

Recession Reflections in Dominican Republic: Socio Economic Insights from Managers and Entrepreneurs

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Abstract: This study examines the implications of economic recessions for workers, organizations, and policymakers in the Dominican Republic, with a focus on resilience, labor market dynamics, and business vulnerability. Drawing on literature review, cultural immersion observations by living in the country, and qualitative insights from the survey of 12 subject-matter experts with over 300 years of combined work experience, the research explores how external shocks such as global downturns, inflation, and disruptions affect the Dominican economy. Findings indicate that recessions disproportionately impact small and medium-sized enterprises, informal workers, and tourism-dependent industries, often resulting in job insecurity, reduced consumer demand, and constrained business operations.

The study highlights how individual experiences of economic hardship shape long-term attitudes toward equity, government intervention, and social welfare policies. It further emphasizes the importance of adopting a long-term, multilevel perspective that considers individual, organizational, and societal responses to economic stress. Key resilience strategies identified include workforce upskilling, digital transformation, business diversification, and proactive financial planning. Expert insights reveal that while recessions present significant challenges, they also create opportunities for innovation and structural reform. The findings underscore the need for coordinated efforts between public and private sectors to strengthen institutional capacity, support vulnerable populations, and promote inclusive growth. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how the Dominican Republic can better prepare for, navigate, and recover from economic downturns in an increasingly interconnected global economy.

Keywords: Recession, Dominican Republic, layoffs, hiring freeze, economic depression.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is essential for researchers, managers, and policymakers in the Dominican Republic to consistently assess early warning signs of economic downturns and closely monitor key macroeconomic indicators to anticipate potential recessions (Barbarino and Scotti, 2020). This proactive approach enables Dominican institutions and organizations to preserve stability, protect employment, and maintain competitiveness through forward-looking planning and evidence-based decision-making. Given that the Dominican Republic's economy is highly dependent on sectors such as tourism, remittances, free trade zones, and foreign direct investment, it is particularly vulnerable to external shocks stemming from currency fluctuations, oil and gas disruptions, pandemics, etc. (World Bank, 2024; International Monetary Fund, 2023). Factors such as rising global inflation, disruptions in international travel, fluctuations in commodity and energy prices, and tightening global financial conditions can generate significant ripple effects across local industries, small businesses, and household incomes. Therefore, understanding critical recession indicators, such as

slowing growth, rising unemployment, reduced tourism inflows, and declining consumer and business confidence, is vital for strengthening resilience in both the public and private sectors (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023; Wen, 2025).

By analyzing both national trends and international recession patterns, Dominican managers and policymakers can better align their strategies with shifting economic realities facing the future workforce (Mujtaba and Lawrence, 2024). Lessons drawn from previous global crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic and past financial downturns in the Caribbean and Latin America, show that organizations with strong contingency planning, diversified income sources, and adaptable workforce strategies are better positioned to withstand economic shocks (Kendrick *et al.*, 2023; Korman and Mujtaba, 2020; Sachdeva *et al.*, 2024; Sarwar *et al.*, 2021). In the Dominican context, diversification beyond tourism and strengthening domestic production can play a crucial role in mitigating vulnerability. The ability to anticipate cyclical downturn and respond effectively is not simply a strategic advantage; it is a fundamental requirement for long-term economic sustainability, national resilience, and inclusive growth that benefit both urban and rural populations.

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In the Dominican Republic, the anticipation of an economic slowdown can generate widespread concern among businesses, workers, and households, often amplifying uncertainty and weakening confidence. These concerns may lead to reduced consumer spending, postponed investments, slower business expansion, and, in more severe cases, layoffs, underemployment, or hiring freezes, particularly in tourism-dependent regions (Mujtaba & Senathip, 2020; Tang & Smith, 2022). Small and medium-sized enterprises, which form a significant portion of the Dominican economy, are especially vulnerable to such shifts (Mujtaba and Seyoum, 2025). These challenges underscore the importance of clear communication, adaptive leadership, and timely government interventions, including fiscal support, labor protections, and incentives for key industries, to sustain productivity and social stability during periods of economic stress.

To generate meaningful insights and practical recommendations, this study seeks to explore the following research question: *What does an economic depression or recession mean for workers, jobs, managers, and organizations in the Dominican Republic?* By examining the country's distinct economic structure, characterized by its reliance on external demand, a growing but uneven labor market, and exposure to global economic fluctuations, this analysis aims to deepen understanding of how Dominican organizations can better prepare for, navigate, and recover from economic downturns. The findings can contribute to a broader discussion on building a more resilient, diversified, and inclusive economy in an increasingly interconnected global landscape.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Any economic recession inevitably affects industries across the Dominican Republic, though the magnitude and nature of the impact vary significantly by sector. As LaPonsie (2025) observes, during economic downturns, most managers and firms typically tighten their belts, and that often means reducing their workforce, and non-revenue-generating roles are often the first to be terminated. This reality is especially relevant in the Dominican context, where many workers are employed in administrative, clerical, retail, and customer service roles tied to tourism, hospitality, and informal commerce. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form a substantial portion of the Dominican economy, are particularly vulnerable when cash flow declines and consumer demand

weaken (International Monetary Fund, 2023). Moreover, the country's reliance on tourism and foreign direct investment means that global recessions can quickly translate into reduced visitor arrivals, lower foreign income inflows, and subsequent job losses or business closures (Mujtaba, Sungkhawan, and U-tantada, 2025). However, not all businesses are affected equally. Some Dominican firms and entrepreneurs have demonstrated resilience by adapting their business models (i.e., cutting unnecessary costs, embracing digital platforms, diversifying into local markets, or responding to shifting consumer needs during crises) (Career Guide, 2025; Agarwal, 2022). This adaptability highlights the importance of innovation, agility, and strategic foresight in navigating the Dominican Republic's cyclical and externally influenced economic environment.

