



Review article

## The impact of COVID-19 and the training of the sommelier. Considerations

### El impacto de la COVID-19 y la formación del sommelier. Consideraciones

### O impacto do COVID-19 e a formação do sommelier. Considerações

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#### ABSTRACT

COVID-19 evolved during the year 2020 until it reached the category of a pandemic, ranking as the greatest threat suffered by humanity in decades. The disease caused the beginning of a global economic recession with effects on all areas of society. Tourist gastronomy and teaching have been among the most impacted activities, which has generated changes and measures in them to reduce the levels of contagion and maintain the vitality of their processes. The objective of this work was to analyze criteria on the impact of COVID-19 in the field of tourist gastronomy, with emphasis on its consequences for the performance of the sommelier and their training needs. An exhaustive bibliographic review on the subject was carried out. The analysis of this confirmed the unfavorable impacts of the pandemic in the economic and social spheres; which allowed the identification of measures and action protocols for its mitigation within the gastronomy associated with tourism, which constitute criteria to consider for the improvement of the sommelier 's performance and the process of its training in the current context.

**Keywords:** professional competence; training; pandemic; restaurant; sommelier; came.

#### RESUMEN

La COVID-19 evolucionó durante el año 2020 hasta alcanzar la categoría de pandemia, ubicándose como la mayor amenaza sufrida por la humanidad en décadas. La enfermedad provocó el inicio de una recesión económica global con afectaciones en todos los ámbitos de la sociedad. La gastronomía turística y la docencia han sido de las actividades más impactadas, lo que ha generado cambios y medidas en ellas para disminuir los niveles de contagio y mantener la vitalidad de sus procesos. El presente trabajo tuvo como objetivo analizar criterios sobre el impacto de la COVID-19 en el ámbito

de la gastronomía turística, con énfasis en sus consecuencias para el desempeño del sommelier y sus necesidades formativas. Se realizó una revisión bibliográfica exhaustiva sobre el tema. El análisis de esta confirmó los impactos desfavorables de la pandemia en los ámbitos económico y social; lo que permitió identificar medidas y protocolos de actuación para su mitigación dentro de la gastronomía asociada al turismo, que constituyen criterios a considerar para la mejora del desempeño del sommelier y el proceso de su formación en el contexto actual.

**Palabras clave:** competencia profesional; formación; pandemia; restaurante; sommelier; vino.

## RESUMO

A COVID-19 evoluiu durante o ano de 2020 até atingir a categoria de pandemia, classificando-se como a maior ameaça sofrida pela humanidade em décadas. A doença provocou o início de uma recessão econômica global com efeitos em todas as áreas da sociedade. A gastronomia turística e o ensino têm estado entre as atividades mais impactadas, o que gerou neles mudanças e medidas para reduzir os níveis de contágio e manter a vitalidade de seus processos. O objetivo deste trabalho foi analisar critérios sobre o impacto da COVID-19 no campo da gastronomia turística, com ênfase nas suas consequências para a atuação do sommelier e suas necessidades de formação. Foi realizada uma exaustiva revisão bibliográfica sobre o assunto. A análise desta confirmou os impactos desfavoráveis da pandemia nas esferas econômica e social; que permitiu identificar medidas e protocolos de ação para a sua mitigação no âmbito da gastronomia associada ao turismo, que constituem critérios a considerar para a melhoria da atuação do sommelier e do processo da sua formação no contexto atual.

**Palavras-chave:** competência profissional; Treinamento; pandemia; restaurante; sommelier; veio.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a sector recognized for the notorious impact it causes on international economies and the potential it holds for the continuous growth of a country. It is an activity with the ability to easily adapt to technological and social changes based on its concepts, products and services, redefining its management models to attract the corresponding market (Mullo Romero *et al.*, 2019). The tourist potential of a certain region corresponds to its resources that, when evaluated, can provide its viability for the start-up as attractive tourist offers (Riveros Montiel & Olmedo de-Ríos, 2020). Tourism demands the development of organizational structures that vary depending on the different contexts.

