



MASTER TOURISM

« Tourism, Hospitality and Food Studies » course

2nd YEAR DISSERTATION

Strategies set up by Destination Management Companies to manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage

Presented by:

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**Strategies set up by Destination
Management Companies to manage
tourist flows and assert a competitive
advantage**

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The complexity of the management of tourist flows

The objective of the following master's thesis is to explore and investigate the issues of managing of tourist flows by Destination Management Companies (DMCs). After doing some deep research on the topic, the goal was to discover and understand the background of the subject and more specifically to examine the importance and issues that represent DMCs within the tourism system. Moreover, in order to be aware of the importance of the management of tourist flows, it is important to consider the collection of data and to understand when it starts. The first time that data collection from travelers was discussed in a paper was not with the intention of controlling the flows of tourists, according to C. Terrier in *Flux et Afflux de Touristes: les Instruments de Mesure, la Géomathématique des Flux*. The purpose was for the institutions to know how many tourists were present at the site in the 2000s, considering the environmental issues and catastrophes. Because these statistics are also utilized for compensation following these concerns, they also have an economic component (Terrier 2006, p. 48). As an example, French tourism organizations did not begin using tourist statistics to regulate tourist flows until much later in the decade (*Ibid.*). Political, Economic, and Environmental decisions all have an important impact on the environment in which this management is conducted.

Existing knowledge, Research question, and research gap

First of all it is important to start by defining the objectives of this master's thesis. Through this study, which is a complete analysis of the subject, the goal of the researcher is to explore the issue of management of tourist flow and more precisely to study the impact of DMCs on it. As will be explained below, it is easy to find papers on the implications of local governments on this type of management, but it represents a real challenge to find scientific documents on the impact of DMCs. The second objective of this master's thesis is to comprehend how crucial it is to establish a solid management approach for DMCs. Finding the competitive advantage in the tourism system and learning how to regulate the flow of tourists can be another objective of this master's thesis. Thanks to the evaluation of the

existing literature review, another goal will be to identify and investigate any research gaps in this area.

The second goal is to examine the current knowledge and research and to determine a research gap after establishing a complete knowledge of the background of the topic that will be explored in the literature review, particularly thanks to the history of the tourist part. The researcher needed to find every organization from small companies to large corporations that makes up the tourism system in order to achieve this objective and gain more knowledge about it. The goal went above just examining the tourism system, which, according to Robert Christie Mill and Alastair Morrison's book *The Tourism System: an introductory text*, ignores interdependency in the industry (Mill et Morrison 1992). Because the idea of the "tourism system" considers tourism as an evolving entity that is influenced by many different factors, the researcher decided to focus on it.

Considering the background and formation in management and nature protection by the researcher, the objective was to focus the study on the tourism system and more specifically on sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is defined as a noninvasive way of traveling, moreover, it is based on three important pillars, economic, social, and environmental. It must respect the socio-cultural authenticity of the local population, take into account and appropriately utilize natural resources, and provide long-term, economically viable activity. Demand for sustainable travel destinations is growing, as is the need for local consumption and community integration when traveling. It's also critical to note that, because of the numerous current catastrophes (environmental, pandemic, etc.), this type of travel is in trend¹. After making some investigation, the researcher discovered that sustainability was a relatively new topic about which there is a lack of information. It is the control of tourism flows, and more especially, the effects of large companies, particularly those of Destination Management Companies, on tourism flows. The author Ascher's perspective will be used to study multinational corporations. The five categories of management capacity are as follows, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO): ecological capacity, sociocultural capacity,

¹ Réseau veille tourisme, 2020, *Le tourisme durable... Enfin ?*, <https://veilletourisme.ca/2020/02/24/tourisme-durable-tendance/>, 24 February 2020, consulted on 30/08/2024

psychological capacity, infrastructure capacity, and managerial capacity. This could make it easier for businesses to define the right kind of management and put the right strategies into action. These five management philosophies also help in defining the subject and academic fields that will be explored.

Before going further and doing research on the subject of tourism, a few key concepts and notions must be understood.

- a) Tourist: A person is "*classified as a tourist (or overnight visitor), if his/her trip includes an overnight stay, or as a same-day visitor (or excursionist) otherwise*"² according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization.
- b) Tourist flows: Esteban Romero-Frías and Charalampos Leontidis explain "*this refers to the spatial patterns of tourists visiting a city. It provides information that is important in managing tourism and providing services and goods that are appropriate for tourists and residents*" (Romero-Frías et Leontidis 2019).
- c) Sustainable tourism: it is defined as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities"³ by the United Nations Environment Program and the World Tourism Organization.

The objective of this study of DMCs' impact on the management of tourist flows, to understand the various advantages it can bring and the issues these companies can face. The researcher has as its objective to evaluate their approach to that problem, their influence on it, and the problems they face. Additionally, a few research investigations that directly affect travelers at the destination but do not focus on DMCs have been conducted on the management and data collecting of tourist flows by local businesses like tourism offices.

The research question which will be developed in the research below aims to analyze as explained DMCs' impact on the management of tourist flows. But it also

² UNWTO, 2008, Glossary of Tourism Terms, <https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>, 2008, consulted on: 30/08/2024

³ UNWTO, *Sustainable development*, <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development>, consulted on: 30/08/2024

includes various components and hypotheses such as the choice of stakeholders, and the competitive advantage it could bring to the company.

A study constructed around the concrete case of the company Abbey Group

The global objective of this master's dissertation is to have a better understanding of the impact of Destination Management Companies on the management of tourist flows. In order to make a more concrete and deeper analysis, this case study is based on a Destination Management Company and a transnational company based in Dublin. Moreover, in order to have a concrete example of a travel company and understand its implications and possibilities for tourist flow management. This concrete case and concrete analysis will be developed on the Irish company Abbey Group which is a Destination Management Company. This company will be important for the setting up of the general methodology of this master's thesis.

Methodology of the dissertation

This master's thesis is a project conducted on a two-year study that evolved over time. The below document is the result of the second year's work which is based on the first year's dissertation. The general topic of these two master's theses is the management of tourist flows, the first-year dissertation focused on the impact of tour operators and travel agencies, and the second, will develop the importance of DMCs in the tourism system.

Concerning the methodology, as for the subject of the dissertation, it has evolved over time. The objective of this master's thesis is to develop a mixed-method research. This method will be divided into two parts, the first one will be the quantitative research which will help to verify the accuracy of the hypotheses. As for the second part, it will be qualitative research which aims to confirm or refute the same hypotheses.

Significance of the study

Considering every facet is necessary in order to understand the research's significance fully. A political document known as Agenda 21, or an action plan for the twenty-first century, was signed by 182 leaders of state. Promoting an eco-friendly tourism program that takes sociocultural characteristics into account as a strategy for sustainable development is one of its goals⁴. Controlling tourism flows without affecting local economies is an important point to keep in mind from a political and economic point of view. One of the most crucial questions to consider and provide a response to might be this one. As an example of an issue of society, consider the conflicts that frequently emerge between residents and visitors in Amsterdam. The city's action plan from 2004 to 2012 intended to attract people to Amsterdam in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008. The locals wanted to leave the city and expressed their revolt, but this goal was rapidly achieved at their price. The host community experienced serious problems as a result. Then the local government made the decision to change the plan of action and involve the community in the tourism action plan. How do we deal with the topic without discussing the technological aspect? Data is necessary for multinational corporations to manage tourist flows. It is crucial to highlight the anonymous nature of the data collected in order to obtain these statistics. From an environmental perspective, mass tourism brought about a number of issues, including pollution, the handling of plastic trash, and the deterioration of natural areas.

Master's thesis plan

In order to understand and analyze the impact that Destination Management Companies have on the management of tourist flows. The master's thesis will be divided into three major parts which aim to do a complete analysis of the subject, it will also lead to some recommendations.

⁴ United Nations 1992, *Sustainable Development, United Nations Conference on Environment & Development Rio de Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992 AGENDA 21*, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>, 14 June 1992, consulted on 30/08/2024

The first part aims to analyze the existing literature review on the topic of the management of tourist flows. It will start by exploring the tourism system and its history and different visions and gaps, the notion of tourist flows, and the importance of DMCs. The second objective will be to develop the concrete case of the Irish company Abbey Group. It will analyze the internal and external environment of this DMC. The third objective of this part is to link the management of tourist flows and the Irish company with the development of the professional, economic, and social context.

The second part of this master's thesis will develop the research question and hypothesis elaborated thanks to the research work made in the first part. Moreover, this research question aims to highlight the research gap discovered in the existing literature review. The definition of a few key concepts and notions will also be developed. As explained this part will also develop the hypotheses and the methodology (with the mixed-method research) that will be followed in order to confirm or refute the different hypotheses.

The third and last part will develop the results obtained thanks to the mixed-method research. As explained above, the quantitative approach will be analyzed in order to verify the accuracy of the hypotheses. The qualitative research will be used to confirm or refute the hypotheses. This third part will also develop the recommendations made by the researcher and the limits and contribution of this master's thesis.

This master's thesis will finish with a general conclusion including the results obtained thanks to the whole and complete research work. This conclusion will also emphasize the primary research gap that was investigated when the dissertation started to be written.

PART 1: THE MANAGEMENT OF TOURIST FLOWS
BY DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANIES: A
GENERAL ANALYSIS OF THE COMPLEX CONTEXT

Introduction

As explained in the general introduction, the management of tourist flows is an important aspect of travel companies nowadays. It is part of a most general context which needs to be analyzed. The article *Tourist Flows Management: Social Impact Evaluation through Social Network Analysis*, provides an example and explains that local citizens “*tend to mobilise and publicly express their dissatisfaction; movements based on anti-tourism and tourist-phobia*” (Acampa et al. 2020, p. 2). This suggests that organized movements against tourism could develop due to the significant impact of a community’s social fabric caused by tourism. Furthermore, the book *Tourism and Politics: Policy, Power, and Place* by Hall (1994), highlights the significant influence political developments can have on tourism. It explains “*it is clear political events have an impact on tourism – from how consumers perceive the country (safe or unsafe) to whether they feel they should support a regime which does not fall in line with their own beliefs*” (Hall 1994, p. 23). This underscores how important political stability and governance are in influencing the opinions and choices of tourists, which also affect the number of tourists and the corresponding economic gains. The environment in which the management of tourist flows operates is additionally complicated with problems: environmental degradation, population density, behavioral changes, financial impact, cultural extinction, pollution, and conflicts between locals and tourists. Concerning this specific environment, an increased awareness of the significance of tourism management is required.

The first part of the master’s thesis aims to introduce the topic of the management of tourist flows by Destination Management Companies. The first chapter will develop the existing literature review about the tourism system and more specifically the issues of the management of tourist flows. It will also go deeper with the analysis of the sociology of organization within the tourism system. This first sub-part also has as an objective to understand the complexity of sustainable tourism and over-tourism. It will also underline the importance of Destination Management Companies within the tourism system and analyze the notion of tourist flows.

The second chapter of this part aims to develop and study a concrete case with the Irish company: Abbey Group. It will analyze the complexity of this

transnational corporation with its three travel companies. The study will have a particular focus on the luxury Destination Management Company part of Abbey Group which is Moloney and Kelly. It will also finish with a general SWOT analysis which aims to highlight the various problems within the company.

The objective of the third chapter of this part will be to make the connection between the two first chapters. It will explain the importance of the management of tourist flows by DMC and underline the lack of information on this topic. Moreover, this sub-part will also develop the case of Abbey Group and its professional, economic, and social context and issues linked with the management of tourist flows. This third chapter aims to be the final introduction of this study which has the objective to understand better the impact of DMC with the concrete example of Abbey Group over the management of tourist flows.

Chapter 1: The tourism system and implementation of the management of tourist flows: a general analysis of the complex context

1. Introduction to a complex and complete overview of the tourism system

The general introduction pointed out that today, controlling the flow of tourists is important. The social, political, economic, and geographical contexts all influence it. As explained previously, the article *Tourist Flows Management: Social Impact Evaluation Through Social Network Analysis* provides an example of the social and political context when it states that the locals “*tend to mobilise and publicly express their dissatisfaction; movements based on anti-tourism and tourist-phobia*” (Acampa et al. 2020, p. 2). Regarding the geographical and economic context, the economic advantages of tourism do not correspond with either its impact or its contribution to the economy (Dwyer, Forsyth, and Dwyer 2010). The context in which managing tourist flows operates is additionally difficult with problems: environmental degradation, overpopulation, behavioral changes, economic consequences, cultural extinction, pollution, and tensions between locals and tourists. This specific setting necessitates a better understanding of the importance of tourism management.

The literature review chapter aims to analyze the tourism industry and understand the gap and lack of study on the impact of Destination Management Companies (DMC) on the management of tourist flows. Moreover, the objective is to highlight various visions and debates about the tourism system and its complexity. This literature review part will support this entire study which aims to better understand the impact of DMC on tourist flow management with particular attention to the notion of power and competitive advantages.

This chapter will be divided into four major parts which will go through a complete analysis of the topic. The first sub-part aims to define the tourism industry thanks to several authors and websites such as the UNWTO, and make an overview of tourism history and tourism trends. The second sub-part aims to examine the differences between the tourism industry and the tourism system. Moreover, this

part aims to analyze the concept of the tourism system through various visions such as P. Violier (1999) with the notion of “network” and linear and non-linear systems (Violier 1999). It will also develop different versions of the tourism system’s examination for example the McKercher (1999) and the Neil Leiper (1979) model. This sub-part also aims to understand the sociology of organization with particular attention to the definition of Destination Management Companies. It will also analyze the different types of power and competitive advantages that exist within companies in a tourism system. The third sub-section will define the concept of tourist flows or tourist movement in the historical context. It will also develop the different possibilities to obtain statistics on tourist numbers and movement. To finish this sub-part will also define tourist flow management. The last sub-section will analyze the importance and influence of sustainable tourism and over-tourism over the management of tourist flows.

2. The Tourism industry

2.1 A definition of the tourism industry

The tourism industry is a vast concept that needs to be defined to understand its importance. In the *Global Economic Impact and Trends 2021* report from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the tourism sector is described as one of the biggest industries in the world. “*In 2019, Travel & Tourism was one of the world’s largest sectors, accounting for 10.4% of global GDP (USD 9.2 trillion), 10.6% of all jobs (334 million), and was responsible for creating 1 in 4 of all new jobs across the world*” (World Travel and Tourism Council 2021, p. 3).

In the book *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics*, the author R. Prosser worked on the tourism industry definition. The tourism industry is defined as all companies and organizations that offer products and services linked with tourism (Prosser 2012, p. 386-406). Moreover, this industry works as a large network of companies and organizations with commercial and non-commercial goals that are linked together with the same objective of servicing the needs of tourists (*Ibid.*). The author decided

to show a counterargument by quoting Mill and Morrison's (1985) vision of the tourism system. They do not consider tourism as an industry but as a concept that gives rise to many industries (Mill et Morrison 1985). R. Prosser (2012) finishes by explaining that tourism is a “*multifaceted industry has a number of distinctive characteristics*” (Prosser 2012), nevertheless, it is common to consider tourism as an industry divided into few sectors.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), now called UN Tourism, offers a simple and complete definition of the tourism industry. They define it as an industry that “*comprise all establishments for which the principal activity is a tourism characteristic activity*”⁵. This definition is clear and simple but does not highlight the different debates that exist when authors talk about describing the complex tourism industry.

2.2 An overview of tourism history and general tourism trends

The tourism industry's definition and concept have evolved over time and adapted to the history and era. It is important to consider and understand the meaning of the word “tourism” or “tourist” throughout history. In the article *Travelling for Pleasure: a Brief History of Tourism*, on the website Europeana, the author Carmen Périz Rodríguez (2020) develops the modern concept of tourism. She explains that it has existed since the 17th century with the invention of the “*Grand Tour: a trip around Europe (usually covering France, Germany, Italy and Greece) with the main purpose of soaking up history, art and cultural heritage*” (Rodríguez 2020). The writer Eric Zuelow (2016) defines modern tourism as “*spending free time primarily in pursuit of enjoyment*” (Zuelow 2016, p. 2). In contradiction with the article in the Europeana website, Eric Zuelow explains in *A History of Modern Tourism*, that modern tourism arrived after the 18th century. According to him, before the 18th century, leisure was not the principal objective of travel, the main reason was “*searching for food, exploration and adventure, trade, religious ritual*” (*Ibid.*). C.

⁵ UNWTO. *Glossary* <https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms> (consulted on the 24/05/2024)

Rodríguez (2020) continues her article by describing the 19th century, when the first travel agency Thomas Cook was created, and they will launch later the first travel package. The invention of the travel agency represents a revolution in the tourism industry. The 20th century also represents a huge advancement in the transport industry which directly impacts tourism. The *“tourism industry continued to grow thanks to the mass production of buses and cars [...] also, improvements in air transport”* (Rodríguez 2020). The 20th century is also marked by an energy crisis that aims to lower costs and prices and make mass tourism emerge. The tourism concept has also emerged thanks to different factors that are important to consider such as *“convenient transportation, lack of travel restrictions, availability of information [...] marketing technologies”* (Rahdi 2022, p. 38). According to Dr. Alaa Rahdi (2022) in the article *Contemporary Concepts of Tourism*, socio-demographic factors need to be examined to understand the growth of tourism numbers. These factors include rapid urbanization, the evolution of information technology, and higher education standards (*Ibid.*). Dr Alaa Rahdi's (2022) ideas are in line with the history of tourism explained in C. Rodríguez (2020) article. According to him, tourism is divided into two major trends *“The eighteenth century can certainly be defined as an era of transition from the modern to the contemporary”* (*Ibid.*). In the book *Contemporary Tourism*, the authors Colin Michael Hall and Chris Cooper (2013) develop a broad vision of how this trend can be defined. They explain that a few key concepts aim to analyze and describe contemporary tourism; these notions are the tourism system, tourists, tourism, and mobility (Cooper et Hall 2013, p. 4). Tourism is now defined as a complex concept that includes various notions.

In summary, the tourism definition has evolved over the years as well as its objectives. Tourists are not traveling for the same reasons as a few centuries ago, and the tourism industry and way of traveling are still changing and adapting to the actual world. The WTTC describes the tourism industry as one of the most important in the world. This industry is considered as composed of a few sectors. R. Prosser defines the tourism industry as all businesses and establishments that provide products and services related to travel.

3. The Tourism system, a complex network

This third sub-part aims to define and analyze the tourism sector through another angle which is the “tourism system”. The tourism system has several definitions according to different writers moreover, it helps to see tourism in its entirety in contrary to the tourism industry. The first objective is to define a tourism system and the concept of linear and non-linear systems with the examination of the concept of network within this sector. It will also analyze and compare two tourism system models the one from McKercher (1999) and the one from Neil Leiper (1979). The second major objective is to examine the sociology of organization within the tourism system. Through this sub-part, the role of Destination Management Companies will be analyzed. Moreover, another purpose will be to understand the power exercises by companies over other companies with the example of zones of uncertainties as competitive advantages.

3.1 Definition of the Tourism System

There are several terms to talk about tourism in its entirety (tourists, tourism companies, leisure enterprises, accommodations...). The first and most common term would be “tourism industry”. As developed in the previous subpart, the tourism industry is described by UN Tourism as a range of companies and establishments for which the main activity is of a tourist nature⁶. In summary, the tourism industry concept mostly focuses on economic activities related to tourism.

The second general term to talk about tourism and all the companies in this industry is the “tourism system”. In the thesis *Symptoms of Complexity in a Tourism System* the author, Rodolfo Baggio (2008) developed his vision of the tourism system. He first started by highlighting the difference between a complex and a complicated system. According to R. Baggio (2008), a complicated system is “a collection of an often high number of elements whose collective action is the

⁶ UNWTO. *Glossary* <https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms> (consulted on the 24/05/2024)

cumulative sum of the individual ones. It can be decomposed in sub-elements and understood by analysing each one of them" (Baggio 2008, p. 6). On the contrary, a complex system is described as a whole including every tourism stakeholder. The author explains that the tourism sector needs to be considered as a complex system and relies on McKercher's (1999) model which will be developed below. R. Baggio (2008) decided to define the complexity of the tourism system thanks to Pavard and Dugdale's (2006) definition in *The Contribution of Complexity Theory to the Study of Socio-Technical Cooperative Systems*. They define it as *"a system for which it is difficult, if not impossible to reduce the number of parameters or characterising variables without losing its essential global functional properties"* (Pavard et Dugdale 2006).

3.1.1 Concept of linear and non-linear tourism system

In his thesis *Symptoms of Complexity in a Tourism System*, the author, R. Baggio (2008) develops the importance of differentiating a linear and a non-linear tourism system. The author says that for a long time, many experts studied the tourism sector as a linear system. But now, that is starting to change, and people are beginning to realize that the tourism sector is a much more complicated non-linear system. As explained above the author supports his ideas with the development of the difference between a complex and a complicated system.

