

THE TOURISM PROFESSION AND THE AXES TO EXPLAIN ITS RELATION TO ACADEMIC TRAINING

Laura Peñaloza Suárez*

J. Lourdes Medina Cuevas**

Alma Herrera Márquez***

y Ruth Vargas Leyva****

Translator: Pablo Contretas Fresán
E-mail: deepcolearning@gmail.com

* Full-time Researcher-Professor, Faculty of Tourism at UAEM. E-mail: laurapesua@gmail.com

** Full-time Researcher-Professor, Tourism Research Center at UAEM. E-mail: lumec57@yahoo.com.mx

*** Full-time Researcher-Professor, FES Zaragoza (UANM). University and Regional Integration UNESCO Chair E-Mail: alserro57@gmail.com

**** Full-time Researcher-Professor, Master's Degree in Industrial Engineering, Instituto Tecnológico de Tijuana. E-mail: rvargas.itt@hotmail.com

REVISTA DE LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR

ISSN: 0185-2760

Vol. XL (4), No. 160

Octubre - Diciembre de 2011, pp. 95 - 118

Approach:12/04/11 • Acceptance: 13/10/11

Resumen

En el presente artículo se analizan los planteamientos teórico conceptuales de las profesiones en sus dimensiones sociológica y económica, que fundamentan los estudios realizados en México en distintos campos disciplinares, situando desde ahí, a la profesión turística, a su vez se identifica la teoría del capital humano como eje de articulación para ser abordada como objeto de estudio, que desde sus ámbitos económico y social delimita la formación académica y producción de conocimientos turísticos ligados al desarrollo productivo.

Palabras clave:

- Profesión
- Profesión turística
- Capital humano
- Economía del conocimiento

Abstract

This paper analyzes the theoretical/conceptual underpinnings of different professions in their sociologic and economic dimensions, which are the bases for studies carried out in Mexico in several disciplinary fields, thereby contextualizing the tourism profession. At the same time, the paper identifies the human capital theory as the axis to be approached as the object of study, wherein its economic and social scopes outline the scholarly activities and the production of knowledge on tourism linked to development.

Key words:

- Profession
- Tourism profession
- Human capital
- Knowledge economy

Introduction

A profession, as a work precursor, is primarily recognized for its contributions to the labor market and the establishment of an occupational structure that determines its practices, however, it is closely related to scholarship through the link established by the professional certification of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and capabilities that meet the needs of the economic, social and cultural environment, in a scenario where knowledge is managed and lifelong learning is exercised it is required that the individual becomes proactive in promoting greater competitiveness in the professional field.

In a profession, the development of an individual occurs in the productive sector that individually and collectively defines the relationship between man, society and work. This paper addresses the study of the profession as a concept, as it has changed over time, and depending on the author, from sociological to economic perspectives, alluding to the changes it has undergone, associating them with the development of human capital, thereby establishing the role of the professional in the field of tourism.

Professions are placed in a historical context, highlighting that their meanings have changed as they have been linked to welfare, remuneration and social, cultural and organizational order as well as the systematization of work. Bearing this in mind, studies of the professions have been based on two dimensions: the sociological and the economic. The first directs its studies towards the social and productive development of which professions take part, assuming they enhance people's social life, their qualities and capabilities, in responding to their professional vocation. This leads to receiving monetary compensation according to the social status conferred by the community, perceiving more income the greater the collective asset and being socially valued on the basis of carrying out a service for the public good.

The second dimension analyzes professions as a mechanism for job insertion by which man has access to employment and a better living standard, enhancing his capacity to produce goods and services, developing a specialized body of knowledge and skills acquired during a period of education and training, highlighting the classic attributes of professions such as expertise and prestige, where the state represents the provider of welfare through public policy.

Finally, we analyze professions studied in Mexico, from the formative processes carried out by educational institutions and the productive sector in various professional fields. Some studies suggest changes in formal educational practices, the development of training according to the specific needs of the labor market as well as the social or economic orientation given to the various professions, thereby, in the last section, we analyze the tourism profession and its role in terms of its social and labor market implications.

The professions in their historical context

The study of professions historically entails the well-being of people with productive capacity, highlighting their social and economic interplay with the market, which in turn places value on the professional abilities to use innovation systems, facilitate the appropriate use of information, communication and technology.

To speak about profession as a concept involves reviewing the different meanings of the term, e.g., for Arturo Ballesteros Leiner (2005), a profession is a type of activity that generates monetary compensation.

The term profession has changed according to the social context where it has been applied. Nineteenth century theorists regarded professions as a form of corporations which allowed the establishment of a new social order; or as the act of professing the willingness to devote to God, to obey a higher being, with great asceticism, devotion and suffering; or as the involvement in intellectual operations or the acquisition of some training; in of all these, the concept of the profession is linked to the role played by the individual, according to his knowledge, to act in an organized social reality.

According to Fernandez (2001), the concept of profession has been defined as a special form of occupational organization based on a body of knowledge conformed by all of the professional profiles, competences and professional practices, which in turn may vary in time and space. This paper emphasizes its meaning derived from the Latin root *professio-onis*, meaning 'action of professing' i.e. the exercise of an activity, but also, since the 18th century, it has been understood as carrying out a specific task, as a result of industrialization and the division of labor.

From the historical perspective, the tourism profession was generated from trades that allowed parents and children to learn from the exercise of a particular inherited occupation geared towards tending for visitors, from then on, it acquired relevance and specialization with the consolidation of companies and the division of labor among the various professional groups that influence the development of human capital in the field.

The social and economic developments experienced in the workplace since the industrial revolution, have led to changes in labor systems, from population growth, lifestyles, training and job insertion mechanisms, to the migration of populations in search of job opportunities. This has in turn led to changes in processes in education and training involving science and technology within industry and various economic activities, thereby generating changes in society, in manufacturing and the accumulation of capital. In this sense a profession is recognized for its role in the theoretical and scientific innovation that make up the professional landscapes of the occupational structure and the labor market.