From a labor market perspective, recessions in the Dominican Republic tend to reshape employment patterns and intensify competition for limited job opportunities. Mujtaba and Parrino (2025) emphasize that "a recession often means fewer jobs available and more qualified candidates applying for them" (p. 61), a trend that has been evident during periods such as the global financial crisis and the recent pandemic. In the Dominican Republic, this dynamic is often compounded by a large informal labor sector, where job security is already limited and social protections may be weaker. As a result, workers face increased pressure to enhance their employability by investing in continuous education, developing digital and technical skills, and diversifying their income sources (Mujtaba & Vardarlier, 2025). The growing influence of digitalization and automation further reinforces the need for workforce adaptability and strategic governance (Demir *et al.*, 2025; Mujtaba, 2026). At the same time, employers play a crucial role in strengthening organizational resilience by investing in employee training, implementing flexible work arrangements where feasible, and engaging in proactive workforce planning (Gradwohl and Mujtaba, 2025). By fostering innovation, supporting skill development, and diversifying revenue streams, Dominican leaders can provide greater stability not only for their employees but also for the communities that depend on them. In this sense, recessions should be viewed not only as economic disruptions but also as opportunities to build long-term adaptability and competitiveness (Mujtaba & Vardarlier, 2025).

"Recession-proof jobs are often in demand as they are the most likely to provide long-term security during economic uncertainty" (Career Guide, 2025, para. 4). In

the Dominican Republic, such jobs are typically concentrated in essential sectors that sustain daily life and national stability. These include healthcare professionals, such as doctors, nurses, and mental health practitioners, as well as educators, public service workers, and utility providers. In addition, as countries continue to modernize, roles in information technology, cybersecurity, and data management are becoming increasingly important and relatively resilient (Javed and Mujtaba, 2026). According to experts (Career Guide, 2025), these occupations are less susceptible to automation, outsourcing, or postponement, allowing them to maintain steady demand even during economic downturns (Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025). Furthermore, "recession-proof" careers in the Dominican Republic are expanding to include roles aligned with national development priorities, such as renewable energy, infrastructure development, climate resilience, and digital transformation, areas that are critical for sustainable growth and economic diversification.

Research also highlights several professions that tend to remain stable during economic contractions (Adam, 2025). In the Dominican Republic, healthcare and information technology stand out as particularly resilient sectors, given the constant need for medical services and the increasing digitization of business operations and government services. Roles such as registered nurses, pharmacists, IT specialists, and cybersecurity professionals remain essential regardless of broader economic conditions (Mujtaba & Vardarlier, 2025). Additionally, public sector employment, including teachers, police officers, military personnel, and civil servants, generally offers greater stability due to government funding and the essential nature of these services. The energy and utilities sector, encompassing electricity distribution, water services, and telecommunications, also plays a vital role in maintaining economic and social continuity, ensuring ongoing demand for these occupations even during downturns. Financial professionals, such as accountants and auditors, are likewise indispensable, as individuals and businesses seek guidance in managing budgets, taxes, and financial restructuring during periods of economic stress and population anxiety (Financial Samurai, 2025; Mujtaba *et al.*, 2025; Tran *et al.*, 2020; Williams *et al.*, 2026).

Certain industries across the globe, including in the Dominican Republic, have historically demonstrated greater resilience during recessions because they provide essential goods and services (Mujtaba,

Sungkhawan, and U-tantada, 2025). These include healthcare, public utilities, grocery retail, agriculture, logistics, education, financial services, and basic consumer goods sectors (Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025). During economic downturns, Dominican consumers tend to reduce discretionary spendings such as luxury goods, entertainment, and travel, while continuing to prioritize essential purchases like food, healthcare, and transportation. As a result, supermarkets, local markets, and low-cost service providers often maintain relatively stable demand. In contrast, more cyclical industries such as tourism, hospitality, construction, real estate, and luxury retail are typically more vulnerable, as they depend heavily on external demand, investor confidence, and disposable income (Mujtaba & Vardarlier, 2025). The tourism sector is highly sensitive to global economic conditions, travel restrictions, and currency fluctuations, making it one of the most affected during international crises. Nevertheless, each recession presents both challenges and opportunities. Some Dominican businesses successfully pivot by leveraging e-commerce, expanding into domestic tourism, or innovating in response to changing consumer behavior, while others struggle to survive during an economic depression. These patterns underscore a critical lesson, that although certain sectors may offer more inherent stability, both workers and organizations in the Dominican Republic must proactively cultivate resilience through continuous learning, prudent financial management, and adaptive leadership to navigate the uncertainties of an increasingly interconnected global economy.

2.1. Dominican Republic Economy

Tourism is one of Dominican Republic's main economic growth engines, built around a mix of beach relaxation, history and culture, nature exploration, water-based activities, and adventure experiences. Consequently, most foreign visitors usually become familiar with activities like beach resorts in Punta Cana, the historic charm of Zona Colonial, or natural attractions such as Los Tres Ojos National Park through travel media, social platforms, and tourism marketing (see Figure 1). International tour operators, influencers, and review sites highlight visually appealing experiences of white-sand beaches, turquoise waters, and adventure excursions like the Waterfalls of Damajagua which are easy to package and promote globally. As a result, foreigners often perceive the Dominican Republic primarily through these curated, high-visibility experiences (World Bank, 2024).

