

# Women in Brazil with higher education in tourism: Preliminary results of the **Gentour Project**

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**Abstract** | The paper aims to identify the profile of women who hold a higher education degree in tourism – from technological training to postgraduate studies – in Brazil, based on results of the Gentour Project. The research methods were quantitative and data collection was carried out through an online survey. A convenience sample included graduates from Brazilian higher education institutions. After a consistency analysis, 421 respondents were considered valid. The data analysis applied univariate and bivariate statistical techniques. Results indicate that a few aspects are similar when comparing male and female graduates, such as the waiting time for their first job, the time in their current job, the higher average salaries obtained in the public sector, the average time of unemployment and the most recurrent reason for being unemployed. In addition, gender was not identified as a barrier in the process of finding a job, neither by male graduates nor by female graduates. Data suggests that there are differences between men and women regarding the highest academic levels, entrepreneurship rate, working hours, leadership positions and income. All these variables seem to be gender-related, according to this research. Although discrimination in professional life is not felt very often, women feel disadvantaged regarding salaries and bonuses; a feeling that is confirmed by a 29.7% gender pay gap. Furthermore, other remarkable features can be observed, such as the correlation between the educational degree and income, which demonstrates that the pay gap between men and women decreases with higher educational levels, and also the relation between professional activities and motherhood, evoking a relationship between motherhood and job stability, as well as with possible better incomes.

**Keywords** | Gender, Higher education, Tourism, Brazil, Gentour Project.

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## 1. Introduction

Most of the tourism workforce worldwide is composed by women (Amaro, 2007; Costa et al., 2011; Parrett, s.d.; UNWTO, 2010, 2011). As a matter of fact, the proportion of women employed in the tourism field almost doubles the proportion of women employed in other sectors. It is an industry characterised by a predominance of low salaries, as well as work in unsocial hours, such as holidays, nights and weekends, which complicates work-family balance (O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Parrett, s.d.; Ramb, 2008).

Underpayment and informality are striking features regarding this workforce, since typically women's earnings are 10% to 15% lower than their male counterparts' (UNWTO, 2010). This sector is also characterised by vertical and horizontal segregation, and the female tourism workers are more likely to be found in low-paid, low-qualified and low-status jobs if compared to their male counterparts (Hemmati, 2000; Jordan, 1997; Kinnaird & Hall, 1996; Parrett, s.d.; Santos & Varejão, 2006).

Considering all this, the importance of addressing gender issues in the tourism field is reinforced. In this sense, the gender perspective is related to several aspects in the tourism sector, both in the organizational aspect and regarding public policies. These are central subjects of the Gentour Project<sup>1</sup>, from which the present paper derives. Under this umbrella project, there is the challenge of addressing questions about female work in tourism, namely the discrimination concerning career advancement, the balancing of work and family lives, among many other issues.

This paper only focuses on one of the sections of the survey developed within the framework of the Gentour Project and aims to present the preliminary results concerning the employment situation of tourism graduates in Brazil, highlighting the differences between men and women. Therefore, the purpose is also to find out whether access

to higher levels of education minimizes gender inequalities in employment conditions. It also tests the methodology at an international level in order to allow for future comparisons between Portuguese-speaking countries.

This paper concentrates its attention on female tourism graduates – from technological education to post-graduation studies. This perspective contributes to the body of knowledge, since the literature tends to regard female work in the tourism sector as homogeneous. These data are innovative in the sense that there is no parallel on previous studies found in Brazilian literature. These research results will allow for a better understanding of the reality of female workers and also of tourism graduates in Brazil.

This topic was also discussed during the "International Conference on Tourism and Gender Issues", hosted by the University of Aveiro in March 2012. The present paper is based on the presentation delivered at this occasion. It is organized in four sections developed after this introduction. The first part presents the theoretical framework regarding the female workforce in the tourism sector, addressing the worldwide situation, but focusing on developing economies, especially Brazil. Then, the methodological aspects are presented, followed by the results, which are organized in three main topics that emerged from the collected data. The first section presents the general findings. The second part discusses the significant differences between women with higher education in tourism in comparison to their male counterparts. The last topic highlights three remarkable features unveiled by the data analysis, shedding some light on the topic. Finally, the conclusions and further work are stated.

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<sup>1</sup> The project is entitled "Towards the improvement of women's skills in the tourism sector. Profiting from the vertical mobility for ethic and economic purposes" (PIHM/GC/0073/2008).

## 2. Women workforce in the tourism sector at a glance

### 2.1. Women working in tourism worldwide and in developing countries

The fast growth of the tourism sector and the opportunities it provides for self-employment are often regarded as a path towards the elimination of poverty and the empowerment of women within their communities in developing countries (Hemmati, 2000). However, this belief of tourism as a panacea for eliminating the exclusion of underprivileged groups from the mainstream economy has been strongly criticized by several scholars (Kinnaird & Hall, 1996; Scheyvens, 2002). For Kadt (1979, cited in Kinnaird & Hall, 1996), such ideas reinforce social stratification, as well as racism, sexism and the international division of labour in North-South relations in the context of postcolonial relations (Dunn, 2007; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000).