As Eliot Freidson rightly notes (2001), it is necessary to emphasize that the definitions of profession may overlap, since they focus either on the processes, structures or attributes. Yet, the concept of profession is primarily

focused on the different occupations, their evolution and their orientation in the labor market.

Since the industrial revolution, professions instituted a new social order due to the need to encourage the creation of more specialized activities, distribution of occupations and wage stratification. This has differentiated the use of the term by the existing social organization as a product of the changes brought by industrialization and the involvement in education by allowing the individual to specialize in an occupation and achieve a better standard of living.

At the dawn of the 20th century, a profession was seen as a possibility for personal development and growth in society, conditioned by the social life of man with all his qualities and capabilities, to respond to his vocation, which has allowed to reevaluate the demands of production systems and recognize the capacity of people in their areas of expertise. Jorge Fernández Pérez (2001) notes that professions are established as strategies to practice certain occupations and accredited by trade associations, thus strengthening their social sense and capacity for remuneration.

By engaging in the labor market organization, the professions constitute a means for raising productivity in the economic development of a region, and its business, which improves their processes giving rise to a knowledge economy, where human capital plays a decisive role in steering technological change.

William J. Goode (1957) quoting Cogan, points out that since the fifties, professions have had a moral obligation to provide some socially valued services for the public good, this allowed for the development of a market.

The transformation of the social order after the Second World War resulted in a functionalist approach to the professions, authors such as Harold Wilensky (1964), Magali Larson (1977), Victor M. Gomez C. and Emilio Tenti Fanfani (1989), placed professions as formalized knowledge and the ideal of service permitted the control of the market and worker protection against competition. The theoretical interpretations referred to professions as a means of control, corporate extortion mechanisms and as a channel for individual progress.

Fernandez (2001), quoting Schein, refers to professions as sets of occupations carried out in a system of rules derived from their special role in society, having a specialized body of knowledge and skills acquired over a long period of education and training.

At the same time, human capital studies were integrated into business managerial processes, looking at the profession to determine whether it was profitable in terms of decision making. Theodore Schultz (1979) pointed out that the human capital usefulness lied in the analysis of the different activities and in increasing the capacity of people to improve their prospects for real income, causing the profession to be seen as a means for specialization.

Nowadays, the trend towards globalization has been expressed in humanized spaces through the concentration of the production of goods, services and capital. Scholars on the subject of professions such as Teresa Pacheco

Méndez (2005), Angel Díaz Barriga (2005), Francisco Arce Gurza (1982), Concepción Barron (2005), Jorge Fernández Pérez (2001), Dingwall Robert, Eliot Freidson (2001) and E. Mariano Fernández Enguita (1995), have referred to the profession as a specific social and economic activity, i.e. one that is exercised by showing skills and abilities for which one receives social recognition and a financial reward that is consistent with the social status conferred by the community, which in turn depends on the society in question and the time in which this function is perceived as having a greater collective benefit.

Professions are manifested in the labor market through knowledge, specialization, individual and collective values and attitudes. As they garner these features they confer importance to their own professional identities, showing their respective societies their organizational work structures, trades, power and status. These in turn may vary according to different times and situations, thus generating in both scholars and employers an interest in studying the professions.

This is how every profession expresses the transformation and development of the economy, society and culture, by diversifying geographically and politically the social context in which they function. This generates the need for higher standards to supply quality knowledge, disposition towards the transformation and competitiveness of employment in manufacturing and services.

Because of this the professions guide the necessary relationship between educational institutions and the labor market, which require their organization to ensure employment opportunities for skilled human capital. Carlos Muñoz (2009) notes that from an economic standpoint, investments in education, in its different types and modalities, are aimed at increasing the capacity of individuals to produce and benefit from the fruits of their labor.

Josep A. Rodríguez and Mauro F. Guillén (1992), referring to the study of professions highlight that these have been a conundrum for social theorists who link education with work because beginning with Marx, the nature of professional classes was thought to be an element of capital gain and the expertise of pundits to ensure production. These scholars who see the profession as involved in every productive domain highlight its importance from a functionalist and economic perspective. Given their historical importance and the central role of education, professions can be seen as an important element in strengthening the expertise level of individuals.

Sociological and economic fundamentals that underpin the study of professions

The social and economic changes taking place in the professions affect their study whether this is approached from the sociological or economic dimension. This implies that the individual should capitalize his knowledge with his skills. Thus it is necessary to study the tourism profes-

sion rethinking the function educational institutions have in developing the knowledge, competences and motivations that serve as incentives to select, guide and empower the individual's behaviors in the world of work.

The nature of work required or presumed in a profession has to do with socially valuable activities, essential for the community, requiring extensive knowledge and specific forms of action (Rodríguez and Guillén, 1992). Thus, laying the ground for a theoretical framework allows to place, from different viewpoints, how the behaviors of a profession, in manufacturing or services, may have come about.

Sociological dimension

Under the sociological approach the profession denotes an activity that shows capabilities through socially recognized activities, receiving a financial remuneration that is consistent with the status conferred by the community.

This position has more recently recognized human development, where the individual, as central to the functioning and structure of the labor market, juxtaposes his values and work experience to his scientific and technical knowledge.

Sociological studies of the professions, according to Rodríguez and Guillén (1992), are mainly based on the theoretical frameworks by Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. On the one hand, with Durkheim social facts predominate where the individual's need to get an education arises showing that education has the social function of implementing the individual's knowledge. This enabled many scholars to recognize that professions buffer the relationship between the state and the individual thus promoting a social ethos. On the other hand Weber's studies on rationality contemplate that professions contribute knowledge to power and in a process of rationalization they facilitate forms of organization and domination through knowledge.

In this context, the history of the professions has been qualifying the discourse on disciplinary content of the various fields making sense of the professional training process that is followed by the institutions and the stratification of society that requires involvement in the labor market.

In other sociological approaches such as M.L. Cogan (1953), Harold Wilensky (1964) and Magali Larson (1977), the professions have been identified from the perspective of human capital formation in addition to the social commitment of both educational institutions and goods and services businesses, due to the vital role they play in defining actions and specialized occupations based on the demands of the world of work.