As explained, the tourism sector has been seen as a linear system for a long time. To understand the concept of a non-linear system linked with the notion of a complex structure it is important to first define the linear tourism system. In a linear tourism system configuration, tourism services and products are only provided if there is a demand. It means that in this type of configuration, the tourism system is entirely dependent on tourists. According to R. Baggio (2008), nowadays, societies are changing and are considering the tourism sector as a non-linear system. In this new approach, instead of relying on tourists, in a complex system, tourism businesses are more participatory and viewed as networks. A complex and flexible system *"interact with each other according to sets of rules that require them to examine and respond to each other's behavior to improve their behavior and thus*

the behavior of the system they comprise" (Stacey 1996, p. 10). This type of configuration is seen as more appropriate and suitable for the tourism system nowadays. R. Baggio's (2008) approach has many advantages, instead of classifying tourism businesses, he chose to see them as a whole system. This study's only weakness is that it is too general and fails to go further into specific instances.

This idea of a non-linear tourism system is also supported by the concept of a network by P. Violier (1999). In his article *Introduction: L'espace local et les acteurs du tourisme*, the author, P. Violier (1999) explains that the interactions between local and international communities in a tourism context are essential to a tourism destination's financial success. The theory of the author is based on three concepts which are big corporations, local companies, and artisanal companies. He also developed the importance of the "network" within the tourism complex system (Violier 1999). This network represents a key asset. According to the author, the notion of a "network" is a complex concept, it may involve a wide range of businesses. The tourism system explained and developed by P. Violier (1999) does not include tourists within it.

3.1.2 The McKercher's model

As explained above, the author R. Baggio (2008) relies on McKercher's model from 1999. This model is developed in the article *A Chaos Approach to Tourism* by Bob McKercher (1999). In this article, the author describes the various existing models including Neil Leiper (1979) which is recognized and often quoted as a reference for the tourism system definition. This article suggests a different approach to the tourism sector that is founded on the ideas of complexity and chaos theory. B. McKercher (1999) contends in the article that the nature of tourism is non-linear, non-deterministic, and dynamic, with tourist systems operating more like alive natural ecosystems. The author calls his model "*the chaos model*", in this model, "*Each element of the model is connected with other elements, either directly, or by no more than one step*" (McKercher 1999, p. 429). The model aims to provide an

explanation of tourism by examining the intricate links that exist between and among the following nine primary elements:

- “The traveller”, who is the key player in the tourism sector, since there wouldn’t be any tourism if people didn’t travel;
- “The communication”, this element links the traveler to their destination.
- “The Consideration or factors” that affect how effective the communication channels are;
- “The destination of internal tourism community” encompassing all establishments engaged in tourism at the tourism destination;
- “External tourism agencies”, that attempt to affect travel;
- “Other tourism-related externalities”, such as substitute tourism locations that impact a place’s capacity to attract tourists;
- “Non-tourism-related externalities”, which can also be macro-environmental forces, events that impact people’s capacity to travel, such as war, natural disasters, or shifting political, economic, or social circumstances;
- “Outputs from the system” both intended and unintended;
- “Rogue or Chaos makers” who are capable of driving a system to the verge of chaos.

In the article, the model describes the operation of a tourism system which is chaotic at a multidimensional level. B. McKercher (1999) explains that this model can be used in a local, regional, national, and multinational context. In this non-linear model, the number of stakeholders influencing the system varies at each level due to the consistency of the interactions between the elements. As a result, this model represents the large complexity of the tourism system.

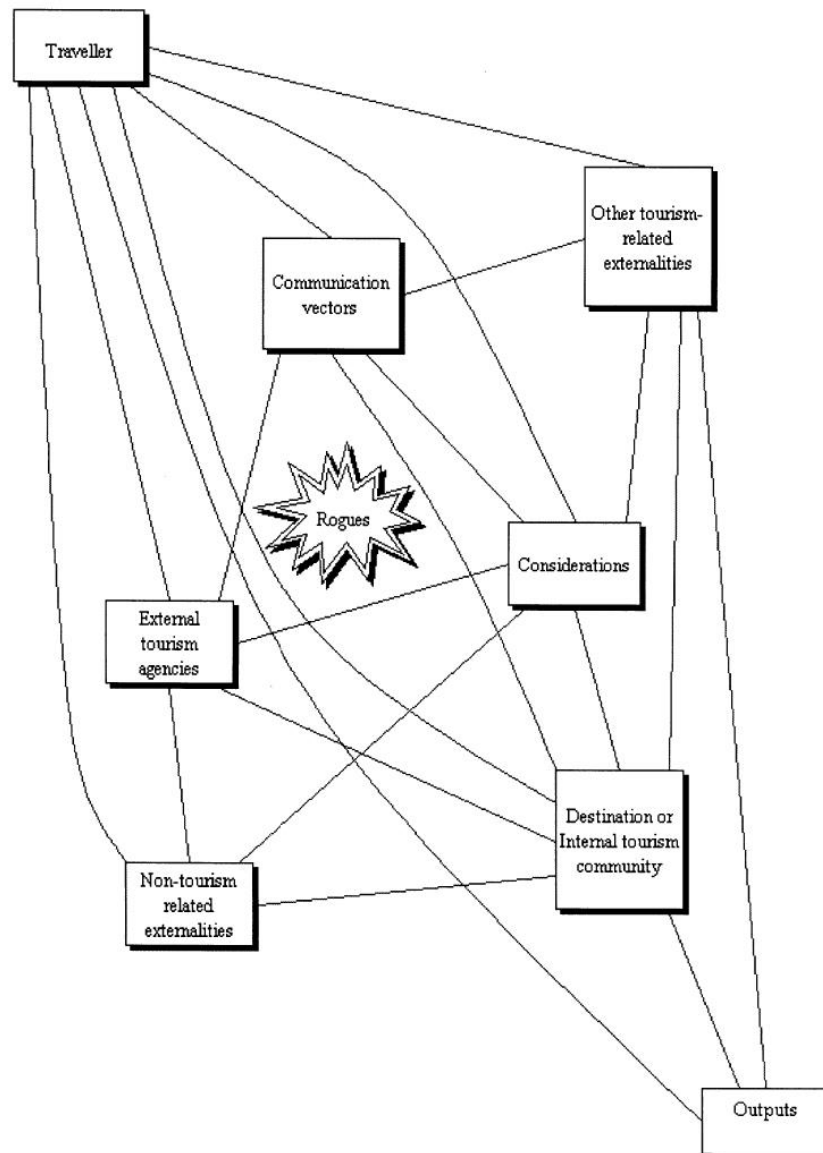


Figure 1 : The McKercher's model

3.1.3 The Neil Leiper model

There is another model of the tourism system that is well known and that represents the complexity of the nonlinear tourism sector. The Neil Leiper (1979) tourism system model is often quoted as the reference of the definition of a “tourism system”. As an example, it is mentioned by a lot of authors and scientists in the tourism industry. This definition explains the whole tourism system and its complexity representing a deeper analysis of the tourism industry. The author, Neil Leiper (1979) first talked about the tourism system in the article *The Framework of*

Tourism, Toward a Definition of Tourism, Tourist, and the Tourist Industry. In this article N. Leiper (1979) called this model “The Tourism System”, the main objective of this paper is to define a new vision of the tourism industry. In the article *Towards a Cohesive Curriculum in Tourism: The Case for a Distinct Discipline*, the author N. Leiper (1981), defines the main elements of tourism:

“*Tourism is an open system of five elements interacting with broader environments, the elements being a dynamic human element, tourists: three geographical elements: generating region, transit route and destination region; and an economic element, the tourist Industry.*” (Leiper 1981, p. 74)

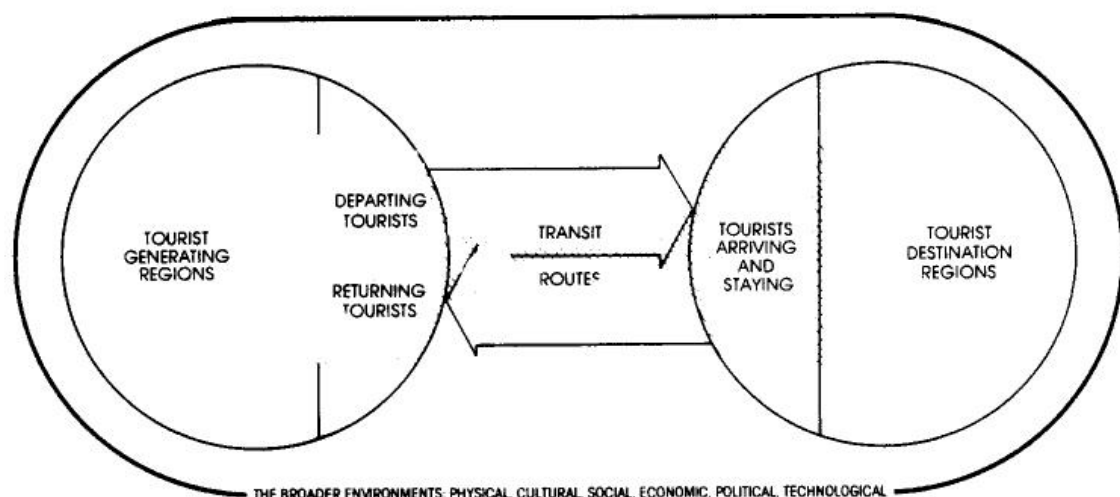


Figure 2: The Neil Leiper model of the Tourism System

To understand the importance of the Neil Leiper (1979) tourism model, each part of it needs to be described.

The first notion of the Neil Leiper (1979) model is the tourist. The tourist is the major component of this system, and all the model is constructed around this key figure.

The second notion of this chart that must be defined is the “*tourist generating regions*”. The author, Neil Leiper (1979) explained this term as “*the permanent residential bases of tourists, the place where tourist begin and end*” (Neil Leiper 1979, p. 393). Leiper continues the definition by saying that there must be particular attention to the characteristics of the region that unintentionally causes or triggers

the temporary outflow. This notion includes the regional and geographical bases and the motivation factors (*Ibid.*).

The third notion is the “tourist destination region” which is on the opposite side of the chart. This part of the Neil Leiper model is described as “*locations which attract tourists to stay temporarily*” (*Ibid.*, p. 397). The characteristics that attract tourists also need to be considered in the tourist destination region definition. The author explains that attraction could relate to an anticipation of a qualitative characteristic by the tourist that he wants to experiment with and might not be found in the generating region (*Ibid.*).

Between the second and the third notion (the tourist generating region and the tourist destination region), the link is made thanks to the “transit routes”. They are “*paths linking tourist generating regions with tourist destination regions, along with tourists travel*” (*Ibid.*). These routes can also include stop points that could be made for accommodation or attractions. These paths are major notions in the tourism system their characteristics can influence the quality of the destination access and “*accordingly they influence the size and direction of tourist flows*” (*Ibid.*). The author explains the importance of routes by highlighting the touristic impact they can have, as an example, a quickest transport could lead to the avoidance of stopover spots.

The last notion that is important is the “*broader environments*” which is around the whole system. The Neil Leiper (1979) model is an open system, the five elements of this arrangement function in a larger environment: cultural, social, physical, political, economic, and technological. These elements of the system interact with the five elements (“*tourists, generating regions, transit routes, destination regions and a tourist industry*” (*Ibid.*, p. 404)).

To summarize this point, the definition of a tourism system can vary and includes a multitude of terms. The notion of a tourism system can be defined as a complicated system that is a collection of a number of tourism elements (destinations, tourists, companies...) that can be divided into sub-elements. It can also be characterized as a complex system that describes the tourism system as a whole, encompassing all parties involved in tourism (Baggio 2008). There is another concept that is important to understand which the linear and non-linear system is. As explained above, the tourism sector was seen as linear for a long time which

means that tourism products and services were only made in response to tourist demand. Nowadays, this sector is mostly studied as a non-linear system which is directly linked with the analysis through a complex system. In this type of vision, tourism companies are seen as networks and are more interactive. Moreover, this part developed two different models, the McKercher (1999) and the Neil Leiper visions of the tourism system. These two models explore different aspects of this sector. For the following study and chapters, the tourism system will be considered and analyzed through the complex, non-linear, and Neil Leiper (1979) model.

3.2 Sociology of organization within the tourism system

The sociology of organizations needs to be analyzed within the different tourism systems studied above. This analysis of the sociology of companies is taking place within a complex and non-linear tourism system. Examining how organizations are developed, how they maintain their relationship with one another, and how these interactions impact the behavior of companies, and the tourism sector as a whole are objectives of this field of study. Additionally, it assesses the impact of various entities on the tourism sector, including governments, local companies, and multinational enterprises. Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg (1977) examine the foundations of organizations, their surroundings, the actions as sociological techniques, and the transformation process in the book *Actor and Systems: the politics of collective actions*.

An analysis of the book by M. Crozier and E. Friedberg (1977), *Actor and Systems: the politics of collective actions*, made by the author N. Mayer explains that:

“Much of the book is devoted to arguing against deterministic formulations that assert that action is determined by structure, or by technology, or the environment. Crozier and Friedberg believe that all of these formulations, found in English and American organizational research, do not leave enough room for strategic formulation and the autonomy and freedom of the actor” (Zald, Crozier et Friedberg 1982, p. 328).

The writer clarifies that their vision differs from the global vision point in this sentence. They believe that they must consider the actor's independence, autonomy, and strategy formulation, which means allowing people and groups to take the initiative and make their own decisions.

To have a second point of view and understand better, the study will analyze Alexander J. Matejko's (1983) vision of the book *Actor and Systems: the politics of collective actions* from Crozier and Friedberg (1977). The author argues that organizations are viewed as human constructs in the works of M. Crozier and E. Friedberg (1977), who are frequently subject to counter-intuitive consequences, biased and deformed, and only partially logical. They may be influenced by a range of outside factors and can be challenging to forecast and evaluate. He uses quotes from M. Crozier and E. Friedberg (1977) to support his claims: "*Men build organizations to solve problems otherwise intractable*" (Matejko 1983, p. 448; Crozier et Friedberg 1977). The subject of culture, the function of power, institutions, financial incentives, and the evolution of power dynamics in organizations are all covered in this study. The writers clarify that it could be hazardous if there isn't a balance between the employees' freedom and their relationships with one another (Matejko 1983, p. 449).

Understanding the complex nature of the tourist sector and the relationships among its various components becomes easier by studying the sociology of organization. The two main ideas are power and unpredictability. Within an organization, authority is regulated, limited, and coordinated to promote collaboration among its members.

3.2.1 The role of Destination Management Companies

Within a tourism system, one of the majors component are the travel companies. One of these types of companies is the Destinations Management Companies, the following part aims to describe the role of this sort of organization. The article *Destination Management* written by K. Ryglová (2008) develops the major keys of destination management and shows their practical application in a high-potential tourist region (Ryglová 2008, p. 443). In this article, the author develops the definition and the role of Destination Management Company (DMC). The author K. Ryglová (2008) decided to develop the role of DMC thanks to M.

Palatková's (2006) definition in the book *Marketing Strategy of Tourism Destination*. M. Palatková (2006) argues that the primary function of destination agencies is to facilitate the integration of legally autonomous and generally independent service providers into a cohesive whole, with the aim of promoting the destination's main products (Palatková 2006). Coordination and cooperation are the key components of such an overall, as is the creation of appropriate service chains and "experiences" for the target client group, all while obtaining influence and control over distinct, partial services (*Ibid.*).

In the article, K. Ryglová (2008) also decided to rely on Bartl and Schmidt's idea that DMCs should act in five main areas for destination management (Ryglová 2008, p. 443). This idea helps to better understand the influence of DMC over potential destination management. The five key areas DMC participates in destination management are the following:

- a) The organization, arranging, and coordination of subjects' vertical and horizontal connections in order to create a cohesive, adaptable, and dynamically competitive market unit (Bartl and Schmidt 1998).
- b) The act of evaluating a destination's quality against that of other top locations to maximize client benefits while reducing essential procedures (*Ibid.*).
- c) The obligation to carry out the fundamental tasks of overseeing tourism in the location; influencing service providers as an association of service providers who fund it, rather than as an organization representing a particular interest (*Ibid.*).
- d) Meeting the objective of the offering (*Ibid.*).
- e) In their capacity to promote the identity and image of the destination as a whole, DMCs are vital in carrying out the marketing role (*Ibid.*).

As another point of view of the role that should have a Destination Management Company, in the article *Role of Destination Management and Marketing Organizations in Regional Development*, the authors develop their perspective. The authors, S. Timareva, E. Arabska, and I. Shopova (2015) explain the function of a Destination Management Organization (DMO) (Timareva, Arabska and Shopova 2015, p. 97). Destination marketing and the coordination and integration of the components of the destination mix come within the authority of DMOs (*Ibid.*). They

are spread out over the entire world and represent a wide range of organizational sizes and configurations. Destination Management Organization structures differ based on governmental systems and regional practices (*Ibid.*).

3.2.2 Type of power exercises by companies over other companies: Zones of uncertainties and competitive advantage

The main objective is to enhance comprehension of the tourist system utilizing business-to-business exchanges. V. Sabourin (2000) studies this using competitive strategy in *L'industrie Touristique: Stratégie Concurrentielle des Entreprises* (2000). Using P. Violier's (1999) theory as a framework, he talks about how tourism markets align with global consumer tastes and financial resources. The author V. Sabourin (2000) provides examples of how region-focused small firms might compete by focusing, diversifying, or utilizing innovative technologies. He brings attention to two strategies for competitors: strategic positioning and market leadership.

According to Hong (2008) in *Competitiveness in the Tourism Sector*, the destination experience is the primary product provided in the tourism system, and companies need to concentrate on this to obtain a competitive advantage. Navigating through zones of uncertainty is a common component of competition management strategies. Based on Crozier and Friedberg's (1977) research, B. Seddik (2017) establishes four power sources in managing uncertainty zones: expertise, environmental interactions, information management, and organizational regulation. These tactics support competitors in gaining influence in the context of competition.

The concept of zones of uncertainty and the sociology of power exercised by companies over other companies will be developed deeper in the second part of this master's thesis.

To summarize, different definitions of a tourism system include a wide range of components, such as travel destinations, travelers, and businesses. Every party involved might be considered part of this complex entity (Baggio 2008). Originally thought to be linear, with products created in response to market demand, the

tourism system is now understood to be a non-linear network. Neil Leiper (1979) and McKercher (1999) are two important writers and they both created two important models of the tourism system. This study will concentrate on the non-linear, complex Neil Leiper (1979) model. This sub-section also highlighted how the tourist system applies the sociology of organization to study the interactions, growth, and effects of businesses within the industry. It also underlines the unpredictable nature of organizations and organizational liberty. The sub-part focuses on power, instability, and the complex nature of the tourism system. The section additionally highlights the value of competitiveness and gaining a competitive advantage in the travel and tourist sector, particularly in light of the influence of multinational companies. It underlines how zones of uncertainty and competitive advantage are related.

4. Tourist flows

In order to understand better the issue of tourist flow management, it is important to first look at the definition of tourist and tourist flows. Moreover, the following part will analyze and go deeper into the analysis and the different visions of tourist flows. It will also examine the various ways of collecting data in order to set up a strategy of the management of tourist flows.

4.1 Definition and History

Before analyzing and trying to understand tourist flow definition and history, it is important to define the term tourist. In the article *Flux et Aflux de Touristes: Les Instruments de Mesure, la Géomathématique de Flux* by Christophe Terrier (2006), the author offers a definition of a tourist. Based on the international definition used by the UN Statistical Commission, anybody who travels and spends at least one night away from their normal place of residence is considered a tourist (Terrier 2006, p. 48). This definition does not suggest any specific course of action. It includes travel for professional purposes in addition to vacations and exploration trips (*Ibid.*). It is important to note concerning the collection of data on tourist flows that the

construction of a system to measure tourist flows and collect systematic statistical data poses a lot of problems because tourism is multifaceted (*Ibid.* p. 47). C. Terrier (2006) does not develop the history of the term tourist flows but he decided to talk about the various possibilities to determine and have statistics on this type of flows. According to him the several ways of having data are the following:

- Territory-based measure and calculation: a survey of the local population (*Ibid.* p. 49);
- Changes of scale: give a more global or more precise view, depending on the statistics required (*Ibid.* p. 50);
- Tourist survey methods: a survey at home, tourists' homes, places of accommodation, borders, and places frequented (*Ibid.* p. 53-57);
- Measuring flows without direct survey: ticketing, transport (train, plane), road (radar, tolls), and mobile phone location (*Ibid.* p. 57-60).

All these types of data can be collected and used in order to set up a strategy for tourist flow management.

In the chapter *Tourist Flows and Spatial Behavior* from the book *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Tourism*, the authors develop another idea of tourist flows. B. McKercher and J. Zoltan (2014) explain the importance of understanding tourist flows it improves understanding of visitor behavior, the operationalization of motivations, and destination management techniques (McKercher and Zoltan 2014). A number of pragmatic difficulties with methodology have historically limited the study of movements (*Ibid.*). Consequently, simulated interdestination movement patterns became the main focus of research (*Ibid.*). Nevertheless, these limitations have since been removed by the development of Geographic Information System software and tracking devices for the Global Positioning System, allowing for analysis of movements at a much finer degree (*Ibid.*). Consequently, the focus now is on tourist flows that take place within or within the destination (*Ibid.*).