Consequently, tourism should not be uncritically regarded as the solution for women's integration in the economy. In fact, jobs in the tourism field, particularly female jobs, tend to be low-remunerated, informal, part-time, seasonal and low-skilled (Purcell, 1997; UNWTO, 2010). In addition, women are more likely than men to be unpaid family workers (United Nations, 2009; UNWTO, 2011). Thus, the Millennium Development Goals have not yet been achieved regarding gender equality (United Nations, 2009).

According to the UNWTO (2010), the wages of female workers in the food and beverage sector in Botswana correspond to 57% of the wages of their male counterparts, while in Mexico and Thailand they correspond to 73% and 76%, respectively. In South America women's wages range between 73% and 108% of the salary of men. Bolivia represents an exception since the average wage of women is higher than that of their male counterparts, contradicting the general tendency (UNWTO, 2010).

Tourism can only be regarded as a tool for development if it provides, both men and women, with

decent employment conditions and empowerment opportunities. According to the International Labour Office (ILO, 2008, p. 1), "decent work for women is also a precondition for economic development since, in the long run, economies cannot afford to ignore an untapped resource such as that which could be offered by female labour". Decent work is defined by access to social protection, basic rights and having a voice at work (ILO, 2008, p. 1). The economic integration of women is thus important for economic development, but only if women are in jobs that provide decent conditions (ILO, 2008). However, two thirds of women in developing countries still have vulnerable jobs (United Nations, 2009).

Whereas women, in general, tend to be disadvantaged in the tourism workforce, this situation is exacerbated among women in developing countries, namely due to the intersection of mechanisms such as imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy (Swain, 1993). Several studies carried out in developing countries have highlighted that, despite the economic benefits that tourism might bring to women (such as some degree of economic independence), it might not necessarily empower them, given that their work remains 'invisible' and non-professionalised (Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995), women's quality of life is not necessarily improved, their power within their community is not automatically increased, while traditional gender roles remain unchallenged (Cukier et al., 1996; Cukier & Wall, 1995; Long & Kindon, 1997). However, in other studies, such as that of Gentry (2007), it is concluded that women's autonomy and decision-making are increased to some extent through their involvement in tourism activity, despite the continuing exploitation of the traditional sex-based segregation.

Women's empowerment and sex tourism are the issues most commonly approached in scholarly literature on developing and emerging countries, while issues such as vertical and horizontal segregation in organizations and the correspondence between education, skills and the genderization of the labour market are more common topics

of analysis concerning developed economies. However, in this study, we intend to analyse women in privileged positions within the context of an emerging economy, namely women with higher education degrees. Long and Kindon (1997) believe that access to higher levels of education and increased participation in formal tourism economy may result in some form of emancipation for women. The tourism graduates' employment situation in Portugal showed not only remarkable gaps between men and women, but also that graduates, in general, have difficulties in finding a tourism job and earn low salaries (Costa et al., 2012a, 2012b). Therefore, the purpose is also to find out whether access to higher levels of education minimizes gender inequalities in the Brazilian case.

## 2.2. Women in the Brazilian general labour market and in the tourism sector

The gender segregation in the Brazilian general labour market is significant according to the social position, educational level, ethnic group, as well as other circumstances. Referring to occupational discrimination, Arbache (2001) explains that it can be attributed to gender discrimination, which is reflected on women's participation in the labour market. On the one hand, some practices protect women's rights, but on the other hand they reinforce gender discrimination and shape women's possibilities for insertion in the labour market (Banco Mundial, 2003).

Although women usually study more years than men, their participation in the workforce is still lower than men's. Additionally, research from the Brazilian Institute of Applied Economic Research showed that women have a 58.8% employment rate, as compared to 81.5% in the case of men; women's monthly income corresponded, on average, to 66.5% of men's income (IPEA, 2008). Besides this, the report revealed that women's income is lower even when holding an undergraduate degree, cor-

responding to 54.6% of men's income (Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres, 2011).

Moreover, figures indicate that the tourism industry is favorable for women's insertion in the Brazil labor market. From 2002 to 2006 nearly 100,000 new formal jobs were created in tourism, of which more than half (52,500) were for women. At the same time, more informal jobs were also created and most of them were for women, showing the vulnerability of this group. In 2006, women filled 33.1% of the total formal jobs in tourism. However, in some sectors, such as accommodation, food and beverage, and travel agencies, they corresponded to the majority of workers (IPEA, 2008). Thus, although this study shows a significant advance of women's participation in the tourism labour market, it also evidences their presence in the informal sector.

A positive trend is that the gender pay gap is slowly decreasing, albeit slowly. In 2008, women earned 69.9% of men's income, as compared to 68.9% six years earlier (IPEA, 2008).

This study targets people who hold an educational degree in tourism, allowing for a comparison between men and women in this group. It seems to be the first initiative concerning this specific set of people in the Brazilian context. Usually the previous studies concerning the tourism workforce were focused on people with basic educational levels or had no consideration to subgroup differences, such as the reports provided by the UNWTO (2010) and data provided by Brazilian authorities.