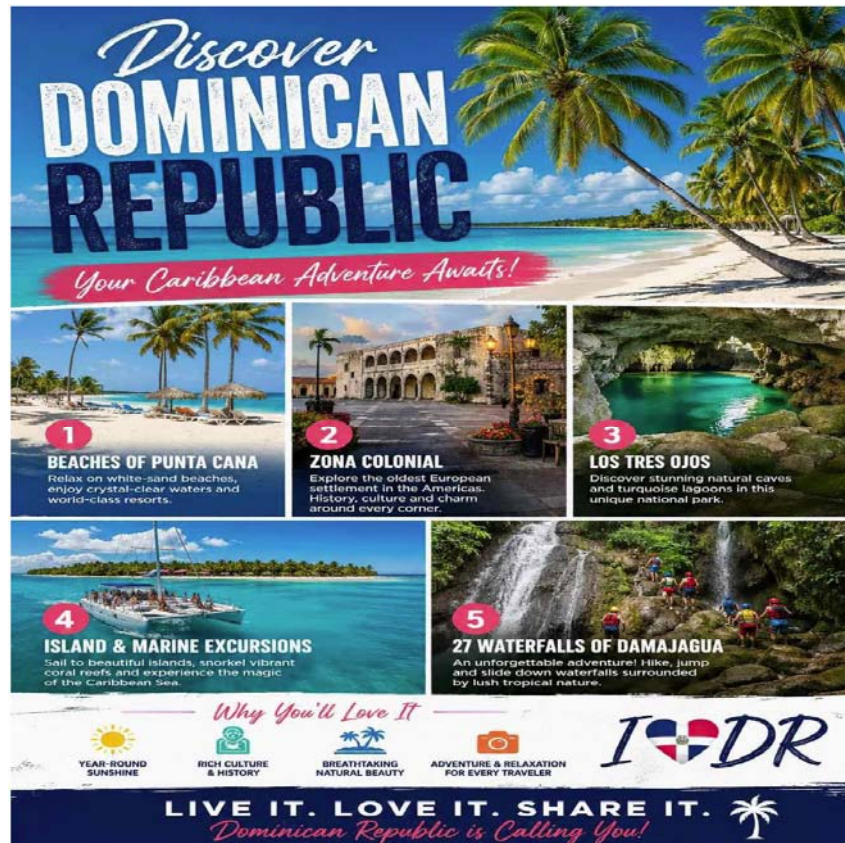


Figure 1: Dominican Republic as a Tourism Destination (AI-generated by the authors).

At the same time, local entrepreneurs operate within a broader and more complex economic reality. Small business owners, tour operators, and hospitality providers must balance attracting tourists with managing costs, supporting local employment, and preserving the very resources that draw visitors in the first place. Their decisions are shaped not just by what tourists want, but by supply chains, infrastructure, seasonality, and competition. For them, popular activities are not just attractions, they are economic engines that require constant reinvestment, training, and adaptation to changing travel trends (International Labour Organization, 2021).

Government policymakers, meanwhile, take an even wider view by designing strategies that ensure tourism contributes to long-term national development in alignment with other human growth priorities such as education, innovation, etc. This includes investing in infrastructure, regulating environmental protection, and promoting sustainable tourism practices so that local resources and destinations are not overused or degraded. They also aim to diversify the economy beyond tourism while strengthening it as a key sector, ensuring that growth benefits local communities and remains resilient over time. In this way, while tourists

see a curated snapshot of experiences, policymakers and entrepreneurs are focused on maintaining a sustainable system that supports both the industry and the country's future.

The Dominican Republic, alongside several other nations in the Caribbean region, has experienced notable economic growth over the past several decades while maintaining a complex cultural identity rooted in historical hybridity. This literature examines the intersection between cultural values and economic development, focusing on how structural economic conditions coexist with social inequality and how cultural frameworks shape societal responses to economic challenges.

2.2. Cultural Context and Social Structure

Scholarly literature consistently emphasizes that Dominican culture is the result of a historical blending of Spanish colonial influence, African heritage, and indigenous Taíno traditions (Central Intelligence Agency, 2024). This cultural synthesis is evident in language, religious practices, and everyday social interactions. Spanish is the official language, and Roman Catholicism has historically been the dominant

religion, though Protestant denominations have expanded in recent decades.

From a cultural dimensions perspective, as seen from the cultural dimensions in Figure 2, the Dominican Republic is characterized as a collectivist society, where interpersonal relationships, family structures, and community networks play a central role in social organization (Hofstede Insights, 2024). In such societies, individuals tend to prioritize group cohesion over individual achievement, and social support systems often function as primary mechanisms for coping with economic hardship. Communication patterns are typically high-context, expressive, and relational, with significant reliance on nonverbal cues and emotional expression.

2.3. Economic and Structural Characteristics

The Dominican Republic is considered one of the fastest-growing economies in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the World Bank (2024), the country has maintained steady economic expansion driven by sectors such as tourism, manufacturing in free trade zones, remittances, agriculture, and mining. Tourism serves as a critical pillar of the national economy, generating employment and foreign exchange earnings.

Remittances from Dominicans living abroad, especially in the United States, constitute a significant portion of national income and provide financial stability for many households. However, despite sustained economic growth, income inequality remains a persistent issue. The International Monetary Fund

(2023) notes that a large segment of the population participates in the informal economy, which limits access to social protections and stable income.

Research indicates that economic growth in the Dominican Republic has not been evenly distributed, resulting in disparities across income groups and geographic regions. According to the World Bank (2024), structural inequality continues to affect access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Additionally, the economy remains vulnerable to external shocks, including global economic fluctuations, natural disasters, and shifts in tourism demand. The IMF (2023) further highlights that inflationary pressures and rising costs of living can disproportionately impact lower-income populations. These vulnerabilities contribute to a disconnect between macroeconomic performance and individual economic experiences, shaping public perceptions of economic stability.

2.4. Cultural Influence on Economic Perception

Existing literature suggests that economic perception is not solely determined by objective indicators such as domestic growth (i.e. GDP) or inflation rates but is also influenced by subjective and culturally mediated experiences. In collectivist societies like the Dominican Republic, individuals often interpret economic challenges through the lens of family and community resilience (Hofstede Insights, 2024). Social networks frequently act as informal safety nets, mitigating the immediate impact of economic hardship; this cultural orientation can shape attitudes toward economic conditions, including perceptions of

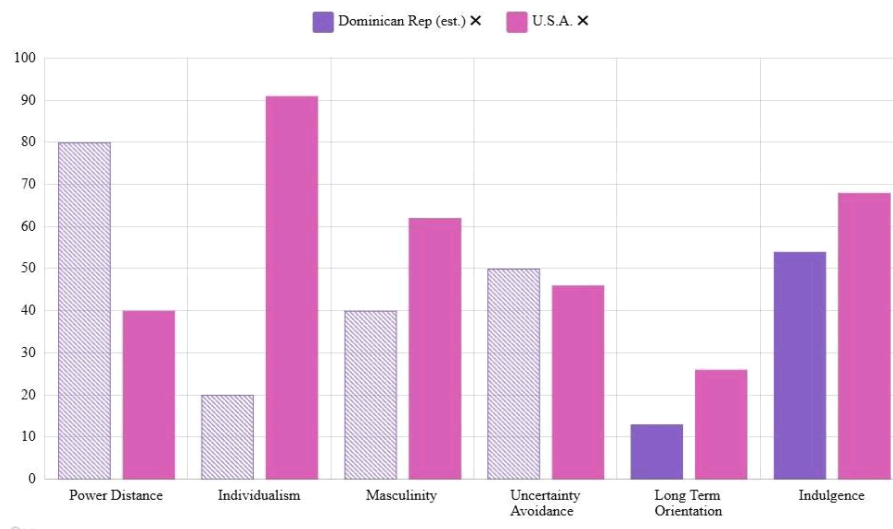


Figure 2: Hofstede Cultural Dimensions of Dominican Republic vs. USA.

recession (Mujtaba *et al.*, 2026). While economic data may indicate growth, individuals may still perceive instability if their daily experiences involve financial strain, employment insecurity, or reduced purchasing power.