In short, C. Terrier (2006) decided to define a tourist as a person spending at least one night away from his home for multiple reasons. He also develops the difficulties of measuring tourist flows due to tourism's diverse nature. Moreover, he suggests several methods to analyze tourist flows such as local surveys, scale adjustments, tourist surveys, and indirect measurements. In the book *The Wiley*

Blackwell Companion to Tourism, the authors focus on understanding tourist flows in order to improve knowledge of tourist behavior, the management of destinations, and tourist flows.

4.2 Tourist flow management

According to IGI Global, tourist flows are a valuable source of data for managing tourism, services, and products as well as a tool for modifying it for tourists and inhabitants. The UNWTO claims that gathering information from travelers is crucial for “*planned management of tourism destinations*” (UNWTO⁷). They show how managing tourist flows and destination management are related, and how this helps prevent, say, duplicated efforts in destination marketing. The World Tourism Organization made the decision to compile tourist flow statistics into a dashboard. Five data sets are used to gather this information; “*heatmaps*” (UNWTO⁸), “*top 10 destinations*” (UNWTO⁹), which are equally based on source market and destination, and “*arrivals and overnight stays*” (UNWTO¹⁰). To ensure the most accurate evaluation possible, these points are combined. The topic of the evolution of tourist flows is examined in the article *Evolution of International tourist flows from 1995 to 2018: A Network Analysis Perspective* by S. Huang, Y. Shao, Y. Wang, M. Luo, and Z. Li (2020). They concluded from their data that, between 1995 and 2018, there was an increase in the number of international tourist flows. They begin by stating that tourist arrivals and tourism revenues are the two primary factors evaluated to measure tourist flows, but they would rather examine network density (Shao and al. 2020, p. 111). A significant portion of their analysis is based on the UNWTO findings. According to the UNWTO, arrivals reached 1.4 billion in 2018. This trend was also observed in the money generated by international tourism, which increased from US “\$485.178 billion in 1995 to US \$1.649 trillion in 2018 (UNWTO, 2020)” (*Ibid.* p. 1). The network density of international tourism has also

⁷ UNWTO, 2005, *Tourism Flows – Source markets and Destinations - Project powered by Telefónica*, <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/tourism-flows-source-markets-destinations>, consulted on: 04/05/2024.

⁸ UNWTO, 2005, *Tourism Flows – Source markets and Destinations - Project powered by Telefónica*, <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/tourism-flows-source-markets-destinations>, consulted on: 04/05/2024.

⁹ (*Ibid.*)

¹⁰ (*Ibid.*)

dramatically expanded; from 0.0108 to 0.0299 in 2018, it has doubled (*Ibid.* p. 5). In order to comprehend the significance of examining tourist flows, the writers clarify that it is beneficial for “*designing tourist packages, providing attractive combinations of attractions, proposing tourism guidance policies and marketing management*” (*Ibid.* p. 2). The objective of this research is to comprehend how tourism has changed over time and to make effective plans for its further growth. “*Globalization promotes international tourism around the world, whereas international tourism contributes to globalization*” (*Ibid.* p. 11) is one of the authors’ analysis findings. It is also crucial to keep in mind that worldwide events, particularly “*global public health crises*” (*Ibid.* p. 11), have an impact on the flow of foreign tourists (the 2008 financial crisis, the terrorist attacks of September 11...).

The writers made the decision to concentrate on the influence that nations and regions have over tourism flows; while they acknowledge that other factors also have a role, they do not develop them. The authors made the unusual decision to examine tourist flows from the standpoint of a network structure in addition to the arrival point of view. Considering the fact that this research covers a wide period, sufficient data was obtained for analysis. It is only a global picture, though, because they were only able to evaluate a portion of it because they chose to concentrate on the entire planet. Furthermore, they did not specify how the data was collected.

In conclusion, it is difficult to measure tourist flows due to the multitude of tourism's diverse nature. Moreover, there are a lot of different ways to examine statistics on tourist movement such as scale adjustment, indirect measurements, tourist surveys, and local surveys. To increase knowledge of visitor behavior, destination management, and tourist flows, it is crucial to understand tourist flows. The study *Evolution of International Tourist Flows from 1995 to 2018* projects that by 2018, there would be 1.4 billion more tourists visiting the world. The tourism network density as well. This study shows the importance of setting up a strategy of the management of tourist flows. Moreover, this understanding of tourist flows would help for better tourism planning and marketing. Despite certain data restrictions, the focus is on the impact of regions on tourism within a network structure.

5. The place of management of tourist flows in sustainable tourism and over-tourism

The following sentences can be found in B. Réau and S. Cousin's (2009) book *Sociologie du Tourisme*:

"Since it is "sustainable", tourism produces idyllic images of territories and nations, a utopian narrative of the "encounter" between self and other. Erasing the relationship of domination, the financial and political stakes, it is presented as a modality of economic and cultural exchange respectful of the translations and values of the targeted societies" (Cousin and Réau 2009, p. 100).

It is a contentious interpretation of sustainable tourism. This book claims that there are four different schools of thought on tourism, and more especially, sustainable tourism:

- Its heroes: people fight to protect the environment and global diversity (*Ibid. p. 100-101*);
- Its refractories: those who are too depressed or sedentary and activist worries about the impact on the environment (*Ibid. p. 101*);
- Its killjoys: those who as a result of their migrations, encounter inhospitality and break the tourist narrative of joyful hospitality (*Ibid. p. 101*);
- Its enemies: because of the ideals they represent, tourists are frequently attacked (*Ibid. p. 101*).

It also examines the difficulties associated with sustainable tourism and how the sector may be run sustainably and fairly.

Through the opinions of those who support, and others who view it as a problem, this section will define sustainable tourism. In order to establish a connection between the necessity of a policy for the management of tourist flows, it will also examine the analysis and definition of over-tourism.

5.1 Sustainable tourism: the development

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities” (UNWTO, 2005¹¹) is how the UNWTO defines sustainable tourism. Furthermore, they emphasize how crucial it is to note that *“all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments”* (UNWTO, 2005¹²) can be utilized for this kind of travel. It is crucial to note that they discuss the importance it is to strike a *“suitable balance”* between the many components (environmental, social, and economic) in order to ensure sustainability. The three pillars of sustainable tourism have the following primary goals, according to the UNWTO (UNWTO, 2005¹³):

- in terms of the environment, the objective is to preserve biodiversity and historical resources while utilizing them to the fullest extent possible;
- regarding the social dimension, their goal is to conserve the cultural authenticity of nearby communities by approaching their history and customs with an attitude of tolerance and understanding;
- for the economic pillar, the goals are to provide sustainable projects, aid in “poverty alleviation” and guarantee that socioeconomic gains are equitably scattered (to all stakeholders).

This UNWTO definition applies all aspects of sustainable development to the travel and tourism system. It demonstrates the value of authentic communities, host communities, the preservation of natural resources, and sustainable economic growth. However, they failed to create the sustainable tourism subcategories that are *“the ecological tourism (ecotourism), the green tourism, the soft tourism, the rural tourism and agro tourism, community tourism, equitable tourism, solidarity and responsible tourism etc”* (Juganaru, Juganaru et Anghel 2008, p. 798).

¹¹ UNWTO, 2005, *Sustainable development*, <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development>, 2005, consulted on: 03/05/2024.

¹² UNWTO, 2005, *Sustainable development*, <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development>, 2005, consulted on: 03/05/2024.

¹³ (*Ibid.*)

This paragraph will discuss Dorin Paul Bâc's (2014) essay, *The Emergence of Sustainable Tourism – a Literature Review*, which examines the topic of sustainable tourism's emergence. First of all, it is critical to identify the exact moment that sustainable tourism emerged, "some authors (Lane 2009; Weaver 2006) consider that the first ideas regarding sustainable tourism belonged to Jost Krippendorf from the University of Bern" (Bâc 2014, p. 133). These authors believe that J. Krippendorf's book *The Landscape Feathers* highlights the detrimental effects of tourism. Although the author does not discuss sustainable tourism, he does suggest an alternative strategy known as "soft tourism". Other writers claim that the rise of sustainable tourism "was the publication of the first issue of the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* in 1993" (Weaver 2007, p. 10; Hunter 2002, p. 3; Dodds and Butler 2008, p. 43; Bâc 2014, p. 133). In the opening paragraph of his section, Dorin Paul Bâc (2014) emphasizes the significance of striking a proper balance among the three pillars of sustainable development "in some cases, the economic benefits come hand in hand with negative environmental and social impacts" (*Ibid.* p. 131). He reveals the detrimental effects that the tourism sector's expansion (both for travelers and entrepreneurs) has on the local populations' natural resources and cultures. Several writers back up this claim, as this explanation shows D.P. Bâc (2014) "We have identified three types of impacts: economic, social and environmental, impacts that can be both positive and negative" (Fennell 2007; Mason 2006; Müller and Jansson (eds.) 2007; Bâc 2014). The author chose to compare the positive and negative aspects of tourism at a location in order to highlight the necessity for the development of sustainable tourism. It can have negative consequences such as economic inflation, an increase of undesirable habits, the loss of cultural identity and customs, the growth of tourism infrastructure, pollution, and seasonal employment... Positive effects include bringing in money for the host communities through tourism, fostering the learning of new languages and cultures, fostering cross-cultural exchanges, conserving and protecting tourist destinations, enhancing the standard of living in the community, building infrastructure for tourism, creating jobs, and more... The author claims that there are some defaults that have advantages. He says that sustainable tourism emerged as a result of this examination of the effects of tourism, both positive and particularly negative "a new form of tourism emerged - sustainable tourism, as an alternative to

the classic mass tourism" (*Ibid.* p. 132). Eliminating negative effects was the goal behind the rise of this new kind of tourism. The author of the article highlights a significant statement made by the writer and director David Weaver "*the main difference between the old and the new form of tourism is moving the focus from the wellbeing of the tourist to the wellbeing of the host community*" (D. B. Weaver (ed.) 1998, p. 31; Bâc 2014, p. 133). D.P. Bâc (2014) uses this quotation to highlight the benefits of concentrating on the local population as the primary objective of sustainable tourism. Additionally, he notes that tourism is now seen as a component of sustainable development as a result of Agenda 21, which was written in 1992 and signed by 182 heads of state. The article's author discusses the development of sustainable tourism and emphasizes its benefits as well as its historical background. He spends a lot of time discussing how sustainable tourism benefits tourism as a whole. However, there is also the killjoy of this soft sort of tourism, in regard to B. Réau and S. Cousin's (2009) theory in the book *Sociology of Tourism*. The author cites a refractory notion "*Sustainable tourism was also considered "intellectually arrogant, expensive, elitist and useless"*" (Lane 2008, p. 20; Bâc 2014, p. 133). He clarifies that the government, the local authorities, and the media rejected the idea of tourism as "*an impossible dream*" (*Ibid.*). This article's limit is that D.P. Bâc (2014) does not give the refractories' viewpoint enough weight while analyzing this tourism concept. Nevertheless, his remarks align with the UNWTO's principles.

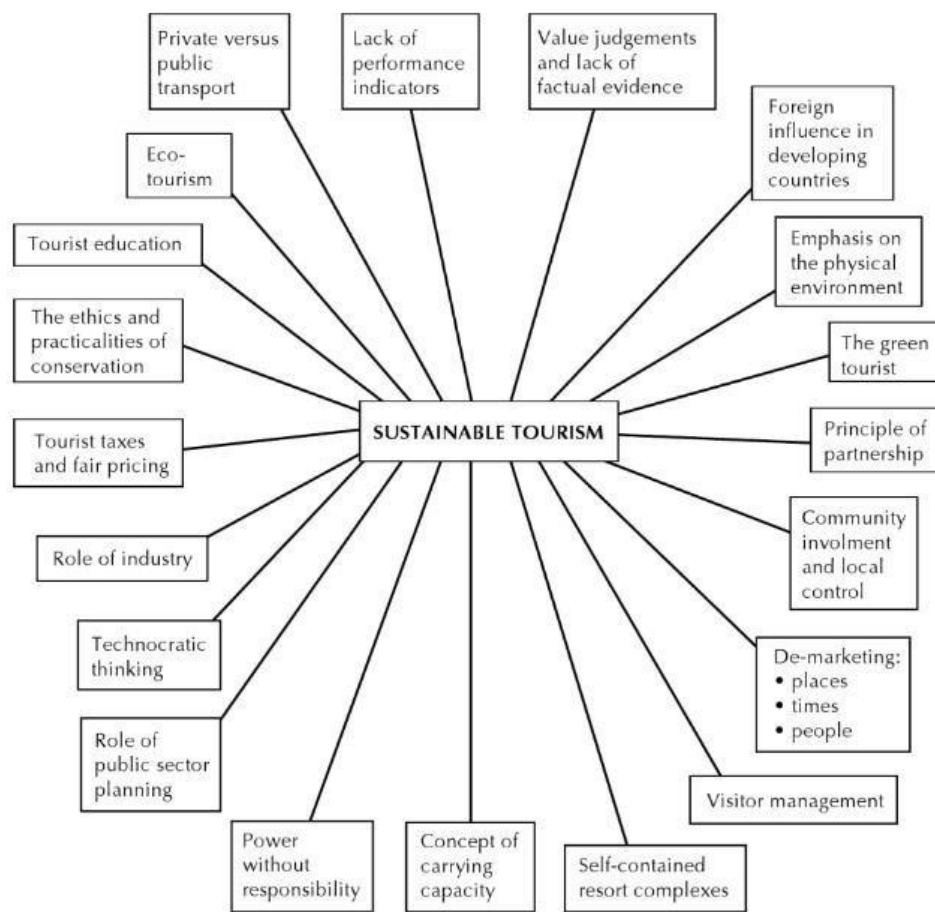


Figure 3: The key issues in the sustainable tourism debate by John Swarbrooke, 1999, p 25

The above figure is taken from John Swarbrooke's book (1999), *Sustainable Tourism Management*. His goal was to provide a concise overview of every topic discussed in relation to sustainable tourism. He discusses all the contentious topics, such as ecotourism, collaboration, equitable pricing, and the function of industry... He begins by outlining each of the figure's arguments and continues by saying "*sustainable tourism debate often appears to be based more on value judgments than on empirical research or other factual evidence*" (Swarbrooke 1999, p. 24). The author demonstrates the refractories' perspectives on sustainable tourism while doing a thorough analysis of the subject.

The analysis aids in comprehending the background of sustainable tourism as well as its current significance. It demonstrates the importance of the economic,

environmental, and social three pillars. It considers the significance of custom, just distribution, and preservation of the environment... Understanding the refractories' interpretation of this idea is also helpful, which makes sense given that it is a relatively new topic. This increasingly common form of tourism takes the issue of tourist flows seriously and can provide significant assistance in managing it.

5.2 Over-tourism

The exact opposite of responsible tourism is over-tourism (Goodwin 2011, p. 1). Akrivi Vagena (2021) uses the European Parliament's concept of over-tourism as a guide to define it in her article, *Overtourism: Definition and Impact*. They define it as an area where the effects of tourism surpass political, social, physical, ecological, and economic capacities in certain places or periods of time (Vagena 2021, p. 1). The author goes on to discuss the negative impacts that an increase in tourism can have on the environment and the local population, which is another aspect of over-tourism (*Ibid.*). For example, it might result in significant damage to the environment, the quality of the air and water, and the destination itself. It can also lead to social marginalization and economic inequality in the host towns. She clarifies that although the phase over-tourism is relatively new, the subject has been studied for many years. "*A degraded tourist experience, overloaded infrastructure, damage to nature, or threats to culture and heritage*" (*Ibid.* p. 2) are additional factors that contribute to the problem of over-tourism. The tourism industry views over-tourism as something that is constantly expanding but poses a serious concern to destinations worldwide. Therefore, there are numerous instances that demonstrate how the development of excessive tourism is causing a loss of authenticity "*The culture and natural resources of a location are in peril, the increase of the cost of living and the property and the adversely impacted the standard of living*" (*Ibid.*). While over-tourism still accounts for a small portion of travel destinations, the author goes on to note that "*the effects [of over tourism] are potentially severe, to a degree that destinations lose their primary functions and appeal*" (*Ibid.* p. 5). She makes an effort to offer solutions for this issue. It is an important problem that won't be resolved quickly; everyone in the travel and tourism sector has to be involved in the search

for a solution. The author claims that in order to address the issue of over-tourism, “*It takes organization and a lot of effort and patience*” (*Ibid.*). The author provides an accurate critique of over-tourism, but she skips over digging further into the potential economic causes of the problem or offering any viable solutions. Once people are aware of the negative effects of over-tourism, the following examination will highlight its causes.

The previous study is completed in Harold Goodwin’s (2017) paper, *The Challenge of Overtourism*. The author begins by drawing a comparison between mass tourism and over-tourism, explaining that conflicts exist between visitors and locals and that these conflicts have turned into a “*local political issue*” (Goodwin 2017, p. 1). From a historical perspective, the term “overtourism” was first used as a hashtag on Twitter in August 2012, and it gained popularity over the following few years. In contrast to the previously explained paper, H. Goodwin (2017) discusses economics and develops it as one of the causes of excessive tourism. “*11% of global consumption is by people of tourists*” (*Ibid.*). A few reasons for excessive tourism are mentioned by the author (*Ibid. p. 6*):

- The reduced cost of travel;
- The decline in housing prices;
- The “distribution strategies” (*Ibid.*), which involve placing visitors in residential areas that are less visited, increasing tensions and proximity between the two groups;
- Travel during certain seasons;
- Tourism marketing agencies advertise well-known locations since they are more effective and require less funding for promotion;
- The transport sector is now more significant than a decade ago.

The article explores the numerous causes of over-tourism, in contrast to the last one, which concentrated on the effects of over-tourism on host communities and the environment. This analysis of the potential problems caused by tourism is comprehensive and well done. Furthermore, the author notes that tourism organizations may contribute to the issue, particularly through their marketing efforts, but he did not identify which kind of organizations.

As the two articles above demonstrate, tourism has the potential to seriously adversely affect both the environment and the local population. Because it may be detrimental to locals, creating a robust local tourism policy is crucial. Understanding the reasons for over-tourism is essential to developing this policy and establishing the framework for tourism management. H. Goodwin (2017) explains that this issue is the fault of the tourism system.

To summarize, according to the UNWOT, sustainable tourism is travel that takes into account the requirements of all stakeholders while taking into account the economic, social, and environmental effects. The objective is to create a balance between equitable economic advantages, cultural authenticity, and environmental protection through all types of tourism. In order to promote positive effects like economic growth and cultural exchange while reducing negative effects like cultural loss, economic inflation, and environmental damage, sustainable tourism was born. While highlighting a change in focus from visitor well-being, Bâc (2014) acknowledges criticism of sustainable tourism as elitist and unrealistic. In this subpart, an overview of subjects like ecotourism, cooperation, fair pricing, and industry roles is given by J. Swarbrooke (1999). He points out that value judgments, as opposed to actual data, are frequently used in discussions about sustainable tourism. He examines many viewpoints on sustainable tourism in great detail.

Moreover, over-tourism develops when traveler numbers surpass a place's ability to handle them all, leading to pollution, social exclusion, environmental damage, and economic disparities. While she doesn't address economic causes or particular remedies, Akrivi Vagena (2021) highlights the detrimental effects on local residents and the environment and suggests coordinated, business-wide efforts by the travel sector to address the problem. This sub-section reveals that Harold Goodwin (2017) attributes over-tourism to economic issues such as lower travel expenses, falling housing costs, and deliberate visitor dispersion. He mentions that the term became well-known in 2012 and highlights the importance of tourism marketing as well as the increasing transport industry, but he doesn't specify which organizations are responsible.

6. Conclusion of the analysis of the existing Literature review

The literature review part went through several important topics in order to have a global overview of the tourism system with specific attention to the management of tourist flows and the importance of Destination Management Companies. The first sub-part developed the concept of the tourist industry and helped to understand better the tourism history.

The further research helped to acknowledge the difference between the tourism industry and the tourism system. The tourism system and moreover Neil Leiper's (1979) vision of it will be the base of this study. Neil Leiper's (1979) model is followed by P. Violier's (1999) vision with the concept of a complex network and non-linear system. This sub-section elaborated on the manner in which the tourism system uses the sociology of organization to examine the interaction, development, and effects of enterprises working within the sector. Power, instability, and the complex framework of the tourist sector are the main topics of this subsection. The importance of competition and obtaining a competitive advantage in the travel and tourism sector is also highlighted in this subpart. It highlights the connection between zones of uncertainty and competitive advantage.

The third sub-part explains how measuring tourist flows can be challenging because of the variety of tourism, but it also highlights the various approaches that can be used to look at statistics concerning the movement of tourists, including scale adjustments, indirect measurements, tourist surveys, and local surveys. It is essential to comprehend tourist flows in order to advance knowledge of visitor behavior, destination management, and tourism flows. Developing a strategy for managing tourist flows is crucial, as demonstrated by the study *Evolution of International Tourist Flows from 1995 to 2018*.

The last sub-section examines sustainable tourism and over-tourism, it also shows the influence of these types of tourism on the management of tourist flows. Through all forms of tourism, sustainable tourism aims to achieve a balance between fair economic benefits, cultural authenticity, and environmental preservation. The author, Bâc (2014) admits that criticism of sustainable tourism is unrealistic and arrogant. This subsection's second section looks at over-tourism, which happens when a destination fails to welcome as many visitors as possible.

