

Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism Service Providers in Acapulco

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Abstract: *This document analyzes and describes the effects that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on Acapulco tourist service providers (TSP), the objective of the research is also to know and describe how they faced its impact in labor, economic terms, the types of support received by the government, the percentage of collaborators who were affected by the disease, jobs lost, man-hours lost and the percentage of infected tourists in tourist businesses. At the time of writing these lines, officials of the local and state tourism administration were consulted to know data on the subject without obtaining a positive response on studies or research that would allow us from the governmental sphere to know more about the effects that the TSP had. The study focused specifically on knowing the opinion on a non -probabilistic sample for the convenience of 50 of the TSP of a population of approximately 500 tourist service providers located in the tourist area of the port, by applying the data collection instrument As is the questionnaire, the investigation is of a descriptive type, some of the findings were that the pandemic affected the tourism sector as a whole for two days in which its hotel occupancy closed at zero.*

Keywords: Tourism, Pandemic, Covid-19, affectations, jobs

1. Introduction

Tourism has been considered as the country's economic development lever from the 70s of the last century, in Acapulco some authors such as Escudero, F. R. (1998), date the appearance of tourism in the 40s, and over the years the city based its development and the growth of its economy on this noble activity

However, global tourism suffered the deepest crisis that is memory with the appearance of the Covid-19 pandemic in December 2019 when China's authorities lit the alarms and launched the warning of the appearance of The disease in the city of Wuhan known at that first moment as cases of severe atypical pneumonia, on January 30 of that same year, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the general director of the World Health Organization (WHO), announced the denomination to the new crown virus as COVID-19 declaring the epidemic of the epidemic of the Coronavirus, and in just 3 months after its appearance, the WHO declares the health emergency at the level of global pandemic with the death of dozens of people in the world.

At the time of writing these lines and according to the WHO portal, dated June 21, 2022 there is a record of 539, 893, 858 million infected people, and a record of 6, 324, 112 of deceased people worldwide, in Mexico the first case was announced on February 29, 2020 by the National Institute of Respiratory Diseases, and according to reports from the Science and Technology Council (Conacyt, by its name in

Spanish), on its interactive website on Covid-19 and based on data from the Ministry of Health of the federal government in Mexico dated June 21, 2022, there are 6, 180, 960 estimated positive cases, with 339, 435 estimated deaths, and 69, 575 estimated active cases.

In the state of Guerrero there is a record of 99, 620 accumulated confirmed cases of infected people, with accumulated confirmed deaths of 6, 772, and 232 active cases, according to estimates of the same Conacyt portal and based on data updated to June 21, 2022, for the case of Acapulco, in the same portal and based on data from the same Ministry of Health of the federal government there are 37, 587 accumulated confirmed cases of infected people, with a record of 2906 deaths, and 169 active cases, see Annex 1.

Undoubtedly, no tourist destination in the world has been safe from suffering the effects of pandemic, especially due to the paralysis of trips around the world, in the case of Acapulco, it was affected in its main tourist indicators such as the Average expenditure made by the tourist, the economic spill that the tourist destination receives from tourists and that undoubtedly affected the finances of the city, and in a historical way it was to know and observe the descent to zero of its occupation hotelier when the records of the Ministry of Tourism of Acapulco showed two days with zero occupation on May 5, 2020 that took to the street to tourist service providers to demonstrate before the closure of beaches, commerce and tourism companies, and turned on

the spotlights Reds of the local and state authority, even more serious when repeated for the second day on May 18, 2020 the total closure of the destination with the economic consequences and social repercussions of a population that according to the National council of evaluation of the policy of social development (Coneval, by its name in Spanish, 2022) is one of which paradoxically despite having an economic development lever such as tourism with a total population of 757 thousand 367 inhabitants, 52.1% of them, that is, 394, 861 inhabitants Acapulco lives in poverty being considered the ninth municipality of the country, and of them 126 thousand 672 of its inhabitants live in extreme poverty.

As can be seen, the excessive dependence on tourism, the lack of diversification of economic activities of the city, were detonating factors for the destination to hit bottom in the crisis of the pandemic of Covid-19, it is noted that despite the above from the governmental sphere, as already mentioned lines above, there are no studies so far with more information on the impact of the pandemic to tourism service providers, hence the importance and relevance of this research.

It is also noted that the impact of the total stoppage of economic and tourist activities caused by the pandemic not only affected the tourism sector of the country that has a hotel tourism infrastructure of more than 24 thousand hotels, 854 thousand rooms, occupying the 7th place in the world in infrastructure (Torruco, M. 2022), also, the port of Acapulco stopped its economic activities, labor and business in 210 hotels of different categories, with more than 19 thousand rooms and considered the first tourist center in the state of Guerrero (Secretary of Tourism of Acapulco 2022).

Objective of the research

The objective of the research is to know the impact caused to tourism service providers by the pandemic, analyze and describe how they faced the crisis, the percentage of employees who were affected by the disease, the jobs lost, the man hours lost and the percentage of tourists infected in tourism businesses.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), agency of the WHO (2020), defines an outbreak as: two or more cases epidemiologically associated with each other.

On the other hand, PAHO-WHO, (2020), mentions that the term endemic is used for a pathological process that is maintained in a population in a stationary manner in certain periods.

Also, as far as epidemic is concerned: it is considered the unusual increase in the number of cases of a given disease in a specific population, in a given period. PAHO-WHO, (2020).

The terms "outbreak" and "epidemic" are often used interchangeably. In general, an epidemic can be considered as the simultaneous consolidation of multiple outbreaks over a wide geographical area and generally involves the occurrence of a large number of new cases

in a short time, greater than the expected number. (PAHO-WHO, 2020)

Likewise, PAHO-WHO (2020) defines Pandemic: epidemic that has spread across several countries, continents or the whole world and generally affects a large number of people.