The literature on the Dominican Republic reveals a complex relationship between economic growth, structural inequality, and cultural dynamics. While the country has achieved significant macroeconomic progress, persistent disparities and external vulnerabilities continue to shape lived experiences. Cultural values, particularly collectivism and strong social networks, play a critical role in influencing how individuals perceive and respond to economic conditions. Understanding this interplay is essential for interpreting public attitudes toward economic issues and for developing policies that address both structural and social dimensions of economic life.

Studying recession realities alongside the cultural studies of the Dominican Republic reveals how economic downturns are shaped not only by financial conditions but also by social values, traditions, and community relationships. In the Dominican context, factors such as strong family networks, community solidarity, informal economic activity, migration, and remittances can influence how individuals and households respond when employment and income decline. Cultural practices often provide social and economic support, allowing people to share resources, rely on extended family, or develop alternative sources of income when formal economic opportunities become limited. Therefore, understanding the cultural context helps explain why the effects of a recession may differ from what purely economic indicators suggest.

This connection is particularly important for understanding economic resilience and responses to recession in the Dominican Republic. Cultural resilience can complement government policies and formal economic institutions by encouraging households and communities to adapt, diversify their income, and support vulnerable members during periods of economic hardship. At the same time, reliance on informal networks may reveal structural inequalities and limitations in access to stable employment and social protection. Studying both recession realities and Dominican culture therefore provides a more complete understanding of economic resilience, as it shows that recovery depends not only on macroeconomic policies but also on the social relationships, cultural practices, and community

strategies that help people withstand and adapt to economic crises.

3. METHODOLOGY

To conduct a literature review for this study in the context of the Dominican Republic, a systematic approach was adopted. The process began with defining the central research question to guide the identification of relevant academic, institutional, and professional publications related to economic recessions, labor market dynamics, and organizational resilience within the Dominican economy. Scholarly databases such as ResearchGate and Google Scholar were utilized alongside reports from international organizations (e.g., the World Bank, IMF, etc.) and national institutions, including the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic and government agencies. These sources provided valuable insights into macroeconomic trends, inflationary pressures, tourism dependency, remittance flows, and labor market responses to economic shocks. Selected studies were carefully analyzed to extract key findings, compare perspectives, and identify patterns across critical sectors such as tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, and services. The literature was then synthesized to highlight dominant themes, theoretical frameworks, and existing knowledge gaps, particularly regarding how Dominican managers, policymakers, and workers respond to external economic volatility and domestic structural challenges (Senathip *et al.*, 2017).

In addition to reviewing secondary data, expert insights were incorporated through semi-structured interviews to provide deeper, context-specific understanding. These interviews facilitated open-ended and exploratory discussions with Dominican professionals, business leaders, policymakers, and organizational managers who possess firsthand experience navigating financial uncertainty and economic fluctuations. Participants were purposefully selected based on their professional relevance to the Dominican Republic's economic landscape and their expertise in areas such as healthcare, academia, technology, management, public policy, human resource development, entrepreneurship, and small business operations. A snowball sampling technique was employed, whereby initial participants recommended additional qualified experts, ensuring a broader and more diverse range of perspectives across industries and regions, including both urban and rural contexts.

The qualitative data gathered from these interviews were triangulated with findings from the literature review to enhance the reliability, depth, and validity of the study's conclusions. This process ensured that theoretical and empirical insights from academic research were either supported or contrasted by real-world experiences from Dominican economic and business environments. While this study was taking place during August 2025 to April 2026, the second author was on a four-month teaching and research assignment in the Dominican Republic as a Fulbright Scholar, which afforded invaluable and rich cultural immersion experience that has made this paper stronger. The integration of these three knowledge sources (scholarly literature, practitioner expertise through surveys, and personal cultural immersion) enabled a more comprehensive understanding of how economic downturns affect organizations, workers, and managerial decision-making in the local culture. The combined analysis revealed recurring challenges such as maintaining employee morale in uncertain conditions, managing operational and supply chain costs amid inflation, coping with fluctuations in tourism demand, and sustaining innovation despite limited financial resources (Fernandes *et al.*, 2025). At the same time, it highlighted best practices, including business diversification, digital adoption, workforce upskilling, and strategic financial planning, which contribute to resilience and adaptability.

Direct insights were obtained from Dominican entrepreneurs, executives, and organizational leaders in relation to the research question: "*What does an economic downturn or recession mean for workers, jobs, managers, and organizations in the Dominican Republic?*" A structured set of open-ended interview questions (see Appendix) was developed to encourage participants to reflect on their lived experiences, strategic decision-making, and organizational responses during periods of economic strain. These narratives provided valuable context to complement the theoretical and empirical findings, helping to construct a holistic and grounded understanding of the Dominican business environment under economic pressure and how people respond to the probability of an oncoming recession (KN & Thomas, 2024). This mixed-methods approach allowed for a more structured analysis of the strategies organizations adopted to ensure sustainability, workforce stability, and long-term resilience in an increasingly volatile global economy.

4. FINDINGS

Recession experiences and strategies, combined with ancient wisdom, can profoundly shape how people in a nation perceive wealth distribution, fairness, and social equity (Frick, 2019; Gudi *et al.*, 2025). A Columbia Business School study found that living through a recession in young adulthood leads to long-term support for wealth redistribution, though this tendency often favors one's own group over society (Meier *et al.*, 2022). This finding is highly relevant in the Dominican context, where socioeconomic inequality, regional disparities, and a significant informal labor market already influence perceptions of fairness. Personal exposure to economic hardships such as job loss in tourism, reduced remittances, or rising living costs can leave lasting impressions on attitudes toward fiscal policy, public assistance, and government responsibility (Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025; Mujtaba & Vardarlier, 2025; Senathip *et al.*, 2017). In the Dominican Republic, where memories of global shocks such as the 2008 financial crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic remain salient, these experiences continue to shape public discourse around taxation, subsidies, wage policies, and inclusive economic growth. As a result, recessions extend beyond immediate financial consequences, leaving enduring social, cultural, and psychological effects that influence national priorities and policy debates.