This can cause pollution, social isolation, damage to the environment, and financial inequalities. In order to address the issue, Akrivi Vagena (2021) suggests coordinated actions by the tourism sector as a whole, highlighting the negative impacts on both the environment and local communities. In this subsection, Harold Goodwin explains how economic factors including decreasing costs for transportation and accommodation and strategic visitor dispersion lead to over-tourism. He observes that the expression gained popularity in 2012 and underlines the importance of marketing for tourism as well as to the growing transportation sector, but he doesn't specify which organizations are responsible.

Chapter 2: Moloney and Kelly: A Destination Management Company part of the transnational corporation Abbey Group

The global objective of this master's dissertation is to have a better understanding of the impact of Destination Management Companies on the management of tourist flows. In order to make a more concrete and deeper analysis, this case study is based on a Destination Management Company and a transnational company based in Dublin.

Within this chapter, the aims are to have a concrete example of a travel company and understand its implications and possibilities on tourist flow management. This chapter will be divided into a few parts. The first part, which will develop the company Abbey Group will be divided into several sub-parts. The first one will introduce the Abbey Group company and will be followed by the second sub-part which will describe the Moloney and Kelly division. The other subparts will be centered on the previous division of Abbey Group. It will first develop a complete analysis of the internal environment of the company. In the second part, the external environment will be analyzed. The last subpart will be a conclusion and final analysis of the Destination Management Company, it will be mostly centered on a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat) analysis.

1. General introduction of a complete transnational company based in Ireland: Abbey Group

This case study will be focused on Abbey Group, an established Irish company that has developed personalized travel for 46 years. The study will be focus more particularly on Moloney and Kelly which is a division of Abbey Group. Moloney and Kelly is a Destination Management Company (DMC) specializing in luxury travel in Ireland and the United Kingdom. This travel design company was founded in 1970 and needs to constantly reinvent its various trips. This company

works with several travel agencies that are focused on the same customer sector, but all have specific needs. The below paragraph will develop the need to adapt each trip to the customers while considering the limits of destinations.

The first subpart will describe the Abbey Group company to understand the importance of this organization within the tourism industry. It will also develop the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility within the company. The second subpart will introduce the luxury division of Abbey Group: Moloney and Kelly.

2. Abbey Group: A collection of travel companies based in Ireland and the United Kingdom

2.1 A brief history of the company

Abbey Group is an Irish company founded in 1978 by Jerry Leahy and Brian McColgan, it was initially called “Abbey Tours”. Abbey Tours was first established as a subdivision of Abbey Travel (an Irish travel agency offering worldwide travel). Abbey Tours aimed to develop the company with a division specializing in leisure tourism for individual and group travel in Ireland. All over the years, the company has evolved, bought other brands (O’mara Travel), gained independence, opened new offices in the United Kingdom, and changed its name to Abbey Group in 2016. In 2013, they decided to develop their offers by buying another company “Moloney and Kelly”. Thanks to this acquisition, they now have a luxury brand that aims to develop their customer target. After several acquisitions, they decided to make a huge rebranding in 2016, they changed their logo, their name, and their graphical design.

In 2024, they now have offices in London, Edinburgh, and the head office in Dublin, they also have a lot of employees working from all over the world (France, Portugal, Brazil...) ¹⁴.

¹⁴ Abbey Group, 2024 “Welcome to Abbey Group”, *Power point - Introduction presentation*, p.6

Abbey Group is divided into three separate companies, all these divisions have specific goals, and they aim to develop the global company:

- a) Abbey Ireland and UK: It is the first division of Abbey Group, it was created 46 years ago. They established offices in Scotland in 2008, and in London in 2015. It is the largest inbound tour operator, which is a Business-to-Business (B2B) division. They are working with over 1500 travel partners in 60 different countries worldwide. With over 125 employees in Ireland and 60 employees in the UK, Abbey Ireland, and the United Kingdom is the major part of Abbey Group.
- b) Abbey Conference and Event: It was founded in 1988, and are “multi-award-winning International Conference Organizer”¹⁵. They produce events in Ireland and the United Kingdom and in different formats: in-person, virtual, and hybrid. The Abbey Conference and Event division has managed around 30 to 40 conferences in 2023. Their client list is composed of a lot of different types of companies such as sports teams, universities, foundations, and medical companies...¹⁶
- c) Moloney and Kelly: It was established in 1970 and acquired by Abbey Group in July 2013. Moloney and Kelly is a luxury destination management company for groups and individual travel, 90% of their clients are from the United States. With 26 employees, this division is the smallest of the group.

The global company of Abbey Group has a turnover of 77 million euros for 2022 and, 111 million euros for 2023. The company is constantly growing as proved by these numbers.

The Abbey Group company is constantly working on its future objective and trying to improve its turnover, it is what they proved and developed during its annual kick-off conference. To attend to their goals, they analyze the market and trends. For 2024, they decided to focus on five major trends. The first one is the increase of sustainability demand, and the importance of the environmental impact for the

¹⁵ Abbey Group. *Abbey Confernece*. <https://www.abbeyconference.ie/abbeyconference> (consulted on the 09/04/2024)

¹⁶ (*Ibid.*)

customer. The second one is the growing demand for one specific activity which is Golf. In the third position, there is the importance for the client of having a speedy response. The fourth trend is pet-friendly trips. The last trend analyzed by the company is the connectivity, clients are looking for delivery (Abbey Group 2024).

2.2 The company's organization

The direction of Abbey Group is now divided among 8 people. They all share the same percentage of the company's shares and all eight have managerial roles within Abbey Group.

Abbey Group has a total of 210 employees with around 80 trainees per year and an average age of 35 years. It is also an international company, there is a total of 20 nationalities within its employees. The Abbey Group company is composed of 8 executive directors, 3 non-executive directors, and 33 managers across the group. There is a great possibility of evolution within the company, and they focus on their employees and try to develop their capacity thanks to training. The following numbers show that it is a great strategy, 80% of the management team were promoted from inside and 16% of Abbey Group employees are former interns¹⁷.

Moreover, the company works with a constant rotation of interns. Their objective is to employ interns to be able to manage the high season. They offer a multitude of different posts such as human resources intern, financial intern, conference and event interns, Foreign Individual Travel (FIT) intern... These interns are dispatched in the whole company and aim to help the current staff prepare for the high season. As said above and highlighted in the Figure 1, the company is divided into three major parts, Abbey Ireland and UK, Conference and Events, and Moloney and Kelly. The first division, Abbey Ireland and UK is split into two offices, one in Ireland (Dublin) and one in the United Kingdom (Edinburg). Each office is divided into several services that all have specific missions and help to keep the company running smoothly. The second division is Conference and Event. This part includes the Meetings, Incentives, Conferencing, Exhibition tourism (MICE), the Event, and

¹⁷ Abbey Group, 2024 "Welcome to Abbey Group", *Power point - Introduction presentation*, p. 7-21

the Conference service. The last division is Moloney and Kelly which is also present in the UK office and is split into two, the leisure, and the incentive department.

The Figure 4, *The organigram of Abbey Group Company* shows that the FIT (Foreign Individual Travel) and Group department are the two services that are present in several divisions. They are first in the Abbey Ireland and UK (in Dublin and in Edinburg) where they are split into geographical sectors which help to have a better organization. They are also present in Moloney and Kelly, where they are focused on the luxe market.

2.3 Mission, values, and rewards

The Abbey Group company is a huge company with several divisions and five major mission statements. The first one is to develop real partnerships with their employees, suppliers, and clients. The goal of this real partnership development is to increase loyalty. The second mission is linked to well-being at work, the objective is to implement a positive working environment and to make sure that this environment satisfies the three divisions of the company. The third one is to set up training for employees to ensure the best quality for their clients. This mission aims to increase each member of staff's skills and level of awareness. The fourth one is to offer each customer innovative and creative products. This is an important statement for which every employee needs to be aware of the innovation in the tourism sector. The last mission is to work with clients and supplier partners in a fair, efficient, and professional manner. This aims to show a professional image of the company¹⁸.

Abbey Group is a company that attaches great importance to CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). Which means that they focus their values on the social and environmental. The six values of the company are the following:

- Respect;
- Integrity;
- team spirit;
- excellence;
- passion;
- open communication.

As said above, the Abbey Group company is focused on developing its CSR to grow its economy while respecting the environment, promoting social progress, and considering its territory. One of the proofs that Abbey Group is working on this aspect is recognition. As is proven below, Abbey Group relies heavily on recompenses to increase its recognition¹⁹.

¹⁸ Abbey Group, 2024 "Welcome to Abbey Group", *Power point - Introduction presentation*, p. 8

¹⁹ (*Ibid.* p. 11)

- a) Best Professional Conference Organizer: Abbey Conference and Events won this prize three consecutive years from 2016. They also won several other recognitions for different events organized.
- b) Ireland's Leading Destination Management Company: Moloney and Kelly has been chosen by the World Travel Awards agency for this special prize for both 2022 and 2023.
- c) Great Place to Work: The Abbey Group received the Great Place to Work prize for 2023 in the United Kingdom and Ireland, this certification is based on employees' reviews and satisfaction.
- d) Best Managed Companies in Ireland: Abbey Group has been named Deloitte's Best Managed Company and maintained this status for 14 consecutive years.
- e) International Operator of the Year 2018 by Scotland's Heritage.
- f) Leading Experts in Luxury Travel: In 2017 Moloney and Kelly won this prize deserved by the Irish Enterprise Awards.
- g) Employer Excellence certification in 2024.

2.4 The luxury division of Abbey Group: Moloney and Kelly

Moloney and Kelly (M&K) is an Irish Destination Management Company (DMC) specializing in luxury leisure groups, individual travel, and incentives travel in Ireland and the United Kingdom. It has been founded in 1970 and acquired by Abbey Group in July 2013. This division is managed by the general director: John Healy. When it was bought out, M&K was already an old and well-implemented company. Because of this aspect, the fame of the company, and its customer list, the Abbey Group decided to keep the original name of Moloney and Kelly to take less risk with the rebranding.

The team of Moloney and Kelly is composed of less than 30 employees with the huge majority based in Dublin. They are mostly divided into two groups, the

incentive team which aims to develop products and projects and to manage sales. The second group is the luxury travel team, which is mostly divided into two parts, individual travel (between 1 to 6 people in a long-term contract), and group travel (more than 6 people in a long-term contract)²⁰.

Moloney and Kelly have several types of clients which will be developed in the following parts. The principal market targets are travel agencies and tour operators, and the secondary market target is mostly customers from the United States.

The importance and the efficiency of the company have been recognized thanks to several recompenses and labels which are the following²¹:

- a) We are Good To Go: It was a certification mostly used in the United Kingdom during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the company is in line with safety and regulations. This label is no longer used in the tourism and hospitality field²².
- b) Safety Charter – Covid-19: It represents the Ireland Safety Charter to ensure that the company set up action to face the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike the We're Good To Go label, the Safety Charter – COVID-19 is made for companies within the Republic of Ireland²³.
- c) Green Tourism Bronze: It is an accreditation that is part of the green tourism certification program. This label aims to prove to the clients that the company is working on its environmental impact and responsibility²⁴.
- d) Ireland's Leading Destination Management Company: This price is awarded by the World Travel Award and aims to reward a destination management company for its quality, services, outstanding performance, and contribution to the tourism industry. Moloney and Kelly's company has won this price for three consecutive years²⁵.

²⁰ Moloney and Kelly. *Our team*, <https://www.moloneykelly.com/our-team> (consulted on the 05/04/2024)

²¹ Moloney and Kelly. *About*, <https://www.moloneykelly.com> (consulted on the 05/04/2024)

²² Visit Britain. *UK businesses registered "We're Good To Go" get global "Safe Travels" stamp*, <https://goodtogo.visitbritain.com/your-business-good-to-go-england> (consulted on the 06/04/2024)

²³ Trade Ireland. *Island of Ireland Safety Charters*, <https://trade ireland.com/TourismIrelandTrade/media/Covid-19-Messaging/Safety-Charter-July-2020.pdf> (consulted on the 06/04/2024)

²⁴ Green Tourism. *About us*, <https://www.green-tourism.com/about-us> (consulted on the 06/04/2024)

²⁵ Abbey Group, 2024 "Welcome to Abbey Group", *Power point - Introduction presentation*, p. 11

Moloney and Kelly is a Destination Management Company which is defined in the article *Tourism Destination Management Company (DMC): A Central Actor of a Destination as a Milieu* as being a “general contractor that possesses the skills, resources and relationships needed to achieve the goals set, and that designs an offering; engages and manages subcontractors; links up with external agencies to obtain licences, insurance, etc.; manages financing; and secures the continuous supervision within and over the entire project management” (Magaš et Bašan 2007). This company decided to work on a business-to-business-to-customer basis which means that they are only selling products to professionals and then these professionals are in direct contact with customers. The client needs to pass through a travel agency or a tour operator to buy a travel package from Moloney and Kelly. They are working with several travel agencies and tour operators all in the luxury firms and with the prime target as United States customers. All these stakeholders are transnational companies, working with companies all around the world in order to offer services around the planet.

3. First overview of the management of tourist flow within Abbey Group company

The Abbey Group company is a large travel company that has developed itself all over the years. The company evolved and developed its services to meet the growing needs of its customers.

The augmentation of its services demands from customers, and the number of stakeholders lead to the need for the evaluation of the tourist flow management. The major party of services of the company are directly or indirectly concerned by this issue as it is possible to see in the Figure 5, *The services involved in the management of tourist flows management within Abbey Group Company*. These services for example FIT, and Group department, are directly in contact with agencies and tour operators who have a direct impact on tourist flows. Some other services need to be included in the process of tourist flow management as

Accommodation, Contracting, and Product, because they do have an indirect impact on it. As they have the ability to choose the stakeholders the company is working with; they can have a significant impact.

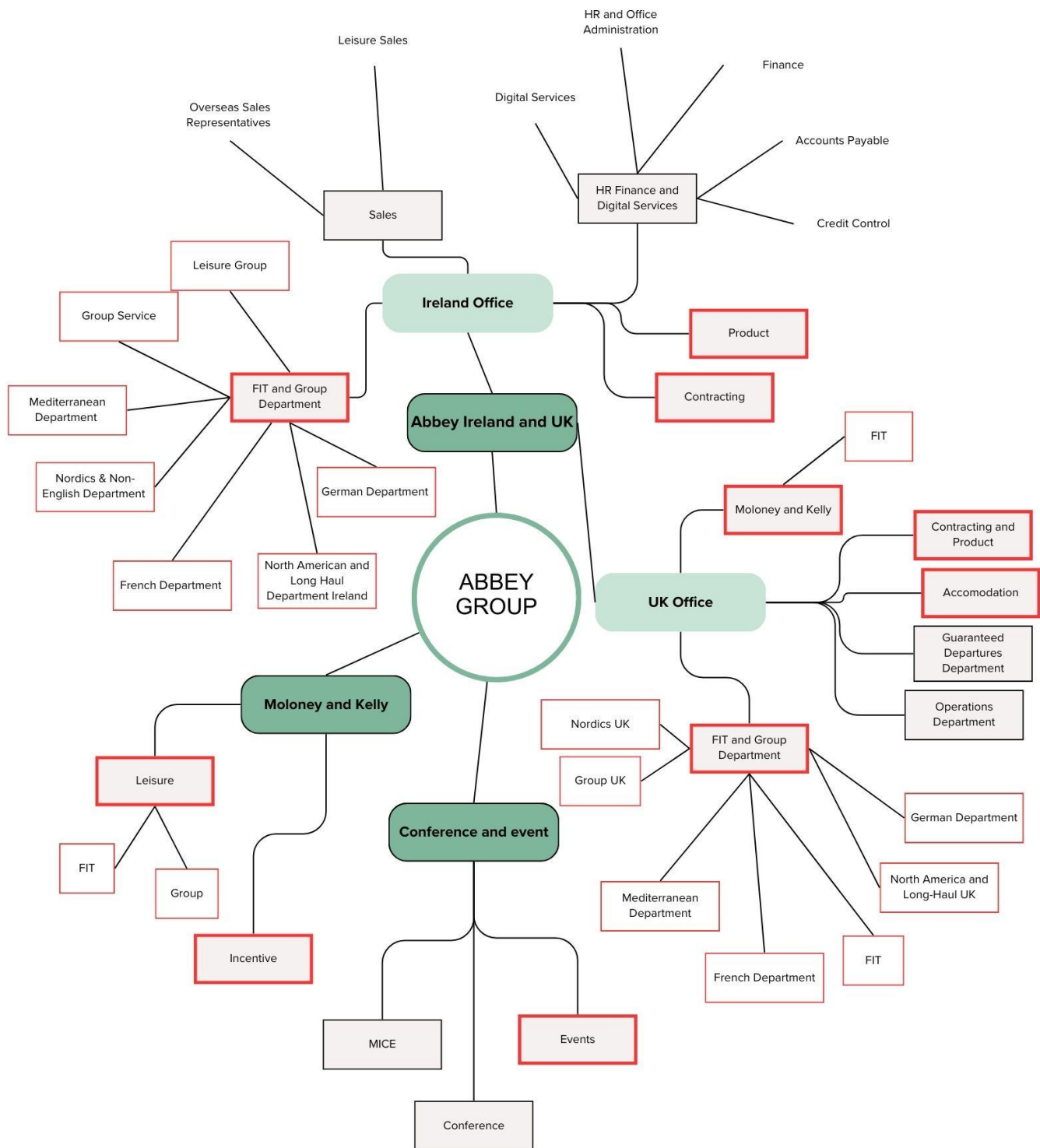


Figure 5: The services involved in the management of tourist flows management within Abbey Group Company (created by Alexandra Quintard)

4. An internal analysis of the DMC Moloney and Kelly

The internal analysis of the company Moloney and Kelly will analyze the different resources needed by the company. The first one will be human resources, then material resources, financial resources and finish with the client target of the company. This analysis will help to understand better the company and to do the global analysis which will be a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) table.

4.1 Human resources

The Moloney and Kelly team is composed of 26 employees who are helped by several trainees throughout the year. The company is split into two offices, one in Dublin and one in Edinburg. It is led by two people, one managing director and one director of operations. In the bellowing positions, there is the incentive composed of three people (director of sales, head of product development, and senior project manager) and the luxury travel team composed of six people. All these teams are helped by other people working in different positions such as FIT (Foreign Individual Travel) or Group agents.

4.2 Material resources

The company has only one office based in the head office of Abbey Group in Dublin. Their office has all the necessities to ensure every employee can perform well at work. Moloney and Kelly loan a computer for each employee with the Microsoft Office package included and two computer screens to ensure they can work efficiently. Moreover, the company is working on one software to make their booking: Tour Plan. This software is made for Tour operators and Destination

Management Companies to help them with sales, back-office systems, and bookings²⁶.

4.3 Financial resources

To understand the importance of Moloney and Kelly company within the tourism industry, it is important to analyze its turnover, and to understand completely its business and how do they make benefits. The company is making contracts with major tourist attractions, hotels, and other amenities for tourists to have lower prices and make profits. Depending on the travel agency or tour operators, the number of people, the amount of time, the number of activities... the price and margin can differ greatly. Some agencies work with packages and fixed rates, and the DMC needs to adapt the package with the hotels to align with it and make sure to make a profit. As explained above, the global turnover of Abbey Group for 2023 represents a total of 111 million euros.

4.4 The client target

As said above, the direct customers of the DMC Moloney and Kelly are luxury tour operators and luxury travel agencies. There is around 10 companies working with M&K. These companies are mostly directly based in the United States. The indirect customers of M&K are American people, they represent the huge majority with around 90%. The other indirect clients are mostly from Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

²⁶ Tour plan. *Tour plan*, <https://www.tourplan.com/> (consulted on the 07/04/2024)

5. An external analysis of the DMC Moloney and Kelly

This external analysis of the Destination Management Company Moloney and Kelly will focus on its competitors. It will first develop the main competitors and then the secondary competitors. This study will help to have a better overview of the company and to do the final analysis thanks to the SWOT table.

5.1 Competitors: DMC in Ireland, a competitive market

In order to analyze the external environment of the company, it is important to examine and understand the importance of the competition. A competitor is any group, company, or individual that faces competition in the business sector, particularly regarding services, products, branding, sales, and marketing strategies. As the dictionary Oxford explains, a competitor is “*a person or an organization that competes against others, especially in business*”²⁷. Analyzing competitors allows us to have a better understanding of the tourism system norms, identify unexplored niche markets, and track the company's progress.

5.1.1 Main competitors

Moloney and Kelly have a few competitors that can be considered as main competitors. They are all Destination Management Companies with the same objective and attracting the same type of customers. These competitors are also in competition with Moloney and Kelly for several rewards. These four competitors will be studied and compared in the table below which will help to understand and analyze the global strengths and weaknesses of M&K.

- a) Competitor 1: It is a Destination Management Company founded in 1989 based in Ireland near Cork. This company mostly focuses on group travel and defines itself as one of the major and most experienced Ireland DMCs. They offer several tours for different types of tourism: Special interest tours, leisure tours, and incentive travel. As for Moloney and Kelly, this company is

²⁷ Oxford Learner's Dictionaries. *Competitor*,
<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/competitor> (consulted on the 01/07/2024)

a world travel award winner. Discover Ireland Tour is also part of the National Tour Association operating in North America and a founding member of the organization Agricultural Tour Operator International. They are offering only uniquely designed itineraries for clients.