On the other hand, PAHO itself defines epidemic curve: to establish that we are facing an epidemic it is necessary to know the previous frequency of the disease. One of the simplest and most useful ways is to draw an epidemic curve, which consists of the graphical representation of the daily, weekly or monthly frequencies of the disease on a coordinate axis, in which the horizontal axis represents time and the vertical frequencies.

Now, what is the coronavirus or Covid-19? is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The virus is known as SARS-CoV-2, a new beta-coronavirus of the Coronaviridae family, named for its spherical lipoprotein capsule surrounded by multiple spicules (S-glycoproteins) that give it the appearance of a crown. The genetic material inside is a single chain of positive-sense ribonucleic acid (RNA).

The World Health Organization announced that on November 24, 2020, a new variant of the Coronavirus was discovered, which was named as "omicron", which is considered to be very dangerous.

It is called "omicron" variant of Covid-19 which has raised the concern of WHO spread faster than any previous variant, with a doubling time of 2 to 3 days, the overall risk remains very high, (UNICEF-WHO, 2020)

External shocks such as wars or epidemics that cause great mortalities can unbalance production systems, as an example the repercussions of the first and second World Wars in the fall of production levels during and after, the shock produced by increases in the price of energy, especially oil, for example, the 1975 crisis that was related to the rise in the price of fuel in 1973, similarly the 1981 crisis (Bugallo Salomón, 2014, cited in Perez, U, et al., 2021).

The previous statement indicates that in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, tourism has shown deep fragility, it can be affirmed that tourism is an extremely fragile activity, one of the economic activities that has been most impacted by this pandemic has, It has undoubtedly tourism, there are various risk factors that endanger tourism, war conflicts, economic crises, natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes, political conflicts, terrorism as the one that occurred to the twin towers and that affection to the travel industry, all these conflicts or events have left their indelible and devastating footprint in tourism, during the beginning and development of the disease global tourism recorded figures of 1500 million tourists traveling around the world of agreement With data from the (UNWTO, 2022, cited by Statista), see Annex 1.

The present century has brought with it 3 crisis that have affected tourism globally, see Annex 1: The Sars epidemic

that appeared in 2003, generated the fall of more than 2 million arrivals of international tourists globally; the second affectation that suffered tourism was the financial crisis of the year 2009, which reduced tourist flows for more than 37 million in the world, and the Covid-19 Pandemia with a fall of 1100 million tourists who could not travel during the highest peaks of the 4 waves of the pandemic, a 5th is currently registered wave, although with less virulence, but still affects tourist flows in certain countries.

2. Problem Statement

The beginning of the pandemic and its impact on the sector raised us the need to carry out the search for information on the pandemic and tourist issue without having sufficient information since no one was prepared to face a global pandemic it was the first problem; second problem, not having enough information in the tourism sector, it was not known how to face a phenomenon still unknown. And the third problem, as has been written above, from the governmental, scientific and academic sphere it was not known how to act and after time that need has been generated to be more prepared to know what to do with a disease that apparently arrives to stay since in two years currently a 5th wave is lived, without a doubt, today it is recognized that one of the most valuable activities for the human being and for the economies of the world is tourism, so to know the impact of COVID-19 on tourism from Acapulco and not finding information from the governmental sphere as it has been insisted, that he will inform about these effects and their impact to the tourist service providers of the destination. Here raised the need to carry out the present academic research as an exploratory

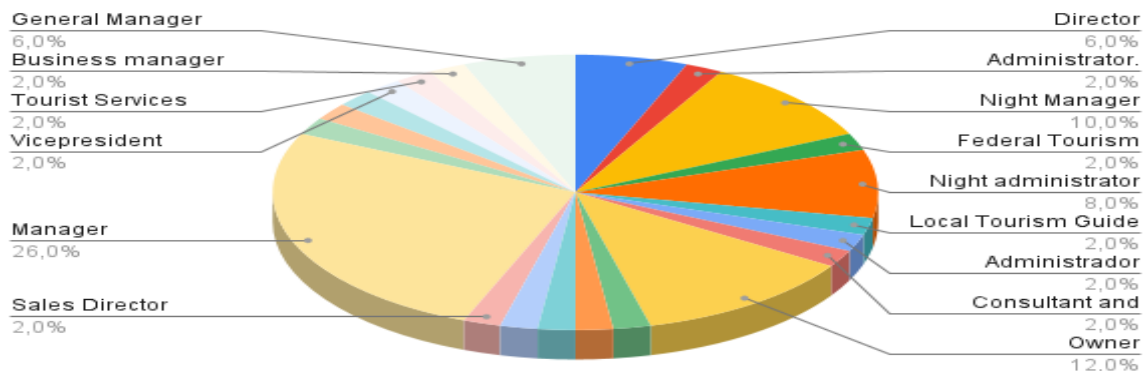
and descriptive type. This allows us to keep the record to know what happened, and how the recovery of the sector faces. Through this resilience of the city and destiny, it seeks to enhance its activities in a sector of the economic one necessary for Acapulco, given the high degree of dependence that the city has of tourism. Tourism in Acapulco touches background, see Annex 2, never before in the history of destiny had been closed until zero figures, see Annex 2, which indicates that the impact was brutal for the entire destination.

3. Methodology

The study focused specifically on knowing the opinion of the leaderships of the sector in a non-probabilistic sample by convenience, from 50 of the tourist service providers of a population of approximately 500 located in the tourist area of the port; through the application of the questionnaire with 28 questions, which was distributed from highest to lower number to hoteliers, restaurant, tourist guides, and travel agencies and others respectively; data collection took place in Acapulco from the 1st of June to June 20 of 2022. The questionnaire was sent to leaders of the tourism sector previously identified and located through a link via social networks such as WhatsApp and email. The relevance and importance of the information collected resides in that it comes from the same leaders of the sector that are at the same time tourist entrepreneurs, the research is descriptive type.