In the seventies, studies of the professions were directed to the need to develop processes for technical and higher education as a mechanism for entering the workforce. In the eighties, Abercrombie (1974), put forward the role of human resources, capabilities and possibilities as a way of accrediting knowledge. In this same vein, studies by Peter Cleaves (1985), Peter Drucker

(1987), M. Burrage and R. Torstendahl (1990), Víctor Manuel Gómez Campos and Teresa Pacheco Méndez (1983), have called for educational process and curriculum analysis to have a strong orientation towards the theories of conflict and stratification as methodological elements to analyze social conditions, graduate follow up and the regionalization of education.

Muñoz (2009) points out that with the growth of the economic system education tends to promote a balance between the supply and demand of qualified human resources thereby supporting the relationship between the labor force, educational level and jobs performed by workers with their productivity levels. In this sense, the professions denote specific social and economic activity that on the one hand, with its social recognition may represent a greater collective benefit, and on the other, as pointed out by De la Garza (2008) the professions offer a different sense of work, where the occupation embodies the bond between the working actors collective actions which are associated more with an identity than with a salary.

The professions boost productivity through the regeneration of knowledge in the professional practices of a field. The current tendency is to use information and communication technologies intensively for effective production, transmission and dissemination of innovative productive activities, investment in intangible capital, where the company and its agents are able to create, as well as the development and application of the knowledge they regenerate.

Human development models have approached the study of the professions, seeking to rescue the value of social engagement, as part of the formation of students and graduates from different professional fields. Ana Hirsch (2006) conducted a state of the knowledge study about the study of professions, which mainly focuses on the development of the ethical and social values of the individual, emphasizing topics such as: professional ethics, scientific and professional values, gender values, professional socialization, talent and the identity of students, teachers and professionals in various fields, thus highlighting the priority now given to professionals in the development of their own talents.

These studies emphasize that the recognition of professions in every field, require trained and skilled individuals to work in professional fields for a competitive and strategic management and innovation edge, which allows the possibility of developing the human talent of professionals who are able to participate in the socio-economic, political and cultural reality of a region, while interrelating their knowledge with practical work in various institutions or businesses.

Education and training strengthen the configuration of professions, identifying the work that guides and gives meaning –and identity– to the occupation, around the collective actions of the professionals who are able to influence various areas of interaction with various stakeholders to promote human development, theirs and the collective's. As noted by De la Garza (2008) these situations allow for the social construction of the occupation, the cost-benefit balance of actors who make decisions in terms of applying themselves –or selecting someone else for the task– as well as being nurtured

by values, cognitive beliefs, emotions, day to day troubleshooting, alongside other factors of a more scientific nature.

It is of great importance to wonder about human development guiding the study of the professions towards the recognition of talent and identifying the intellectual gifts of human capital and its relationship with the knowledge and skills that allow the organization of the collective, as well as the individual's job and professional performance.

According to Martha Alles (2008: 35) individual talent is "the sum of abilities, commitments and actions that provide a multiplier effect at work." The relationship between knowledge, talent and skills results in the development of capabilities and knowledge influenced by certain personal traits and motivation.

The equilibrium offered by professions embodies the social conception of the work by linking it to the perception of its social utility and at the same time, the valuation of the type of qualities required for its implementation, as well as the effort and dedication on the part of the individual who carries out the tasks.

Economic dimension

From the economic perspective the profession is seen as the means by which man has access to work and better living standards, as the specialized capacity to produce goods and services for others, and as a source of fulfillment.

The rationale given from the economic dimension indicates that the professions arise from the socioeconomic needs of a place as well as its legal, political and social acceptance status. Ruth Vargas reiterates that the occupation involves activities, instruments, methods and forms of social organization of work conditioned by the economic dynamics and the set of interactions and relationships with the public (Vargas, 1998). In this sense, the professions encompass social problems and variants of the global civil society's struggle, they take on new forms of organization, debate and action thus generating alternatives for business development by triggering goods and services mediated by the presence of the professions' academic processes.

Within the economic perspective there are three main approaches: the interactionist, the critic and the human capital, which share in common a special interest in the development of the person, as a resource, social agent or human capital.

R. Ramirez (2009) refers to Everett Hughes as the pioneer of the interactionist approach by emphasizing that professions negotiate their special position in daily life, both in their sociability, by the action of the collective, as in labor relations with worker actions and interactions, hence it is considered that the formation of professions enhance and transform the individual. By rescuing some of the principles of functional models for the study of the profession, this approach defines people's behaviors in daily life as a reality determined by their interactions, which transcends the field of sensory stimulus and the immediate,

broadening the perception of the environment, increasing the ability to solve problems and facilitate performance in both their professional and personal life.

Under the critical analysis approach Rodriguez and Guillén (1992), include classic attributes of professions: knowledge, expertise and prestige, where professions are meaningless if not in a context associated with the social structure, organizations and politics. Thus, the sense of the profession as a strategy for collective action in a world of work arises, where the welfare policy of the state is primarily a human capital value recognition. Thereby the relationship between the education system and the economic structure determines the role of scientific and technological knowledge in production, organization and the division of labor. Ruth Vargas Leyva (1998) and Estela Ruiz Larraguivel (2004) among others, argue that there is a weak link between the training of human resources for research, the retraining of the workforce and the competitive advantages of technical-scientific professional training.

The human capital approach is represented primarily by Theodore W. Schütz (1979), who proposes that human capital acquires a theoretical and methodological profile that contributes to the economic value of education, due to the interrelation of organized activities that increase human capacity and improve real income prospects, by the means of schooling and the qualification of human resources, as well as on the job training.

In general, this theory suggests that human capital is a source of additional flows of income that contribute to economic growth, coming from employment wages. These funds yield services of economic value whereby wages provide data on production prices as classified into homogeneous groups and skill levels, according to schooling, gender, and age, thus the profession is linked to occupations, while the system of knowledge is demarcated by professional fields and skills, which define the daily life of the individual, the social institutions and the labor market.