Competitive advances and economic growth in the leisure industry depend on basic factors such as: investments in technology, infrastructure, human capital and complementary services; all of them in combination with innovation and efficiency (Miró Pérez *et al.*, 2020). Quality for the tourism sector is perceived to be closely related to complementary services, specifically restaurants are valued as necessary and required by tourists (Solano & Uzcátegui, 2017). This connection is also sustained for certain travelers, in the consideration of the gastronomic offers and the customs associated with them as the main motivation for their trip, which sometimes become gastronomic tourism (Salazar Duque & Burbano Argoti, 2017).

Gastronomy has become an important activity, especially as an expression of local customs; the cultural value of this becomes

a highly appreciated attraction for tourism, with a valuable contribution to the development of the area in question (Diéguez Matellán *et al.*, 2018).

The gastronomic activity is also significant for any country from the political and social sphere; In it, mainly that associated with tourism, many products highly appreciated by consumers stand out, closely related to the functions and performance of the sommelier in restaurants.

The pandemic generated by COVID-19, in addition to constituting a threat to public health throughout the world, has triggered the start of a global economic recession. The transmission of the disease has become the most worrying topic of the international scientific community since 2020. The interest not only covers what concerns the effects of this disease on human health, but also the economic area. in general, in which tourism, also affected, is vital and decisive for many countries. It is worth considering that tourism companies depend on many factors, including exogenous ones, with direct or indirect links to the sector, which have also been impacted by the pandemic (Vega Falcón *et al.*, 2020).

It is evident that the impact generated by COVID-19 has also caused changes in the teaching-learning processes at all levels of the educational system. Measures and action guidelines have been implemented from the institutions that are dedicated to such purposes, to minimize the effects of the pandemic and continue the teaching processes, mainly using the non-face-to-face modality (Garoz Sanjuán & Recina Jiménez, 2021). These adverse effects have also been evidenced in Cuba, a country that includes among the challenges of education, the commitment of professionals to society, who put into practice, through their performance, the skills acquired in school institutions. The close link between companies and educational centers manifests itself in

various ways; One of the alternatives that contributes to the success of this type of joint work is the continuous adjustment of the curriculum based on the growing and changing demands of companies, in current times marked by the impact of the pandemic (Pérez de-Armas *et al.*, 2019).

The previous references justify the implementation of curricular adjustments and ways of doing in the training processes of human resources, mainly of those who will face the changes in the exercise of their profession as a consequence of the new reality. In the field of tourist gastronomy in Cuba, there have been transformations in the way the sommelier acts and performs in the restaurant as a consequence of COVID-19. It is worth mentioning the recognition of this figure for its contribution to the competitive advantages of facilities of this type, mainly for its important performance as a manager and provider of services, associated with demanded and recognized products, including wine, Habanos and cigars. coffee (R<sup>1</sup>czaszek Leonardi *et al.*, 2019). The study of the behavior of these elements will help in the adoption of better action protocols in order to reduce the risks of contagion, in addition to offering considerations for the necessary changes within the sommelier 's training processes.

The objective of this article is to analyze criteria on the impact of COVID-19 in the field of tourist gastronomy, with emphasis on its consequences for the performance of the sommelier and their training needs. In response to this purpose, the work that is presented implies a methodological value for proposing, in a detailed, structured and organized way, basic elements of protocols associated with gastronomy in the tourist field, mainly linked to the management and service of the sommelier in the restaurant in the current context; therefore, it constitutes a reference for the training processes of human resources related to the subject.

The practical value lies in the feasibility and relevance, taking into account the criteria of national and international authors and the most effective practices to counteract the current situation. It is worth noting that the work implies a social value due to the possible benefits for the actors involved.

The conception and development of the investigative work was carried out based on the review of bibliographic references on the main experiences of the world in relation to the impact of COVID-19, mainly in the context of tourist gastronomy and the functions of the sommelier within this. The experience of the teachers of the Tourism Training Center of Villa Clara, acquired in the work they do for the tourism companies of the territory and the training of said professional, was also considered.