- b) Competitor 2: It is an inbound tourism operator DMC founded over 30 years ago in 1989. The company is based in three strategic locations which are Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Australia. They aim to offer Irish travel to their clients. They offer several services which are: customized tours, group tours, special interest tourists, and corporate and incentive travel. They also offer personalized travel with high-quality thanks to their local experts. This company also offers conferences and corporate events.
- c) Competitor 3: It is a travel company specializing in bus travel and tour operators. The company was established in 1971 in Dublin, they are now based in Ireland, Scotland, and England. The company developed itself with a new division which is the DMC part. They create unique travel tours and 70 deluxe touring coaches.
- d) Competitor 4: It is one of the leading luxury DMC corporations and incentives in Ireland. They offer Ireland and Scotland trips to their client. It is not just a DMC, they also offer a service of event management. This DMC was founded in 2017, but its CEO worked for over 40 years in the travel industry.

5.1.2 Secondary competitors

The Moloney and Kelly DMC also have some secondary competitors. These indirect competitors also need to be analyzed and studied. They can represent a future threat to the company. They are either travel companies, DMCs, or tour enterprises that attract the same customers as Moloney and Kelly.

- a) Competitor a: It is a private travel company based in Killarney and founded in 1998. Such as for Moloney and Kelly, is a destination management company, that designs travel for groups. They specialize in group travel in Ireland and offer seven trips with various durations and thematic.
- b) Competitor b: It is a tour company in North Ireland in the United Kingdom. Unlike Moloney and Kelly, they are specialized in corporate tours. They offer four different tours with specific themes (golf, Belfast tour, private car tour,

and walking tours). All these different tours are only one-day tours but are targeting the same indirect clients as Moloney and Kelly.

- c) Competitor c: This is a travel company which develops tours around the island. This company was created over 50 years ago in 1971 and has its offices in the western part of the island in Limerick. They offer a large choice of package types with various themes and duration.
- d) Competitor d: It is a tour company. This company offers several tours all around the island and offers custom and private tours. This company won a lot of prizes over the years, from Tripadvisor to, the World Travel Award...

5.2 Analysis of the Major Competitors

The following table (Figure 6) aims to analyze and compare the four major competitors developed above. The first column represents a really short analysis of the company Moloney and Kelly, it highlights one of the major strengths of seniority. Moreover, the table also shows the price difference and underlines the fact that even if Moloney and Kelly have a large scale of rates, it is still one of the most expensive DMCs within the competitor set. This expensiveness is explained by the high quality of services. Moloney and Kelly is not the only DMC of the competitor set to be part of a group, which represents a real advantage.

Feature / Company	Moloney and Kelly	Competitor1	Competitor2	Competitor3	Competitor4
Founded on:	1970	1989	1989	1971	2017
Strengths	-Founded 50 years ago -Rewards -Part of Abbey Group	-Founded the Agricultural Tour Operator International -large choice of tours	-A world presence with three offices -Diversity of services	-Part of a Group -Offer 70 luxury touring	-Offer trips to Ireland and to Scotland
Weaknesses	-Only one major indirect customer type -many intermediates	-Dependence on operational cost and external factors	-No example of their travel is available on their website	-A lot of different activities -the operational costs of buses	-a recent company in a competitive market
Pricing	Around €1000 to €5000 per person for a package or €5000 to €10000 for custom and private tours	Large difference: Day tour (€50 to €150 per person), multiple day tour (€500 to €2000 per person)	From €2000 to €10000 per person for personalized travel	The rates vary a lot according to the service offered.	Only personalized trips with personalized rates
Products	Package and personalized trips	Personalized trips and Package	Personalized trips Conferences and Event	Personalized and special interest tour Coach hire Private transfers Event transportation and management	Trips to Ireland and Scotland Personalized trip Event Management

Figure 6: Major competitor analysis table

6. Final and general analysis of the DMC Abbey Group with particular attention on Moloney and Kelly

6.1 SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) One of the first DMCs in Ireland b) Ireland's leading Destination Management Company c) Rewards d) Long-standing relationship with customers and suppliers e) Preferred rates, more flexibility, and more availabilities from suppliers f) Multiple positioning g) Multiple travel agencies and tour operators h) Package and personalized trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Only one major indirect customer type b) Luxury positioning c) The age of the customers d) Many intermediaries between the customer and M&K e) Employee turnover f) Lack of methodology and communication about the management of tourist flows g) Lack of communication on the negative impact of over-tourism
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Diversification of its customers thanks to a variety of tour operators and travel agencies b) Large variety of suppliers c) Depends on Abbey Group and its reputation d) "Ireland's Leading Destination Management Company" reward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The pandemic and war impact on tourism b) The inflation c) Growing environmental issues and concern d) Large number of competitors e) Depends on Abbey Group and its reputation f) Lack of adequate hotel accommodation

6.2 Analysis of the SWOT as a conclusion of the complexity of the Destination Management Company Abbey Group

The table in the subsection above highlights the assets and limitations of the Abbey Group Company thanks to an analysis of the internal and external environment. As explained, it is a destination management company composed of three travel companies. This company has a lot of strengths and opportunities that can be used to develop its work but it needs to be aware of its weaknesses and the threats. The table above shows Abbey Group's main issues and challenges in the current environment with particular attention to the DMC Moloney and Kelly.

The internal environment (Strengths and weaknesses)

Moloney and Kelly which is part of Abbey Group is one of the oldest Destination Management Companies in Ireland since it was founded in 1970 and the oldest one (Joe O'Reilly Ireland) was created in 1966²⁸. The M&K company is one of the most established and well-respected organizations in its sector in Ireland. This indicates that customers are familiar with the business and the company has established a number of enduring long-standing relationships and agreements with customers who consistently choose it as their DMC for travels in Ireland. Moreover, this company is well-recognized thanks to multiple rewards, for example, the "Ireland's Leading Destination Management Company" for three consecutive years²⁹. Because of their loyalty and reconnaissance, suppliers will also provide Abbey Group preferential rates and make extra efforts to be more flexible and available to the company. They also have a positioning advantage by only focusing on a few markets such as luxury, and incentive travel, which means that they can be considered as an expert in their sector. Moreover, Abbey Group works with a multitude of Travel agencies and Tour operators which helps them to bring in new customers. They also offer different types of travel, which can either be a package or personalized trips which can persuade more customers to choose them.

²⁸ Joe O'Reilly Ireland DMC. *About us*, <https://www.jorireland.com/en/about-ireland-dmc> (consulted on the 30/05/2024)

²⁹ World Travel Awards. *Ireland's Leading Destination Management Company 2024*, <https://www.worldtravelawards.com/award-irelands-leading-destination-management-company-2024> (consulted on the 30/05/2024)

Moreover, they diversify their business thanks to the Event and Conference division of the company. That could help to attract different clients

One of the major weaknesses of DMC Moloney and Kelly is their lack of diversity concerning their type of customers. As explained above, 90% of its clients are from the United States which can become a huge weakness in the case of economic, social, legal, political, or even pandemic problems. Hopefully for M&K, as they are part of Abbey Group, the company has several markets and attracts a lot of different clients. The luxury positioning of M&K can be considered as a strength and as a weakness. Being focused only on a small part of the huge travel market can be reductive and become a problem in case of disinterest in the luxury travel type and would generate a loss of customers. The age of the travelers must also be considered, it is a really demanding customers that have high revenue. They are known as loyal customers but demand high quality during their travel. Another weakness to consider is the numerous intermediaries between the customer and the DMC Abbey Group. These intermediates generate a supplement of charges and margins which can demotivate the customer. The next weakness that needs to be considered is the important turnover among employees. As mentioned above, there is a large percentage of trainees, which engenders the need for additional training to make sure the work is well done. This is a notion that needs to be considered and represents a waste of time. Moreover, some other weaknesses have been highlighted such as the lack of information concerning the negative impact that could have the company on the environment. As an example, the Abbey Group is a huge travel company and has a real impact on the flow of tourists to destinations, they should develop communication about over-tourism and its risks. Another important weakness that has been underlined and is important for this study is the lack of methodology and communication about the management of tourist flows. This represents one of the major problems that need to be analyzed and develop in the following parts.

The external environment (opportunity and threats)

The Destination Management Company Abbey Group has several opportunities that need to be considered while analyzing it. The company manages to diversify its customers thanks to the variety of companies she is working with. As explained above M&K's customers can be considered a weakness because of their age and requirements but it can also be considered as an opportunity. Indeed, thanks to the variety of tour operators and travel agencies Abbey Group is working with, it allows a diversification of clients. This diversification of customers leads to a diversification of suppliers. To meet customers' demands, the company must look for a wider range of stakeholders in both the hospitality and leisure sectors. Which aims to offer more tourist stays to its clients and increase its business-to-business relations. The Moloney and Kelly DMC has been part of Abbey Group since 2013, this represents an opportunity for both companies. The two companies benefit from each other's reputations. Another point that has already been cited in the strengths is the reward "Ireland's Leading Destination Management Company". This reward is also an opportunity since it is an international prize led by the World Travel Awards, it allows the company to be known to more potential customers and stakeholders.

There are a few threats to consider for the DMC Abbey Group. The first one impacts the general tourism system, it is the pandemic and war impact on tourism. In an article, Laura Foley discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Irish tourism. The author explains that the tourists expect that the COVID-19 pandemic will have a long-term impact on "*their traveling behaviors*" (Foley, 2022, p. 7) and are more cautious and more likely to visit their own country. According to her, the number of tourists is rebounding but the tourism sector companies will have to face more exigent customers. There is another world event that needs to be considered as a threat to the DMC. The article "Irish Tourism: Impact of Ukraine Conflict" highlights the risks that represent the war over the tourism in Ireland. The article highlights the "*reduction in accommodation offer*"³⁰ which leads to an increase in the price of tourist accommodation. Another threat that needs to be considered and which is a direct impact of the two previous threats is inflation. "*High inflation, in an*

³⁰ Itic. *Irish tourism: impact of Ukraine conflict*, <https://www.itic.ie/ukraine/#Risk> (consulted on the 30/05/2024)

*already high-cost economy, coupled with supply side issues runs the risk of threatening the competitiveness of the Ireland tourism offering*³¹. Moreover, even though inflation has been increasing these last few years, forecasts are good for 2024. As explained in the Industry Postcard Spring'24 published in April 2024, the *"inflation has fallen significantly [...] will continue to ease to level off at around 3%"*³². It is a positive forecast for the tourism sector. The growing of environmental concerns and issues represent also a threat to Irish tourism and consequently to the DMC Abbey Group. The tourism sector needs to adapt itself to its clients' environmental concerns. As explained previously in the analysis of the competitors, the Moloney and Kelly DMC have a large number of competitors that represent a threat. The company needs to continue evolving and offering the best customer experience to stay competitive. Moloney and Kelly depends on the Abbey Group company's reputation which can either be an opportunity or a threat. One of the important problems that is a threat to the DMC is the lack of adequate hotels within the country. To meet customer demands, a wide range of accommodation requirements must be met, which reduces even more the number of hotels available for DMC's customers.

7. Conclusion of the global analysis of the DMC Moloney and Kelly and Abbey Group

The previous analysis of the DMC Moloney and Kelly highlights the complexity of this company. The first and second part of this chapter developed the global company Abbey Group and its history. This first overview of the Group with the details of the history, the organization, and the missions helped to understand how the company operates. Moreover, these first parts highlight the services directly linked with the management of tourist flows.

³¹ Itic. *The competitiveness of Irish Tourism Review and Outlook* <https://www.itic.ie/RECOVERY/competitiveness-2023> (consulted on the 30/05/2024)

³² Itic. *Industry postcard spring'24*, <https://www.itic.ie/industry-postcard-spring-2024/> (consulted on the 30/05/2024)

The next section of this company analysis focused on the luxury part of Abbey Group which is the DMC Moloney and Kelly. This analysis went through an overview of the human resources, material resources, financial resources, and the client target. This first study of the internal environment helped to highlight the various problems such as the lack of diversity within the client target and the important turnover within employees. The external environmental analysis of the Destination Management Company developed the importance of competitor analysis. This overview helped to highlight the highly competitive market and the various strengths and weaknesses that Moloney and Kelly have compared with their major competitors.

The last section underlines the global analysis of the company thanks to a SWOT table. This table shows the numerous strengths and weaknesses.

This global analysis of the DMC Moloney and Kelly and Abbey Group aimed to develop and highlight different problems that are present within this type of company which are:

- Are DMC able to set up strategies to manage tourist flows?
- Does DMC have statistics on their direct impact on tourist flows within their destination?
- What impact that type of company could have on tourist flow management?

These questions emerged thanks to the analysis of the internal and external environment of Moloney and Kelly and the company Abbey Group. One of the aims of this study will be to demonstrate the various possibilities that a DMC to set up strategies for tourist flow management and analyze the potential impacts of it.

Chapter 3: Destination Management Companies' connection with tourist flow management, with the concrete example of Abbey Group

1. Introduction to the analysis of DMC's link with the control of tourist flows

The first objective of this first part was to analyze the literature review on the topic of tourist flow management. It first developed the general concept of the tourism industry and the tourism system with its definitions and various visions of it. It also went through the sociology of organization and the analysis of the various types of power exercises by companies. This first chapter developed the notion of tourist flows, its management, and the trend of sustainable and over-tourism. After this general overview of the literature review with the highlight of the different debate and gaps on this topic. The second chapter of this part developed the analysis of a concrete case: the Irish company of Abbey Group. This sub-part developed an overview of the company with its history, missions, values, and resources... Moreover, this study highlights thanks to a SWOT analysis some problems within the company.

This third chapter aims to link the two first chapters and to underline the problems existing in the management of tourist flows. It will start by defining the connection between Destination Management Companies, and tourist flow management. The second sub-part will then develop the concrete case of Abbey Group with an overview and highlight the professional, economic, and social context and issue. This sub-part will help to show problems and highlight questions and the need to go deeper into the study of the impact of Abbey Group on tourist flow management. This third chapter will expand the study to worldwide Destination Management Companies. It will develop the professional, economic, and social context and issue, it will help to define problems and questions. This sub-section will highlight a bigger problem, which will be analyzed in the following study of this master's thesis.

2. Destination Management Companies and tourist flow management

As explained above in the Literature review chapter, Destination Management Companies represent a major component of the travel sector. According to M. Palatková in the book *Marketing Strategy of Tourism Destination*, a DMC's primary function aims to make it easier for legally independent and typically autonomous service providers to collaborate as a coherent unit to promote the destination's primary items (Palatková 2006). Key elements of such an organization include cooperation and coordination, as well as developing suitable service networks and "experiences" for the target clientele while establishing influence and control over specific services (*Ibid.*). Moreover, the authors C. Clergeau, O. Glasberg, and P. Violier (2014) in the chapter *Stratégie et Organisation* from the book *Management des Entreprises* offer another idea for defining a DMC. According to them, the DMC are travel companies that welcome tourists to a destination and correspond with tour operators and travel agencies (Clergeau, Glasberg, and Violier 2014).

In the article Destination Management by H. Bartl and F. Schmidt written in 1998, the authors explained the five key elements that aim to participate in destination management thanks to DMCs.

- a) The coordination of the various subjects in order to create a competitive and adaptable market (Bartl and Schmidt, 1998).
- b) The evaluation of touristic destinations and comparison with other touristic locations (*Ibid.*).
- c) The obligation to do the fundamental task in order to supervise tourists in destinations, influencing tourist services (*Ibid.*).
- d) Reaching the offerings objectives (*Ibid.*).
- e) Marketing tourist destinations by promoting the identity and image of the location (*Ibid.*).

These five areas of work explain the various effects and possibilities of Destination Management Companies over destination management and indirectly over tourist flow management. Moreover, these key elements show the importance of DMC over tourist flow management.

From another point of view, the authors D. Magaš and L. Bašan developed the role of DMC in the article *Tourism Destination Management Company (DMC): A Central Actor of a Destination as a Milieu*. According to the writers, concerning the management of a touristic destination, the main mission of the organization in destination management is to ensure there is long-term competitiveness and establish sustainable development (Magaš, and Bašan 2007). In this article, the question of who is responsible for tourist destination management and indirectly tourist flows management is raised (*Ibid.*). They do not give a precise answer to this question, they explain that “The result of these discordant views is the fact that “everyone and no one” is responsible for the development of a destination” (*Ibid.*).

These studies highlight the difficulty of determining the precise role of Destination Management Companies in the management of tourist flows. It can also be hard to figure out the impact of DMC on destination and tourist flow management. Moreover, studying the existing literature review underlines the lack of information concerning the role of DMC. It also highlights the number of studies made on the management of tourist flows made by local companies such as Tourist offices, hotels, museums... There is an existing gap in this type of analysis in the tourism sector.

3. The concrete case of the Irish company Abbey Group

The chapter 2 of this master's thesis, “Moloney and Kelly: A Destination Management Company part of a transnational corporation (Abbey Group)” developed the analysis of the company Abbey Group with a general overview. Within this study, the internal and external environment has been studied and moreover, the impact that could have this company over tourist flow management has been analyzed. The following subpart will analyze the concrete case of this Irish company and the impact that it could have on tourism flows.

3.1 Overview of the management of tourist flows by the company Abbey Group

Abbey Group is an Irish travel transnational corporation with a multitude of companies. Within these companies, there is Moloney and Kelly which represents the luxury part of Abbey Group and is a Destination Management Company. Moloney and Kelly aims to develop tourist products which are travel packages or custom stays for travel agencies and tour operators. This part of the company is directly in relation to a large amount of travel company and do have a direct impact on the number of tourists within a destination. As explained in Figure 5: *The services involved in the management of tourist flows management within Abbey Group Company*, many services within Abbey Group are directly related to tourist flows management.

3.1.1 The professional, economic, and social context

As explained above, Abbey Group is a travel company based in Ireland and the United Kingdom. This company is composed of three companies with different objectives and missions. Abbey Group has been developed and analyzed in chapter 2 of this master's thesis with particular attention to the Moloney and Kelly Company which has a real direct impact on tourist flow. Moreover, the theoretical aspect of tourist flows, and tourist flows management issues has been developed in the literature review chapter. This subpart aims to expand the professional, economic, and social context.

The professional context: As explained above, Abbey Group is a travel company, and its main business is DMC. They are in direct contact with tour operators and travel agencies all over the world and create travel packages for these companies. Abbey Group is in charge of the local management of tourist flows as a DMC. This covers logistic management, quality control, and cooperation with regional suppliers and stakeholders (hotels, restaurants, activity companies, and transportation firms). One of the major parts of the management of tourist flows is

the marketing and promotion of the company has an impact. In this context, Abbey Group is working on the objective of promoting sustainable stays. Moreover, one of the companies managed by Abbey Group is responsible for conferences and events in Ireland. This includes planning major events and business travel, both of which can significantly affect the number of tourists. Events minimize the effects of seasonality by attracting tourists from abroad and distributing tourism activity over various locations and seasons. To make intelligent choices, the Abbey Group examines data on visitor arrivals, preferences, and behavior. Theoretically, this approach based on data allows them to predict changes in demand and modify their offer, accordingly, enabling them to maximize their services and respond to market trends.

The economic context: The management of tourist flows by the company Abbey Group, represents a complex and challenging economic context. The tourism sector represents a large part of Ireland's GDP and therefore the Abbey Group is involved in these figures. Some important external events affected the economic context of the tourism sector and its companies such as Abbey Group. Within these external events, there is the COVID-19 pandemic which had a huge impact on the economy and the arrival of tourists. Brexit also impacted tourism in Ireland, and this has forced the company to adjust its marketing and tourism management strategies to maintain and attract visitors from the United Kingdom while exploring new markets. Diversifying these markets is crucial for long-term economic growth, as Ireland attracts visitors from a range of foreign countries. Abbey Group is targeting emerging markets in Asia and Latin America in addition to conventional markets like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe. The company is modifying its products and marketing approaches for these new countries.

The social context: Tourism has a huge impact on local communities in Ireland and has to be managed. The Abbey Group is essential in redirecting tourism to various areas, distributing the economic gains, and supporting local people. The company aims to develop cultural interactions, and introduce tourists to Irish culture. Through these exchanges, visitors and local communities receive benefits, and mutual understanding and respect are developed. The management of tourist flows in Ireland by the Abbey Group contributes to community development, accessibility, inclusion, and cultural heritage preservation. Additionally, the social background is

significantly impacted by the adoption of sustainable and ethical tourism. Ireland's tourist management operates within a complicated and multifaceted social context especially when it comes to Abbey Group. This company is significantly improving Ireland's economy and social cohesion by leading the promotion of ethical travel, protecting cultural assets, and helping local communities.

3.1.2 The professional, economic, and social issues

After analyzing the professional, economic, and social context of the management of tourist flows thanks to a concrete study case: the Irish company of Abbey Group. The objective of this second subpart is to understand the various issues. It will help to acknowledge the real issues that tourist flows can represent and highlight problems and research questions. This subsection will develop the professional, economic, and social issues.