University education is the basis that guides the relationship between education and work, it ranks the professional status associated with a knowledge-based economy by diversifying the supply of educational and employment options in complex areas of development. By integrating students and graduates from different fields of study, higher education outlines a better human coexistence, harmonious development in the workplace and professional identities.

From the sociological and economic perspective, education is linked to the sense and direction of professions, socially steering towards schemes in which the individual does not mechanize his activities but develops his own skills, attitudes, thoughts and criticism. Therefore, the challenge facing higher education is to train a new type of worker, to become more open, flexible, solidary, democratic and critical, with an ever more versatile training to face a society of complex changes. Studying the profession and its future has a degree of unpredictability never before seen at any other time in the history of mankind due to the complexity of productive processes.

There is a need to investigate the educational processes, in conjunction with the development of a profession, in terms of the economic implications associa-

ted to different conditions in the working environment (i.e. employment, wages, occupational structures, and so on). All of these add up to the individual's rank based on his university education, which according to Manuel Zatarain (1991), requires in turn, training to include models that lead to education as an ongoing process, tailored to the real possibilities as determined by the individual's context. These, in some way, conditions the ways in which occupations are identified, as well as their relation to the existing production system, according to the professional development of the local labor market, for professionals provide their services expecting some form of economic compensation in return.

Therefore, the scope of the studies of the profession gradually involve reviewing human resource development, not only in terms of the need to train staff by providing them with knowledge, but also by allowing them to develop their skills and professional talent, engaging them in personal and professional activities that concomitantly affect the development of the local economy and thus society at large.

In the case of the tourism profession, furthering knowledge, job creation, salaries and organizational positions, has led to the recognition of the human capital formation processes taking place in the labor market of a country, which may be too complex for an analysis of the profession, yet it is required for the designing of comprehensive models aimed at reviewing the role of human capital in the performance of innovative professional practices that may impact the welfare of a community or an organization, focusing on the context in which it operates, both according to the conditions of the production environment as well as the importance given to the discipline concerned.

The professions reflect their relation to the world of work starting with the human relationships that arise in the human capital interactions, skills and capabilities. Thus human capital incorporates its knowledge into the practices that lead to the active and productive development and maintaining of the supply of capable engaged professionals as knowledge workers, to account for new employment strategies, the renewal of activities and services in the productive arena, as well as different expectations of lifelong learning.

Human capital is studied mainly according to its impact on the labor market, however it may also be studied in the domain of the professions given that its consolidation is strengthened by the formative processes involved, which links human capital to the professions, educational institutions and the workplace.

The relationship between the academic and professional domains should improve as part of the professions' development process. Based on the participation of various actors who have the capacity to intervene in the production system, through the management of organizational knowledge skills, which largely involve improving the graduation profiles and curricula for training programs in tourism, as well as the development of academic skills for intervention, research and innovation processes in the professional field, around the configuration of knowledge management models.

Therefore, these relationships imply a new social construction of work that meets the diversity and quality of consolidated professional tasks, the deve-

lopment and use of technology, workload distribution and the linkage with businesses and the assignment of value to human capital in the context of a knowledge-based economy.

Importance of studying the professions in Mexico

In Mexico, economic development has been linked with the various forms of organized production and services through the flow of social needs and demands. The relationship between education, the improvement of services and attention to professionals in their field shows the evolution and changing dynamics of the communities in which they emerge. Studies of the professions tend to approach different empirical studies emphasizing practices in the areas of medicine, engineering, and agronomy, for those are the ones that have been analyzed continuously, due to social and production needs.

Empirical studies have shown that the professions reflect the changes that modern society experiences, they also emphasize the complexity of social and economic activities due to the changes that take place in the areas of training, information and communication. The different professions show their development in the form of different structures of work, job creation and local or regional development as well as educational accreditation and certification of the different professional disciplines.

Thus in Mexico, the study of professions has also been approached from a sociological perspective, Pablo Latapí (1982) argued that professions had their origin in the construction of the social economic formation that led to the birth and evolution of liberal capitalism in small fragmented markets, which from the critical position of the interactionist approach, could gauge the role human capital plays in the field of tourism. Concomitantly Claves (1985: 33) emphasizes that "the profession is an occupation requiring specialized knowledge, high-level educational training, control over the job components, self-organization and self-regulation, altruism and community service spirit" which gave rise to functionalist studies that mediated the market needs with the organizational changes of society.

Subsequently, studies by Angel Diaz Barriga (2005), Felipe Estévez (1991), Victor Manuel Gomez Campos (1989) and Manuel Zatarain (1991), among others, have proposed that the sense of the profession derives from the professional training and the curriculum at higher education institutions, mainly focusing on the study of the professions, in medicine, engineering, psychology, social work, dentistry and education.

Research exercises carried out in public educational institutions and to a lesser degree in the productive sector, have proposed changes in formal educational practices in order for training to develop according to the specific needs of the labor market.

Authors such as Ángeles Valle (2009), Carlos Ornelas (2002), Sulema Rodríguez Roche (2010), Sylvie Didou (1992), Lourdes Medina Cuevas (1996), Felipe Estévez (1991), Víctor Manuel Alcaraz (1991), Concepción Barrón (2005) and others, have studied the areas of administration, psychology, education, engineering, social work, medicine, and tourism, among others, through empirical studies on human resources in business practices, trends in professional fields, and the dynamics between higher education graduates and the labor market.

The applications of studies of the professions, while they continue to study the different training processes in various fields, are directed towards the rescuing of values, whether ethical, professional or social, as Ana Hirsch's (2006) study, noted earlier, which generated a new framework for analysis of the role of graduates from technical and higher education, both socially and at work.

The different professional fields highlight the importance of rescuing professional identities. By highlighting the differences between higher education institutions in Mexico and the conditions under which technological and university training programs are conducted and by linking the selection of programs and vocations which imply emerging changes in society, its context and the type of knowledge that allows for the interaction that makes professional practice a fundamental activity to gauge the capacity of an educational and/or productive discipline, in the global arena.