Analyzing recessions requires adopting a long-term and structural perspective rather than focusing solely on short-term economic fluctuations. Research indicates that the full impact of downturns on employment, public health, inequality, and social cohesion can only be understood by examining extended timelines and cumulative effects (Benach *et al.*, 2022; Mujtaba & Vardarlier, 2025). This is particularly important in the Dominican Republic, where economic shocks can disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including informal workers, rural communities, and those dependent on remittances or seasonal employment. For Dominican organizations and workers, this underscores the importance of prioritizing resilience and sustainability strategies such as continuous skills development, digital transformation, financial planning, and economic diversification over purely reactive, short-term responses (Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025). Strengthening institutional capacity and social safety nets also becomes critical in mitigating long-term adverse outcomes.

To better understand these dynamics, this study employed a multilevel analytical approach that integrates individual, organizational, and societal factors influencing responses to recessionary pressures in the Dominican Republic. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a diverse group of local participants in Dominican Republic, many of whom possessed between 10 and 30 years of professional experience. These individuals have navigated multiple economic disruptions, including global financial crises, regional economic fluctuations, and the recent pandemic-related downturn, thereby providing valuable insights into resilience, leadership, and adaptive strategies within the Dominican economic landscape. Their experiences span key sectors such as tourism, finance, manufacturing, public administration, and small business development, offering a comprehensive view of the country's economic fabric.

Table 1 presents a demographic summary of these Dominican participants, whose perspectives serve as the foundation for identifying broader patterns regarding how a potential recession may affect workers, employment structures, and organizational practices. Their collective insights highlight both shared challenges and sector-specific vulnerabilities, while also revealing innovative responses and coping mechanisms. Analyzing their experiences provide a critical basis for understanding how Dominican society can better anticipate, manage, and recover from future economic challenges through informed, inclusive, and forward-looking decision-making that promotes both economic stability and social equity.

Of the 12 respondents (7 males and 5 females), all of them had experienced a recession, most likely during the recent pandemic and the 2008 financial downturn. In terms of formal education, all respondents had earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree, with 9 reported having a master's degree or higher. Collectively, these Dominican Republic respondents bring over 300 years of professional work experience, representing economic concerns of both the private and public sector citizens. Regarding the questions of whether the Dominican Republic and its citizen are adequately prepared for a recession, a majority claims that they are not prepared. As such, like most experts across the globe, the average entrepreneur and policymaker in Dominican Republic is worried about a probable recession (Harring, 2025).

4.1. Recession Concerns in Dominican Republic

Based on the responses of D.R. citizens, the following are the main concerns, verbatim, from the impact of a recession on jobs in local communities and/or the global economy:

1. Low wages in some jobs, while others that are less important for the nation are better paid.
2. The limited preparation of personnel.
3. The respondent expresses deep concern that the dominant business class lacks a genuine vision of sustainable development and long-term stability. Employment practices are often influenced by favoritism rather than merit, leading to exclusion of both young and older

Table 1: Interviewee Demographics

No.	Gend.	Edu	Industry	Position	Years of Exp	Experienced recession?	D.R. prepared?	Citizens prepared?
1.	1 = M	2	Healthcare	Physician	38	1	1	1
2.	2 = F	2	Commerce	Manager–Owner	34	1	1	1
3.	1	2	R&D, Health, Bus. & Consult.	Consultant	30+	1	1	4
4.	1	2	Mining project development	Non-conv. mining explor.	42	1	2	2
5.	1	2	Financial Services (Bank)	Technology	30	1	2	2
6.	2	2	Healthcare	Physician	10+	1	4	3
7.	1	1	Engineer	Administration	25	1	2	3
8.	2	2	Education	Manager	10	1	2	2
9.	1	1	Education	Technician	30	1	2	3
10.	2	1	Government	Event organizer	21	1	2	2
11.	1	2	Construction	Field work	20	1	2	2
12.	2	2	Small business	Self-Employed	10+	1	2	2

workers. Workers are frequently treated as expendable resources rather than human beings deserving dignity and fair conditions.

4. Lack of salary indexation for income tax exemption.
5. Fiscal deficit, high levels of informal employment, challenges in the electricity sector, and public debt.
6. Reduction of budgets and hiring in both public and private sectors, job instability, and rising cost of living affecting healthcare workers.
7. Job stability, layoffs
8. Unemployment, inflation
9. Job insecurity
10. Job loss
11. Fewer jobs
12. Unstable income

4.2. Preparing for a Recession

The following are statements regarding how managers and organizations prepare for a recession regarding jobs:

1. They are really not prepared.
2. There is no policy in education to prepare managers or organizations for a recession.
3. Most organizations respond with short-term reactive strategies such as freezing hiring, mass layoffs, and increasing workloads for remaining employees. Instead of building resilience, they prioritize immediate financial survival.
4. There are no visible plans to protect citizens from recession effects.
5. Protecting benefits to retain talent, increasing efficiency, and automating repetitive processes.
6. Cost control, hiring freezes, and increased productivity demands.
7. Reduce staff
8. Cost reduction

9. Hiring freeze
10. Reduce staff
11. Reduce workforce
12. Limit hiring

4.3. Protecting One's Job

During an oncoming recession, the following are respondents' comments on what can or should employees do to help protect their jobs:

1. Have higher levels of preparation to perform their jobs competitively. The best employees would keep their jobs.
2. Prepare themselves and learn to save for times of scarcity.
3. Employees should make themselves indispensable by contributing to revenue-generating or cost-saving projects, develop versatile skills, especially digital and analytical—and maintain strong professional networks while building personal financial security.
4. Demand that the government implement protection measures included in the labor code.
5. Be proactive and adaptable, meet goals, pursue training, and develop soft skills.
6. Continuous training, diversification of skills, and development of digital competencies.
7. Be versatile
8. Improve skills
9. Be productive
10. Work harder
11. Commitment
12. Adapt

4.4. Hiring Status during a Recession

During an oncoming recession, the following are respondents' comments on whether managers and organizations hire new employees:

1. They do not hire new employees. Economic recession affects budgets, and the first thing they do is reduce staff.

2. They do not hire new employees. On the contrary, they reduce the workforce to adjust to budget limitations.
3. Generally, no. Companies usually freeze hiring and cut costs. Hiring occurs only for essential roles or when companies can obtain highly qualified talent at lower cost.
4. No. Companies usually cite budget limitations.
5. Depends on the sector. Large companies often freeze hiring until economic conditions improve.
6. Generally, not, due to economic uncertainty, although the healthcare sector may maintain hiring due to its essential nature.
7. Only if necessary
8. Rarely hire
9. Rarely hire
10. No hiring
11. No hiring
12. Rare hiring

4.5. Mistakes to Avoid in a Recession

During an oncoming recession, the following are respondents' comments on mistakes employees make when they see a recession looming:

1. They do not save for difficult times.
2. They do not save for times of economic crisis.
3. Employees often wait passively, assume loyalty or seniority will protect them, neglect skill development, fail to build professional networks, and do not prepare financially for emergencies.
4. A Dominican saying applies - people "do not save bread for May," meaning they fail to save for difficult times.
5. Some attempt to leave the country illegally believing better opportunities exist elsewhere.
6. Failing to prepare financially, assuming job security, and not updating professional skills.
7. Lack of preparation

8. Poor planning
9. Panic
10. Not saving
11. No preparation
12. Not planning

4.6. Suggestions for dealing with a Recession

During an oncoming recession, the following are respondents' comments and suggestions about what managers and employees should know to better prepare:

1. Managers should train and develop employees for alternative activities, such as online sales or online customer service. Employees should learn to save money and reduce expenses and have a financial cushion.
2. Managers should educate their employees so they can pursue alternative jobs. Employees should update their skills and learn to diversify their occupations in order to complement their income.
3. Managers should invest in reskilling employees and innovation rather than simply reducing staff. Employees should prioritize continuous learning and professional adaptability because long-term job stability is no longer guaranteed.
4. Recessions are cyclical and generally linked to global market forces.
5. Understand economic context, manage liquidity better, and create plans to respond to recession.
6. Importance of financial planning, continuous training, and adaptability.
7. Plan ahead
8. Save money
9. Be proactive
10. Save money
11. Plan financially
12. Be prepared

5. DISCUSSION

The responses from the 12 subject-matter experts reveal a broad and deeply rooted concern about the potential effects of a recession on the Dominican Republic's labor market and economic stability. The methodological approach involved a qualitative reflection on comments and observations provided by experts regarding the Dominican Republic's economic trends and the broader themes surrounding recession and economic resilience. By examining recurring ideas, interpretations, and explanations from the experts' perspectives, the analysis identified patterns related to economic challenges, policy responses, social conditions, and factors influencing the country's ability to adapt to economic downturns. Rather than relying solely on statistical indicators, this approach used expert knowledge to provide contextual meaning to economic developments and connect them with the country's cultural and social realities. Comparing and interpreting these viewpoints made it possible to identify common themes, recognize areas of agreement or divergence, and draw relevant conclusions about the causes, effects, and potential responses to economic change in the Dominican Republic.

A recurring theme is the imbalance between wages and job value, where essential roles are often underpaid while less critical positions may receive higher compensation. This structural inefficiency is compounded by limited workforce preparation and skills gaps, which weaken competitiveness in both local and global markets. Several experts also expressed concern about systemic issues such as favoritism in hiring practices, lack of meritocracy, and insufficient long-term vision among business leaders. These factors contribute to inequality, exclusion of vulnerable groups, and the perception that workers are treated as expendable rather than as valuable contributors to economic development.

Macroeconomic concerns further intensify these challenges. Experts highlighted persistent fiscal deficits, high levels of informal employment, public debt pressures, and inefficiencies in the electricity sector as key vulnerabilities that could worsen during a recession. Additionally, rising inflation and the increasing cost of living, particularly affecting essential workers such as those in healthcare, create additional strain on households. Job instability, layoffs, and reduced hiring across both public and private sectors were consistently identified as major concerns,

reflecting a fragile employment environment where many individuals already face uncertain or unstable income streams.

When examining how organizations prepare for recessions, the findings suggest a general lack of strategic readiness. Many experts indicated that businesses in the Dominican Republic tend to adopt reactive rather than proactive approaches, focusing on immediate survival rather than long-term resilience. Common responses include hiring freezes, workforce reductions, and increased workloads for remaining employees. The absence of formal policies, particularly within education and workforce development systems, further limits preparedness. While a few organizations implement strategies such as automation, efficiency improvements, and benefit protection to retain talent, these efforts are not widespread. Overall, the lack of coordinated planning and institutional support leaves both organizations and workers vulnerable to economic shocks.

In terms of individual job protection, the experts emphasized the importance of personal responsibility and adaptability. Workers are encouraged to enhance their skills, particularly in digital and analytical areas, to remain competitive in a tightening labor market. Being versatile, productive, and proactive were commonly cited strategies, along with maintaining strong professional networks and contributing to revenue-generating activities within organizations. Financial preparedness also emerged as a critical factor, with multiple respondents stressing the importance of saving and reducing expenses to withstand periods of economic hardship. At the same time, some participants highlighted the need for stronger enforcement of labor protections, suggesting that employees should advocate for their rights under existing legal frameworks.

The hiring outlook during a recession appears overwhelmingly pessimistic based on expert responses. Most participants agreed that organizations typically freeze hiring or significantly reduce recruitment during economic downturns due to budget constraints and uncertainty. In many cases, companies not only stop hiring but also downsize their workforce to maintain financial stability. Hiring, when it does occur, is usually limited to essential roles or highly specialized positions that directly contribute to operational continuity. Certain sectors, such as healthcare, may maintain some level of hiring due to their critical nature,

but overall, job opportunities become scarce, which increases competition among job seekers.

Experts also identified several common mistakes that employees make when facing an impending recession. A dominant issue is the lack of financial planning, particularly the failure to save for difficult times, a concern reflected in both formal responses and cultural expressions such as the Dominican saying about not saving for future hardship. Many workers are perceived as being unprepared, either because they assume job security or fail to update their skills. Passivity, poor planning, and panic-driven decisions further exacerbate vulnerability. In some cases, individuals may resort to drastic measures, such as attempting to migrate in search of better opportunities, highlighting the social and economic pressures associated with downturns.