The professional issues: As professional issues, the management of tourist flows by the company Abbey Group is essential to avoid over-tourism in certain destinations, especially during the high season. The Abbey Group in Ireland is dedicated to a complete and comprehensive strategy that considers economic development, capacity, sustainability, customer experience, safety, and stakeholder cooperation.

The economic issues: The problem of the management of tourist flows also represents economic issues for Abbey Group. Abbey Group and the management of tourist flows have a significant challenge in optimizing offers and prices while keeping expenses under control. In order to maximize revenue, this requires changing offers and tariffs in accordance with seasonal demand and preferences of various client categories. The growth of the business also affects the local economy, especially when it comes to the creation of jobs. To clarify, Abbey Group's economic challenges in managing the flow of tourists involve a strategic combination of maximizing revenue, controlling costs, boosting the local economy, and maintaining resilience in the face of market fluctuation and crises.

The social issues: It represent a huge social impact and issues on local communities. The company Abbey Group needs to involve local communities and

ensure that the influx of tourists does not distort local culture. This also includes protecting local traditions, ways of life, and languages. Abbey Group has a role to play in encouraging local recruitment while ensuring that the employment created is good quality and well-paid.

3.2 Problems underlines by the context and issues analysis

This analysis of the professional, economic, and social context and issues of the management of tourist flows by the company Abbey Group led to questions about the real impact of this company.

- How can Abbey Group affect the management of tourist flows in Ireland?
- Does Abbey Group select its stakeholders in order to develop more sustainable tourism within the island and ensure management of tourist flows?

This analysis also highlights the need to understand better the impact of Abbey Group on the management of tourist flows by analyzing the vision of its employees. The following study will develop in the second part the analysis made in order to interview and conduct a study within this company.

4. Extending the study to a worldwide scale

The previous study of the management of tourist flows by DMC with the concrete case of the Irish Company Abbey Group highlighted a real problem within the tourism system. The existing studies in the management of visitors' flows are only made in a local context with local companies such as local government, tourist offices, museums, hotels... These studies help to understand the problem of over-tourism but do not develop solutions on a larger scale, such as a country. The following part aims to develop the general context and issue that DMC and more generally transnational corporations faced with the management of tourist flow all around the world.

4.1 Destination Management Companies, Transnational corporations and management of tourist flows

Destination Management Companies and Transnational corporations have a role to play in the management of tourist flows because of their missions which are either directly or indirectly linked to this major problem. These actions are part of a wider context which includes professional, economic, and social contexts. Moreover, the DMCs must consider the professional, economic, and social issues in the management of tourist flows.

4.1.1 The professional, economic, and social context

As explained above, DMCs, and more generally transnational corporations have a role to play in the management of tourist flows. This sub-part will develop the professional, economic, and social context on a worldwide scale.

The professional context: In the context of the management of tourist flows, transnational companies, and especially DMCs have a real responsibility. They oversee the creation of general strategies to attract tourists, improve their experiences, and guarantee the tourism system's sustainable growth. They play a part in the daily administration of tourism services as well. It is also important for DMC to understand what is the maximum number of tourists that a location can handle without endangering its natural, economic, and social environments, it is referred to as its carrying capacity³³. For DMCs, controlling tourist flow is a real challenge because of the issue of over-tourism and its unfavorable consequences, which include conflict with locals and environmental degradation (World Tourism Organization (ed.) 2007). Natural catastrophes and other crises are other things they have to handle. In order to guarantee the long-term viability and appeal of tourism destinations, DMC's business environment for tourism flow management is

³³ McKinsey. *Destination readiness: Preparing for the tourist flows of tomorrow*, 2024, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/travel-logistics-and-infrastructure/our-insights/destination-readiness-preparing-for-the-tourist-flows-of-tomorrow> (consulted on the 10/07/2024)

dynamic and differs, requiring a strategic blend of management abilities, sustainable practices, stakeholder cooperation, and new approaches.

The economic context: The management of tourist flows by DMCs does have an impact on the GDP (gross domestic product) of each country especially on those who rely a lot on tourism revenue. DMCs are essential in optimizing this contribution by efficiently managing tourist flows³⁴. Moreover, the tourism sector and companies generate many direct and indirect jobs which contribute to the economic context of local destinations³⁵. Optimizing revenue all year round and reducing the time of high demand to prevent overusing components of managing tourist flows. This can include encouraging travel during off-season tourism. In the context of the global economy, DMCs' management of tourist flows is a complicated area that includes value creation, employment management, and the promotion of sustainable development.

The social context: DMC and the management of tourist flows play an important role in protecting and promoting the destinations' cultural heritage. While making sure that tourism-related activities and companies do not negatively impact these cultural assets, they develop programs that highlight local traditions, art, and historical locations³⁶. It also aims to develop cultural exchanges and generate local community engagement. The management of tourism flows by destination management companies (DMCs) is defined by a complex social environment that includes social equity, community participation, cultural heritage protection, and the reduction of negative social impacts. DMCs are essential in ensuring that tourism improves the social structure of the destinations it visits.

4.1.2 The professional, economic, and social issues

After analyzing the general context of the tourist flow management by DMC and transnational companies on a worldwide scale, the objective of this sub-part is to understand the issues of this problem which is part of the over-tourism problem.

³⁴ World Travel & Tourism Council. *Economic Impact Research*, <https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact> (consulted on the 10/07/2024)

³⁵ UNWTO. *Tourism and Jobs : a better future for all*, <https://www.unwto.org/world-tourism-day-2019> (consulted on the 10/07/2024)

³⁶ UNESCO. *Sustainable Tourism*, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tourism/> (consulted on the 10/07/2024)

This sub-part will examine the various issues that DMC can face with the analysis of the professional, economic, and social issues.

The professional issues: There are several professional issues linked with the management of tourist flows by DMC and transnational corporations. They need to be involved in the management of the environment, to minimize the negative effects of tourism on the environment, DMCs should set up sustainable policies such as promoting eco-friendly accommodation, reducing waste, and protecting natural resources³⁷. Managing a destination's capacity to avoid overcharging infrastructure and provide tourists with a high-quality experience is another significant issue. DMCs need to work in collaboration with local government, local companies, and local communities to develop coherent and inclusive touristic strategies³⁸. In order to effectively manage tourism flows, DMCs must find a balance between infrastructure management, customer satisfaction, sustainability, innovation in technology, and stakeholder participation.

The economic issues: The economic impact of tourism, the creation of jobs, managing seasonality, tourist spending, sustainable development, and governmental regulation are some of these issues. As explained above, DMCs have a real impact on countries' GDP which represents a real issue. Employing sustainable tourism practices can boost the economy by attracting consumer groups that are becoming more conscious of the social and environmental effects of their vacation³⁹. Additionally, it would make better management of visitor flows possible.

The social issues: The management of tourist flows by DMC and transnational corporations represents a major social issue. It encompasses various aspects such as interaction between local communities and tourists, social equity, cultural and art preservation, and the general well-being of host communities. Local communities receive many benefits from tourism in terms of the economy and their community, including increased employment opportunities, better services, and

³⁷ Global Sustainable Tourism Council. *GSTC Criteria*, <https://www.gstccouncil.org/gstc-criteria/> (consulted on the 10/07/2024)

³⁸ UNWTO. *UN Tourism: Putting Communities at the Centre of Tourism Development*, 2024 <https://www.unwto.org/news/un-tourism-putting-communities-at-the-centre-of-tourism-development-in-the-americas> (consulted on the 10/07/2024)

³⁹ Global Sustainable Tourism Council. *GSTC Criteria*, <https://www.gstccouncil.org/gstc-criteria/> (consulted on the 10/07/2024)

better infrastructure⁴⁰. DMCs aim to provide these advantages to community members in an equitable manner.

4.2 Problems highlighted by the analysis of DMC's context and issues of the management of tourist flows

This analysis of the professional, economic, and social context and issues of the management of tourist flows by Destination Management Companies and Transnational Corporations highlight the lack of information on this topic. Moreover, this analysis shows the importance of this type of company over tourist flow management in tourist destinations and their important impact on over-tourism. The following study will aim to understand the importance of DMC over tourist flow management and to see if they have a direct impact on the number of tourists in a destination and participate in over-tourism.

This analysis also highlights some questions:

- How do DMC use data collection to organize their package and custom stay and influence tourist flow management?
- How can sustainable tourism be more regulated to ensure better management of tourist flows?
- How do DMC and Transnational companies use management of tourist flows as a strategy to exercise their power?

These questions will be used as the basis of the final research question of this master's thesis.

⁴⁰ World Bank. *Développement Touristique Piloté par la Communauté*, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic> (consulted on the 10/07/2024)

5. Conclusion of a precise study of DMC's impact on the management of tourist flows (concrete case: Abbey Group)

As explained in the first sub-part of this chapter, in the tourism system, Destination Management Companies play a crucial role by facilitating coordination among service providers to promote destinations. Coordination, evaluation, control, goal satisfaction, and marketing are all under their authority. DMCs collaborate with tour operators and travel agencies, establish networks, manage services, and more. Moreover, the second sub-part develops the concrete case study of the Irish company Abbey Group. As explained, Abbey Group manages tourist flows through several of its Travel Company as example Moloney and Kelly. They design vacation packages and custom trips, manage operations, and promote sustainable tourism. Abbey Group also oversees events to attract tourists during periods of low occupancy.

This analysis which developed the connection between the overview of the literature review and the study case of Abbey Group highlighted the various contexts and issues of this study. As professional context and issues the major subject underlined is the DMC's global collaboration for sustainable tourism. It also shows the challenge of avoiding over-tourism while maintaining quality and developing local collaboration. The economic context and issues analysis emphasize the importance of DMC for the GDP and the challenge of adapting to the crisis. As economic challenges, it shows the importance of balancing revenue, cost, and resilience. This sub-part also developed the social context and issues which are the support communities and promote cultural interactions. It also highlights the social challenge of preserving culture, ensuring equitable benefits, and promoting sustainability.

This global analysis explores the DMC's role in tourist flow management and their impact on sustainable tourism, and over-tourism. It also focused on data use, sustainable tourism regulation, and strategic influence. This study also highlighted how, in order to control tourist flows and reduce over-tourism, DMCs maintain a global balance between infrastructure, sustainability, and collaboration.

Conclusion

This first part of the master's thesis aimed to highlight the existing literature review and examine the concrete case of the Irish company Abbey Group. This literature review part and the analysis of the Abbey Group company allowed to discover the tourism system as a whole as it operates. It went through the discovery and analysis of the existing literature review on the tourism system, tourist flows concept, the importance of DMC, and the various types of tourism as over-tourism. This part also explores the company Abbey Group with a particular attention to the DMC Moloney and Kelly. The link between this Irish company, worldwide DMC, transnational corporation, and the management of tourist flows has been made in the last sup-part of this general analysis of the complex context.

The analysis of the existing literature review provided an overview of the tourism industry and the tourism system. It also focused on the management of tourist flows and the role of Destination Management Companies. It explored enterprise interactions, power dynamics, and competition through the model by Neil Leiper (1979) and P. Violier (1999)

. It also examined the history of the tourism industry, establishing it in contrast to the tourism system. The difficulties in measuring tourist flows were emphasized, with a focus on methods such as adjustments and surveys. Gaining an understanding of these flows is essential for managing destinations as well as discovering insights into tourist behavior. Over-tourism and sustainable tourism were also covered in the literature review chapter. Despite its detractors, sustainable tourism aspires to balance the environment, culture, and economy. A lack of tourist flow management contributes to over-tourism, which in turn causes environmental and social problems. The literature review chapter aimed to have an overview of the tourism system and to highlight the lack of information on the management of tourist flows by DMC, it principally focuses on local government and local travel companies.

The second chapter aimed to develop the analysis of the DMC Abbey Group with a particular focus on Moloney and Kelly, it highlighted its complexity. The chapter began by going over the background, the company's organization, and activities of the Abbey Group, with a focus on services related to tourist flows

management. After that, the focus then shifted to Moloney and Kelly, the luxury market, and an analysis of its clientele and financial, material, and human resources was examined. These exposed problems including the lack of client diversity, and a high staff turnover rate. The competitive market and the advantages and disadvantages of Abbey Group were brought to light by external investigation. The SWOT analysis also highlighted the lack of information of their strategies set up to manage tourist flow and to inform their employees on this topic.

The third chapter aimed to underline the connection between DMC and tourist flow management. Tour operators and travel agencies collaborate with Destination Management Companies to arrange for service providers to sell destinations, promote destinations, and handle coordination. The Abbey Group case study including Moloney and Kelly, demonstrates how DMCs plan events, manage tourist flows, create packages, and encourage sustainable tourism. The study of the professional, economic, and social context and issues emphasizes the strategic influence, data use, and regulation of DMCs in the management of tourist flows, promoting sustainable tourism, and avoiding over-tourism.

This literature review part and analysis of the concrete case of Abbey Group makes an overview of the global problem of the tourist flows management in the tourism system by Destination Management Companies. This study is the pillar of the following parts which will examine more precise concepts of the tourist flows management and Destination Management Companies. Moreover, this first part will serve as the basis for the development of the research question which will be detailed in the second part.

PART 2: THE STRATEGIES OF DMC AND ABBEY
GROUP ON THE MANAGEMENT OF TOURIST
FLOWS AND THE METHODOLOGY OF A MIXED-
METHOD APPROACH

Introduction

The analysis of the existing literature review on the topic of tourism system, management of tourist flows, the concept of destination management companies, the notion of power, sustainable tourism, and over-tourism aimed to highlight the various gaps. It highlighted the various point of view on the notion of tourism system, but also on the aspect of tourist flows, and on sustainable tourism. Moreover, the analysis of the existing literature review shows the issue of over-tourism. The second objective of this first part was to develop a concrete case thanks to the analysis of the Irish Destination Management Company Abbey Group. This company will be used in the following research. The last section of this first part aimed to develop the link between the Abbey Group company and the issue of the management of tourist flows within the tourism system. This section explained the professional, economic, and social context and issues.

Thanks to this global analysis of the literature review and the company Abbey Group, the following part aims to develop a research question. Therefore, thanks to some questions that have been highlighted in the first part, it help to underline an important research question which will be developed and explained in the first chapter.

The second chapter will be the development of the theoretical framework. To be more precise, this section will define and develop the gaps and debates in the key concepts and notions that are highlighted in the research question.

The third chapter of this part will be based on the concepts and notions which have been highlighted in the previous chapter. The objective will be to develop two to three hypotheses which will be the base of the following study. Moreover, these hypotheses will rely on the research question and will have an objective to be confirmed or refuted.

The fourth chapter will be focused on the development of the general methodology of this master's thesis. It will first develop the general organization of the dissertation, from the first year to the second year. Moreover, the major goal of this chapter will be to justify and highlight the theoretical part of quantitative and qualitative research. It will go through the choice of the type of approach with its

definition thanks to several authors, then it will develop the choice of the sample, the choice of the questions, the administration of the question, and the data processing. This chapter will also underline and develop the survey and the semi-structured interview which will be conducted.

This second part of the master thesis will be mainly focus on the methodology choose in order to conduct this research. It will also underline the research question and the choice of the hypothesis.

Chapter 1: The Research Question

The analysis of the existing literature review, the examination of the DMC Moloney and Kelly and the company Abbey Group, and the third chapter of the first part which made the connection between DMC and tourist flows management highlighted some questions and gaps. Some problems have also been highlighted within the tourism system thanks to these analyses. The following questions have emerged:

- Are Destination Management Companies able to set up strategies to manage tourist flows and what type of impact could they have on it?
- Does DMC have statistics on their direct impact on tourist flows within their touristic destination?

Moreover, the first part developed the analysis of the economic, professional, and social context of the Destination Management Companies and Abbey Group's impact on the management of tourist flows. This analysis helps to raise some other questions:

- Does Abbey Group select its stakeholders in order to develop more sustainable tourism within the island and ensure management of tourist flows?
- How do DMC use data collection to organize their package and custom stay and influence tourist flow management?
- How can sustainable tourism be more regulated to ensure better management of tourist flows?
- How do DMC and Transnational companies use management of tourist flows as a strategy to exercise their power?

These questions have been emphasized thanks to the global analysis of the existing literature review on the tourism system and the company Abbey Group. The following study will be based on this analysis and the questions highlighted, it aims to understand the importance of Destination Management Companies over the management of tourist flows and underline if they have a direct impact on it. It will also help to understand the importance of DMC and their participation to over-tourism. After taking into account these initial questions and going further into

research, the following research question was developed, keeping in mind that managing tourist flows is a strategy: **How do Destination Management Companies use management of tourist flows and choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage?**

This problem will be expressed in several hypotheses in the following parts. The following study and report will focus on an in-depth examination of the theoretical framework of Destination Management Companies with their strategies, control of competitive advantage with zone of uncertainties, and power. Moreover, the next chapter will explore the concept of tourist flow, the management of tourist flow, and the notion of sustainable tourism and over-tourism. These disciplines are the primary concerns in the management of tourist flows.

Chapter 2: Concepts and notions

1. Introduction to the complex concepts and notions

Providing the basis for an extensive understanding of the subject, the literature review section has a crucial role in offering a detailed overview of the tourism system. This chapter helps to identify the research problem by providing background for the study, highlighting knowledge gaps, and analyzing previous studies, theories, and current trends. This second chapter's goal is to clarify important concepts, notions, and theoretical frameworks that are pertinent to the research in more details. It also aims to explore the topic in deeper terms in order to provide a comprehensive framework on which future research may be developed.

The first sub-section of this chapter which aims to analyze the key concepts and notions linked with the research question will define tourist flows. It will first highlight various concepts with important articles. The second sub-section will develop the main issues and problems with the management of tourist flows particularly thanks to the vision of the author Leroux (2012). The next sub-part has as objective to study destination management companies and transnational companies. Moreover, it will analyze the challenges and issues faced by DMC and transnational corporations. The last sub-section will examine the sociology concept of types of power and competitive advantage. It will also examine the notion of Zone of Uncertainty developed by Crozier and Friedberg (1977).

2. Tourist flow

The concept of tourist flows can have several definitions and encompass a lot of notions such as incoming flows, outgoing flows, and internal flows. The book *Management du Tourismes: Territoires, Offres et Strategies* by J-P. Lozato-Giotart, E. Leroux, and M. Balfet (2012) aim to understand the notion of the tourism system with its services, tourist flows, and tourism products. It also aims to study the market and analyze the concept of management of the tourism system. In order to understand better the term tourist flows, the authors developed the important notion

of the calculation of the territorial attractiveness coefficient. This notion corresponds to the calculation of the ratio between incoming and outgoing flows (Lozato-Giotart, Balfet, and Leroux 2012, p. 34-35). Moreover, in the book, the authors developed the term “Touristicité”. The author J-M. Theodat (2004) define this concept in the article *L’endroit et l’envers du decor: la “touristicité” Compare d’Haïti et de la Republique Dominicaine*. According to him, the “Touristicité” is a result of geopolitical, economic, and social factors both inside and beyond the country, this notion defines an area designated for visitor arrival with the goal of bringing in a significant number of people (Théodat 2004). Moreover, the “Touristicité” of a destination is the combination of criteria that allow the evaluation the territory's reputation (a specific destination's hosting capacity) as well as its role in the development of the tourism system.

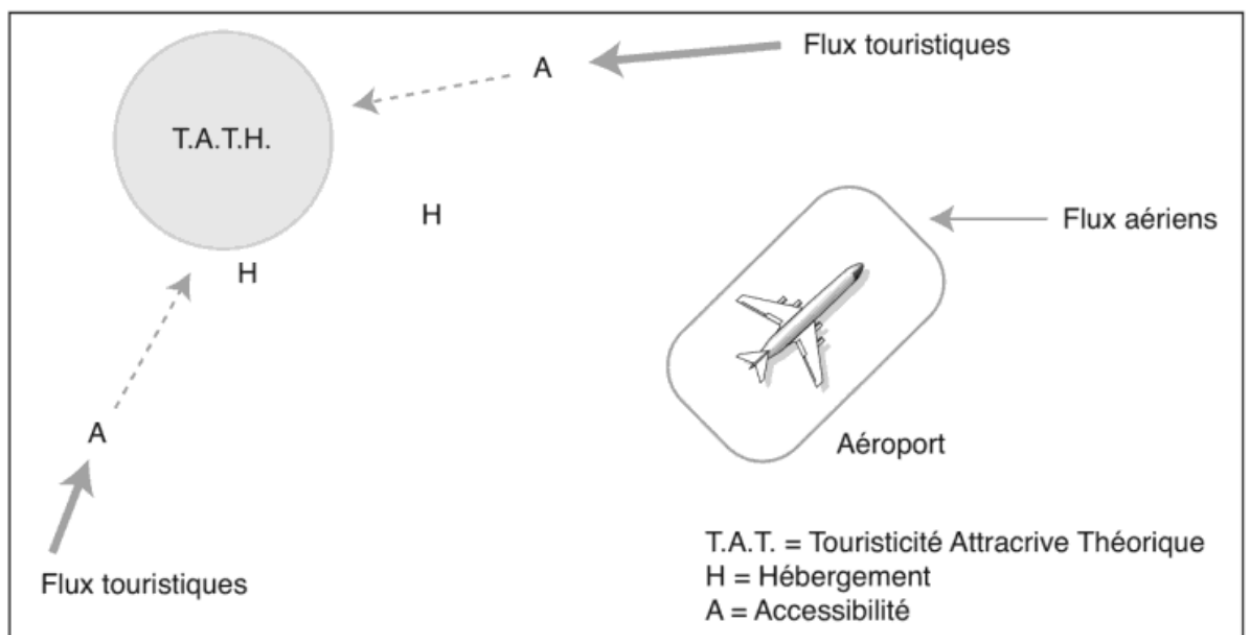


Figure 7: The importance of the “Touristicité” within the measurement of tourist flows

Moreover, the authors of the book *Management du tourisme: territoires, offres et stratégies*, developed 2 figures which aimed to define and understand better the notion of tourist flows. The figure 7 above, develops the “Touristicité” and the different important ideas that are important to attract tourists within a destination and calculate tourist flows which are accommodation, transport, and accessibility (Lozato-Giotart, Balfet, and Leroux 2012, p. 33-34). This schema also highlighted

the major terms of tourist flows and air traffic flows which are important to understand the complexity of defending tourist flows. It also underlines the importance of considering the concept of “Touristicité” to measure the tourist flows within a destination.

