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Tourism in Kosovo at the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract---Today tourism is under the influence of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Which is one of the most important economic activities in the country. Today, tourism has experienced a decline in the economic development of the country. Today, its development is experiencing difficulties in its functioning with a large decline in tourist demand and a greater increase in job losses for all those working in this sector in Kosovo. From this many businesses feel Insecure about the development of activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The spread of the pandemic has permeated every corner of life, so tourism and hospitality have been damaged by this global economic crisis that has engulfed Kosovo. Based on the situation created, a large number of tourism enterprises have not to function properly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism and hospitality are among the most important activities for the economic development of Kosovo. the development of tourism activities represents a decrease in income if compared to the previous period before the pandemic. The decrease in tourists has led to the deterioration of the situation and economic development of Kosovo. According to the current situation, tourism businesses require support to overcome the crisis in which they are.

Keywords---economic crisis, Kosovo, pandemic COVID-19, tourism, visits.

Introduction

The beginning of 2020 has introduced the COVID-19 Pandemic which has affected the disorder in many countries of the world. It has also spread to Kosovo and European countries. Dealing with a major crisis Different countries develop different measures to cope with the crisis ([Seraphin et al., 2019](#)). in terms of time, many difficulties are being posed by the pandemic, so the data is extracted from (WHO | World Health Organization 2021). In the first days of January 2021 were present about five million infected people, and later there was a decrease in cases in two and a half to half of February 2021. America and Europe are represented by about 79% of the number of those who die In the African Continent alone, there is a decline of less than 3.9%. In preparing for the pandemic, countries must prepare for the vaccine that will eradicate this pandemic; and Worrying Variants of the World Health Organization WHO SARS-CoV-2 2021). From March to May, the place was almost completely blocked. While enterprises faced major difficulties in the operation and delivery of services ([Pektas & Hassan, 2020](#)). Kosovo also went with the number of infections along with the countries of Europe and the World. Also, the economy was closing every day and there were difficulties in the tourism and hospitality sector. Other viruses (IATA, 2020) have also presented a serious condition at any time with negative political effects ([Kirant Yozcu & Cetin 2019](#); [GAMAGE et al., 2020](#); [Lin et al., 2016](#); UNWTO, 2020). The number of job seekers in the country increased much more than in the past (ILO, 2020). However, the direct viral origin and ancestors of SARS-CoV-2 remain elusive ([Li et al., 2021](#)). Social behavior data tells us that we have a lot to do in order to build and support trust in communities around the world. People have concerns about the safety of vaccines and other biomedical devices made with unprecedented speed and new technologies. These concerns should be acknowledged and addressed by providing individuals and communities with relevant, timely, and reliable health information from reliable sources and by providing the space and follow-up needed to work with these concerns with trusted health or community leaders. Past epidemics have shown us how quickly and widely individual or community fears can spread if treated properly and comprehensively ([WHO, 2021](#)). But this was not the only key to the impact of COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2). Various countries were blocked by the pandemic including the economy (IMF-IMF, 2020; [Shretta 2020](#); [Naradda Gamage et al., 2017](#)). They appear in many different human activities and in the development of activities (WTTC, 2017; [Horowit, 2020](#); [Elliot, 2020](#)). Even the most developed countries have difficulty with this repentance ([Rosemberg, 2020](#)). Tourism and its development depend on the impact of the pandemic, which as in any other country in Kosovo has expressed great impact. By reducing the number of tourists and the loss of jobs for employees in this important activity for the development of society.

Theoretical framework

The development of the economy at the end of the crisis is one of the issues most important in the world and in our country (UNWTO, 2020). Economic development and post-crisis economic growth is the most important part of the world according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2020). Each country aims to orient the economy towards post-pandemic development. Each country