To better navigate recessions, experts provided a range of practical recommendations for both managers and employees. For organizations, there is a strong emphasis on investing in employee training, reskilling, and innovation rather than relying solely on cost-cutting measures. Encouraging alternative business models such as digital platforms, online sales, and service diversification can enhance resilience and open new revenue streams. Managers are also advised to improve financial planning, manage liquidity effectively, and develop contingency strategies to respond to economic fluctuations. These proactive measures can help organizations remain competitive and sustainable even in challenging conditions.

For employees, the key recommendations center on adaptability, continuous learning, and financial discipline. Workers are encouraged to diversify their skills and income sources, remain proactive in their professional development, and build financial buffers through savings and careful expense management. Understanding that recessions are cyclical and often influenced by global forces can also help individuals adopt a more strategic and less reactive mindset. The collective insights from these experts underscore the need for a cultural and institutional shift in the Dominican Republic, one that prioritizes long-term planning, resilience, and shared responsibility among government, organizations, and individuals to better withstand future economic downturns.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Preparing effectively for a recession in the Dominican Republic requires a shift from reactive responses to proactive, long-term planning at both organizational and national levels. Based on expert insights and existing literature, as summarized in Table 2, one of the most critical recommendations is the development of strategic contingency plans. Organizations should move beyond short-term cost-cutting and instead establish clear frameworks for managing economic shocks, including scenario planning, risk assessments, and liquidity management. Strengthening financial reserves, improving cash flow monitoring, and diversifying revenue streams, particularly by expanding into digital markets or local demand segments, can help reduce dependence on

Table 2: Preparing for a Recession Suggestions

Categories	Actions
<i>Plan Ahead Strategically</i>	Develop contingency plans for economic downturns Monitor cash flow and manage financial risks Diversify income sources to reduce dependency on vulnerable sectors
<i>Invest in Skills & Training</i>	Continuously upgrade technical and digital skills Encourage workforce reskilling and adaptability Align education with market needs
<i>Embrace Innovation & Flexibility</i>	Adopt digital tools and automation Explore new business models (e-commerce, online services) Stay agile to respond quickly to market changes
<i>Strengthen Financial Security</i>	Build savings and emergency funds Reduce unnecessary expenses Practice long-term financial planning
<i>Collaborate & Support Communities</i>	Strengthen public-private partnerships Support small businesses and vulnerable workers Promote policies that enhance economic stability
<i>Key Message</i>	Resilience is built through preparation, adaptability, and collaboration. Stay proactive. Stay prepared. Stay resilient.

volatile sectors such as tourism and external inflows (Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025). At the policy level, governments should reinforce macroeconomic stability by addressing fiscal deficits, improving infrastructure (especially electricity reliability), and supporting formalization of the labor market.

A second key recommendation is to prioritize human capital development as a central pillar of resilience. Both managers and policymakers should invest in continuous training, reskilling, and upskilling initiatives that align with evolving labor market demands. Emphasis should be placed on digital literacy, analytical capabilities, and adaptable skill sets that enable workers to transition across roles and industries. Educational institutions and vocational programs must also play a more active role in preparing individuals for economic uncertainty by integrating practical, market-relevant competencies (Mujtaba *et al.*, 2026). For organizations, retaining and developing talent during downturns can provide a competitive advantage and reduce long-term recovery costs compared to mass layoffs and rehiring cycles (Gradwohl and Mujtaba, 2025).

Third, fostering organizational agility and innovation is essential for navigating recessionary environments. Experts consistently noted that many firms rely too heavily on workforce reductions rather than exploring alternative strategies. Businesses should instead focus on improving operational efficiency through technology adoption, automation of repetitive tasks, and process optimization. Encouraging innovations such as adopting e-commerce platforms, offering new services, or targeting emerging customer needs can create additional revenue opportunities even during economic contractions. Leadership also plays a crucial role; transparent communication, employee engagement, and inclusive decision-making can help maintain morale, trust, and productivity during uncertain times (Kanaris and Mujtaba, 2024; Wang *et al.*, 2021).

At the individual level, workers must take greater responsibility for their own economic security and career sustainability. This includes actively investing in skill development, continuous learning through formal education, maintaining professional networks, and demonstrating adaptability within the workplace (Mujtaba *et al.*, 2026). Employees who contribute directly to organizational performance, whether through revenue generation, cost savings, or innovation, are more likely to retain their positions during downturns. Equally important is financial preparedness: individuals

should cultivate disciplined saving habits, reduce unnecessary expenses, and build emergency funds to cushion against income disruptions. Shifting mindsets from short-term consumption to long-term financial planning is particularly important in contexts where income instability is common.

Finally, a coordinated and inclusive approach involving government, private sector, and civil society is essential to mitigate the broader social impact of recessions (Mujtaba and Seyoum, 2025). Policymakers should strengthen social safety nets, enforce labor protections, and implement targeted support programs for vulnerable populations, including informal workers and small business owners. Public-private partnerships can facilitate job creation, workforce development, and innovation initiatives that enhance national resilience. Additionally, promoting a culture of preparedness through formal education, financial literacy campaigns, entrepreneurship support, and awareness of economic cycles can empower citizens to respond more effectively to future downturns. Together, these recommendations highlight that resilience is not achieved through isolated efforts but through collective, sustained action aimed at building a more stable, adaptive, and inclusive economic system in the Dominican Republic.

7. SUMMARY

This study explored the multifaceted impact of economic recessions on workers, managers, and organizations in the Dominican Republic, emphasizing the importance of preparedness, adaptability, and long-term resilience. Grounded in literature review and enriched by qualitative insights from subject-matter experts and cultural immersion, the research highlights how the Dominican economy, which is characterized by its reliance on tourism, foreign direct investment, and a sizable informal sector, is particularly vulnerable to external shocks. Global disruptions such as inflation, fluctuating energy prices, financial tightening, and declines in international travel can quickly transmit negative effects to domestic industries, leading to reduced business activity, job losses, and increased economic uncertainty.

This study revealed that recessions do not affect all sectors equally. Tourism, hospitality, construction, and other discretionary industries tend to experience the most severe contractions due to their dependence on external demand and consumer confidence. In contrast, essential sectors such as healthcare,

education, utilities, agriculture, and basic retail demonstrate greater resilience, as demand for their services remains relatively stable even during downturns. Small and medium-sized enterprises, which form the backbone of the Dominican economy, are especially susceptible to financial strain during recessions due to limited access to credit, lower cash reserves, and dependence on consistent consumer demand. Similarly, workers in informal employment arrangements face heightened vulnerability, as they often lack job security, social protection, and access to government support programs.