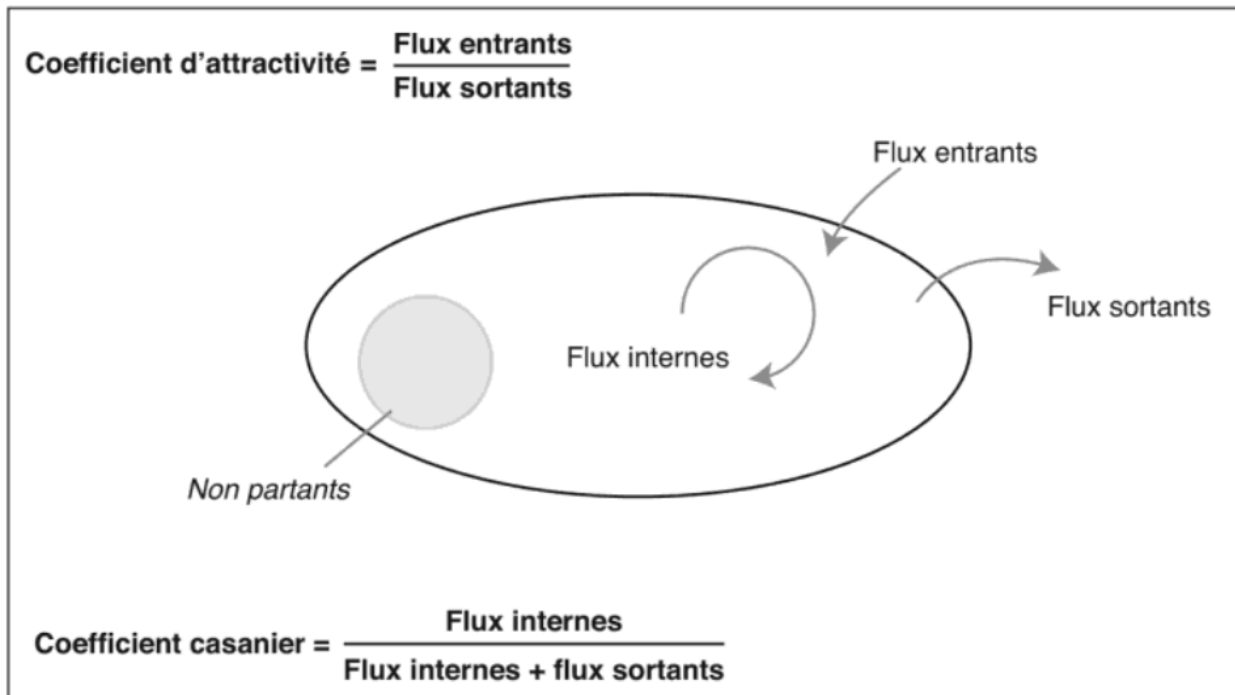


Figure 8: The territorial attractiveness coefficient: the calculation of tourist flows

As explained above, they also developed the concept of the calculation of the territorial attractiveness coefficient. In order to understand and define the tourist flows, the authors explained the notion of the territorial attractiveness coefficient. The figure 8 above develops the calculation of this coefficient and the different components of this calculation. The different flows that need to be considered are the incoming, outgoing, and intern' flows. All these flows have to be included in calculating the attractivity, which aims to better define and understand the importance of tourist flows (Lozato-Giotart, Balfet, and Leroux 2012, p. 35). That can also explain the carrying capacity of a destination and understand its limits and issues.

From another point of view, the authors G. Acampa, M. Grasso, G. Marino, and M. Parisi (2020) developed the definition of tourism flows in the article *Tourism Flow Management: Social Impact Evaluation through Social Network Analysis*. They based their study on the UNWTO definition of a specific notion which can be considered as an alternative of the term tourist flow. This concept is the Tourism Carrying Capacity notion (TCC). The TCC's definition is "the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time without causing destruction of the physical, economic, or socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in tourist satisfaction" (Acampa and al. 2020). Moreover, the authors developed five types of tourist flows defined by the UNWTO. These five types of TCC are the following:

- a) The ecological capacity (*Ibid.*): it is the capacity of some species to endure disturbance thanks to environmental and biological factors.
- b) The sociocultural capacity (*Ibid.*): the sociocultural capacity is determined by the limits imposed by the availability of human resources or the intolerable effects of the local community.
- c) The psychological capacity (*Ibid.*): it is based on the maximum level of crowding that tourist can endure without noticing a decline in quality. This changes depending on the types of tourists, the activities, and how they use them.
- d) The infrastructure capacity (*Ibid.*): it refers to elements like the number of bedrooms, the capability of the transportation networks, or the water supply. Long-term and medium-term variations are easily possible.
- e) The management capacity (*Ibid.*): it refers to the maximum number of tourists that a destination can accommodate without causing logistical or economic problems. The UNWTO does not consider the social impact of tourism on local communities, instead, it focuses on the quality of the experience and the tourist's perspective when discussing socio-cultural capacity.

These two different articles and books above explained the difficulty to define the tourist flows. Moreover, the authors define the notion of tourist flows thanks to

other important concepts such as the “Touristicité”, the territorial attractiveness coefficient, and the tourism carrying capacity.

3. The issue of the management of tourist flow

Over-tourism is the fundamental cause of many issues, especially those related to the environment and society, as it was stated in the literature review chapter section. One suggested way to address this problem is to manage tourist flows, which allow control over how many people visit a destination. The implementation of this method continues to increase, particularly in local regulation. One specific technique for managing tourist flows is developed in the article *Le Démarketing pour une Meilleure Gestion des Flux Touristiques* on the Réseau Veille Tourisme website. They begin by looking at trends in terms of the number of tourists; the UNWTO projects that by 2030, there will be four million more visitors⁴¹. This raises issues regarding the necessity of implementing tourism management measures as soon as possible. The article discusses demarketing as an approach that is employed by local tourism agencies and governments. This strategy involves controlling access to the tourist destination and stopping to market the place of interest⁴². The objective is to permanently or temporarily discourage clients, and the article justifies it by saying “*demand can not be unlimited in a world of limited resources*” (Réseau Veille Tourisme, 2021⁴³). This article mainly examines how local policies affect tourism flows and offers answers. The deployment of sustainable development at the destination made possible by local regulations is examined in the essay *Tourisme Durable et Enjeux Strategiques* by Erick Leroux (2012). The primary steps governments have made to promote sustainable tourism are described by the author. These steps aim to control tourist flows, support local communities in their personal growth, and inspire visitors to interact with locals with respect (Leroux 2012, p. 97-98). The author says the following to advance the idea of managing tourist flows “*public institutions [...] intervene by carrying out*

⁴¹Réseau Veille Tourisme, 2021, *Le Démarketing pour une meilleure gestion des flux touristiques*, <https://veilletourisme.ca/2021/09/21/demarketing-meilleure-gestion-flux-touristiques/>, September 2021, consulted on: 01/08/2024

⁴² (*Ibid.*)

⁴³ (*Ibid.*)

promotional campaigns to encourage off-season visits"⁴⁴ (*Ibid.*, p. 98). Regarding the previous essay, the writer emphasizes the significance of local and public policies as well as public institutions when it comes to managing tourist flows.

These two publications are only an example of the kinds of resources that may be found online while researching how to control tourists flows. The aim of this dissertation is to examine how Destination Management Companies which are in direct contact with tour operators or travel agencies, affect the management of tourist flows. Understanding the problems and the management strategies set up was the aim of this subsection. A scientific publication on the topic presents a difficulty, requiring a discussion and investigation into the issue in question. Does the lack of information on this topic imply that DMC has a strategy for managing tourist flows? Is it because the subject matter is too recent? However, there is evidence that software can be used for collecting information about tourist stays; a short search on the web reveals that the travel sector and DMC use this kind of software.

In the essay *L'analyse de la Geographie des Flux Touristiques en France Metropolitaine : un Autre Regard sur l'Attractivite des Territoires*, the author Patricia Lejoux (2006) develops another vision of the management of tourist flows. She develops this topic in the sub-part *L'étude des Flux Touristiques : Niveau d'Analyse et Approche Methodologique*. She started by defining the concept of tourist flows by saying that they are markers of the general attractiveness of destinations and the level of geographic knowledge. The subject of territorial attractiveness and the problems associated with local development becomes easier to understand with the increase in tourists (Lejoux 2006). Moreover, the author also decided to highlight the fact that tourist flows are only well-known and studied at an international scale. She explains that she first needs to point out that research on tourist flows is studied far more frequently on an international than a national scale. Indeed, the majority of the literature review on tourism focuses primarily on how tourist flows are distributed globally, or more specifically, how people travel between different countries or territories (*Ibid.*). Since the UNWTO publishes data that identifies the main emitting

⁴⁴ Translated by Alexandra Quintard

and receiving location of world tourism, the general trend of these international tourist flows is rather well recognized (*Ibid.*).

This article shows the difficulty of defending the concept of tourist flows and the management of it. It also highlights the issue and lack of knowledge on the management of tourist flows on a locale scale.

4. Destination management companies and transnational corporations

In order to analyze the impact of Destination Management Companies on the management of tourist flows. It is important to understand the notion of DMC. In the article *An Exploratory Study of the Destination Management Company (DMC): Building a Profile* the authors B.M. Bordelon and M. Ortiz (2015), decided to define DMC. They define it as “*a professional services company possessing extensive local knowledge, expertise and resources, specializing in the design and implementation of events, activities, tours, transportation and program logistics*” (Bordelon and Ortiz 2015, p. 1). To go deeper into the definition of DMC, the authors decided to rely on the article *The Effects of Information at Tourism Destinations: A Model Proposal* by Ortega and al (2014). The geographic region in which they are located has a considerable increase in economic activity due to Destination Management Companies' expenses (Ortega, Rodríguez, and Kitchen 2014; Bordelon and Ortiz 2015, p. 1). According to Ortega and al., the responsibilities and services of DMC businesses extend above simply offering and picking out destinations. (*Ibid.*). All of the tourists' stay must be provided with services. The Destination Management Companies' job, function, and service delivery are crucial. The DMC may be able to offer more support and raise customer satisfaction by collaborating with the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) (*Ibid.*). The CVB is a nonprofit company that advertises a country, city, or territory as a desirable vacation destination for tourists, business travelers, and event coordinators. In this article, the authors decided to focus on the economic impact of DMC on destinations.

Destination Management Companies also face various challenges and issues such as financial vulnerability. These financial issues are due to major events such as the pandemic, sixty-five percent of DMCs have had to reduce staff, and some others had to relinquish office space due to a lack of bookings⁴⁵. Another important issue for DMC is adaptation and innovation. For the tourism sector to be viable in the long term, sustainable development is essential, so DMCs must adapt quickly to keep up with the growing demand⁴⁶.

Moreover, another objective of this master's thesis is also to focus on transnational corporations DMC. Determining the numerous strategies, types of power, and levels of impact that DMC's transnational corporation could have over other companies or governments is a challenging task. The terms transnational corporations and multinational will be used in the analysis that follows; therefore, it is important to define both in order to gain a better understanding of them. A company that maintains a presence in many different countries and operates in international business is recognized as a transnational corporation. These corporations are directly linked with the major party of Destination Management Companies, they have a worldwide impact and are working with various countries. They frequently have more global influence and have access to an increased number of resources and markets (Davis 1987, p. 279). According to the website Britannica, a multinational corporation is a synonym for a transnational company⁴⁷ but it is crucial to understand that *"Some people distinguish transnational corporations from multinational ones that are understood to run largely distinct operations in a plurality of countries"* (Rouse 2019, p. 1). To revisit the multitude of strategies used by multinational corporations to exercise their influence, it is necessary to underline that there are simply too many to count. It is explained by the author A. Verbeke (2013) as follows *"there are as many views on international business strategy as there are people writing about it"* (Verbeke 2013, p. 2). The goal of the subsection below is to concentrate on the competitive strategies of

⁴⁵ NorthStar meeting group, 2020. *How the Role of Destination Management Companies is Evolving*, <https://www.northstarmetingsgroup.com/Incentive/Strategy/destination-management-companies-incentives>, consulted on the: 01/08/2024

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Britannica, 2023, *Multinational corporation*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/conglomerate-business>, March 2023, consulted on: 01/08/2024

businesses in the tourism system in a situation where focusing on different strategies is not possible.

According to the writers S. Macleod and D. Lewis (2004), transnational corporations have a significant impact *“They influence the destinies of individual economies in the developing world, they have a crucial impact on the eco-system, they set wage levels, which can cause the first world to bend to their demands, and so on”* (Macleod and Lewis 2004, p. 77). The significance of this kind of company is clearly demonstrated by this sentence. They have an important influence on the ecosystem and the regional or global economy, either directly or indirectly. They additionally bring attention to the fact that additional information on the influence actions of transnational companies is becoming available, but as of currently, no plan appears to exist for how these companies fit into the global responsibility system (*Ibid.*). In the paper *Transnational Corporation and Global Governance*, the author emphasizes the significance of transnational corporations over governance from an alternative viewpoint completely based on the same concept. He defines *“corporations are important and privileged players in global governance arenas but do not fully control them. Some corporate mobilizations to shape the [World Trade Organization] WTO, for instance, have succeeded while others have fallen short”* (Bartley 2018, p. 26). In the tourism system, multinational corporations affect other companies, but they can also affect governments, as T. Bartley’s (2018) comment explains.

This subsection clarifies the definition of Destination Management Companies (DMCs) and the diverse issues and difficulties that these companies face in the context of the evolving tourism system. Additionally, it highlights how difficult it is to define the kinds of strategies that DMC and multinational companies can employ. It also demonstrates the importance of these organizations and their control over other companies in the sector. They may also have power over the local government, as previously mentioned.

5. Sociology of power exercises by companies and zones of uncertainty

The main objective is to improve the comprehension of the tourism system through techniques of company interactions. The author Vincent Sabourin (2000) chose to use the competitor strategy analysis method in his work *L'industrie Touristique : Stratégie Concurrentielle des Entreprises* in order to accomplish this goal. He begins with a broad overview of the sector before discussing how the tourism markets are becoming more global in terms of consumer preferences and purchase criteria for products and services (Sabourin 2000, p. 1). Even though the author does not specify it, it is clear that his analysis of the tourism system relies on P. Violier's (1999) theory, which is presented in the literature review part. He uses the competitive advantage that multinational corporations have over small enterprises as an illustration. He views small companies as those that only offer one product and service to a specific territory (*Ibid.*, p. 2). According to V. Sabourin (2000), diversifying offerings or increasing activity specialization in a certain market are the two ways to compete with competitors. Employing innovative technologies to guarantee a competitive advantage is another option (*Ibid.*, p. 2-3). This demonstrates the conflicts that might happen in the tourism sector when trying to be the most competitive organization. The author brings attention to the fact that there are two viewpoints when creating a specific plan; they cannot be seen as an important and deliberate action or as a growing phenomenon (*Ibid.*, p. 5-6). Additionally, he develops the idea of competitiveness in the tourism sector by discussing two distinct approaches, one of which is strategic positioning, which tries to improve a company's negotiating position (*Ibid.*, p. 65), and market leadership, which tries to take the biggest portion of the market in order to dominate it (*Ibid.*, p. 75).

Tourism competitiveness: From an economic and managerial perspective, the book *Competitiveness in the Tourism Sector: A Comprehensive Approach* indicates, from a second point of view “*the fundamental product in tourism is the destination experience*” (Hong 2008, p. 9). The author said that in order for businesses in the

tourism system to acquire an advantage over their competitors, they must focus on the destination.

The actors in the tourism system develop strategies to face off with competition; these approaches might resemble to zones of uncertainty. Actors have strategic views about the following, as clarified by B. Seddik (2017) in the article *Manage the Zones of Uncertainties to Reduce the Cost of Training in the Organization*:

- The advantages of the maneuvering margin;
- Uncertainty zones;
- The strength of their and other actors' strategic resources;
- Power interaction dynamics (Foudriat 2007, p. 161; Seddik 2017, p. 9)

The author of this essay chose to examine M. Crozier and E. Friedberg's (1977) *L'acteur et le Systeme*. They create four distinct power sources that might be employed to eliminate the zones of uncertainty. The first is getting a particular competence; this area of uncertainty allows the actor to grow and communicate with bigger organizations. It's also critical to note that in this original source of power, authority can only be used by those with a specific competence over others (Crozier and Friedberg 1977; Seddik 2017, p. 10). The second is the management of interactions with the environment; they clarify that this is a significant benefit (Crozier and Friedberg 1977; Seddik 2017, p. 10). The flow of information is the third source of power; those in charge of it use it to their advantage (Crozier and Friedberg 1977; Seddik 2017, p. 10). Controlling organization rules is the fourth source of power over uncertainty zones because it allows an actor to defend the legitimacy of their actions (Crozier and Friedberg 1977; Seddik 2017, p. 10). These several sources of influence are also referred to as strategic alliances, strategic manipulation, strategic rules, and strategic competency (Crozier and Friedberg 1977). The actors' setting up of these strategies in an effort to demonstrate their position as leaders corresponds to the competitively relevant zone of uncertainty.

The importance of competition and establishing a competitive advantage in the tourism and travel sector is demonstrated in this subsection. Considering the power transnational organizations exercise, as seen previously, it is even more significant. This subsection also brings attention to the relationship between the zone of

uncertainty and competitive advantage. As was previously noted, one can take advantage of these zones of uncertainty.

6. Conclusion of the key concepts and notions

This chapter aimed to examine the key concepts and notions of the research question and the various questions that emerged thanks to the analysis of the literature review part. Moreover, this chapter studied the following concepts: tourist flows, the issues of the management of tourist flows, DMC and transnational corporations, and the types of power and competitive advantages.

The first sub-part examined the definition of tourist flows thanks to various concepts and schema. The concepts of the “touristicité”, the territorial attractiveness coefficient, the calculation of tourist flows, and incoming and outgoing flows have been examined thanks to Lozato-Giotart, Leroux, and Balfet's (2012) vision. Moreover, in order to have another point of view on the definition of tourist flows, the article from Acampa, Grasso, Marino, and Parisi (2020) has been analyzed. This essay highlighted the five types of tourism carrying capacity which refer to the types of tourist flows. These five types are the following: the ecological capacity, the sociocultural capacity, the psychological capacity, the infrastructure capacity, and the management capacity (Acampa and al. 2020). The second subpart aimed to analyze the issues of the management of tourist flows. It first developed the importance of setting up a strategy for the management of tourist flows because of the increase in the number of tourists. It also highlighted the problem of over-tourism and developed the concept of demarketing. Moreover, this sub-part also underlines thanks to Leroux's (2012) vision the need to promote sustainable tourism. To finish, this section relies on Lejoux's (2006) essay and examines the concept and problem of territorial attractiveness. The third sub-part aimed to develop the definition of Destination Management Companies and Transnational Corporations. The first objective was to focus on DMC and to define it thanks to Bordelon and Ortiz (2015). Moreover, the challenges and issues of DMC have been underlined such as financial vulnerabilities and the need for quick adaptation and innovation. It also shows the importance of the expansion of sustainable development in the tourism

system. Another objective of this sub-section was to understand the importance of transnational corporations which was defined thanks to Davis's (1987) vision. It shows strategies used by multinationals and DMC to exercise their influence over other companies or touristic destinations which was developed by Verbeke (2013). The last sub-section highlighted a sociology analysis of the types of power and competitive advantage exercised by companies in the tourism system. It shows the analyses of the different types of companies' interactions thanks to Sabourin's (2000) point of view. Moreover, the strategies developed by companies in the tourism system to face competitors have been highlighted. The last important notion studied in this chapter is the zones of uncertainty explained by Crozier and Friedberg (1977) in the book *L'acteur et le Systeme*. These zones of uncertainty are the following: to have a particular competence, the management of interactions with the environment, the circulation of information, and the control of organization rules (Crozier and Friedberg 1977; Seddik 2017, p. 10).

This chapter aimed to show the main concepts and notions that will help to determine hypotheses for the following study. Moreover, it will also be the base of this global analysis which have as objective to determine the importance of DMC on the management of tourist flows and understand the competitive advantages that it can bring to these types of companies.