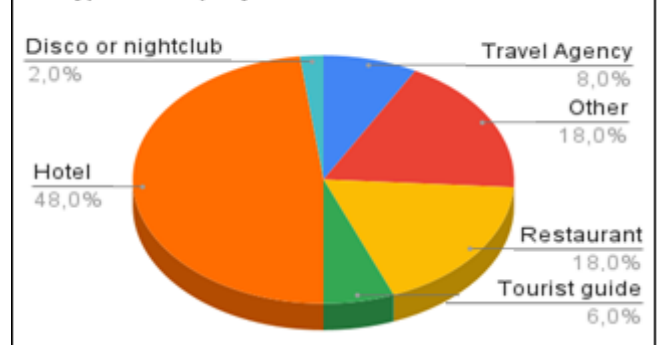
4. Results

1 Position of the interviewee?

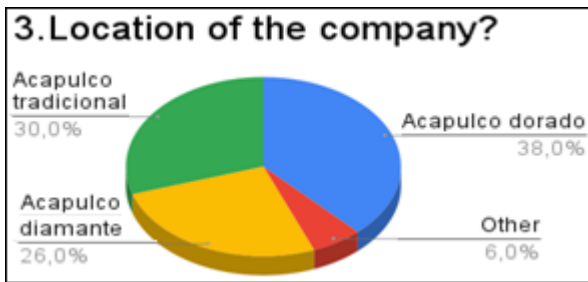


This graph shows us the types of people who were interviewed through the questionnaire, here it can be seen that the highest percentage of them was the manager in the first place, followed by owners, and night managers respectively, and leaders of various tourist organizations that were previously contacted for this purpose.

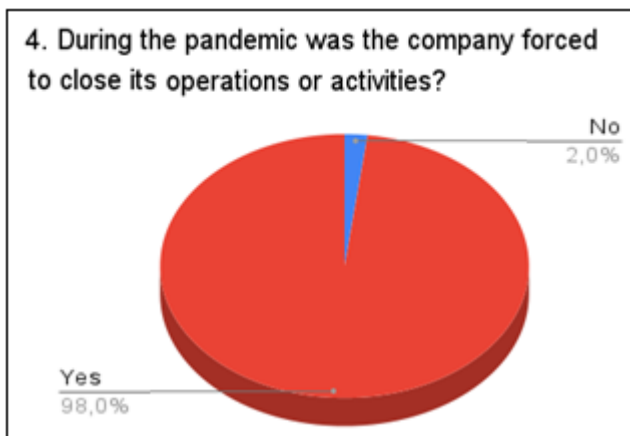
2. Type of company?



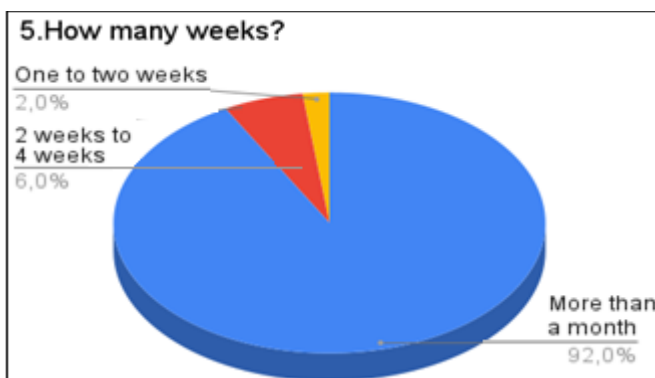
As can be seen, the type of company represented by the respondents were from highest to lowest hotels with 48%, restaurants with 18%, others with 18%, travel agencies with 8% and tourist guides 6%.



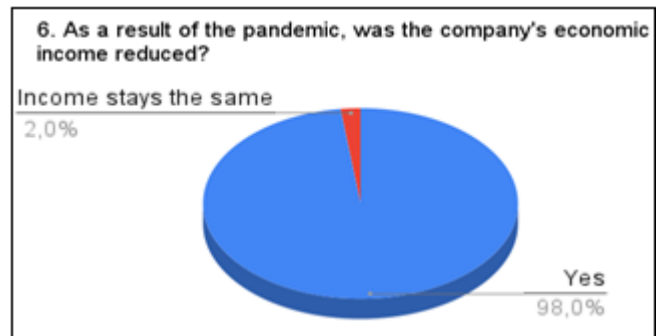
The highest number and percentage of respondents was located in the area of Golden Acapulco with 38% since in that area is where the largest number of TSP is located, followed by the Traditional Acapulco with 30% as it is effectively considered as the second zone of TSP, the area of Acapulco Diamond is with 26% which is the area that is growing and is where the development is oriented of Acapulco and finally "others" with 6% referring to the resorts of Pie de la Cuesta and Bonfil beach in the municipality of Acapulco.



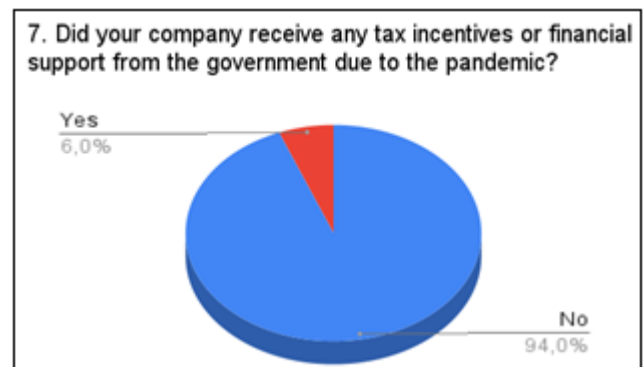
Undoubtedly, the largest percentage of TSP, was forced to close their businesses, except for a small percentage of 2% of them considered and registered as small businesses remained open in defiance of the pandemic and the health authorities who began the massive closure of businesses during the days of greatest contagion caused by waves 2 and 3 of the pandemic and of which there is information they were never registered or notified to close.