Criteria that illustrate how COVID-19 has impacted tourism from gastronomic activity were analyzed. The situation presented by some representative products for the functions of the sommelier, including wine, was taken as a reference. In addition, measures and protocols that modify to some extent the work of service personnel linked to gastronomy in restaurants were addressed, from which the sommelier was chosen to show how new training needs of human capital will arise from these changes. The company induces changes in teaching processes, from the work context, research on products and their management is stimulated, which allows identifying training needs of related people.

## DEVELOPING

Humanity is facing an unprecedented crisis caused by COVID-19, a disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which due to its magnitude was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11 of 2020 (Paredes Izquierdo *et al.*, 2020).

The Latin American region has been among the most affected by the disease, in addition to the economic damage produced in most of the countries that make up the area, the structural weakness of their health systems has been evidenced. Among the indicators that show it are the high rates of contagion and the high mortality rates, mainly represented in Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Colombia and Argentina (Acuña Ortigoza, 2021). Tourism has previously suffered the devastating effects of other epidemics, the negative impact of the current pandemic is also relevant, it has been reflected in the decrease in the growth levels of tourism activities with unfavorable and significant impacts on associated jobs, especially everything in airlines, tourist demands and hotel services (Vega Falcón *et al.*, 2020), (Martín Sánchez, 2020), (Baustista Hernández & Meléndez Torres, 2020).

As a consequence of the foregoing, the tourist gastronomic activity has also suffered severe impacts due to the decrease in its services and the changes assumed as adaptation to the new conditions. The analysis of the situation will allow a better understanding of the incidence of COVID-19 in the gastronomic activity, with greater emphasis on that directly or indirectly associated with the performance of the sommelier in tourist facilities.

### **Incidence of COVID-19 on the performance of the sommelier in tourist gastronomy**

In the economic sphere, as a result of COVID-19, direct and indirect effects are manifested, both in the behavior of consumers and companies, with special effects on the supply chain (Vega Falcón *et al.*, 2020). The consequences of this situation have been reflected, mainly, within the economic activity of countries around the world, in the deterioration in the prices of raw materials (Quevedo Vázquez *et al.*, 2020). The impact of the pandemic has

shaped lifestyles with transformations of daily activities towards new perspectives. Confinement measures are the most influential in this regard, causing a de-escalation process that leads to a new normality where measures and protocols related mainly to hygiene predominate (Gómez Varela *et al.*, 2020).

In gastronomy, the practice of eating in public spaces has been one of those severely impacted by the current pandemic; This is shown by the results of an investigation carried out in the city of Hermosillo, Sonora. The owners of the establishments studied confirmed a drastic reduction in the number of people accessing their businesses, with the consequent effects on the family economy. Likewise, they mention that the application of health protocols and social distancing has led to changes in the relationships between service providers and their clients, mainly due to the closeness and familiarity that has been modified. Likewise, the clients also showed reactions, among which the request for vouchers that guarantee the health of the service personnel with respect to COVID-19 stands out. Faced with these and other situations, the owners showed their resilience with the implementation of communication and operational strategies, aimed at reducing costs, increasing sales, establishing sanitary measures and intensifying the use of social networks (Baustista Hernández & Meléndez Torres, 2020).

Gastronomy has been impacted by COVID-19 in various ways, in addition to those already mentioned, there are effects on the management and services of products with high incidences in the economic contributions of the facilities that market them, among them are several closely related to the performance of the sommelier, wine, spirits and coffee, gastronomic products that have always been highly demanded in restaurants due to the complement they represent for culinary offers. In certain facilities, in addition, Habanos are added to these drinks,

considered emblems of the after-dinner by consumers and service providers. The effects that these products and their service processes have experienced as a result of the health measures adopted, together with changes in behavior and preferences experienced by customers, will condition changes in the performance of the sommelier and with it the emergence of new training needs to consider in the teaching environment in which these professionals are trained.

