether one likes it or not, this could be a key industry for economic growth in coming years. In times of crisis such as the one we are now facing we believe that this industry can be an effective lever for the development of many local economies.

According to WTO (1998), planning for the development of local tourism aims to generate some socioeconomic benefits to society, while maintaining the sustainability of the tourism industry through the protection of nature and local culture. In this context, tourism must be built within an appropriate time frame and employ a flexible, comprehensive, integrated environmental and sustainable, community-based, and implementable approach. Thus, it becomes essential to adopt a strategic planning approach, considering all components of planning, tourist attractions and activities, hosting services, facilities and other

tourism services, transport, infrastructure and institutional elements. In this institutional context, an appropriate standard of qualification should be ensured, both initial and long-life, of the tourism workforce.

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION IN TOURISM

This article also aims to reveal that the Portuguese educational institutions have invested heavily in education in tourism, for nearly fifty years. However, only in the mid-1980s institutions of higher education, from the private sector, have embraced the challenge of education in tourism. More than two decades after, and at the end of the academic year 2009/10, it appears that the effective implementation of the Bologna Process, at the 1st cycle, which led to significant changes in higher education, especially at the curriculum level. However, the diversity of educational approaches still remains a peculiar characteristic of tourism studies, which led to some profusion in the names of the degrees and in models of educational and curriculum organization. Currently, MCTES legislates in order to define and create scientific areas (CNAEF) of Tourism and Leisure (code 812) and Hospitality and Beverage Services (code 811), which are the main object of this analysis, but it also includes degrees in the area of Management and Administration (code 345).

Thus, there was an expansion of higher education degrees in both public and private sector of degrees that have a large variety of names and whose goals are often difficult to understand and justify. As a result of this proliferation there was also a large number of vacancies.

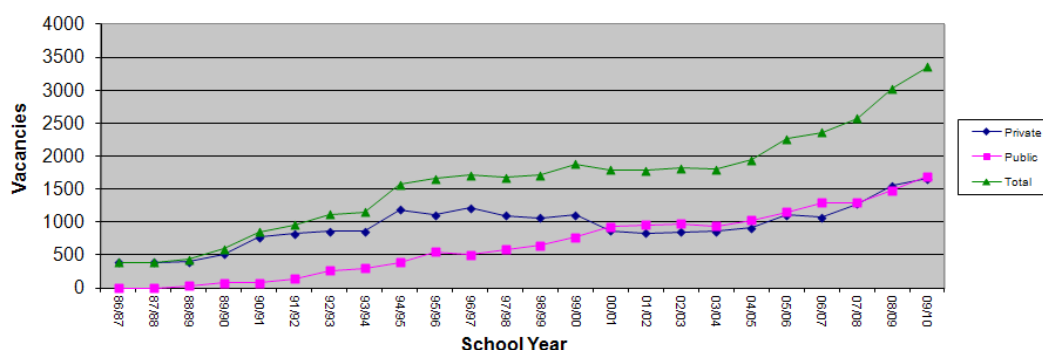
It can be assumed that the skills to be acquired in any higher education (Gonçalves et al., 2005), in this area, should be appropriate to the graduate level and also relate to: monitoring of operational and/or with responsibility for the implementation and transmission of an expert specialist knowledge at medium-high (1st cycle) level, the management or direction of corporate units or institutional areas, and/or the responsibility for solving problems and presenting solutions in the implementation of tasks' at an expertise specialized higher level, involving reflection on the expertise (in the 2nd cycle). In both cycles, we observe the presence of general skills of nature: instrumental and activity framing interpersonal and human resource management, and systemic and conceptual, in-depth research on a particular aspect of

the sector knowledge, of a general and/or applied scope, whose success is reflected not in predetermined and formatted skills but on a highly qualified staff (in the 3rd cycle). In Portugal, higher education in the tourism sector is concentrated mostly in the polytechnic subsystem and obeys the (1st cycle) degree model. The university subsystem also offers some degrees, lasting three years, and Masters (2nd cycle). In the first approach it was important to consider promoting a structure and duration of both degrees in an integrated manner. Indeed, the first undergraduate degree should be more general in nature, with skills focused on learning to know, know how to apply and in some cases, the know-how to do and followed by a second level of expertise, centered is know-how to coordinate, create and learn to innovate.

Currently, the (1st cycle) degrees in the tourism sector are implemented in the university and polytechnic subsystems. In this context, we present two statistical series (charts 1 and 2) that organize data on relevant indicators for interpreting the evolution and importance of tourism. This quantitative analysis is intended to complement the description of the behavior of this area until 2009/10 (Salgado et al., 2010).