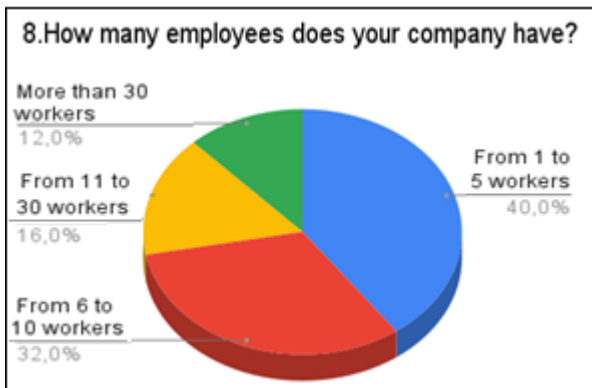
It can be seen in this graph that the vast majority of TSP, that is, 92% closed their businesses for more than a month, while the rest of them, 6% did it from 2 weeks to four and 2% did it from one week to two at least during the pandemic.



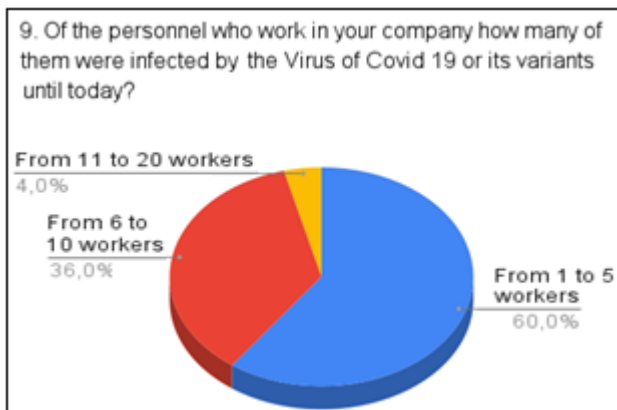
The fall in economic income can be seen in this graph, no one could escape from seeing their income reduced, 98% of them were impacted by the pandemic, unfortunately there is no record on the amount of that income because generally the issue is very difficult to know since the TSP does not respond to this type of questions, but if we make a very simple arithmetic operation and take as a reference the winter holiday period that is the most anticipated of the year, and according to information published by the Secretary of Tourism of Acapulco at the end of each holiday period, and in the voice of its owner, at the end of the December 2021 season the economic spillover was approximately 5, 572 million pesos (Abarca 2021), if we add to this the holiday periods of Easter and summer with the same economic amount of December, we can speak of 16, 716 million pesos on average per year of 2020.



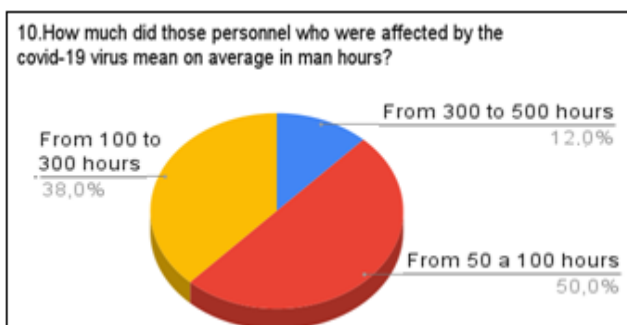
The federal government sentence that would not help any private sector company during the pandemic with economic stimuli, and the graph is more than revealing, 94% of the TSP did not receive any financial or fiscal support, while 6% of them, that is, a small number of tourist guides revealed that they did management before the State Government to receive financial support which were not granted, only the aid of food supplies.



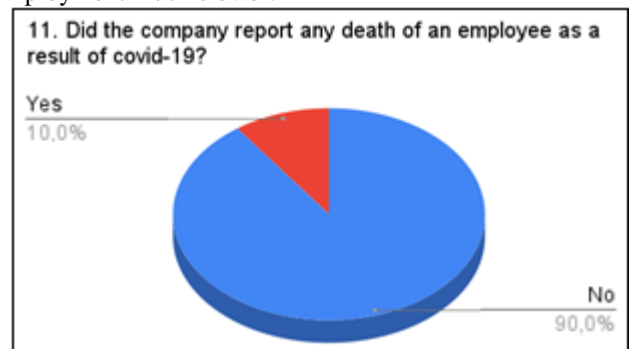
For the next question, the TSP's answer was that 40% of the companies counts from 1 to 5 workers, 32% from 6 to 10, 16% from 11 to 30, and the rest, that is, just 12 % of the companies have more than 30 workers, without a doubt the graph faithfully reflects the reality of the destination for the number of tourism and workers companies that were affected since the largest number of companies are mostly MSMEs and SMEs, only one number scarce are large companies such as special class hotels, grand tourism hotels and 5 stars that are reflected here.



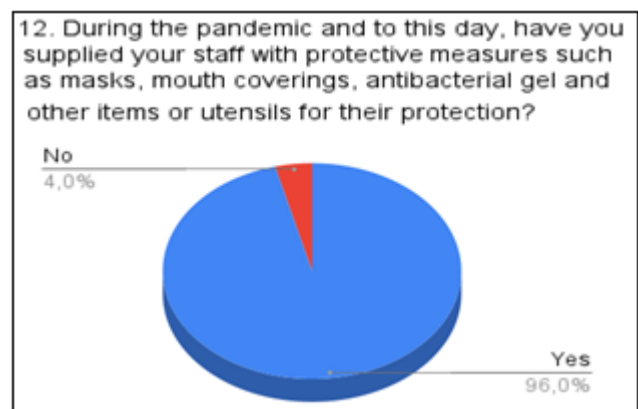
This is a reality that almost no one could escape, almost all companies to a greater or lesser extent their workers were infected by the Coronavirus, as 60% of the companies could be seen had 1 to 5 infected workers, 36 % of the companies had 6 to 10 workers infected with the disease, and only a small 4% of companies had 11 to 20 workers infected by the COVID-19, this reflects what is expressed in the previous graph of which it is concluded with the smallest number is the large companies that nevertheless had more workers infected by the virus, that is, the size of the company reflects the number of employees infected especially in the period of the pandemic peak when the population was not vaccinated.