In a study carried out in fast food restaurants during the year 2020, affectations were recognized characterized by a decrease in sales by 82%, a reduction in workers by 30.43%, closure of companies by 26.08%; In addition, other damages related to the delay in the payment of obligations, the loss of customer levels and the changes that were generated in the style of sales were verified. The fast-food restaurants that participated in the study were able to specify that the pandemic caused by COVID-19 generated 71.42% more negative consequences than the oil crisis of 2014, quantified at 28.57% (Bastista Hernández & Meléndez Torres, 2020).

The wine is presented in a constant renewal, customers express the need for new sensations and experiences, mainly the younger market. Studies carried out on this type of consumer indicate that wine is an ideal product and they prefer brands that have a balanced point between quality and cost (Guiñez Cabrera & Cornejo Saavedra, 2016), (Concha Velásquez *et al.*, 2018).

The export of coffee is fundamentally expressed by the large amount of foreign currency that it moves throughout the world and the numerous families associated with the cultivation of the grain. Research reveals an increase in world consumption and exports in recent years (Ocampo López & Álvarez Herrera, 2017). Under the effects of the current scenario, it is predicted in the

near future that coffee production will have a considerable decrease; Research carried out in Mexico relates the causes that influence such predictions, the abandonment of coffee plantations, the increase in pests and diseases, and the factors associated with high migration (Briones Ruíz *et al.*, 2021).

The tourist activity, and with it the gastronomic one, is highly depressed, implementing changes in the types and forms of services in some organizations, as an alternative to maintain vitality, even at low levels of operation. Logistics and other conditions have also affected the commercialization of the already mentioned gastronomic products, in terms of quantity and variety, mainly in restaurants, spaces in which the sommelier works.

The economic impacts are not the only ones that are recognized as a consequence of the pandemic caused by COVID-19, people are also changing to some extent as a result of this stage. In travelers, there is a growing trend in the need to live new safe experiences (Arold Larius, 2021). The confinement that has been experienced conditions affectations, physically and psychologically. A study carried out in Argentina on alcohol consumption during the quarantine period, shows that it has increased compared to previous times (Camarotti *et al.*, 2020). These results are just one example of the different causes that have influenced people's changes in terms of increased feelings of irritability, anxiety, depression and consumption habits.

The pandemic is causing changes in the way consumers and companies relate to each other, mainly during the purchasing process. In the workplace, the increase in the use of new information and communications technologies is expected in the coming years, especially for virtual fairs, marketing in commerce and the use of virtual platforms for meetings, even with clients. As a result of the changes that are taking place, systems

aimed at managing the administration of relationships between clients and businesses have gained greater importance (Bullemore Campbell & Cristóbal Fransi, 2021).

For tourism, the growing use of technology imposes alternatives and opportunities in search of new customer experiences, attending to their demands and their evolution towards characteristics, in which greater demands prevail, more connection through social networks and computer applications (Paredes Izquierdo *et al.*, 2020).

In the adaptation of companies to the new scenarios, gastronomy associated with tourism, with the effects of insurance and product sales, has the urgency to reinvent itself (Quevedo Vázquez *et al.*, 2020), to meet new needs of customers marked by the changes they have undergone. New strategies are needed for the gastronomic sector that take into account the client's profile, their tastes and interests (Arold Larius, 2021).

### **Measures in tourist gastronomy to reduce COVID-19**

The elements addressed illustrate part of the effects caused to gastronomy that, together with the rest of the damage recorded since the declaration of a coronavirus pandemic issued by the WHO, have contributed to the adoption of exceptional measures for the prevention and control of the disease. Quality certifications have been issued against the risk of contracting COVID-19 in the gastronomy sector; These respond to the current needs of the sector and seek to promote its reactivation. The measures dictated at a global level to prevent the spread of the disease, for the most part, are recommended by the WHO; consequently, official bodies in the different countries have issued their own indications (Cruz Piza *et al.*, 2020). Restaurants have adopted new strategies in their forms of sales and the implementation of various measures in order

to mitigate the impact of the pandemic (Salazar Yacelga & Garrido Patrel, 2021). In Cuba, the Ministry of Tourism developed a protocol that has made it possible to prepare the facilities, including the gastronomic ones, for their operations, in what has been called the new normality. The analysis of the measures issued allowed them to be classified according to the purposes they pursue, in general gastronomy and specifically for restaurants, kitchens and wine service; This last classification is made because of the importance it has on the performance of the sommelier. The measures are arranged as follows:

### **General gastronomy measures**

- Installation of disinfectant substance dispensers for workers and customers in the corresponding areas.
- Washing lingerie and work clothes at temperatures above 60°C.
- Minimization of the handling of utensils and surfaces by customers.
- Indication of frequent hand washing with detergent substances.
- Frequent sanitization of surfaces likely to be touched.
- Use of a mask and other protection elements as appropriate, mainly in public areas.
- Giving priority to gastronomic activity in the open air.
- Organization of shift work that guarantees social distancing measures.
- Organization of gastronomic services through reservations to avoid waiting areas.
- Sanitization of surfaces of furniture, equipment and utensils at the end of shifts or moments of services to groups of clients.
- Signaling of location points with distancing in waiting areas.
- Constant training in hygienic sanitary issues.

- Design and compliance with investigation and disinfection protocols at the entrance of premises.
- Design of the action procedure when respiratory symptoms are identified.

### **measures for the kitchen**

- Preservation of the cold chain and keeping food physically protected.
- Compliance with hygiene standards and good practices in the preparation and handling of food.
- Cooking food at temperatures above 70°C.
- Disinfection of containers and products before storing them on shelves or cold rooms.
- Limitation of access of non-kitchen staff.
- Clear identification of the office area.
- Implementation of an intensive plan for cleaning and disinfecting tableware and spaces.
- Use gloves for handling ready-to-eat foods.
- Mandatory use of protection means (mask, cap, etc.).
- Use of clean work uniform and only for each day.
- Social distancing, according to the characteristics and conditions of the areas.
- Guarantee of the scrubbing temperature (with machines 75-80 °C or manual 60 °C) and the use of the corresponding disinfectant substances.
- Deep cleaning of each area (floors, walls, tools and equipment) at the end of each work shift.
- Disinfection of the handles of the work equipment periodically.
- Adequate operation of the injection and extraction of air from the premises.

### Measures for restaurants

- Disinfection of crockery and cutlery with temperatures above 60 °C.
- Organization of the tables with a distance between them greater than 1.5 m.
- Change of tablecloths at each mount or dispense with their use.
- Design of food and drink offers in individual portions.
- Decrease in the attention time of the clerk at the table.
- Elimination of the shared use of utensils between tables.
- Use of means of protection for exposed food (hoods, screens, etc.)
- Creation of conditions in waiting areas to achieve distancing.
- Use of electronic whiteboards and other means that the client does not touch for the communication of the offer.
- Limitation of customer access to vending machines; In the exceptional cases that happen, constant sanitation must be guaranteed.
- Stimulation of the use of disposable doyles and, failing that, constant sanitation is imposed.
- Minimization of the elements exposed on the tables and elimination of the decorative ones.
- Ventilation of the premises after each service.
- Frequent change of service utensils in buffet restaurants.
- Minimize raw food offerings.
- Minimize the use and manipulation of cash in the collection of operations.
- Stimulation of home delivery and take-out sales.
- Locate food on display behind transparent acrylic or plastic barriers.

### Measures for wine service

- Start the service by sanitizing hands with the substances provided for the

restaurant, if possible, in view of customers.

- Avoid contact of the glasses with the spout of the bottle.
- Avoid the use of droppers.
- When opening a bottle, do not directly touch the bottle spout with your hand.
- In the case of the use of dispensing machines by cup, they must be sanitized after each group of visitors (mouthpieces, buttons, doors, etc.), using a hydroalcoholic solution.
- If there is manipulation by the visitor, place alcohol before and after its use.
- Before and after each tasting, clean and disinfect all surfaces exposed to contact with the visitor: tables, chairs, floors, doorknobs, etc.
- Use electronic boards and other means that the customer does not touch to inform the wine offer.
- Reduce customer access to the cellars.