Regarding higher education in tourism, the Brazilian figures indicate very few reliable data on people holding a degree in tourism. According to the Brazilian Ministry of Education (2012)<sup>2</sup>, there are 490 undergraduate courses in tourism, 98 in hospitality and 6 recognized master courses in tourism (CAPES, 2012)<sup>3</sup>, but only 180,000 people hold a degree in tourism.

<sup>2</sup> [www.mec.gov.br](http://www.mec.gov.br), accessed on January, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> [www.capes.br](http://www.capes.br), accessed on January, 2012.

### 3. Methodology

The empirical study underlying the present research was based on two surveys, one directed at graduates in tourism studies, and the other targeting students enrolled in higher education degrees in this field. Both surveys were applied in Portugal and in Brazil. The aim of this study was to analyse the employment situation of tourism graduates, as well as the expectations of students enrolled in these degrees concerning the labour market, highlighting the differences between men and women. The results presented in this paper are only related to the sample of Brazilian tourism graduates.

Data collection was carried out in Brazil from July to November 2011, through an online survey. The convenience sample resulted from the contacts established by the Brazilian consultants of this project with professors and researchers who were asked to disseminate the surveys through former students of Brazilian educational institutions. After a consistency analysis, 421 surveys were considered valid, 312 of which were answered by women (74.1%) and 109 by men (25.9%).

The quantitative data analysis was made using the software IBM SPSS Statistics (v.19). Univariate and bivariate statistical techniques were applied, through exploratory and inferential methods, and a 5% level of significance was adopted.

It was observed that women prevailed amongst the respondents, since 74.1% were female graduates and 25.9% were male graduates. Thus, men represent only about a quarter of the tourism graduates that participated in this study. This proportion is believed to reflect the population of interest for this research, although the research team did not find official data regarding this specific topic.

Brazilian graduates were, on average, 32 years old ( $M=31.94$ ,  $SD=8.601$ , 95% IC [31.00; 32.87]). The comparison of the age of respondents by gender reveals that women are, on average, about two years younger than men, although these differences are not statistically significant ( $t(326)=-1.671$ ,  $p=.096$ ).

The majority of respondents had Brazilian citizenship (96.6%), being the majority native to São Paulo (25.3%), Rio Grande do Sul (9.5%), Pernambuco (8.2%) or Pará (7.9%). Concerning the marital status, they were mostly single (61.3%), while 20.7% were married and 13.1% were in a non-marital partnership. Almost two out of every five graduates (39.5%) were living with their parents and only one third were living with their spouses. The low proportion of graduates with children (21.4%) may be explained by the fact that the sample is relatively young, and the majority of the respondents live with their parents. In fact, those who were childless pointed out *being single* (36.2%), *postpone the decision of having children to progress in the professional career* (21.9%) or *being too young* (21.5%) as the main reasons for not having children.

### 4. Results

In this section the main results of the study are presented, focusing on three topics: general findings, significant gender differences among the respondents, and some remarkable features that underlie important trends regarding the female respondents.

#### 4.1. General findings

This section presents data on jobs, income, field of activity and unemployment, for which the results are similar for both female and male respondents.

##### a. Job characteristics

Results indicate an unemployment rate of 18.8% among respondents, with no significant differences between men and women ( $\chi^2(1)=0.589$ ,  $p=.443$ ). Approximately half of the respondents hold a Bachelor's degree (50.8%). Smaller percentages hold a Technological certificate in Tourism (3.4%), while only 1.4% hold a *Licenciatura* (four-year degree).

Regarding Post-graduation studies, 16.4% have a specialization equivalent to a MBA, 24.1% hold a Master's and 3.9% a Doctoral degree.

On average, tourism graduates work 35 hours per week ( $M=35.41$ ;  $SE=0.79$ ; IC 95% [33.86; 36.96]). Among male graduates the average working hours is slightly higher than the one observed among female graduates (37.2h versus 34.8h), although these differences are not statistically significant ( $t(179.521)=-1.450$ ,  $p=.149$ ).

Most graduates have a *formal private contract* (34.4%) or are *public servants* (32.0%), as opposed to *those without any formal contract* (1.0%) or on *internship* (2.7%) (Figure 1). The analysis by gender shows that men are more represented in contractual situations related to higher professional stability (i.e., employer), while women outnumber men in the categories associated with more unstable professional realities (i.e., internship or scholarship).

Although tourism graduates waited four and half months on average for the first job, about half of the respondents got a job the moment they graduated. By gender, the differences were statistically not significant ( $t(150.656)=-1.198$ ,  $p=.233$ ).

Half of the respondents had five or more jobs throughout their professional careers ( $M=5.61$ ;  $SE=0.221$ ; IC 95% [5.17; 6.04]). It is verified there is a positive correlation between the monthly aver-

age salary and the number of previous jobs, and that this correlation is statistically significant ( $r_s = .354$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Thus, the results suggest that having had a higher number of previous jobs has a positive influence on the salary obtained.