The professions in Mexico studied by Gabriela Alvarado, Alonso Trujillo Belkis, Allan Borboza, Ansilú Matteredita, Isabel Jácome and Cristina Yañez, Luis Fraile Calle, Ruth Vargas Leyva, Estela Ruiz, Ángeles Valle Flores, José Gómez Villanueva, Teresa Pacheco, Ángel Diaz B., Mónica Sladogna, Juan Carlos Flores, Antonio Valderrama, and Gloria Estrada, among others, stress the need for more specialized knowledge and expertise for solving more specific problems.

As Harold Wilenski (1964) pointed out, the tourism profession, as in other professions, has a social commitment to a balanced development of the human being to define his capabilities and potentials of personal and social fulfillment. This profession should form a body of systematic knowledge acquired through academic training to support the professional practice, from a multi-and cross-disciplinary perspective, for understanding and exercising the many linkages this discipline may have as dynamic axes in the social, cultural, political and educational spheres.

Even when studying professions in the sociological and economic dimensions the tourism profession is more recognized for its contribution to the economy than for the changes and fulfillment of social needs. This is a dynamic sector immersed in fierce competition, associated with employers and employees trained on the job as well as graduates from various tourism programs. Therefore it is up to the professionals in this area to support knowledge management in tourism and foster tourism education with the vision of generating greater competitiveness in their field.

Study of the tourism profession

In the world of work the tourism profession has generated a series of transformations that emphasize the complexity of its activities and occupational tasks such as services, academic training, social stratification, through levels and areas of training, which as social and economic factors converge, greater synergies are achieved among all of the aspects tourism entails.

As rightly pointed out by Monica G. Sladogna (1999), tourism defines a set of professional figures broadly defined in terms of employment and activities that originate from the adaptation and adjustment of the supply of services, requiring to modify the requirements, needs and motivations to cater to different consumers of tourism services and facilitate the transition from one company to another in the different functional areas.

The experience, power and culture that the knowledge society establishes represents a new condition for working life, according to Manuel Castells (2005). The various professions, and tourism in particular, present new social problems and variants that take the form of original modalities of organization, debate and action. Thus the tourism profession involves promoting the importance of human capital in the perspective of the development of human talent, as a central factor in consolidating employability skills in this knowledge society.

Tourism as an economic activity is involved in the integration of capital markets, which serves for the full development of the individual allowing him to naturally transform his productivity as well as the training of professionals and the diversification and division of labor (Peñaloza, 2001: 42).

Several empirical studies have focused on the importance of the tourism profession beyond the training processes at higher education institutions, a situation presented by Silvye Didou (1992) Lourdes Medina (1996), and L. Peñaloza (2001). In these studies it is recognized that the professions are framed by society and its specific training modalities and monitoring of graduates, certification and evaluation, allowing tourism to be seen as a profession where social, cultural and political processes and actions converge.

However, tourism is confronted with social and economic demands for the professional skills required by the social organization of labor. Therefore, there is a need for the trends in the tourism profession to configure the employment structure accordingly, based on a deep understanding of reality, and for academic training, to provide the human capital attributes for the adequate development of contemporary tourism.

The tourism profession faces a changing, competitive, complicated environment characterized by a social commitment that involves the educational integration and the transition to rethink the means for professional, personal and social development, through a linkage between educational institutions and the tourism industry in order to generate a greater understanding and respect for the environment through the professional practice of tourism.

As Hector Robles (2005) rightly notes, the knowledge economy is based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information, supported by advances in science, technology, communication and information. This is applied in the tourism profession which is in itself dynamic. Its development involves changes in technology and innovation where the human capital adapts them to the labor market in order to maintain current living standards.

The academic component of the tourism profession develops human capital committed to meeting the needs of its community or country, by identifying the training processes required for productivity and efficiency, seeking quality education, skills development and different learning strategies.

From the perspective of institutions like the OECD, Brian Keeley (2007) indicates that human capital involves a commitment to society, its cohesion within the various disciplines remains a pillar of stability. Thus in the field of tourism we may see that social and working relationships among professionals produce interesting and sometimes controversial ideas, but its human and social capital that may potentially help prepare individuals and societies to cope with the changes that lay ahead, both in training and productive processes.

Studies of the tourism profession further add to the impact of sociological and economic studies aimed at understanding the role of human capital.

Gomis Lopez (2005), as well as institutions such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2001) have pointed out that in the knowledge society, tourism converges due to its interrelation with other disciplines such as economics, sociology and management. This scenario frames a new era for tourism and, therefore, the tourism profession must be able to provide a knowledge platform for interacting and making its practice meaningful through the use of information and communication technologies and through fostering the development of the professional skills of its human capital.

Although studies of the tourism profession are of importance for understanding the role of professionals in lifelong learning processes, they require review and reorientation of these lifelong learning schemes in order to innovate and strengthen their participation in caring for the needs of travelers who themselves originate this specific occupational field. The development of the skills and talents of this profession's human capital is linked to teamwork oriented practices, effective communication in a changing organizational environment and keeping up-to-date by the means of lifelong learning.

The tourism profession, its labor market and training processes require better coordination through the development of various human capital skills, which performance could form new professional and occupational trajectories asserted into a socio-educational identity, favoring the professional development of collective actions to strengthen the efficiency of the workplace, the rise of new production and service activities, and the affiliation to a professional identity.

The tourism profession is shaped by the knowledge that serves traveler's needs and the development of the tourism industry, yet the social processes involve the development of a guild, formed by professionals and entrepreneurs who demand more and better specialized knowledge and information for the improvement of intellectual tasks and training for the selection, organization, processing and recovery of the changing environment, competitive and complex, generated by the social commitment for the professional, social and personal development of civil society.

The human capital that is incorporated into the tourism field of work requires covering the expectations of a changing workplace where the supply and demand of personnel is constantly reconfiguring the role of the profession in social and labor terms. The influence of new technologies in the field has resulted in the emergence of new ethical standards, knowledge and skills, as well as complex behaviors and practices, on top of the individuals' moral obligations towards the community and society at large.