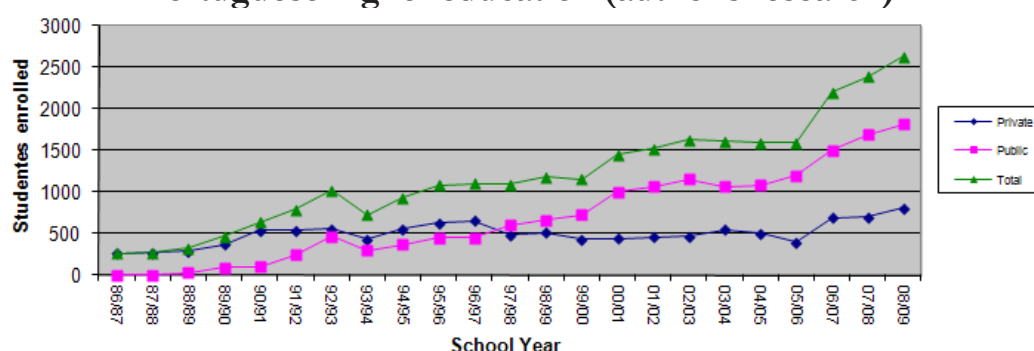
The adequacy of higher education degrees to the Bologna Process, leading to the current training offer of 76 degrees in Tourism (28 in the private sector and 48 in the public), and seven more degrees (+9%) in 2009/10. This offer represents a total of 3,356 admission vacancies, there is a slight majority in the public sector with 1696 (chart 1) and shows the following division by degrees in scientific areas: Tourism and Leisure (49) Hospitality and F&B (16) , Management and Administration (11). It is also important to note that degrees in Tourism continue to occur predominantly in a polytechnic subsystem (63 degrees) than in a subsystem university degree (13 degrees). In 2008/09, tourism accounted for approximately 3.4% of the supply of places in higher education and an increase of 0.4% than the previous year. In this study, there is clearly a growing trend in this variable.

Chart 1 - Tourism admission vacancies in Portuguese higher education (author's research)



This school year, during the first phase of application to public higher education, 1454 were placed in the degrees (86%, representing a decrease in demand of 1% over the previous year) for 1696 vacancies. Thus, it can be stated that this area continues to have a big demand by candidates. For a complementary analysis in Chart 2 is presented, which represents the statistical series of entries for the 1st time in higher education degrees in tourism and where there is a considerable growth since 1986/87. At first, the essential role of private higher education may be noticed but the two sectors have different growth trends, because the public perceives considerable increase in enrollments in the 1st year compared to the private sector, since 1997/98. In the last school year, higher education saw 2625 new students enrolled, with 1813 in the public sector and 812 in the private, representing approximately 3.2% of new enrollments. It confirms the greater attractiveness of the public sector which is translated by the difference in 1001 and entered a new rate of 69% of the total registered for the 1st time.

Chart 2 - Students registered for the 1st time in Tourism in Portuguese higher education (author's research)



Curriculum and educational changes within the Bologna Process are considerable on degrees in the scientific area of Tourism and it is nowadays concluded that this area is fully integrated in this adaptation of higher education. It is also necessary to investigate and evaluate, even if briefly, the developments at the 2nd and 3rd cycles of higher education, as well as in technological specialization courses (CET).

The Master in Tourism Management and Development was a pioneer and emerged from a strategic partnership between the Universities of Aveiro and Algarve. At the level of the second cycle (Masters) in academic year 2008/09 there were 17 programs (14 public and 3 private) with a total of 493 enrolled students. Its division by scientific areas features 14 programs in Tourism and Leisure, one in Hospitality and F&B services and two in Management and Administration. We are sure that the current school year will show a considerable extension of this network of master's degrees training admission, especially in polytechnics.

In the academic year 2008/09 there is a record of four public universities (Aveiro, Coimbra, Évora and the Algarve) with doctoral programs in Tourism, in which 71 doctoral students are enrolled. The Universities of Coimbra (three specializations: Tourism and Development, Leisure and Sport, Culture and Heritage) and the Algarve have adapted their programs to the 3rd cycle of the Bologna model. These four programs fall into the scientific area of Tourism and Leisure.

Following the numerical analysis we aim to justify the relationship between the development of training and education in tourism, higher education, and sustainable development of national tourism, which can also be improved with the implementation of the project ONET, which aims to draw attention to the advantages of creating a network of information within the knowledge society, aggregating academic institutions and their degrees in this field of education. It is a work proposal intended to be inclusive, in the perspective of a system at national level. System that must be supported by assumptions that justify the choices taken in curriculum planning and educational implementing.