There were no statistically significant differences between male and female graduates concerning the professional experience, measured by the *period of time working in the current organization* ( $M=3.74$ ;  $SE=0.276$ ; IC 95% [3.20; 4.29]) and the *time performing the actual task* ( $M=4.71$ ;  $SE=0.482$ ; IC 95% [3.76; 5.66]). However, it was observed that the average number of years in the organization and the average number of years performing the same task is slightly higher among men ( $M=4.63$  and  $M=5.06$ , respectively) comparatively to women ( $M=3.44$  and  $M=4.59$ , respectively).

#### b. Relation between income and field of activity

The workers employed in the private sector are more represented in the lower salary categories, since more than half earn less than R\$1,245 per month, while more than 60% of workers employed in the public sector earn more than R\$2,490 and thus are more represented in the highest salary categories.

In fact, the graduates employed in the private sector ( $M=2,086.26$ ;  $SE=171.35$ ; IC 95% [1,747.48; 2,425.03]) earn around R\$1,800 less, comparatively

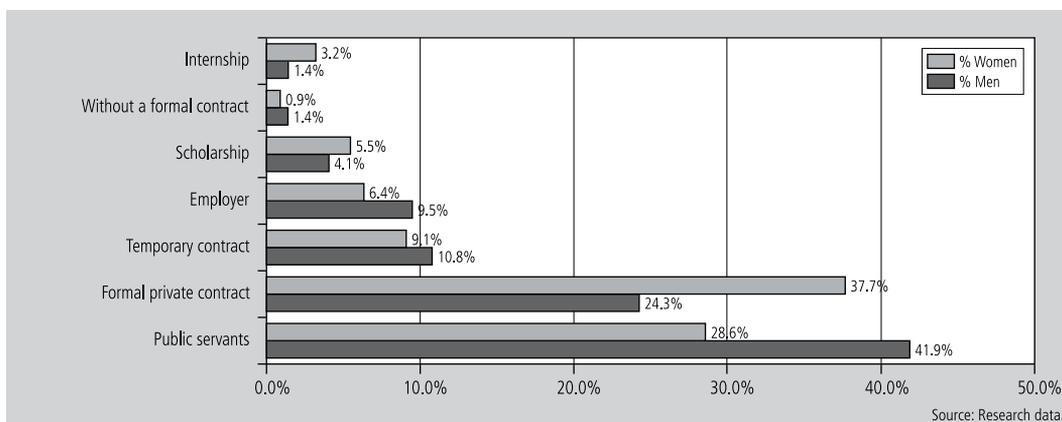


Figure 1 | Contractual situation by gender of Brazilian tourism graduates surveyed.

to those working in the public sector (M=3,860.19; SE=202.21; IC 95% [3,460.84; 4,259.53]). These differences were statistically significant ( $t(297.168) = 6.693, p < .001$ ) and thus, data suggest that the average monthly salary is higher in the public sector when compared to the private sector within the tourism industry, for both men and women.

Analysing the average monthly salaries according to the field of activity of the respondents, statistically significant differences were confirmed ( $\chi^2_{KW}(9) = 81.803, p < .001$ ). The field of *education* (M=4,273.85) and *consulting firms* (M=4,618.33) were the most highly paid, as opposed to the fields of *cultural, recreation and leisure services* (M=1,105.63), *food and beverage* (M=1,271.00) and *travel agencies and tour operators* (M=1,357.08), which revealed the lowest average wages (Table 1).

**Table 1** | Average monthly salary by field of activity of Brazilian tourism graduates

Activity	Average monthly salary (R\$)
Consulting firms	4,618.33
Education	4,273.85
Public sector organizations	2,649.45
Accommodation	2,501.82
Transportation/Rent-a-car	1,805.56
Travel agencies and tour operators	1,357.08
Food and beverage	1,271.00
Cultural, recreation and leisure services	1,105.63

Source: Research data.

**c. Unemployment**

Concerning the unemployment, it was observed that the unemployment rate decreases as the academic degree increases (Figure 2), which is confirmed by the statistical significant association between the *employment* and the *higher education* variables ( $\chi^2(5) = 16.683, p = .005$ ).

On average, these respondents had been in these professional situation for about a year (M=11.90 months; SE=1.235; IC 95% [9.44; 14.36]). There were no significant differences between female and male graduates ( $t(77) = -0.818, p = .416$ ). The most recurrent reason pointed by the respondents for be-

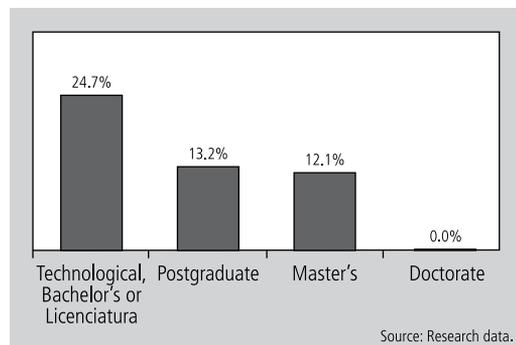
ing unemployed was *studying or being in a training program* (44.3%). Only 6.3% of the unemployed graduates claimed to be in this situation due to *dismissal or closure of the company*.