The exposed measures mark substantial changes in the performance of the sommelier in restaurants belonging to tourist gastronomy, mainly due to the encouragement towards virtual practices in the acquisition of gastronomic products and the redesign of offers to adapt to other markets and conditions. It is worth considering, in this sense, the decrease in the levels of commercialization of the products that this specialist manages and serves, including wine. Another element that will mark the performance of the sommelier from now on is undoubtedly that associated with customers, who experience psychological changes with incidences in their needs and perceptions, with an increase in concern for health, mainly in relation to hygiene. and food safety.

The process of training the professional skills necessary for the performance of the sommelier must consider the precise changes based on the current situation, especially those that modify in some way the management of sales and service processes.

In this sense, the growing introduction of elements associated with information and communication technologies in gastronomic processes, the minimization of the use of shared use utensils between clients, the decrease in the use of cards to communicate the offers, including wine, with the increase in other means of communication and the need to minimize interaction between service personnel and customers.

### **Sommelier training and the impact of COVID-19**

Distance education has been the protagonist of teaching scenarios in the face of the increase in the pandemic, accompanied by the establishment of regulations for face-to-face activities. In investigations carried out on the subject, favorable results are found and others that express limitations around this educational modality. There are criteria with optimistic views on distance education, in terms of autonomy for the organization of work, flexibility in the use of time and a better balance between the hours dedicated to work and family. However, these teaching processes have had to face dissimilar difficulties, depending on the country in which they take place, in terms of schedule, internet access, availability of equipment and the necessary preparation of students and educators (Meo & Dabenigno, 2021). In addition to these factors, others are identified as part of a new scheme in teleworking, the expectations for the fulfillment of certain responsibilities, the reconversion of the physical work space at home and the identification of new leaders of the work team (Montero Ulate *et al.*, 2020).

Non-contact education imposes a great challenge for teachers and students, with the necessary decision-making of the institutions that deal with it. Creativity, negotiation, emotional intelligence and resilience are identified as influential elements, especially in skills related to Information and Communication Technologies. Therefore,

regulation and training is required in the aspect of the digital transformation of education, applicable to teachers and students, which will allow the efficient use of available resources such as: Moodle Virtual Platform, Office 365 Platform, Edmodo Platform, Schoology Platform, Google Scholar (Álvarez de-Barrios, 2020).

The training of professional skills in the sommelier has a high incidence in the gastronomic field. Among these, the acquisition of skills to suggest food and drink combinations based on sensory analysis stands out, in addition to the skills for their sale and service. The profile of the sommelier is recognized, both for the knowledge of this specialist, and for the ethics and prudence that he expresses in his performance (Loredo Mafud *et al.*, 2017). In the design of the curriculum for the sommelier course, competencies of this profession must be valued.

- Analyze and describe the wine-producing areas in correlation with the organoleptic characteristics of the drink.
- Design the offer of the wine list of a restaurant.
- Advise the management of purchases and storage of beverages and products related to the sommelier profession.
- Manage and execute beverage service and high-end products.
- Master communication based on sales and service.

The importance of the sommelier for the restaurant is supported by the results of studies carried out. The existence of wine lists with better characteristics based on sales and highly professional customer service, together with other objective and subjective characteristics, help to differentiate between restaurants that have the performance of a sommelier and those of

the competition that do not include this figure in their template (Lau *et al.*, 2019).

In Cuba there are already many people who work professionally as sommeliers, most of them graduates of the courses taught at the Tourism Training Centers. These specialists are recognized for their ability to suggest spectacular pairings and efficiently manage sommelier products, successfully venturing into the Habanos service.