This profession highlights values that due to their social and historical importance entail the development of a new work ethos, inspired by a common vision that drives the development of new skills and competences that contribute to the credibility, empathy, assertiveness and mastery of the art of negotiation, to ensure the organizational efficiency and effectiveness of the tourism sector.

The tourism profession as an object of study is associated with lifelong learning processes and the promotion of the transition into the professional, social and personal development of the citizenry. This perspective generates an understanding through new development axes: on the one hand, the formation of capital –human and economic performance of specific social activities, which analyzes the financial rewards according to the status conferred by the community in relation to the perceived collective benefit, thereby assuming social accountability and, on the other, to value talent development that confers status to professional competition.

For tourism professionals to integrate into the world of work through professional paid practice, it is necessary to develop new academic and professional training models as well as schemes for keeping their knowledge, including the respect for the environment, up-to-date.

After identifying the theoretical and methodological approaches, used in studies of other professions, the need to create integrated and permanent human capital training processes has also been identified. This would help develop and consolidate a tourism profession with greater impact on sociological and economic studies, however, it is necessary to contribute more directly to the educational approaches, to increase the economic value of education and the interaction of training and development activities that increase the human capacity to create, innovate, generate new ideas, thoughts and processes.

The tourism profession is linked to addressing social services assuming the social nature of its work, given its social importance, and at the same time, valuing its qualities, therefore continuing education is required as well

as the effort and dedication of those who work in the field, who have expressed their desire for greater interaction with educational institutions to review and integrate quality training processes, based on the principles of competitiveness and lifelong learning, as essential components for innovation in the field of tourism under the perspective of a knowledge-based economy.

The tourism professional's role is to contribute to the strategic and essential activities of tourism enterprises specialized to increasingly ensure better service quality as well as to intensify the application of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to remain competitive while responding to the requirements of the workplace. The intensive use of knowledge, productivity and learning, makes it possible for professionals working in institutions, companies and tourism associations to expand economic activities, which translates into a collective benefit. This benefit is reflected in educational, productive and social activities, embedded in the everyday conditions of the world of work. The educational, for it entails the development of training processes that increasingly look for better ways of developing learners' knowledge, methodological and technical resources for the productive development of the field. The productive branch, for tourism itself is an economic activity booster. The social facet, for integrating the development of people in each community as well as its culture, reflected in the current changes taking place in the tourism market.

The tourism field's division of labor requires human capital to develop skills, knowledge, capabilities and values to gain access to better jobs resulting in a better standard of living thus contributing insights into the production of goods and services for others, developing a system of rules derived from their special role in society by having a specialized body of knowledge and skills acquired over a long period of education, including on the job training and work experience.

Therefore, the study of the tourism profession should address:

- Activities, tools, methods, forms of social organization and division of labor, conditioned by the economic dynamics and the set of interactions and relationships with the public.
- Embracing the struggle of civil society to adopt new forms of organization, debate and action.
- Generating alternatives for business development, acting in a goods and services precursor capacity.
- Outlining the labor market structure based on the behavior of people in a certain reality to increase the capacity for problem solving and facilitate performance in professional and personal life.

To study the tourism profession from the human capital perspective would contribute to the recognition of the field as a generator of knowledge, expertise and prestige as well as to outline some collective action strategies for the global contemporary workplace.

Final considerations

The multifaceted dimension of a given profession takes place in various areas of social participation both in terms of the services provided as well as in planning and social development, yet it requires an identity for its actors to engage with their environment in the workplace. It is required to have highly trained personnel to create, learn and produce knowledge associated with production needs, which involves not only to interlink training processes or job experience, but must also generate the development of human capital talent, to make the professionals in the field competitive.

Therefore in this reflective exercise we consider every profession to be a specialized set of activities carried out in the production arena, based on previous knowledge in a disciplinary field, in a specific practice. From the perspective of the training, any profession involves constant transformation of the educational practices aimed at enhancing job performance, requiring constant self-actualization to conserve the ability of generating new knowledge, discovering in a different light the characteristics of a knowledge based economy, where education becomes a powerful tool for human capital development as is the case for the tourism professional.

The study of the professions in Mexico relates to the recognition and current trends in different academic fields in which professionals are paid according to the social status conferred by the community. They also perceive the greatest collective benefit, providing the forms of organization and domination through knowledge, promoting a stable social arrangement and accreditation by the collegiate bodies in the particular field, such as in the tourism industry. The various studies and input on the configuration of the tourism field have elucidated the importance of maintaining a scientific spirit of intellectual production for the disciplinary framework, as Rossana Guevara (2006) indicates, an organizational and economic configuration of tourism, projects a modern image of Mexico abroad, and leads to the field of tourism to study the construction of the economic, cultural, social and environmental reality of the tourism phenomena in Mexico.

Meanwhile, the tourism profession is conformed in the economic framework as value linked to the availability of skilled manpower, innovation and human capital, specialized studies on this profession, although incipient, respond to the need of recognizing the growth of a population that demands services, the nature of work in the field of tourism is linked to social activities of great value, generated by the need for relaxation, business, study or recreation. Through statistics these studies show results in the field of the provision of services through the various economic activities inherent in traveling.

The tourism profession is primarily recognized for its inclusion in the domain of services, but the professional capacity of its professionals shows alternative developments where traditional tourism businesses such as lodging, food and beverage, travel agencies, transportation, social sector, educational

institutions, recreational and cultural centers, those dedicated to organizing events and conventions, tourism consulting and public sector agencies, require new forms of the organization of work as the market demands such social cohesion as to allow the strengthening of social relationships and the inclusion of tourism professionals with the skills, competences and expertise for specialized performance supported by an academic training that in turn contributes, a wide range of productive and social participation.

This would thus empower the knowledge generation and management of tourism as a multi- and interdisciplinary phenomenon that requires specialized tasks from the human capital, which must learn to work together, creating learning mechanisms to strengthen their civic life, accessing knowledge and continuing to participate more effectively under certain premises prospecting new possibilities for professional development.