Concerning the difficulties felt by the respondents during the search for a job, they pointed out as the main difficulty the *requirement of professional experience* (19.0%), as opposed to *age* (3.8%) and the *business structure of the region* (3.8%), which were less emphasized. Thus, gender was not identified as a barrier in the process of finding a job, neither by male nor by female graduates.

**2.2. Significant gender differences**

**a. Academic degree and gender**

The analysis of the academic degree of female and male graduates reveals that women are over-represented comparatively to men in the lowest academic degrees (i.e., Technological Degree and Bachelor), whereas men are overrepresented in the highest academic degrees (Figure 3). In fact, while 41.4% of women have a *Licenciatura* or a post-graduate diploma, the proportion of men in those academic categories is of 58.5%. The association between the academic degree and the gender of the respondents is statistically significant ( $\chi^2(5) = 14.574, p = .012$ ), thus suggesting that male graduates in tourism tend to reach higher educational levels.



**Figure 2** | Unemployment rate by academic degree of Brazilian tourism graduates surveyed.

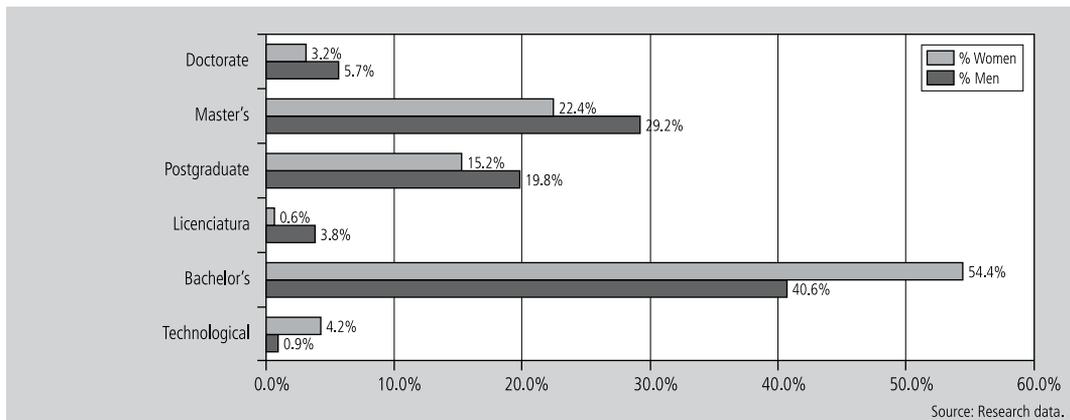


Figure 3 | Academic degree by gender of the Brazilian tourism graduates surveyed.

### b. Entrepreneurship and gender

Data reveals a high entrepreneurial activity among tourism graduates since about 30% of the respondents claimed to have created their own employment or their own company. The creation of one's own employment or firm was statistically associated with the gender of respondents ( $\chi^2(1)=15.160, p<.001$ ), a result which was not surprising, since the proportion of those who had created their own job among male graduates (44.3%) was almost the double of the proportion observed among female graduates (24.4%).

Among those who had never created their own employment, two in every three respondents (67.8%) claimed that they would like to do so in the future. There is no gender difference regarding this willingness among these respondents.

The main reasons pointed out both by those who had created their own employment or company and by those that were willing to create it in the future were *personal achievement* (32.0% and 51.0%, respectively), the belief that it is *good way to improve one's financial situation* (16.4% and 21.2%, respectively) and *the lack of business in the activity field selected* (11.5% and 10.6%, respectively).

### c. Working hours and gender

More women tend to work part-time (26.0%) than men (15.3%), which could explain why they

work fewer hours per week comparatively to male respondents, as mentioned before. In fact, a statistically significant between gender and part-time or full-time work association was confirmed ( $\chi^2(1)=4.072, p=.044$ ). It also can be one of the reasons why female's income tends to be lower than male's (item e) in this section).

In order to know if this was a personal decision or an imposition of the labour market, respondents were asked to indicate the reasons why they were in a part-time employment. The main reasons pointed out were *studying or being in a training program* (36.7%), *personal choice* (17.7%) or *work schedule required by the job* (15.2%).

There were outstanding differences between female and male respondents concerning the reasons of *personal choice* (15.2% versus 30.8%) and *not finding a full-time job* (10.6% versus 23.1%), suggesting that men are taking part-time jobs either by own choice or due to market imposition, while women's decisions on having a part-time job may be influenced by other kind of factors (Figure 4).

### d. Leadership and gender

Men are overrepresented in top management positions comparatively to women (27.8% versus 23.8%), while women prevail in middle-management positions (46.8% versus 35.2%). There is also a male predominance among those who claim to