The determining role of the Tourism Training Centers in the formation of human capital in the Cuban tourism industry is recognized, based on the demands arising from the work of this type of company. The interaction of the educational center with the tourist companies allows the adaptation and improvement of the curriculum of the programs that are part of the academic product of the aforementioned educational institutions. This influences the formation of competencies of the desired profiles, adjusted to each moment and specific context, applicable to the performance of the sommelier, conditioned by the current epidemic impact (Pérez Dorta *et al.*, 2021).

The training of the sommelier in some countries of the world is assumed by schools whose main task is the profile of this professional. In Cuba, it is carried out in the Tourism Training Centers, through the Specialization in Sommelier course that, together with others, integrates the portfolio of academic products of these institutions, based on the development of human capital in the tourism sector. The curricular design of the program designed for this purpose includes several topics, among which the generalities of sommelier, practical foundations, sensory oenology, enogastronomy, after-meal restoration and oenography stand out; All of them respond to the training needs of the students of this type of course, whose mission will be to influence the constant elevation of the standards of the restaurants in which they

work, in order to satisfy the needs of their clients, which requires of professionalism and competence in the exercise of their work (Pérez Dorta *et al.*, 2021).

Sommelier Specialization courses are characterized by a high practical component in their teaching activities. Students have the opportunity to corroborate part of the theory with exercises, mainly organoleptic analysis of the drinks and foods studied. Under the current conditions, the classes taught have been adjusted to the health needs to prevent COVID-19. The groups have been fragmented into subgroups to achieve isolation between students and the disinfection processes with alcohol for hands and surfaces are assumed, in such a way that it does not interfere with the sensory perceptions of the students. In addition, the theoretical contents and other exercises that allow it have been worked on in a blended form. To these changes in the sommelier training process are added the needs arising from performance in the workplace.

Through observation of the performance of the sommelier and in exchange with employers in the area of human resource management, training needs associated with the specific contexts of performance have been verified, which in current conditions are added to the incidents derived from the impact of COVID-19. The analyzed criteria allow us to identify affectations that to some extents have changed the way in which the sommelier performed until now, these become considerations to be taken into account in the processes that are responsible for their training in the current situation.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research carried out confirms that tourism, and especially the gastronomic activity, have been severely affected by the impact of COVID-19, with profound changes

in the types and forms of services offered to the client, adopting in each case alternatives that they help the work of the institutions, in correspondence with the measures dictated at a global level to prevent the spread of the disease, mostly recommended by the WHO; As a consequence, the official organisms in the different countries have issued their own indications (Cruz Piza *et al.*, 2020). In this context, the performance of gastronomic professionals, such as the sommelier, has also been affected and modified to a certain extent.

Isolation measures, together with the physical and psychological effects suffered by people, have led to changes in the behavior of customers, both in their ways of relating and in consumption habits. This is evidenced in studies that reveal an increase in the use of technologies. These, in the field of information and communication, become protagonists in social relations, notably influencing the so-called new normality (Acuña Ortigoza, 2021).

The training needs of the sommelier are also experiencing changes derived from the modifications that the management processes and services associated with this professional have undergone, as a consequence of COVID-19; However, this is not the only cause that generates changes in the teaching process in charge of training the professional skills of the sommelier, it also influences the increase in the blended modality, a trend that is verified in research results that show evidence of a certain reconversion of the sommelier. physical space of the school by that of the home (Montero Ulate *et al.*, 2020).

It can be concluded that it is evident in the current context, marked mainly by the spread of COVID-19 and its unfavorable consequences for human life, that the offers and services of gastronomic products related to the performance of the sommelier in tourist restoration, transit due to recognized

affectations, which could extend over time, according to the rate of control of the disease itself.

On the other hand, the proposed measures, as part of the general and specific protocols in the gastronomic field, constitute valuable references to help minimize the impacts of the pandemic.

The changes experienced in the labor scenarios of tourist gastronomy and in teachers, constitute valuable references to consider in the improvement and improvement of the educational teaching process for the training of the sommelier in the Tourism Training Centers.

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The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

#### **Authors contribution:**

The authors participated in the writing of the work and analysis of the documents.



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