References

- Abercrombie Ben-David (1974). Citado por Fernández, J. (2001). “Elementos que consolidan el concepto de profesión. Notas para su reflexión”, en *Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa*, 3 (2). Retrieved september, 2010 <http://redie.uabc.mx/vol3no2/contenido-fernandez.html>
- Alcaraz Romero, Víctor Manuel (1991). “Los nuevos desarrollos científicos y tecnológicos y el curriculum universitario”, *La formación de profesionistas ante los retos del siglo XXI*, Guadalajara México, Universidad de Guadalajara pp. 13-21.
- Alvarado Gabriela y otros (2008) “Definición de enfermería en el tercer nivel de atención, según los acompañantes de los usuarios de un hospital costarricense”, *Revista Enfermería Actual en Costa Rica* (2008, núm. 14 retrieved september, 2010) [http://www.revenf.ucr.ac.cr/definición de enfermeria.pdf](http://www.revenf.ucr.ac.cr/definición%20de%20enfermeria.pdf) ISSN 1409-4568
- Alles Martha (2008). *Desarrollo del Talento Humano basado en competencias*, Argentina, 2ª ed., ediciones Granica.
- Arce Gurza, F (1982). *Historia de las profesiones en México*, México, El Colegio de México.
- Ballesteros Leiner, Arturo (2005). “La noción beruf en la sociología de Max Weber y su inserción en la sociología de las profesiones”, *Sociológica*, año 20, núm. 59, septiembre-diciembre, pp. 61-91, www.revistasociologica.com.mx/pdf/5905.pdf retrieved september, 2010.
- Barrón Tirado, María Concepción y Gómez Villanueva, José (2004). “Las nuevas profesiones en las instituciones de educación superior”, *Las profesiones en México*, Valle Flores Ángeles (coord.), 1ª ed. 2004, México CESU UNAM.
- Barrón Tirado, Ma. Concepción (2005). “Formación de profesionales y política educativa en la década de los noventa”, *Perfiles Educativos*, Vol. 27 núm. 108, México.
- Berumen Gomar Gómez (2005). “Trabajo y profesión”. *Ética del ejercicio profesional*. www.itescam.edu.mx/principal/sylabus/fpdb/.../r28556.doc, Retrieved june, 2009.
- Brian Keeley (2007). *Capital Humano, Cómo influye en su vida lo que usted sabe*. Percepciones de la OCDE, México Ediciones Castillo/ OCDE.
- Burrage, Michael and Torstendahl, Rolf. (eds.) (1990). *Professions in Theory and History: Rethinking the Study of the Professions*. London, Sage.
- Castells, Manuel (2005). “Prologo de Sociedad del conocimiento y turismo”, *Sociedad del Conocimiento*. Cómo cambia el mundo ante nuestros ojos. Barcelona, Editorial UOC; pp.151-219.

- Cleaves, Peter (1985). *Las profesiones y el Estado; el caso de México*. México, El Colegio de México.
- De la Garza, Enrique (2008). "Hacia un concepto ampliado de trabajo", en: *El mundo de trabajo en América Latina*, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, México, www.docencia.izt.uam.mx.
- De la Garza, Enrique; Garabito, Gustavo; Hernández, Juan J.; Rodríguez, José y Olivo; Miguel (2008). "Hacia un concepto ampliado de trabajo, de control, de regulación y de construcción social de la ocupación: Los otros trabajos". *Memoria del Segundo Congreso Latinoamericano de Antropología*, Congreso ALA 2008, Universidad de Costa Rica. Retrieved october, 2011 www.congreso-ala2008.ucr.ac.cr.
- Díaz Barriga, Ángel (2005). "Las profesiones ante los nuevos retos. Globalización, Flexibilidad y competencias", *La profesión universitaria en el contexto de la modernización*. Teresa Pacheco y Ángel Díaz compiladores. Ediciones Pomares pp. 73-97, México.
- Didou Sylvie (1992). *Los profesionistas egresados de la UAEM y su zona de primer empleo*, Toluca, Edo. de México, UAEM.
- Dingwall R. y Lewis P. (1985). *The sociology of the professions: Lawyers, doctors and other*. London, Mac Millan Press.
- Drucker, Peter (1987). *Las empresas públicas bajo la óptica de Drucker*, pp. 5-7 Panorama de Management y Gestión, núm. 49, año 5, Buenos Aires; Organización y Desarrollo Empresarial, october, UNIRED.
- Enebral, José y Valderrama, Beatriz (2009), *La intuición en la empresa. Manual para directivos y profesionales del conocimiento*. Editorial Gestión 2000
- Estévez Lugo, Felipe (1991). "Transición económica y formación de profesionistas en México", *La formación de profesionistas ante los retos del siglo XXI*. México, Universidad de Guadalajara, pp.61-73.
- Estrada Correa, Gloria (2005). "El mundo objetivado, fundamento de la profesión médica", en *La profesión universitaria en el contexto de la modernización*. Teresa Pacheco y Ángel Díaz compiladores. Ediciones Pomares, México, 47-72.
- Fernández Enguita, Mariano (1995). "La profesión docente y la comunidad escolar": *Crónica de un desencuentro*. 2° ed. Morata, España.
- Fernández Pérez, Jorge (2001). "Elementos que consolidan al concepto profesión. Notas para su reflexión", *Revista de Investigación educativa*, Vol. 3, núm. 1, México.
- Freidson, Eliot (2001). "La teoría de las profesiones. Estado del arte", *Perfiles educativos*, Vol. 23 -093, México, UNAM pp. 28-43.
- Flores Trejo, Juan Carlos; Valderrama Martínez (2002). *Trabajo y formación profesional en turismo reto compartido entre la universidad y la empresa*, Escuela de Turismo de la Universidad Autónoma de Baja California. B.C. México.
- Gómez Campos, Víctor Manuel y Pacheco Méndez, Teresa (1983). "Educación Superior, mercado de trabajo y práctica profesional", *Pensamiento Universitario*, 60 México UNAM/CESU pp.4-51.
- Gómez Campos, Víctor Manuel y Tenti Fanfani E. (1989). *Universidad y profesiones*. Crisis Alternativas, Miño y Dávila editores, Buenos Aires Argentina.
- Gomís López, Joan Miguel; González Reverte, Francesc; Pérez Martel, Esther y Rubio Royo, Francisco (2005). "Sociedad del conocimiento y turismo", en: *Sociedad del Conocimiento. Cómo cambia el mundo ante nuestros ojos*. Barcelona, Editorial uoc; pp.151-219.
- Goode, William J. (1957). Community Within a Community: The Professions. *American Sociological Review* Vol. 22, núm. 2 (Apr., 1957), pp. 194-200, American Sociological Association Stable <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2088857>, retrieved june, 2010.