From a labor market perspective, the study underscores how recessions intensify competition for limited job opportunities while reshaping employment structures. As organizations reduce costs, layoffs, hiring freezes, and reduced working hours become more common, particularly in non-essential roles. This environment places pressure on workers to enhance their employability through education, continuous learning, skills development, and professional adaptability. The growing role of digitalization and automation further reinforces the need for workers to acquire technical, analytical, and transferable skills that can withstand economic fluctuations. At the same time, employers are encouraged to adopt proactive workforce strategies, including employee training, flexible work arrangements, and strategic planning, to maintain organizational stability and productivity.

A key insight from the study is that recessions have lasting social and psychological effects beyond immediate financial losses. Drawing on existing research, the findings suggest that individuals who experience economic hardship, particularly during formative years, are more likely to support wealth redistribution and social welfare policies over the long term. In the Dominican Republic, where inequality and regional disparities remain persistent, such experiences can significantly influence public attitudes toward fairness, government intervention, and inclusive economic development. This underscores the importance of considering the broader societal implications of economic downturns, including their impact on social cohesion, trust in institutions, and long-term policy preferences.

The research adopts a multilevel analytical approach, integrating individual, organizational, and societal perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of recession dynamics. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of experts, including economists,

entrepreneurs, managers, and policymakers with extensive professional experience. These participants offered valuable insights into how organizations respond to financial pressures, highlighting strategies such as cost optimization, revenue diversification, digital transformation, and market adaptation. Many emphasized that resilience is not solely about survival but also about the ability to innovate and identify new opportunities during periods of disruption.

The study also identifies several “recession-resistant” roles and sectors within the Dominican Republic. Occupations in healthcare, public service, utilities, education, and information technology tend to remain stable due to their essential nature and continued demand. Additionally, emerging fields aligned with national development priorities such as renewable energy, infrastructure development, and digital services are increasingly recognized as important areas for sustainable employment growth. These findings suggest that both individuals and policymakers should prioritize investment in skills and industries that enhance long-term economic resilience. The findings of this study emphasize that building economic resilience requires a proactive and comprehensive approach centered on five major approaches:

1. Planning strategically to anticipate economic challenges and prepare appropriate responses.
2. Investing in skills and training to strengthen human capital and improve adaptability in changing labor markets.
3. Embracing innovation and flexibility to encourage new ideas, diversify opportunities, and respond effectively to economic disruptions.
4. Strengthening financial security through responsible financial management, savings, and diversified sources of income.
5. Collaborating and supporting communities by promoting cooperation, shared resources, and collective responses to economic difficulties.

The key message is that resilience is not simply about surviving a recession but about preparing individuals, businesses, institutions, and communities to adapt, recover, and emerge stronger from periods of economic uncertainty.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the

qualitative nature of the research, while providing rich and context-specific insights, may limit the generalizability of the findings across the entire Dominican population or all economic sectors. The sample of interview participants, although diverse and experienced, may not fully capture the perspectives of all stakeholders, particularly those in highly marginalized or rural communities. Second, the reliance on self-reported experiences introduces the possibility of subjective bias, as participants may interpret or recall events differently based on personal or organizational contexts. Third, the rapidly changing global economic environment means that some findings may evolve over time, particularly as new technologies, policies, and external shocks emerge. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating quantitative data, expanding the sample size, and conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in economic behavior and resilience strategies over time.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive examination of how economic recessions affect the Dominican Republic, offering valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities that arise during periods of economic uncertainty. It emphasizes the need for proactive planning, continuous learning, and adaptive leadership at both individual and organizational levels. By fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors, investing in resilient industries, and supporting vulnerable populations, the Dominican Republic can better navigate future economic downturns while promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.

APPENDIX: RECESSION SURVEY OF MANAGERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

This survey is confidential, and participant names will not be recorded or published. Based on your current or past role as a manager, human resource professional, and/or entrepreneur in the industry, please answer each question to the best of your knowledge. We look forward to receiving your answers, reflections, views, and recommendations.

Demographics Variables	Participant Answers
<i>Your industry? (education, healthcare, retail, etc.)</i>	
<i>Your position title or expertise in the industry?</i>	
<i>How many years of total work experience thus far?</i>	
<i>Gender: 1-Male, 2-Female</i>	
<i>Education: 1- bachelor's degree, 2- Master's degree +</i>	

1. Have you experienced a recession or downward Dominican Republic economy during your lifetime?

1-Yes2- No
2. Today, Dominican Republic is prepared for a recession, better than most countries in the region?

DECLARATIONS AND DISCLOSURES

We would like to thank the experienced executives, managers, entrepreneurs, and business owners from Dominican Republic for sparing their time to be interviewed for this study. Thank you for sharing your wisdom and insights with the authors and for the readers of this article.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF AUTHORS

The author(s) of this article confirms that the work complies with the principles of research and publication ethics.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

FUNDING

The author(s) received no financial support for the preparation and/or publication of this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author(s) confirm sole responsibility for conceptualization and design, data collection, analysis of data and interpretation of results, writing the first draft of the manuscript, and review and editing.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURE

AI was used to improve the language content, after which the author(s) checked the text and took full responsibility for its content.

3. 1-Strongly disagree 2- disagree 3-No idea 4-agree 5-Strongly Agree
4. Dominican people are prepared for a recession, better than most others in the region?
5. 1-Strongly disagree 2- disagree 3-No idea 4-agree 5-Strongly Agree
6. What are your current concerns regarding the Dominican jobs and/or global economy?
7. How do managers and organizations in Dominican Republic prepare for a recession regarding jobs?
8. During the oncoming of a possible recession, what should Dominican employees do to help protect their job in the event of a recession?
9. Do Dominican Republic managers and organizations hire new employees during recessionary times? Why or why not?
10. What mistakes do Dominican Republic employees make when they see an imminent recession approaching?
11. What else should managers and employees know to better prepare for a recession in Dominican Republic?

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Received on 06-08-2026

Accepted on 09-01-2026

Published on 10-09-2026

<https://doi.org/10.6000/2817-2310.2026.05.02>

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