takes into account the loss in the economy (Steiner, 2006). The world economy is expected to be in a difficult situation in 2021, and this will be related to the time of the pandemic. Such negative developments lead to a decrease in economic income. In this way, the cost of living is increasing in various countries including Kosovo. The number of cases is growing worldwide (World Bank Documents, 2021). This represents an economic crisis of 2 to 3% (World Bank Document, 2021). If the number of cases decreases, economic development will start to return. Global and national measures to curb the virus, from social distancing to business closure, create supply disruptions and reduce household incomes and consumption - which is a double blow to supply and demand. Overall (UNWTO, 2020), the number of foreign tourists will decrease to 29%, which is a higher decrease than the global decrease of 3.99% which was introduced in 2009. Most tourism in Kosovo includes the diaspora almost 79%. Restrictive measures have been in force since 2020, which is why Kosovo has lost the largest number of tourists. In 2020 there will be no growth. In the future, economic developments are expected to return to normal, depending on the duration of repentance. In 2021, growth is expected to return to pre-COVID-19 levels in Kosovo, rising to 5.2%. Investors and consumers are expected to return in the future. Increased economic improvement will also affect the freezing of tourism and the improvement of living conditions (Uğur & Akbıyık, 2020; Qiu et al., 2020; Sigala, 2020). The crisis may depend on the duration of the pandemic. Taking measures and activities can reduce the crisis. If the crisis lasts, the situation becomes more volatile (World Bank Document, 2021). The countries of the Balkan Peninsula have entered a crisis from the pandemic (World Bank Document, 2021). Greater recovery from shocks also depends on the drive to increase productivity. Prior to the explosion of COVID-19, the forecasts for Kosovo's economy for 2020 were promising. According to forecasts by the World Bank, the economic downturn will be greater due to the pandemic. The current situation and uncertainty about how long the virus will last have led the country to take a series of measures. Restrictive measures and cessation of activities in the two months had consequences on Kosovo's economic development. The measures taken can improve the situation with pandemics (Kuçi et al., 2021).

Methodology

The working methods are based on primary data collected in the field and on secondary data, based on data from state institutions (WTCC, 2017; UNWTO, 2020). These obtained notes are processed to achieve the desired results. The use of such methodology leads us to the results and predictions for the future, for the state of Tourism and Hospitality in Kosovo at the time of the COVID-19 Pandemic (Matsuura & Saito, 2022; Duro et al., 2021; Nyandra et al., 2018). But the paper are presented the forecasts for the future of tourism development in Kosovo. The collected data are compared for previous years and forecasts are given for the future. Data were obtained from designated sources (research), obtained in the field as primary data and from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, WHO, World Bank, World Tourism Organization, World Trade Organization, OECD, Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, American Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Commerce-Department of Tourism, Central Bank of Kosovo, Kosovo Institute of Health. The collected data are compared by analyzing the past, present situation and including comparisons for the future.

The current data presents a summary of tourism activities in Kosovo and its parts as it is one of the most frequented areas. The methodology presented in this paper is related to the time of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kosovo and around the world (Fan et al., 2020).

Results and Discussion

The paper analyzes data on the development of tourism and tourism activities in Kosovo in 2019 and 2021 by addressing some specifics which are evaluated from the collected data. All of them are given tables and graphs with the help of which the state of development of tourism and its activities in Kosovo has been clarified (Vo et al., 2021; Ecker et al., 2020; Zopiatitis et al., 2021).

Table 1
Revenues realized in Kosovo in 2019 by percentage %

Tourism sectors	0	1-10.000	10.001-50.000	50.001-100.000	100.01-300.000	300.001+	They have not stated
Sector of travel agencies and tour operators	10.71	37.50	14.29	7.14	3.57	14.29	12.50
Accommodation sector (hotels, motels, inns)	2	4	18	28	12	28	8
Gastronomy sector (restaurants, cafes)	5.08	6.78	44.07	25.42	6.78	3.39	8.47
Tourist Guide Sector	-----	60	20	-----	20	-----	-----
Transport sector (air and road transport)	-----	24.24	30.30	12.12	21.21	3.03	9.09

According to field data, the situation in the period before the pandemic is presented, the revenues realized in 2019 are presented as the year before the pandemic, and in 2020 the period of the pandemic. The data show the changes that were made in 2020 compared to 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the table are presented the revenues which have realized the Tourism sector with its activities. During 2019, the sector that has realized the most revenues is the sector of tourist guides from 1-10,000 euros with 60%. Then the gastronomy sector (restaurants, cafes) from 10,001-50,000 with 44.07%. On average in 2019, 26.5% of revenues in the country were realized. This proves that 2019 has been a successful year in the development of Tourism and Hospitality until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Elitzur et al., 2021; Ozili & Arun, 2020; Sumadi, 2016).