- Guevara Ramos, Rosana; Molina, Sergio, Tresserras, Jordi (2005). "Hacia un estado de la cuestión de investigación turística", *Estudios Multidisciplinarios en Turismo*, www.sectur.gob.mx/work/sites/1/1.pdf, retrieved may, 2009.
- Hirsch Adler, Ana (2006). "Construcción de un estado de conocimiento sobre valores profesionales en México", *Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa*. Vol. 8, núm. 2, México.
- Larson Magali, Sarfatti (1977). *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 312 pp., retrieved july, 2009, <http://www.questia.com/library/book/the-rise-of-professionalism-a-sociological-analysis-by-magali-sarfatti-larson.jsp>
- Latafí, Pablo (1982). "Profesiones y sociedad. Un marco teórico para su estudio", en *Revista Latinoamericana de estudios educativos*, México, centro de Estudios Educativos, México, Vol. XII, núm. 4.
- Medina Cuevas, J. Lourdes (1996). *El mercado de trabajo y la práctica profesional del egresado de la licenciatura en turismo de la UAEM*. Cuadernos de investigación. UAEM. Toluca, México.
- Mungaray Lagarda, Alejandro (2007). "La educación superior y el mercado de trabajo profesional", *Revista Electrónica de investigación Educativa*, México.
- Muñoz Izquierdo, Carlos (2009). *¿Cómo puede la educación contribuir a la movilidad social? Resultados de cuatro décadas de investigación sobre la calidad y los efectos socioeconómicos de la educación (1968-2008)*, Universidad Iberoamericana, México.
- OMT (2001). *Cuenta Satélite de Turismo: México*, Organización Mundial de Turismo, retrieved september, 2009, archivos.diputados.gob.mx/Centros_Estudio/Cesop/.../d_turismo.htm
- Ornelas, Carlos (2002). "La autonomía: Entre el Estado, el Mercado y el Conocimiento" Conferencia de apertura de la mesa de trabajo 2: *Políticas para la Educación Superior*, en el Tercer Congreso Nacional y Segundo Internacional Retos y Expectativas de la Universidad UAMEX. Ixtapan de la Sal, december, 2002. Estado de México, México.
- Pacheco Méndez, Teresa y Díaz Barriga, Ángel (comp.) (2005). *"La profesión universitaria en el contexto de la modernización"*. Barcelona, Ediciones Pomares.
- Peñaloza Suárez, Laura (2001). *Formación Profesional y Campo Ocupacional del Licenciado en turismo de la UAEM* (Tesis de grado), Toluca México.
- Ramírez Rosales, V. (2009). *"La construcción de la identidad profesional de las normalistas tlaxcaltecas"*, www.eumed.net/tesis/2009/vrr/
- Robles Peiro, Héctor; Molina Ortiz, Alfredo; Fuentes Bracamontes, Rolando (2005). *La economía basada en el conocimiento. Las condiciones de los Estados Mexicanos*, Guadalajara México. 2ª edición, Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Guadalajara.
- Rodríguez, Joseph A. y Guillén, Mauro F. (1992). "Organizaciones y profesiones en la sociedad contemporánea". REIS núm. 59, pp. 9 18.
- Rodríguez Roche, Sulema (2010). "Las competencias profesionales en las ciencias de la información". ACIMED La Habana Cuba, Vol. 20, núm. 1 Mayo. www.acimed@infomed.sld.cu, retrieved june, de 2010.
- Ruiz Larraguivel, Estela (2004). "Desafíos y amenazas de los cambios tecno-organizacionales a la profesión y formación profesional: El caso de la ingeniería", en *Las profesiones en México frente al mercado de trabajo*, pp. 95-127, México CESU/UNAM
- Schultz, Theodore W. (1979). *Capital humano*, España, Ed. Aguilar.
- Schultz, Theodore W. (1992). *Restablecimiento del equilibrio económico*. España, Ed. Gedisa.
- Sladogna, Mónica G. (1999). *El diseño de familias profesionales en turismo*. Ministerio de Cultura y Educación. Instituto Nacional de Educación Tecnológica.

- Valle Flores, Ma. Ángeles (2009). *Nuevas instancias de regulación del mercado de trabajo profesional en México*. CESU/UNAM. Instituto de Investigación sobre la Universidad y la Educación. 132.298.192 IRESIE, retrieved june, 2009.
- Vargas Leyva, Ruth (1998). *Reestructuración Industrial, educación tecnológica y formación de ingenieros*. ANUIES, México.
- Vogliotti, Ana y Macchiarola, Viviana (2003). “Teorías implícitas, innovación educativa y formación profesional de docentes”, en *Procesos de formación*. Universidad Nacional de San Luis. Congreso Latinoamericano de Educación Superior.
- Wilensky, Harold (1964). *The Professionalization of Everyone?* American Journal of Sociology Vol. 70, núm. 2 (Sep., 1964), pp. 137-158. The University of Chicago Press, Stable. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2775206>. Retrieved el 09 august, 2009.
- Zatarain Castellanos, Manuel (comp.) (1991). *La formación de profesionistas ante los retos del siglo XXI*, México, Universidad de Guadalajara.