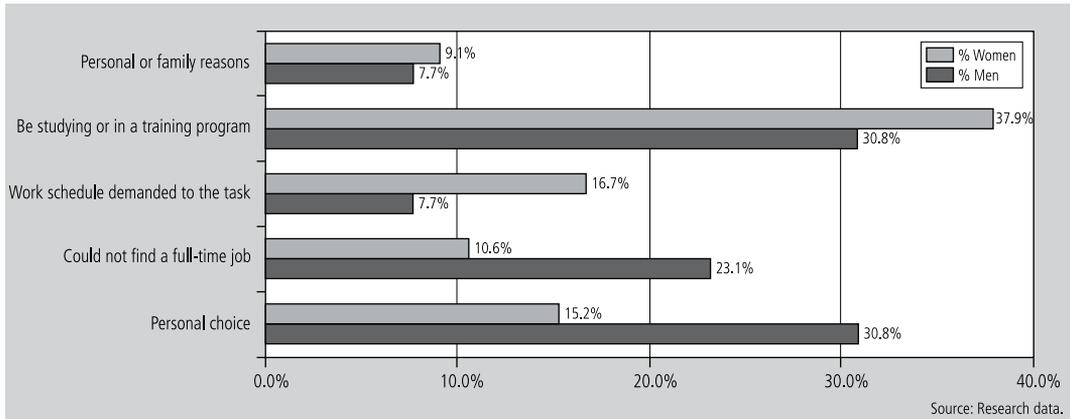


Figure 4 | Reasons why Brazilian tourism graduates work in part-time jobs by gender.

be in a leadership position (35.8% versus 25.3%), confirming the statistically significant association between gender and holding a leadership position ( $\chi^2(1)=3.333, p=.048$ ).

Among those who are not leaders, it is observed that the proportion of women that are willing to hold such positions (59.0%) is slightly higher compared with the proportion observed among male respondents (55.8%).

The gender gap is even wider when analysing the differences between men and women who are not in leadership positions but claimed that they had already been leaders: 61.5% of men had already been in a leadership position, while the proportion of women in the same situation was 39.3%. These differences (Figure 5) were statistically significant ( $\chi^2(1)=8.085, p=.004$ ). The main reasons that led them to leave these positions were *another job opportunity*

(37.8%) and *low wages for the responsibilities involved* (13.4%). In opposition, *interpersonal relationship problems with employees* (0.8%), *incompatibility with familiar commitments* (2.4%) and *difficulty in reconciling schedules* (2.4%) were the less relevant reasons. It can be concluded that leaders leave leadership positions for opportunity-based reasons, namely when they find better opportunities in the labour market.

**e. Income and gender**

The majority of respondents (55.7%) earn less than R\$2,490 per month. Even though the average monthly salary of graduates ( $M = 3,019.49; SE = 133.87; IC 95\% [2,756.18; 3,282.79]$ ) is about five times higher than the national minimum wage in Brazil, there are still 5.2% of respondents that claim earning less than the minimum wage.

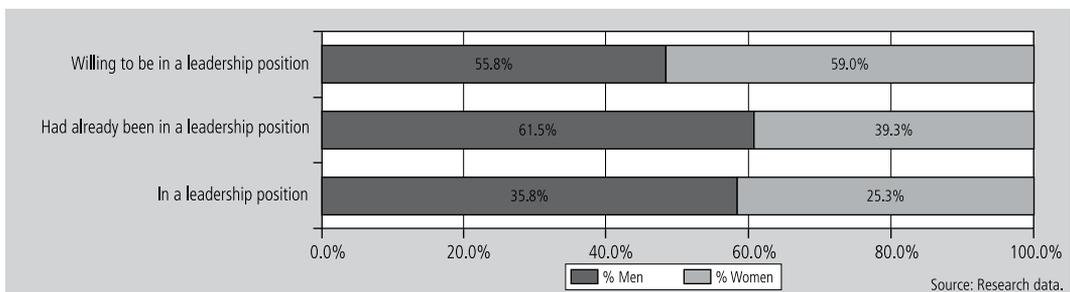


Figure 5 | Gender differences concerning leadership positions.

Female graduates are more represented in the lowest salary categories, while men prevail in the highest salary levels (Figure 6). The differences between the average wages of women ( $M=2,728.24$ ;  $SE=143.50$ ; IC 95% [2,445.65; 3,010.83]) and men ( $M=3,883.19$ ;  $SE=300.27$ ; IC 95% [3,286.27; 4,480.11]) are significant ( $t(127.544)=-3.470$ ,  $p=.001$ ). In fact, female graduates earn, on average, about R\$1,150 less than male graduates, which corresponds to a 29.7% gender pay gap.

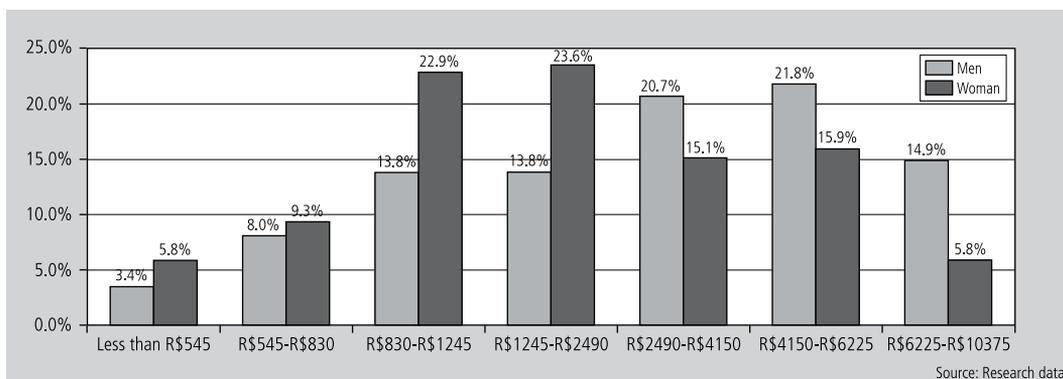
**f. Discrimination in professional life and gender**