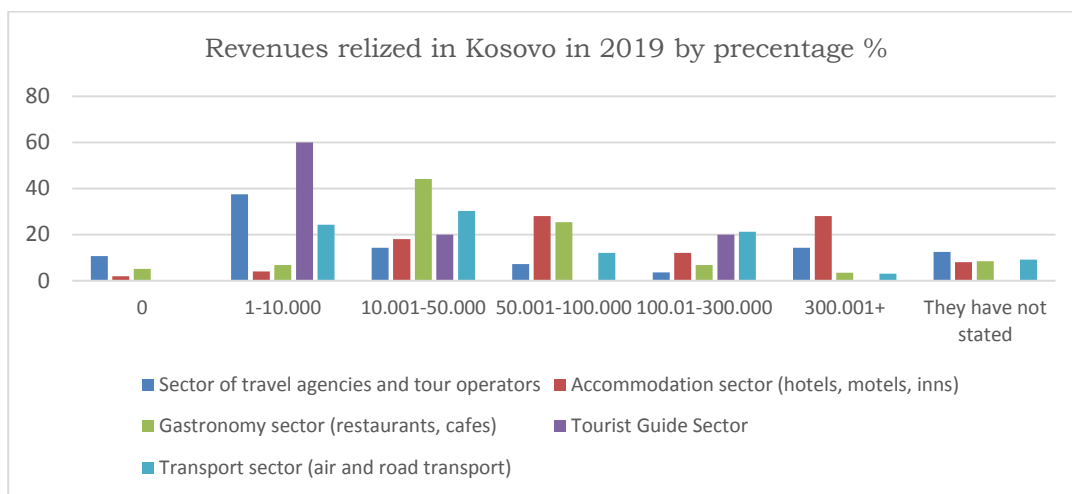


Figure 1. Revenues realized in Kosovo in 2019 by percentage %

Table 2
Revenues generated in 2021 by percentage %

Tourism sectors	0	1-10.000	10.001-50.000	50.001-100.000	100.01-300.000	300.001+	They have not stated
Sector of travel agencies and tour operators	14.29	39.29	12.50	3.57	10.71	12.50	7.14
Accommodation sector (hotels, motels, inns)	2	32	34	8	4	12	8
Gastronomy sector (restaurants, cafes)	5.08	33.90	42.37	10.17	1.69	1.69	5.08
Tourist Guide Sector	-----	80	20	-----	-----	-----	-----
Transport sector (air and road transport)	2.94	26.47	55.88	2.94	2.94	-----	8.82

The year 2021 has a significant decrease compared to previous years. Revenues are reduced in all sectors of tourism and hospitality. From the field data, it can be seen that the Tourist Guides sector has participated with 80% from 1 to 10,000 euros. Then follows air and road transport with 55.88% from 10,001 to 50,000 euros. Then rich from the Sector of Tourist Agencies with 12.5% from 300.000 Euro plus. If compared to the period of the previous year 2019, we have a significant decline in revenues in all sectors of tourism due to the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic. On average for all sectors were realized the most revenues 42.33% with from 1 to 10,000 Euros. While on average at least revenues were realized 4.86%. All data can be compared from the table above.