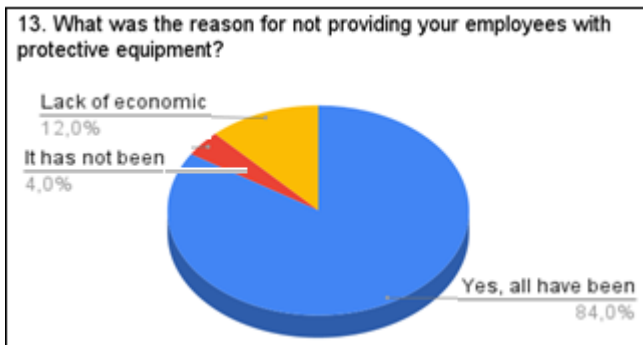
However, on average 50% of the TSP whose workers suffered the disease , 38% lacking work from 100 to 300 hours, that is, 6 weeks or a month and a half, and the remaining 12% lacking more than 6 weeks or more than 2 months taking into consideration the recovery of people who had more involvement with the disease and whose clinical cases were aggravated by chronic degenerative diseases such as diabetes, arterial hypertension, obesity, advanced age and other diseases that aggravated their disease and recovery. It should not be forgotten that while experimenting with a vaccine and more knew about the virus and the effects of the disease many patients died due to the ignorance of their clinical paintings and the complications that those diseases associated with COVID-19 caused their death from them or they made their recovery and incorporation to their source of employment much slower.



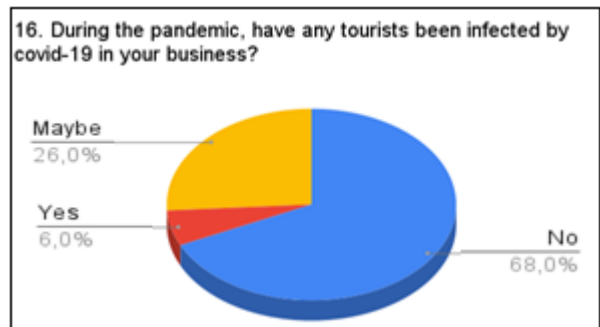
Although the exact number of deaths is not known since the black figures of the disease were controversial with the official ones, according to the information received by the TSP in this investigation, it is now known that only 10% of those companies had any death of workers, and 90% did not report any deaths despite the high rate of infections in the sector as shown in the graph above by the number of man hours lost and reported.



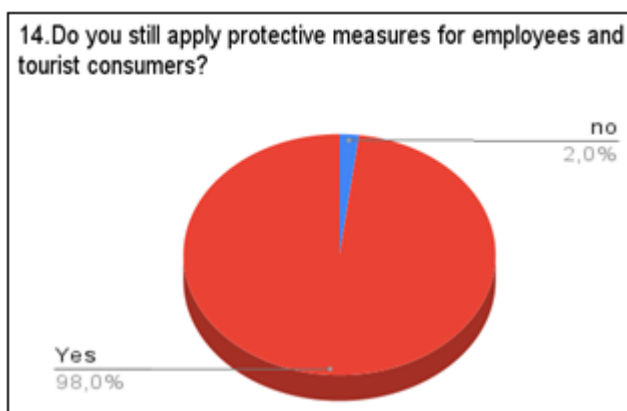
The skepticism and lack of information often confusing by the federal government on the use of the face mask and protocols to avoid infection, was the detonating for people and companies not to take their precautions to apply sanitary protocols at the beginning of Pandemic, that 4% although it is in a very small sense, meant the contagion of workers in the sector as expressed in the previous graphics, the vast majority, that is, 96 of companies supply of utensils and prevention measures to their staff during pandemic and until today.



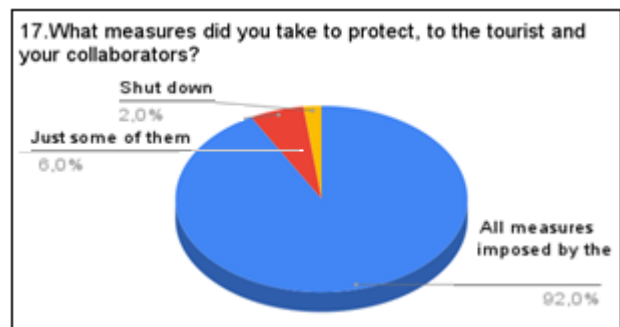
It can be understood that at the beginning of the pandemic the cause of not supplying protective utensils to its collaborators has been the lack of economic resources, since the closure of the sector generated the fall in its income by that 12%, but 4% consider it not necessary to supply them, however 84% of the TSP continue to supply all the utensils and security measures to their workers.



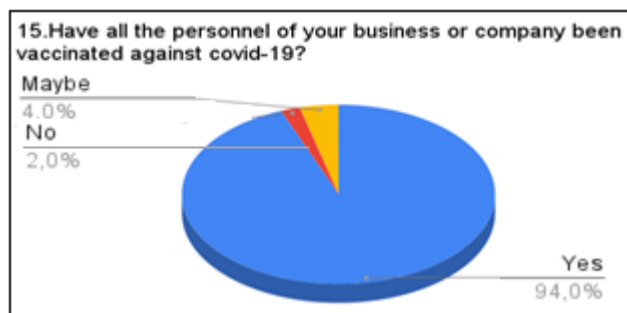
Contrary to the previous response, this graph does show us the response of the respondent with the 6% affirmative in the sense of knowing if some tourists were infected in their businesses, this surely comes from the responsibility of the tourist who communicates to the TSP the possibility of being Infected in the business and thereby initiate COVID-19 protocols for the protection of workers with whom they had contact during their stay, a high percentage, that is, 26% responded that perhaps more infections were had in tourist establishments , and 68% responded negatively.