Within this study, the example of the University of Aveiro should be observed on the importance of tourism management and planning, which are directly linked to the spatial structure of municipalities with tourism potential and induction of local development. According to the PhD at the University of Algarve, Ericka Almeida, it is important to know the extent to which higher education in tourism fits the needs of a tourism of planning strategic, particularly at a local level, which is essential for the sustainability of tourism. In this study, it is interesting to relate the functions of tourism planning at a local level with a degree in Tourism in order to know the levels of interaction between school and destiny.

ONET, as a space for collection, compilation and dissemination of knowledge, can contribute positively to fill a market gap between training and employment. The ONET platform aims to establish itself as a useful working tool for teachers, students, employers' and other participants in the education system and the sector productive system, through the aggregation of information on public and private sectors of tourism.

According to the IQF (2005), professionals with a degree in Tourism, in theory, meet the technical, cognitive, social and relational skills that reflect the appropriate profile for the performance of technical functions in the planning and development of tourism. Thus, there is an emerging need of the role of a development and tourism planning, which is "responsible for planning, conceiving, development and promotion of tourist products, and to work with other professionals with local responsibilities of promoting and fostering regions, within the field of tourism").

Inskeep (1993) stresses the importance of sustainable development for tourism, as this activity depends on the preservation and enhancement of natural heritage resources, historical and cultural. Tourism planning should be proactive and the government's and community residents' participation should be effective. The contribution of the planning for the sustainability of tourist destinations is explained in that it involves reflection on

the use of more harmonious tourism locations and local dynamics, trying to optimize socio-economic, environmental, political and cultural factors.

STUDY OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN PORTUGUESE MUNICIPALITIES

Some factors in the political and socio-economic prevent or hamper that the majority of municipalities prepare and implement an appropriately tourism planning. This is a fact that affects the added value of human resources in the area of tourism.

In the analysis of labor markets in Portuguese municipalities, to the paper, prepared as part of the curricular unit Quantitative Methods for Tourism and Leisure, School of Tourism and Hospitality from the Polytechnic Institute of Guarda, This paper was conducted by students João Gomes, Marta Henriques and Telma Correia, under the supervision of teachers Alexandre Martins and José Manuel Salgado, during the first semester of the academic year 2008/2009.

The study population consists of human resources from the tourism sector in the 308 Portuguese municipalities. The field work was developed by sending a letter of presentation of the study, with the survey questionnaire attached (Annex I) for all municipalities, and also a stamped addressed envelope for returning the questionnaires. Later, an e-mail was sent to strengthen the cooperation requested, to those municipalities that had not responded in the first two months and, as a follow-up, for those who had not read the respective e-mail a telephone call was also made.

The response rate in terms of municipalities was 43.8% (135 municipalities), with 7 that reported not having human resources from the tourism area. This sample by clusters allows to estimate the proportions of the population with an absolute error less than 6.5% and with a confidence level of 95%. In terms of data 391 validated questionnaires were received. These data shows that 79% of respondents are female, have an average age of 37 years with a standard deviation of 9 years, 17 being the minimum age and the 68 years maximum, 70% of respondents are 41 years old or less.

The distribution of questionnaires by NUT II, overall, highlighted the regions of North (30%) and Alentejo (26%) as the most represented, and the regions of Algarve and Azores as the least represented, which may be due to its smaller geographical size, and there were no responses from the region of Madeira (cf. table 1).

Table 1 - Number of questionnaires by NUT II

NUTS II	Frequency	Percentage
North	118	30,2%
Centre	88	22,5%
Lisbon and Tagus Valley	68	17,4%
Alentejo	102	26,1%
Algarve	13	3,3%
Autonomous Region of Açores	2	0,5%
Autonomous Region of Madeira	0	0,0%

The contractual relationship with the employer (see table 2) shows that the vast majority of human resources in the tourism sector has a staff contract with Portuguese municipalities (67.8%). With a significant percentage comes resolutive term contracts (21.5%), and also 4.6% in professional internship.