In general, tourism graduates do not feel discriminated against concerning employment factors like salary, working hours and flexibility, incentive

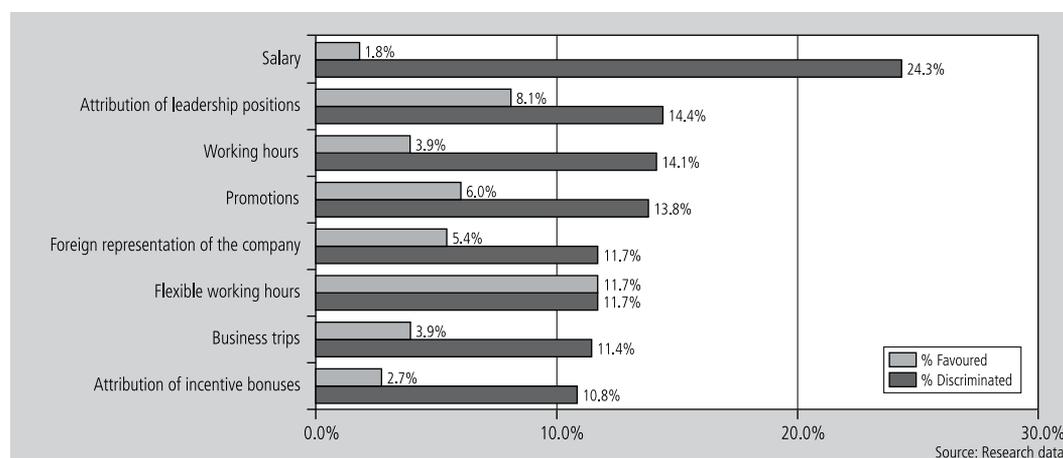
bonuses, getting promotions, reaching leadership positions, or representing the organization abroad.

However, if we analyse the feeling of advantage versus disadvantage revealed by the respondents, it can be observed that the feeling of being disadvantaged prevails in relation to each factor. The only exception is *flexible working hours*, in relation to which there is an equal proportion of respondents expressing either feelings of advantage or disadvantage (11.7%).

*Salary* stands out as the major discrimination factor (24.3%) in the professional life of tourism graduates, while it was in relation to *flexible working hours* (11.7%) and the *attribution of leadership positions* (8.1%) that the graduates considered themselves more advantaged (Figure 7).



**Figure 6** | Monthly wages by gender of the Brazilian tourism graduates surveyed.



**Figure 7** | Feelings of being favoured and discriminated in professional life by gender, concerning the Brazilian tourism graduates surveyed.

Analysing the discrimination feelings by gender, there were statistically significant differences between female and male graduates concerning salaries ( $U=8,488.500$ ,  $W=3,9863.500$ ,  $p=.001$ ), attribution of incentive bonuses ( $U=9,578.000$ ,  $W=4,0703.000$ ,  $p=.052$ ) and flexible working hours ( $U=8,979.500$ ,  $W=1,2549.500$ ,  $p=.009$ ). Whereas women feel more disadvantaged comparatively to men regarding salaries (28.8% versus 10.7%) and the attribution of incentive bonuses (12.1% versus 7.1%), men feel more disadvantaged than women concerning flexible working hours (17.9% versus 9.6%).

#### 4.3. Remarkable features

Besides the results presented above, three insights emerged from the collected data which deserve to be pointed out, even though they need deeper understanding in future research. They concern monthly income and academic degree, the connection between work life and motherhood, and special needs of women at work.

##### a. Women's monthly income and academic degree

The first noteworthy feature relates to net monthly income and academic degree. There is a positive correlation between having a higher education degree and a higher monthly income ( $p<.001$ ), as expected. The multiple comparison of means, based on Games-Howell test<sup>4</sup>, showed that there

<sup>4</sup> This test was chosen since there is no equality of variance between groups ( $F(3; 338)=4.104$ ,  $p=.007$ ).

were statistically significant differences ( $p\leq.023$ ) in the average monthly salary of graduates of all academic degrees considered in the analysis.

Concerning the income across different educational levels, it is possible to observe that when having the same educational level, women are still paid less (monthly average net salary) as compared to men. However, as the educational level rises, the gender pay gap decreases from 29.4% to 2.1% (Table 2).

Thus education contributes to the narrowing of the gender pay gap among tourism graduates.

##### b. Women: career and motherhood

The data demonstrate that women, especially with children, tend to escape from the food and beverage sector, as well as cultural, recreational and leisure services. They look for the public sector (e.g., education and other public sector organizations) which could be explained by assuming that they are in search for more stability and better income.