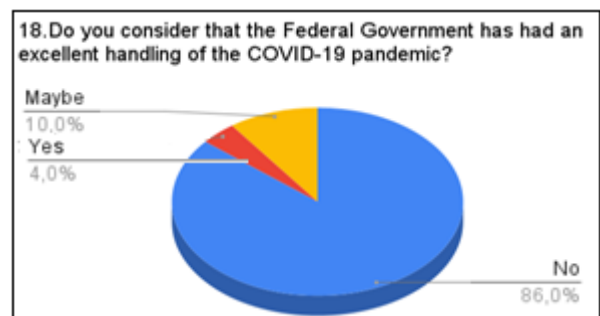
Undoubtedly, the application of protection measures are already a daily part of our lives, although there is still resistance to implement them as shown here in the graph with 2%, 98% of respondents continue to apply the most basic measures to avoid as much as possible contagion between the staff of their companies and the tourist.



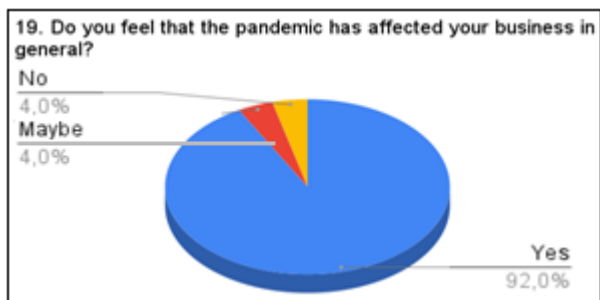
This graph shows that 92% of the TSP complied with the indications of the health authority to implement protocols and prevention measures against Covid-19, some others did not attend to those indications of the authority as shown with 6% who mention that only some measures were implemented by their business and the rest, that is, 2% faced with infections had to close their businesses.



This graph is more than eloquent and revealing that compared to the previous one they show us that 2% that still rejects vaccination, it is worrying that 4% of the responses of the respondents mention that perhaps, since this reflects the ignorance of the administrators, owners or managers to find out if their workers in their entirety have already been vaccinated, the highest percentage, i.e. 94% of them claimed that they have already been vaccinated



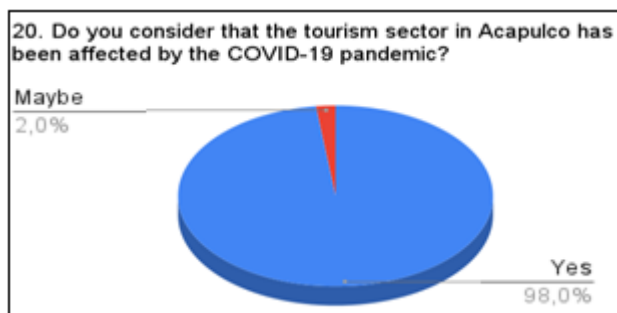
The graph shows that 86% responded that the Federal Government did not have an excellent management of the pandemic, the opinion is divided with the rest of the answers, since 10% of them responded that maybe and 4% said yes, the issue is controversial but by the number of deaths related to the pandemic and the majority response shown here, it is clear that there was not.



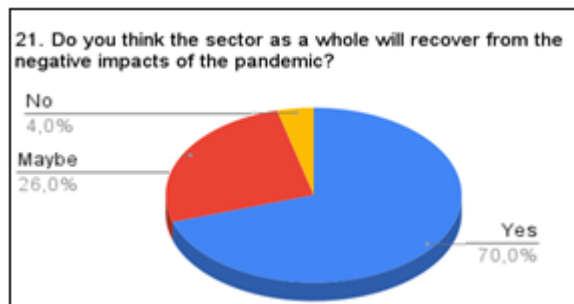
92% of respondents mention that the pandemic they affected their business, 4% said no, and the other 4% respond with one perhaps, the above only shows us that a small percentage did not suffer effects on their businesses because those are those TSP who knew how to overcome pandemic without setbacks.



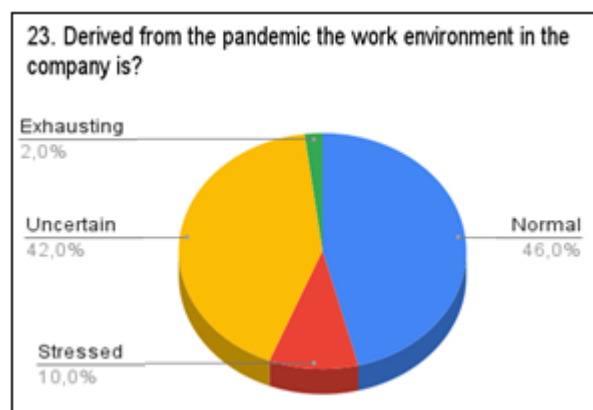
82% of the TSP answered affirmatively about the reduction of personnel of their companies at the time of the pandemic, and 18% of them responded that their workforce was not reduced, it is not a smaller number to know that 82% of the workforce has been reduced, from this it follows that these personnel were the ones who were sick and did not have a good physical recovery to return, or are the deaths of workers who no longer returned, it is also deduce that among other things the workers during the closure found another job opportunity and therefore decided not to return to the tourism sector, finally it is stated that the reduction of 82% of that staff as part of the company only happened in the closure of activities during the time that TSP was requested to close or reduce activities by the health authority and tourist.



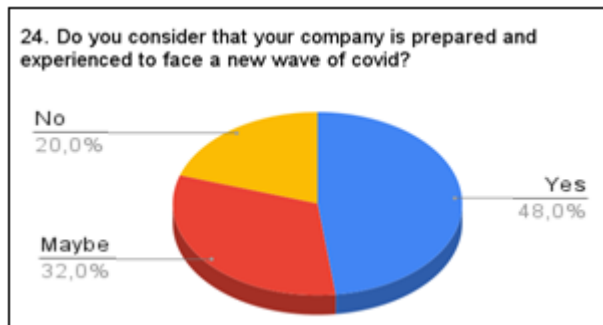
This graph shows that 98% of respondents agree that Acapulco was affected by the pandemic, which reflects the events recorded as the total closure of the destination on the dates mentioned above, while only 2% mentioned that perhaps there was an impact on the destination due to the pandemic.