Table 2 - Types of Distribution of contracts to the employer

Linking	Frequency	Percentage
Staff contract	265	67,8%
Resolute term contract	84	21,5%
Retainer contract	7	1,8%
POC	0	0,0%
Professional internship	18	4,6%
Other	9	2,3%
Not answered (NR)	8	2,0%

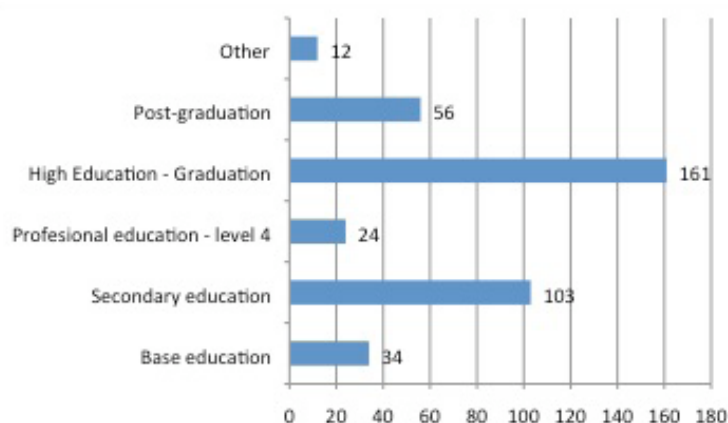
In terms of types distribution of contracts to the employer by NUT II, it appears that, from the observation of Table 3, the Lisbon region has the highest rate of staff contracts (83.8%), the Center has the highest percentage of resolute term contracts (31.8%) and North and Central had the highest percentage. In the data obtained it appears that there is no evidence of statistically significant differences in the variable gender in towns of the types of contracts to the employer.

Table 3 - Types of Distribution of contracts to the employer by NUTS II

NUT II	Staff contract	Resolute term contract	Retainer contract	Professional Internship	Other	NR
North	69,5%	13,6%	3,4%	7,6%	4,2%	1,7%
Centre	61,4%	31,8%	0,0%	6,8%	0,0%	0,0%
Lisbon and Tagus Valley	83,8%	14,7%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	1,5%
Alentejo	58,8%	27,5%	2,9%	2,9%	3,9%	3,9%
Algarve	76,9%	15,4%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	7,7%
Açores	100,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%

In terms of academic qualifications, as it is visible in Chart 3, a degree is predominant (41.3%) and is followed by 12th grade (26.4%). The human resources with post-graduate degree is relevant (11%) and will, in our view, have a tendency to grow as new master programs in the Tourism and Leisure scientific area appear.

Chart 3 - Distribution of educational attainment



The distribution of educational attainment by NUT II is evident in Table 4, which reflects the previously referred situation on the predominance of higher education, in which Algarve has the highest value (69.2%), followed by secondary education and postgraduate education. It is also noteworthy that the highest value in secondary school is in Alentejo (41.2%). The highest value for postgraduate education was found in the North (22.9%), Centre (14.8%) and Lisbon and Tagus Valley (13.2%). It also shows, though, the percentage of human resources with basic education in the center (9.1%) and in Lisbon and Tagus Valley (8.8%) region.

Table 4 - Distribution of educational attainment by NUT II

NUT II	Base Education	Secondary Education	Higher Education	Post-graduation	Other	NR
North	1,7%	26,3%	44,9%	22,9%	3,4%	0,8%
Centre	9,1%	25,0%	48,9%	14,8%	2,3%	0,0%
Lisbon	8,8%	26,5%	51,5%	13,2%	0,0%	0,0%
Alentejo	4,9%	41,2%	42,2%	5,9%	4,9%	1,0%
Algarve	0,0%	15,4%	69,2%	7,7%	7,7%	0,0%
Açores	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%

In terms of educational attainment by gender in Table 5 we found a slight predominance with females in higher education and, conversely, a slight predominance of males with primary and secondary education and also post-graduates. Most respondents (85.7%) consider their academic training as sufficient for the performance of their official duties. Recognition of academic training by the employer highlights it as an asset, as agreed by 68.5%, however 17.9% expressed their disagreement.

Table 5 - Distribution of educational attainment by gender

Gender	Base Education	Secondary Education	Higher Education	Post-graduation	Other	NR
Masculine	9,6%	34,9%	38,6%	16,9%	0,0%	0,0%
Feminine	4,2%	27,9%	49,7%	13,6%	3,9%	0,6%

The most expressive job categories are the Superior Tourism Technician (27.1%), the other option (26.6%, which aggregates Administrative Technician, Senior Technician, Administrator, etc.) and the Professional Tourism Technician (19.7%).