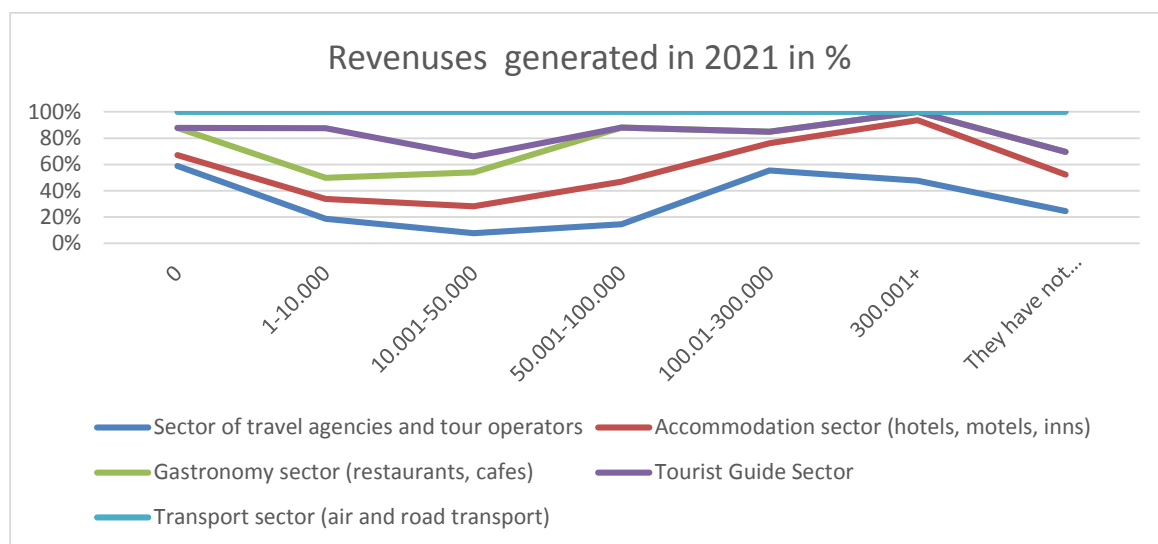


Figure 2. Revenues generated in 2021 by percentage %

Table 3
The impact of COVID-19 on understanding revenue reduction by 2021

Tourism sectors	There is no had decrease of revenues	Landing up no 30%	31-50% Discount	51-70% discount	71-80% landing	81-90% discount	More than 91% discount
Transport sector (Air and road transport)	-----	18.18%	27.27%	24.24%	21.21%	3.03%	6.06%
Gastronomy Sector (restaurants, cafes)	2%	10.07%	27.12%	42.37%	10.17%	6.78%	3.39%
Sector of Tourist Agencies and Touro Operators	-----	0%	14.29%	28.57%	23.21%	19.64%	14.29%
Accommodation sector (Hotels, motels, inns)	-----	6%	10%	18%	12%	28%	24%
Guide Sector	-----	0%	0%	20%	0%	00%	80%

For more detailed analysis are presented the data from the impact of COVID-19 on the reduction of revenues until 2021. From the tourism sectors, the largest decrease during this period was in the sector of Tourist Guides by 80% with more than 91 %. Following from the Gastronomy sector (restaurants, cafes) with 42.37% to 51 to 70% discount. While the transport sector (air and road transport) had a smaller decrease with 18.18%, a decrease of up to 30%. While the maximum average for all sectors of tourism and hospitality was 26.64% with a reduction of 51 to 70%. While the minimum average for all sectors was 6.85% with a reduction of up to 30%.

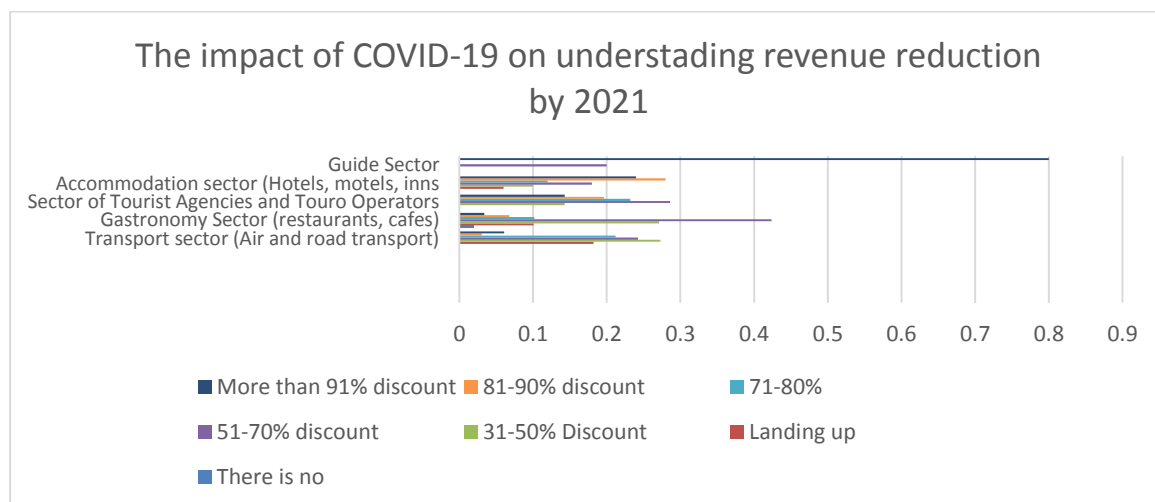


Figure 3. The impact of COVID-19 on understanding revenue reduction by 2021

Table 4
Staff who is at risk of being fired or has already left in 2021 as a percentage