70% of respondents are positive when affirming that the destination as a whole will recover from the impacts of the pandemic, 26% are skeptical, and the rest, 4% definitely respond negatively by stating that the sector will not recover from the negative impacts, in fact the resilience of the destination comes to the surface and at the time of writing these lines Acapulco has shown once again its strength to recover of the onslaught of the pandemic, no doubt some TSPs are still struggling to reopen their doors and continue their economic activities.



When asking the TSP about the work environment in the company derived from the pandemic, they replied that 46% consider that it is normal, 42% responded that it is uncertain, 10% responded that it is stressed and the rest, 2% affirmed that It is exhausting, but if they add exhausting, uncertain and stressed, it throws 54% of negative work environment in the companies of the tourism sector, from the above it is deduced that one of the affectations or negative impacts to the TSP is the work environment so difficult that is lived in these companies, something that undoubtedly the Secretary of Labor (STPS by its name in Spanish), the administrators, the secretaries of tourism both municipal and state and the secretary of health should take very seriously in order to attend possible post-traumatic damages derived from the pandemic and its affectations.



Reality prevails, 48% of respondents say they are prepared and experienced to face a new wave of covid-19, 32% are hesitant to answer that perhaps, and 20% say they are not prepared, in the sum of the negative answers you can get 52% and if you add the negative answers of the previous graph you can deduce that those who would have problems facing a new wave with the same severity of infections and with post-traumatic problems would really be most of them with little positive results to come out ahead in a new wave of Covid-19 infections.

5. Findings

First: Never in the history of Acapulco, the tourist destination had closed its activities at zero, not even before the devastating passage of natural phenomena such as the Hurricane Paulin, or the Igrid and Manuel who were two natural phenomena that raised at the same time, one of them generated in the Gulf of Mexico and with a trajectory to cross the country to the Pacific and the other phenomenon initiated in the Pacific with a trajectory to the state of Guerrero, both phenomena affected at the same time, something never seen.

Second: The owners or administrators or business managers do not have full knowledge of the number of workers of their companies if they were already vaccinated, it shows us a disinterest, apathy, or the little importance it has for them, it is possible that the lack of employment of rigorous measures are also the cause, in this case it must be understood that reality shows us this type of health risks for the workers and potential clients and without a doubt for the company if a worker could infect.

Third: The response of the respondents comes from a telephone call directly to those who claimed to have received information from the client upon their return to their home to show clear symptoms of contagion, in some cases only the probability of contagion in the establishment by the tourist was mentioned to the TSP. The above indicates that there was communication between TSP and tourist.

Fourth: The resilience of destiny is not equal to the resilience of the city, you are different, they move and develop at different recovery speeds.

Fifth: One of the findings that most attract attention for the low visibility that has been given to the subject, is undoubtedly the post-traumatic or psychological effects post pandemic that have affected the work environment of

companies, the graph indicates a great affectation that has not been taken into account and much less attended by the health and labor authorities mainly, graph 23 illustrates that there will be hundreds of workers who live in anguish or as they expressed it with post-traumatic stress because they have been affected by the contagion or because they have reduced their income or for many other causes not expressed here by the administrator, manager, general director or owner of the company surveyed, which forces to carry out another investigation of a medical nature and no longer tourist that can demonstrate the damage to health caused not only by covid-19 but also as a sequel to Covid-19 or as post-traumatic damage from the event of the same disease, affecting their relationships affected their labor relations such as the work environment in companies and in the worker from the psychological point of view, more than half indicates.

6. Conclusions

In the first place, it is concluded that there is a marked disinterest or ignorance of the authorities of the municipal and state administration to prepare studies or at least data records that indicate what has been the impact on the TSP and the local economy due to the Covid-19 pandemic, despite being a new and global phenomenon for humanity that has generated millions of deaths and infections, and especially for the global tourism sector due to its impacts on almost all its indicators, this has not aroused the interest of either of the two local and state administrations to understand and comprehend, analyze and apply measures that reduce or mitigate their impact on the sector and the city.

The resilience of the destination is not equal to the resilience of the city, although both are an indissoluble part of a whole, the effects and negative impacts of the pandemic affected the city and the destination differently, the impacts of the pandemic on the city were perhaps less and the affectations were only observed in the immobility for a few months of its inhabitants, the reduction of mobility even in some places gave opportunity for some species to benefit, and although this forced people to adopt necessary measures to avoid contagion by reducing social life to the maximum and take their school and work activities to the so-called home office with virtual or hybrid activities in some cases, and in others to establish school classes virtually, it was achieved that the most substantive activities of the city although they were reduced did not stop in their entirety.

It is concluded that in the case of the destination, the resilience does not run at the same speed as that of the city, both run in parallel but following different objectives and with different speed, as for tourist activities, these were affected to the extent of the closure of Acapulco as a destination, and not as a city since the city was never closed as such, while Acapulco as a tourist destination was closed for two days in the same month, something never before seen in history, the pandemic also forced the total closure of its beaches, something that had also never been seen in its tourist history and also the personnel of the Mexican Navy, the navy, to request and in some cases to forcibly remove bathers from the beaches

It is urgent the psychological medical attention by the health authority that attends to the working personnel of the tourism sector of Acapulco for those affectations post COVID-19 or post traumatic derived from the pandemic and that have affected their employment relationship and surely other aspects of their physical, family, and work life, graph 23 indicates, it is forceful that more than half point it out, the above must be supported and reinforced by the tourist administrations of the city and the state to accompany an effort of medical attention to the TSP and its workers who were affected.