Table 6 - Distribution of job categories

Category	Frequence	Percentage
Superior Tourism Technician	106	27,1%
Tourism Technician	48	12,3%
Professional Tourism Technician	77	19,7%
Tourism Assistant	50	12,8%
Other	104	26,6%
Not Answered (NR)	6	1,5%

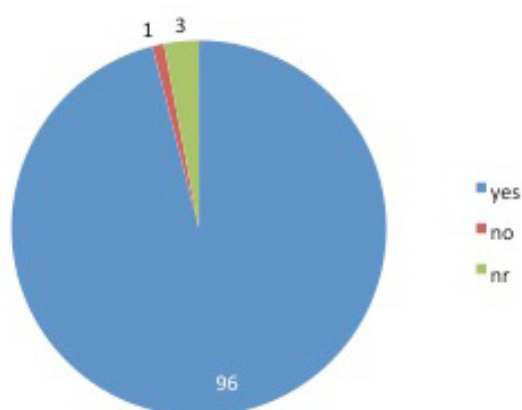
Within the functional content of each job category corresponding to the performed jobs, 75.4% of respondents, which is a large majority, considers that there is parallelism. However, 18.2% consider that there isn't a desired correspondence between the professional category and office. In terms of consonance between the job category and the academic qualifications, that 72.4% agreed that there was compliance, but 24.6% manifested there are discrepancies.

Respondents indicate with a majority (66.2%) the availability of opportunities for vocational training, which is indispensable for the performance of activities. This is also the trend in the Nut II, as can be seen in Table 7. However, the opportunities percentage is considerably higher in Algarve and the Azores, being an enhanced situation by the lower number of respondents in relation to other questions.

The long-life learning gets near unanimity (95.9%) as to the interpretation of its significance, as confirmed in the fourth graph display. Further, there were 259 respondents who indicated they had been provided with opportunities to further them training, 39% answered less than 35 hours, 35% indicated between 35 hours and 70 hours, and 26% showed more than 70 hours, recorded in average annual hours in the last 4 years.

Table 7 - Training Opportunities

NUT II	Yes	No	NR
North	64,4%	33,1%	2,5%
Centre	65,9%	31,8%	2,3%
Lisbon and Tagus valley	70,6%	26,5%	2,9%
Alentejo	61,8%	37,3%	1,0%
Algarve	92,3%	7,7%	0,0%
Azores	100,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Madeira	-	-	-
Total	66,2%	31,7%	2,0%

Chart 4 - Importance of Lifelong learning

In the context of planning and organization of activities in the tourism sector, 66.5% of respondents indicated that their opinion is considered by the employer, and 23.5% expressed that their opinion is not considered in this context. Though many people were taken into consideration in this type of intervention where a considerable proactivity and productivity by employees of municipalities is aimed, it is revealed here there is some concern by some indices of the presented indicators, placing emphasis on the need and urgency to integrate, the views of technicians in terms of policies and strategies in the tourism areas.

CONCLUSIONS

In the context of this discussion we conclude that tourism, in terms of national municipalities, can be structured and organized in different circumstances, but it must take a flexible, comprehensive, integrated environmental and sustainable, implementable and community-based approach, according to the assumptions of local action of WTO. In our perspective, it will be increasingly important to have a strategic planning approach, considering the variety of industries and diverse areas of intersection in Tourism. In this context the development of human resources in the sector must also be ensured, providing both adequate initial qualification or continuing training of professionals of Portuguese municipalities, from the Tourism. In the study conducted among 308 Portuguese municipalities the existence of different situations with regard to human resources is visible, a fact that influences the achievement of objectives and implementation strategies in order to reach the tourist development of the territories at a local level.

One shouldn't forget that the planning for the development of local tourism aims to generate many economic benefits to society, while maintaining the sustainability of the tourism industry through the protection of nature and local culture. The challenge of the Legislation on Tourism is to never forget the principles of sustainability, transversality and competitiveness, to ensure that the tourism policy and strategy fulfill its aims in the national and regional levels. This assumption requires a theoretical knowledge and on the tourism realities that promote academic learning and scientific research, also undertaken by human resources studied here.

As an outcome, it seems clear that local authorities can not stand aside from and indemnify the issue of tourism because, like it or not, this could be a key industry for economic growth in coming years. In times of crisis, as experienced now, we believe that this industry can be an effective lever for the development of many local economies and the creation of local jobs. How-

ever, this qualitative transformation can only be believed through a dialectical process of consideration and inclusion of the municipalities technicians who, according to the observation of several indicators, reveal conditions, have qualifications and skills increasingly reinforced for the competent intervention in Tourism. This study has an exploratory nature and in this context it is the basis for further and upgraded research in order to understand better the current situation, given that municipalities have taken a considerable increase of skills in the functional area of Tourism over the past two years.

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Submitted: 15th October, 2011

Final version: 28th February, 2012

Accepted: 24th April, 2012

Refereed anonymously