Tourism sectors	None	1 to 20%	21 to 30%	31 to 40%	41 to 50%	51 to 60%	More than 61%
Sector of travel agencies and tour operators	3.57	32.14	7.14	1.79	19.64	16.07	19.64
Accommodation sector (hotels, motels, inns)	-----	30	10	10	10	6	34
Gastronomy sector (restaurants, cafes)	1.69	28.81	18.64	25.42	18.64	3.39	3.39
Tourist Guide Sector	-----	-----	-----	20	-----	-----	80
Transport sector (air and road transport)	3.03	30.30	12.12	6.06	9.09	15.15	24.24

The COVID-19 pandemic has had major consequences for the entire economy, including tourism and hospitality with all related activities. Data collected from the field are the best indicator of how much the pandemic has affected employment in the tourism and hospitality sector in Kosovo. The data show that the tourism sector of Gudia has the largest number of those who have been fired or will leave with 80% to over 60% of the total amount. Then follows the sector of travel agencies with 32.14% from 1 to 20%. Then follows the Gastronomy sector (restaurants and cafes) with 25.42% to 31-40%. The smallest number of those who will be fired or have left will be in the sector of travel agencies and tour operators with 16.07% in 51-60% of cases. The maximum average in all tourism sectors is 32.25. While the value of the minimum average is 10.15%. The data

show the tourism sector during the pandemic period has been severely damaged in all aspects.

Table 5
The main financial problems faced by tourism businesses during the pandemic

Tourism sectors	Payment of staff salaries and social security expenses	Payment of rent and utilities (Light, water)	Others
Sector of travel agencies and tour operators	40.59	28.71	30.69
Accommodation sector (hotels, motels, inns)	48.94	22.34	28.72
Gastronomy sector (restaurants, cafes)	43.12	34.86	22.02
Tourist Guide Sector	55.56	11.11	33.33
Transport sector (air and road transport)	40.63	25	34.38

The pandemic period has also evolved with the appearance of numerous problems, of which are the financial problems with which they have presented themselves to tourism businesses. The data from the table show the great financial difficulties that have been presented to tourism businesses. The payment of staff salaries and expenses for social security had the most financial problems in the tourist guide sector with 55.56%, followed by the accommodation sector (hotels, motels, inns) with 48.94%. All the sectors not shown in the table had financial problems which include the value of over 40% which indicates that the tourism and hotel businesses in the time of the pandemic were faced with many difficulties. Then there are other difficulties such as payment of rent and utilities (electricity, water), the biggest difficulties were the Gastronomy sector (restaurants, cafes) with 34.86%. Followed by the sector of travel agencies and tour operators with 28.71%, and so on. And the least for the payment of rent and utilities was the tourist sector with 11.11%. Also in other sectors with many losses is the Transport Sector (air and road transport) with 34.38%. Followed by the Tourist Guides Sector with 33.33%. This is evidenced by the major financial problems faced by tourism businesses during the pandemic ([Škare et al., 2021](#); [Nicola et al., 2020](#); [Plyth & Craham, 2020](#)).