It can be concluded from the last two graphs that the TSP would definitely face a very critical and adverse panorama of a new wave like the previous ones, the deficiencies in terms of medical attention to those who have been affected by the impact of COVID-19 from the post-trauma point of view and before the uncertainty of not being prepared to face another wave of Covid-19 makes the tourist destination extremely vulnerable as stated lines above when addressing the approach to the problem, but also the city would be left in a vulnerable position, it is finally reiterated, in summary that the effects and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the city and the destination will produce very different roads of resilience for each one.

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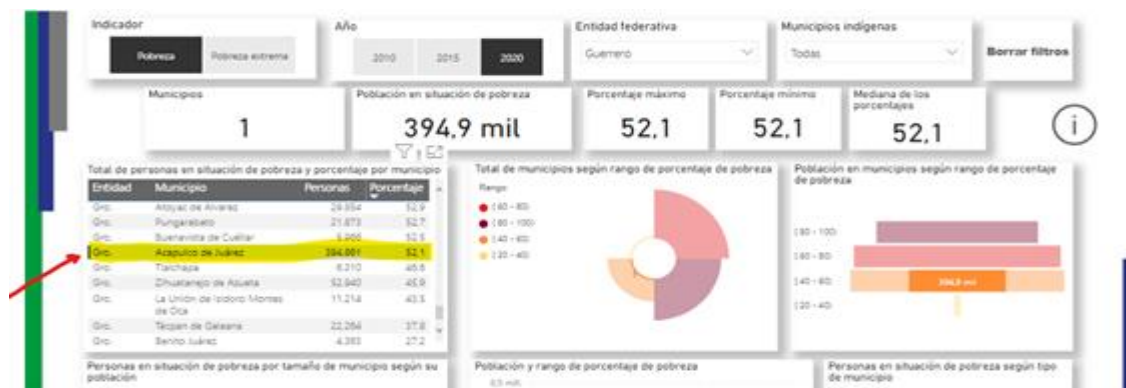
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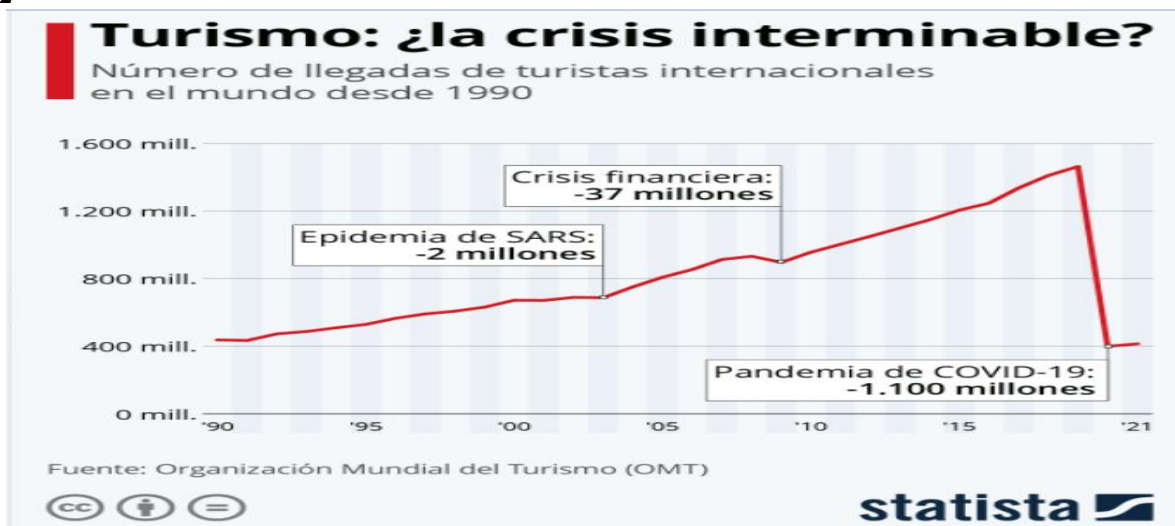
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Annex 1



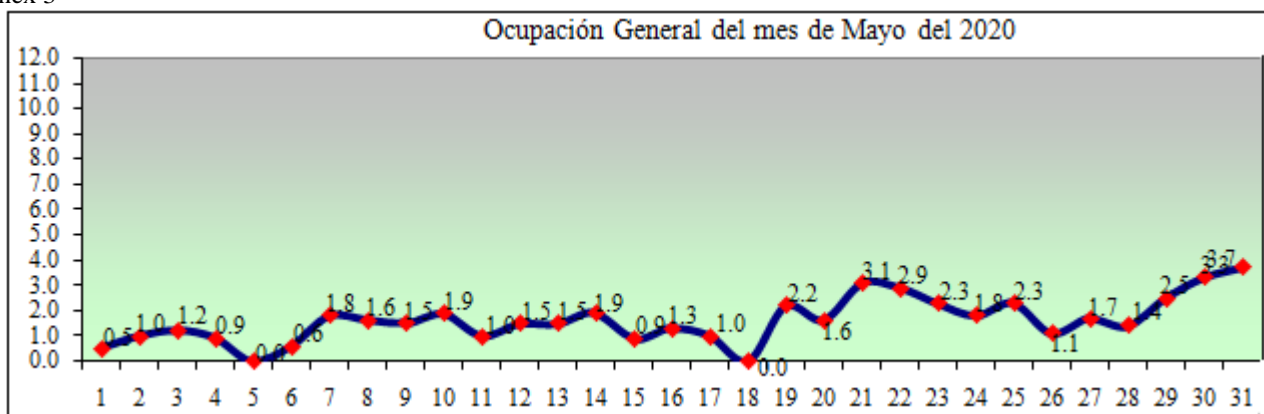
Source: Conacyt, based on data from the Ministry of Health

Annex 2



Source: statista with data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2022)

Annex 3



Source: Secretary of Tourism of Acapulco

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