Both men and women tend to agree that children hinder women's career progression (about 60%), and the difference observed between them is not statistically significant ( $U=9,937.500$ ,  $W=41,062.500$ ,  $p=.832$ ). However, men and women tend to disagree in what concerns the balance between personal and professional activities. While women find that reconciling work and family issues is harder for them than for men, men tend to disagree, which indicates that they think it is harder for them or that the challenges are similar.

Regarding childcare, most respondents with children use paid services to take care of them (64.3%).

**Table 2** | Salary and pay gap concerning different levels of academic degrees and gender

Academic degree	Average Monthly Salary (Reais)		Women Pay gap
	Men	Women	
Technological certificate, Bachelor's and Licenciatura	2,722.36	1,820.81	-29.4%
MBA and similar specializations	3,683.82	2,857.14	-22.4%
Master's	4,703.00	3,980.71	-15.4%
Doctorate	7,908.33	7,449.25	-2.1%

Source: Research data.

It suggests that women are not overwhelmed by this domestic task. However, when children get sick, women take care of them, showing that this is a feminine family activity. Nonetheless, there is no relation between gender and job resignation caused by the need to take care of children or relatives.

### c. Women: a group with special needs at work?

Male respondents regard women as a group with specific needs, indicating that they need personal convenience and comfort in the workplace (52.1%). Men also tend to believe that there are unsuitable occupations for women (52.7 %) and that women are more concerned with safety issues during business travel (53.8%).

Most women agree with the male group in several aspects. However, there they disagree regarding the existence of occupations that are inappropriate for women. There was a statistically significant difference between men and women in this respect ( $U=11,336.000$ ,  $W=52,091.000$ ,  $p=.031$ ).

In a few words, women and men tend to agree that the former represent a group with its own needs regarding convenience and comfort in the workplace. However, there is a marked disagreement on the part of women in what concerns the existence of inappropriate professional activities for women.

## 5. Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to identify the main features regarding women who have higher education in tourism in Brazil, in comparison to their male counterparts, as a preliminary presentation of the results of the Gentour Project.

No differences were found between male and female graduates regarding aspects such as: the waiting time for their first job (about 4 months); the average time in their current job (3.7 years); the average pay (higher in the public sector as compared to the private sector); the average period of unem-

ployment (one year); and the most recurrent reason for being unemployed (studying or qualifying). More importantly, gender was not identified as a barrier in the process of finding a job, neither by male graduates nor by female graduates. About half of the respondents got a job the moment they graduated.

Results suggest that women with tourism higher education in Brazil are paid less in comparison to their male counterparts, since their salaries are approximately 29.4% lower than men'. However, this gap is lower than in the Brazilian labour market as a whole. It is also remarkable that the pay inequality between men and women decreases with increased levels of education. However, regarding the highest academic levels and gender, it was observed that women tend to be concentrated in the lowest levels (Technological and Bachelor degrees) and men in the highest (Master's, PhD).

We could also verify that there are less women than men in senior positions in the tourism sector. Generally, men prevail in the top positions and there is also a higher proportion of men who previously held this kind of positions. On the other hand, data support the idea that both men and women are similarly interested in top positions.

In addition, a lower rate of entrepreneurship was found among female graduates. The proportion of men who have created their own job or company is about twice as much as the proportion of women, despite their similar interest to start their own business.

Apparently, there is also a difference between men and women concerning the working hours and the reasons for accepting a part time job. While men indicated that it was a personal choice, mainly due to involvement in educational activities, women indicated that it was more a result of a lack of option. Moreover, women's lower educational level, lower participation in top positions and higher participation in part time jobs can explain their lower income.

Based on the data, being a woman poses obstacles not for getting a job, but for career ad-

vancement. Few perceived disadvantages of being a woman in the labour market were stated. They are linked to lower salaries and awards when compared to men. There are no perceptions of other aspects regarding inequality and discrimination at work, under the female perspective, in the analysed group. Most respondents did not feel discriminated against concerning representation, responsibilities or vertical mobility. Above all, data reveals that the feeling of discrimination among graduates is not strong.

The findings also offer some insights to be further explored, such as the fact that some professional activities attract more women with children, especially in the public sector. It suggests a relationship between motherhood and job stability, together with better incomes. Regarding the conciliation of professional life with family and domestic tasks, data leads to the conclusion that there are family activities which are under the responsibility of women. Surprisingly, there is no correlation between job resignation and gender, which means that female respondents do not tend to abandon work to take care of other family members, neither children nor adults. Finally, women tend not to be perceived as a group with special needs at work, neither by men nor women. There is a strong agreement with this sense of women as a special group when it refers to comfort and safety, especially in business trips. However, women tend to disagree that there are activities not suitable for them, as opposed to male respondents. These last issues still deserve more verification in future research.

Even though the research contributes to a better understanding of women's participation in the tourism labour market, it has some limitations. The study gathered a smaller number of respondents than expected, even if the minimum sample size was reached. Moreover, some questions did not seem to work well in the Brazilian reality or the answers did not allow for a better statistics analysis due to a low response rate or to a lack of responses of men or women in certain items. The next steps in the research are a deeper data analysis, followed

by comparisons and correlations to be explored, specially focused on understanding cross-country convergences and divergences.

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