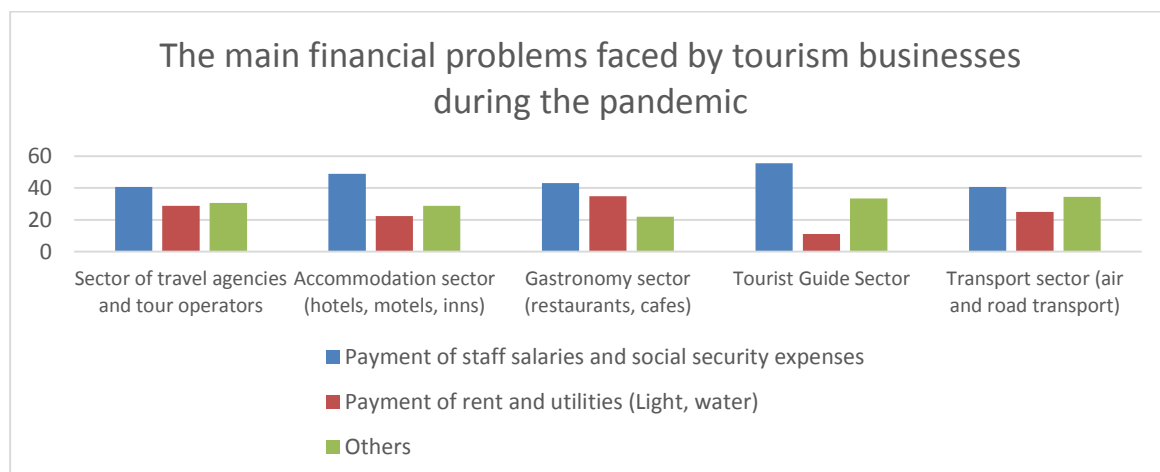


Figure 4. The main financial problems faced by tourism businesses during the pandemic

Table 6
Business needs support

Tourism sectors	Interest-free loans	Subsidizing workers' wages	Tax cuts or deferrals	Operational grants for businesses
Sector of travel agencies and tour operators	20.21	31.91	13.83	18.09
Accommodation sector (hotels, motels, inns)	16.33	36.37	16.33	21.43
Gastronomy sector (restaurants, cafes)	21.05	36.84	16.67	20.18
Tourist Guide Sector	11.11	33.33	11.11	33.33
Transport sector (air and road transport)	22.95	29.51	11.48	24.59

Thanks to all this crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need has arisen to support Tourism and Hotel businesses in order to overcome the Crisis as easily as possible. Some help is needed such as: Interest-free loans, Subsidizing workers' salaries, Tax cuts or deferrals, and Operational Business Grants. The data are presented for the five sectors of Tourism as: Sector of tourist agencies and tour operators, Sector of accommodation (hotels, motels, inns), Sector of gastronomy (restaurants, cafes), Sector of Tourist Guides and Sector of transport (air transport and road). All are specified and have come up with their results which are most in need of support. The transport sector (air and road transport) needs 22.95% for loans without interest. Followed by the Gastronomy Sector (restaurants, cafes) with 21.05%. While the sector which has the least need for support for interest-free loans is the tourist guide sector with 11.11%. While in the subsidy of workers' wages is most needed Sector of gastronomy (restaurants, cafes) with 36.84%. Then comes the Accommodation Sector (hotels, motels, inns) with 36.37% and so on. While the least needs support the transport sector (air

and road transport) with 29.51%. With the reduction or postponement of taxes, the most prominent is the Gastronomy Sector (restaurants, cafes) with 16.67%. Then comes the Accommodation Sector (hotels, motels, inns) with 16.33% and so on. While at least for the reduction or postponement of taxes there is a need for the tourist guide sector with 11.11%. Finally, we have the need of tourism and hotel businesses for operational Grants for businesses. In this case, the tourist guide sector leads with 33.33%. Following from the transport sector (air and road transport) with 24.59% and so on. While the sector of travel agencies and tour operators with 18.09% needs the least operational grants for businesses (Fedorchenko et al., 2021; Sunardi et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Based on the analysis made and the data collected and processed, the COVID-19 pandemic has really affected the development of tourism. From this, there is a stagnation in the tourism sector. The number of visitors and overnight stays has decreased significantly compared to previous periods. The need for assistance has also increased for all tourism sectors. Interventions by state institutions have become necessary, in order to alleviate the financial crisis as little as possible. In each region of Kosovo, we have a decrease in the number of visitors and overnight stays (Glyptou et al., 2014; Korinth & Ranasinghe, 2020; Kasni & Budiarta, 2021). Based on the analysis, the period from 2019 before the pandemic to the period of 2020 and 2021 have been compared, in which data on the tourism sectors and tourism businesses that are currently operating at this time are presented. Over time, we hope that the COVID-19 pandemic will pass and the tourism sectors will recover. Data presented in tabular and graphic form are the best indicator of the state of tourism in Kosovo. In the coming days we believe that the pandemic will end and the economy will recover, including tourism as one of the most important sectors. In this way the number of visitors from abroad has been reduced. The number of local visitors has also decreased. After overcoming the pandemic, with the help of assistance from local and international state institutions, the difficulties in overcoming the situation from the pandemic will be faced. In this way the normal situation will be restored and the tourism sector together with the whole economic development will take the right development direction (Appleby-Arnold et al., 2018; Calero & Turner, 2020).

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