Chapter 3: Hypotheses

The examination of the existing literature review on the topic of the tourist system, the management of tourist flows, the concept of DMC, and the analysis of the Irish company Abbey Group to determine a research question: How do Destination Management Companies use management of tourist flows and choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage? After defining this question, the objective in the chapter 2 was to examine the key concepts and notions. The idea of tourist flows and management of it, destination management companies and transnational corporation, and the sociology of power within enterprises have been highlighted with the concept of zones of uncertainty. A deeper investigation of the situation raised attention to how important the question is. The following hypotheses are the result of this analysis of the literature review with the essential ideas and of the entirety of the previous analysis.

1. Hypothesis 1: Destination Management Companies use data collection to organize their stay and have an influence on tourist flow management which allows them to exercise their power and assert a competitive advantage

The first hypothesis relies on the notion that Destination Management Companies collect data through software. Local travel companies and more global corporations such as DMC are using software to collect data on their business, clients, and destinations. These data might be useful in developing a strategic approach. Furthermore, it is important to notice that there is a gap in the existing literature review concerning this topic, no documents exist that go into detail about this technology's specificity or how it is used in the tourism sector. This lack of information represents an opportunity for further study. This topic will be explored thanks to the semi-structured interview and the survey which will be developed in the fourth chapter. They will include focused questions on the subject of the use of data to manage tourist flows within DMC. These types of companies may better

predict market trends, comprehend customer behavior, and develop more informed strategies by utilizing the power of data collection. This could give them a competitive advantage over their rivals. Therefore, more research on this subject may lead to a better comprehension of how data-driven tactics are influencing the competitive environment in the tourism sector.

2. Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose their stakeholders, especially the tour operators and travel agencies they are working with

This hypothesis highlights the importance of the choice of the stakeholders. In the tourism sector, as explained above, Destination Management Companies are working closely with tour operators and travel agencies which aims to bring customers to the company. Moreover, the importance of these types of companies has been highlighted in the analysis of the existing literature review. The objective of this hypothesis is to understand the impact of the choice of stakeholders, including the choice of companies that DMCs are working with directly within the destination (accommodation, restoration, activities, transportation...). This hypothesis will be confirmed or refuted thanks to the semi-structured interview which will be developed below. Moreover, the survey which will be presented in chapter four of this part will help to understand the vision of the employees of Abbey Group on this topic.

3. Hypothesis 3: Sustainable tourism with its three pillars is a solution to managing tourist flows but must be more regulated to ensure a better management of these flows

This third hypothesis considers that destination management companies are aware of the positive impact that could have sustainable tourism on destinations and more precisely on the management of tourist flows. As seen in the analysis of the existing literature review, the concept of sustainable tourism can be seen as having positive and negative impacts. These studies helped to understand the nuance of this type of tourism and the impact that it can have on destinations with over-tourism. Sustainable tourism has been largely developed these last few decades and represents a real innovation in the tourism system. This hypothesis will be analyzed in the bellow survey and semi-structured interviews which will aim to confirm or refute it.

These three hypotheses will be developed through the following parts of this master's thesis. The definition of the main concepts and overview of the existing literature review has helped to develop these hypotheses. The purpose will be to justify them thanks to a methodology that will be explained in the next chapter. Moreover, these hypotheses will be confirmed or refuted thanks to semi-structured interviews and a survey that will be developed and analyzed in the following parts of this master's thesis.

Chapter 4: Methodology of the quantitative and qualitative approach: a mixed-methods research

1. Introduction to a complete methodology

The analysis of the existing literature review and the study of the Irish company Abbey Group led to the definition of a research question which is the following: How do Destination Management Companies use management of tourist flows and choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage? After the development of this research question, the objective within this second part was to go deeper into the analysis of the key concepts and notions. These ideas which have been developed are tourist flows, the management of tourist flows, destination management companies and transnational corporations, and the power exercise by companies over other enterprises within the tourism system. This analysis helped to develop some hypotheses for the research question. The aim of this study will be to confirm or refute these hypotheses thanks to a qualitative and a quantitative approach which will be developed below.

The first sub-part aims to develop the organization of the dissertation in order to better understand the global objective and the importance of this study. The objective of setting up an organization is to have a well-structured work. The aims of this chapter are also to highlight the methodology developed in the organization of this study. This methodology goes through the organization, the qualitative and the quantitative approach. This section will develop the work which have been done and which will be done for this master's thesis. The second sub-part will explain the importance of setting up a quantitative approach for this study. Moreover, it will develop the definition of a quantitative study and the explanation of the questions. The last sub-section will develop the qualitative approach which will be done in this study. It will go through the definition of it, the objectives, and the explanation of the semi-structured interview with the questions

2. The organization of the master's thesis

As said above; in order to have a well-structured study, it is important to set up a quality organization. A Gantt chart was created for the writing of this study. Dissertations can be organized in many different kinds of methods. In order to ensure optimal organization, a Gantt chart has been established. One of the most effective tools for project management is the Gantt chart, which makes it possible to see how the dissertation is progressing along with its key stages. With the Gantt plan, which will help ensure that each step is carefully managed, the dissertation will be completed on schedule and to the required standard of quality. There are some steps that need to be done in order to make an effective Gantt chart. The first step is to precisely identify the study's or project's theme. Creating a list of all the tasks required to complete the study is the second step. Listing the major steps and then dividing them into smaller parts is the most effective way to complete this step. Calculating the work duration, which can be done in many units such as an hour, day, week, or month, is the third step. The goal of the fourth stage is to establish a connection between each task and the previous one. Creating an exhaustive calendar with exact dates for the essay is the fifth task; the schedule needs to be complete and realistic. Selecting a useful tool to track the project's development is the final stage. This master's thesis has been divided into a two-year study which aimed to evolve over time.

The first-year dissertation started by choosing the general topic thanks to the creation of a starting question. This question evolved thanks to a deep analysis of the existing literature review, the definition of the context and the objectives, and became a research question. This research question was "How do tour operators and travel agencies use management of tourist flows as a strategy to exercise their power and have a competitive advantage?" (Quintard 2023, p. 67). This question which was the base of the study, led to two different hypotheses. These hypotheses was focused on two subjects which was the data collection and the global strategy setting up by tour operators and travel agencies in order to manage tourist flows. The next parts of this first-year master's thesis developed the redaction of the questions for the semi-structured interviews and finished with the limitation of the study.

For the organization of the second-year master's thesis, the objective was to take the first-year dissertation as a base and to make it evolved. The global topic stayed the same but has been adapted thanks to a concrete case study. After defining the context, objectives, and plan of the dissertation, the first objective was to analyze the existing literature review on the topic of DMC and tourist flows. The next step was to study a concrete case with the Irish company Abbey Group and to link it with the topic of this master's thesis. Thanks to this overview, a few questions have been highlighted and led to the definition of a research question which is: "How do Destination Management Companies use management of tourist flows and choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage?". After the explanation of the research question, the objective was to define the main theoretical framework. It underlines a few concepts such as tourist flows, management of tourist flows, DMC and transnational corporations, and the power exercise by companies over other. Thanks to these concepts, three hypotheses has been highlighted on the topic of data collection, sustainable tourism and the choice of stakeholders in order to set up a strategy of tourist flow management. The next step was to define the general methodology of this study with the qualitative and quantitative approach. After this, the objective will be to analyze the results of the interview and the survey. This analysis will help to confirm or refute the various hypotheses and to highlighted keys recommendations.

This first sub-part helped to understand the strategy of the organization of this master's thesis. The study of the existing literature review, the research question, the hypotheses, the interview and survey, the analysis of the results, and the recommendations are the main components of this two-year dissertation. Establishing deadlines and developing a Gantt chart with all the components was essential to managing this work. This chart helps to visualize how the dissertation has changed over time and makes it easier to follow the changes that have been made.

3. The quantitative approach

In order to analyze and respond to the research question “How do Destination Management Companies use management of tourist flows and choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage?” the objective is to make two different approaches, the first one is the quantitative approach, and the second one is the qualitative approach with the semi-structured interview. The quantitative approach will help to have an overview of the importance of DMCs in the management of tourist flows. This quantitative approach will also help to determine the importance and accuracy of the hypotheses, which will be confirmed or refuted thanks to the qualitative approach. As a reminder, the hypotheses that will be valeted thanks to the quantitative approach are the following:

- a. Hypothesis 1: Destination Management Companies use data collection to organize their stay and have an influence on tourist flow management which allows them to exercise their power and assert a competitive advantage.
- b. Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose their stakeholders, especially the tour operators and travel agencies they are working with.
- c. Hypothesis 3: Sustainable tourism with its three pillars is a solution to managing tourist flows but must be more regulated to ensure better management of these flows.

This analysis of the importance of setting up a quantitative approach will be divided into two parts. The first sub-section will define the concept of the quantitative approach, it will also go through the importance of determining a sample, choosing the questions, the administration of the questions, and the data processing. The second sub-section of this analysis of the quantitative approach aims to develop the survey with the questions that will be asked.

3.1 Definition and overview of the quantitative research

It is crucial in order to understand the importance of the choice of setting up a quantitative approach to start by defining it. The author R. Watson (2015) wrote an article focused on the concept of the quantitative approach. According to him, measurement is a crucial component of quantitative research, which is predicated on the ability to measure the phenomenon being studied. The objective of quantitative research are to collect data through measurement, analyze the data and search for patterns and relationship, and validate the measures that were taken (Watson 2015, p. 1). The quantitative approach allows to have access to some items that are easy to measure such as age, position within a company... But it is also important to consider that some other items are not taken into account in this type of approach such as how people feel, and what they really think, these components are difficult to verify (*Ibid.*, p. 2). As a definition, the author wrote “*Quantitative research encompasses a range of methods concerned with the systematic investigation of social phenomena, using statistical or numerical data*” (*Ibid.*, p. 1). It is also explained in the article *Quantitative Research*, that this type of approach can be conducted in two different ways, the first one is the experiment and the second one is the surveys. It is possible to read in this article that surveys

“frequently involve distributing questionnaires, but they may also be conducted by interview or by observation. In contrast to experiments, surveys cannot easily distinguish between cause and effect, but they are useful for gathering large amounts of data to describe samples and populations” (Hallberg IR 2008; Watson 2015, p. 9).

With this sentence, the author highlights the benefits and limitations of surveys over experiments, pointing out that although surveys are not as good at determining connections between variables, they are nevertheless useful instruments to collect huge quantities of data that characterize populations.

3.1.1 Determination of the sample

The author R. Watson (2015), developed in the article *Quantitative Research*, that “*The sample surveyed is always part of the same population but does not, necessarily, comprise the same people*” (*Ibid.*, p. 10). In order to understand the

functioning of a sample, as it is highlighted in the sentence above it is important to acknowledge the notion of population. In the book *Statistics: A Spectator Sport*, the author develops a definition of a population he explains that a population is “*any collection of objects or entities that have at least one common characteristic*” (Jaeger 1990, p. 138). Thanks to this analysis the author, R. Jaeger (1990) highlights the fact that a population is not as general as it is generally thought. A population can also be a group of people, houses, a team... The author also defines the notion of a sample as a section of a population (*Ibid.*, p. 139). In the book *Research in Organization*, it is possible to read that there is a large variety of sampling strategies (Swanson et Holton (eds.) 2005, p. 47). The authors developed six different strategies of sampling. These strategies are the following:

- “*Convenience Sampling*” (*Ibid.*, p. 50): which means selecting participants who are accessible easily;
- “*Purposive Sampling*” (*Ibid.*, p. 51): aims to select and target a small group;
- “*Simple Random Sampling*” (*Ibid.*, p. 52): the authors explain that with this strategy, each member of a population has the same chance to be selected;
- “*Cluster Sampling*” (*Ibid.*, p. 53): it is a random sample where participants are chosen from the population and placed inside a group;
- “*Stratified Sampling*” (*Ibid.*): it aims to divide the population and select one small group;
- “*Census*” (*Ibid.*): the objective of this strategy is to select the entirety of the population.

In order to conduct this research, as explained above, a survey will be done. For the choice of the sample, it will follow the “*Purposive Sampling*” (*Ibid.*, p. 51). Moreover, the study will be done within the Irish company Abbey Group which has been developed and analyzed in the first part of this Master’s thesis. The sample for this study will be the employees of Abbey Group who represent a total of around 200 persons, including managers, staff, interns, CEOs...

3.1.2 Choice of the questions

The choice of the questions is really important for a quantitative approach. There are a large type and choice of questions existing for a survey. Selection of the right type of questions will help to determine the accuracy of the hypotheses. As an example, there are:

- the open-ended questions: which aim to extend the topic;
- the closed-ended questions: questions that offer responders a list of predetermined responses, such as “yes” or “no”;
- the rating questions: the responders need to evaluate something, there is generally a scale, such as 1 to 10;
- multiple-choice questions: the respondents have the choice between several answers, they can either select one or multiple answers;
- ...

For this research, the majority of the questions will either be closed-ended questions, which will help to determine the profile of the respondent and have their opinions on some topics. There will also be a few multiple-choice questions which will help to open the debate on different topics.

3.1.3 Administration of questions

Concerning the administration of the questions. As explained above this quantitative approach which will be a survey will be conducted within the Irish company Abbey Group. The objective will be to contact each employees and to send them the survey via a link. This process will be done thanks to the help of a manager who can reach directly every employee and intern within the company. Moreover, the choice of the software to create the survey is also really important. For this research, Google Forms will be used. This software allows to create an easy-used survey and to share it simply. Moreover, it also makes easier the analysis of the data thanks to its responses part.

3.1.4 Data processing

After creating the survey and sending it through the employees of Abbey Group, the objective will be to analyze the data collected. As explained in the previous sub-part, the software which will be used is Google Forms, this application

aims to make the analysis easier thanks to diagrams that are created directly. Moreover, it is possible to export all data in a table which helps to do a deeper analysis of the statistics. The goal of this analysis will be to cross-reference data as much as possible in order to obtain as many pieces of information as possible.

To summarize, in order to determine the importance and accuracy of the hypotheses, a quantitative research will be made. This quantitative approach will be created thanks to a survey which will be shared with every employee of the Irish company Abbey Group. This company has been developed and analyzed in the first part of this master's thesis. As explained, it is a DMC, which justifies the choice of this company for this research. The objective of this section was to understand the choice of a survey and to determine the different elements in order to conduct this quantitative approach. The first goal was to determine the sample of this survey. As explained by the authors in the book *Research in Organizations*, the choice of doing purposive sampling was the most coherent for this research. The second objective was to determine the types of questions which will be asked, the choice was to alternate between close-ended questions and multiple-choice questions. As explained, the administration of the survey will be done thanks to the software Google Forms and will be sent through email to every employee of Abbey Group. The last element to determine was the data processing, as explained, the objective will be to cross-reference data as much as possible in order to obtain as much information as possible.

3.2 The concrete questions of the survey

As explained and analyzed in the previous sub-part, quantitative research can be conducted in two different ways in two different ways, the first one is the experiment and the second one is the survey. To conduct this research with the quantitative approach, the choice has been to create a survey, which was more adapted to the study.

In the book *Research in Organizations*, the authors developed the various elements and steps to include in the process of quantitative research. These steps are the following:

- “1. Defining the survey purpose and objectives*
- 2. Determining the sample*
- 3. Creating and pretesting the instrument*
- 4. Contacting respondents throughout the survey process*
- 5. Collecting, reducing, and analyzing data” (Ibid., p. 100)*

In order to create the survey, the researcher decided to follow these steps. Concerning the first one, the purpose and objective of the survey are the following. As explained previously, the global objective of this quantitative approach is to determine the accuracy of the hypotheses. Another goal of this survey will be to analyze the vision of people working inside Abbey Group and the impact that the company could have on tourist flow management according to the employees. Having the vision of these employees will help as said above to determine the accuracy of this research and it will also help to organize the qualitative research which will be developed in the following section.

Concerning the determination of the sample, as explained above the survey will follow the sampling strategy of purposive sampling. In order to do that the population of this research has been selected. This population is the Destination Management Companies all around the world. Moreover, the sample will be one of these DMCs, it will be all the employees of the Irish company Abbey Group.

For the third element, the design of the survey has been created and tested. To do this step, the choice of words was really important, the objective was to choose simple words over specialized ones. The questions needed to be short and concrete. Another objective was also to vary the types of questions in order to give different types of answers and the maximum as possible data to analyze. The testing phase has also been made over a really small sample in order to adapt the questions if needed. The different sections and questions of the survey will be explained and developed below.

As explained above, for the distribution of the survey, the choice is to contact a manager in order to administrate the quantitative research to every employees within the company. The objective is to have as many answers as possible to have

the maximum data and have a viable survey. It is often said that in order to have a viable survey there is a minimum of answers to obtain, this minimum number is generally one hundred. But, considering that the global sample is a total of around two hundred employees, the minimum answers needed for this research will be twenty percent of the employees. This number corresponds to around forty people. The last step is the collection and analysis of the data. After sharing the survey, the next objective will be to study the data collected. As explained above, the analysis will be done mainly thanks to the Google Forms software, and the exporting of data into a table in order to cross-reference data.

The survey of the quantitative approach will be divided into four sections. All of these sections have different objectives and will help to demonstrate if the hypotheses are accurate. These four sections are the following: the profile of the respondent, the destinations the group is selling, the management of tourist flows, and the solutions that can be brought for better management.

The first section aims to develop the profile of the respondent thanks to four questions, which are outlined below:

- In which sector of the company are you?
- What is your workstation?
- What is your type of contract?
- How long have you been in the company?

All these questions have the objective to determine the profile of the respondent, according to the sector they are working in and their workstation, their responses will differ. For example, as explained above, in the first part of this master's thesis, there is a sector of the Abbey Group company that is focused on the organization of events and conferences, they won't have the same vision as the people working at FIT or Group workstation. Moreover, the persons working in the human resources or financial position will also bring another point of view. The question about how long the respondent arrived in the company is also really important, the people that have more experience within Abbey Group may have a more global vision.

As seen previously, the second section will develop the aspect of the destination. It aims through five questions to understand the point of view of the employees about the destinations sold by Abbey Group and to discover if there is a notion of over-

tourism according to them. Within this section, there is a mix of closed-ended questions and multiple-choice questions. The questions are the following:

- a) Do you think there is any over-tourism in destinations we are working with?
- b) IF YES: Would you say:
 - All our destinations are mass tourism
 - The majority of our destinations are mass tourism
 - A few of our destinations are mass tourism
- c) At your workstation did you notice a service (accommodation, leisure company, transportation...) that is frequently booked?
- d) IF YES: What type of service was it? (From the most to the least important)
 - Accommodations
 - Activities
 - Tours/Guides
 - Transports
- e) Would you say that the accommodations are booked:
 - Always in the same cities
 - Often in the same cities
 - Not particularly in the same cities but in the same region
 - Scattered throughout the country

These questions aim to determine concretely if according to the employees there is an issue of mass-tourism. There are two graduated questions with slight nuances between the answers. The aim is to comprehend the positioning of each employee within Abbey Group. Therefore, the fourth question is a rating question, as explained above, the objective is to rate the type of services which are the most booked in the same cities or area. The goal of this section is also to introduce the topic of tourist flow management and the issue that it represents for this type of company.

The third section has the objective to talk concretely about the tourist flows management by Abbey Group. It discusses the needs of this company to set up concrete actions to manage tourist flows and the impact that it could have on destinations. The three questions in this section are the following:

- f) Do you think Abbey Group needs to set up actions for the management of tourist flow?
- g) Do you think the company could have an impact on the management of tourist flows?
- h) IF YES: Would it be a positive or negative impact?

It is really important to understand the point of view of the employees and to understand if according to them DMCs need to set up actions to manage tourist flows and if it could have either a positive or a negative impact.

The last section of this survey will develop the solutions that employees think can be established to have a better management of tourist flows. This section will be divided into five questions which are the following:

- i) Would you say that the company have enough stakeholders in order to not send tourist in the same place?
- j) Do you think that data collected by the company are used to manage tourist flows?
- k) Would you say that using data collection is effective?
- l) According to you, what is the most represented type of tourism within the company?
- m) Do you think this type of tourism is efficient concerning management of tourist flows?

This section addresses the different topics of the hypotheses which are the data collection, the choice and diversity of stakeholders, and the importance of sustainable tourism.

As explained in the previous sub-section, the objective of this quantitative research is to validate the accuracy of the hypotheses thanks to the survey. The survey has been made in order to be short and easy to answer, the goal is to share it with every employee of the Abbey Group and to collect their point of view.

4. The qualitative approach

The objective of this subpart is to understand and define the qualitative approach. This type of approach will be used in this study in order to analyze the research question. Moreover, developing the plan that will be utilized to confirm or refute the hypotheses is the aim of the next sections. The following strategy is included into the framework of a qualitative approach: create an adaptable semi-structured interview and select companies and interviewees carefully. As a reminder, the following are the hypotheses:

- a. Hypothesis 1: Destination Management Companies use data collection to organize their stay and have an influence on tourist flow management which allows them to exercise their power and assert a competitive advantage.
- b. Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose their stakeholders, especially the tour operators and travel agencies they are working with.
- c. Hypothesis 3: Sustainable tourism with its three pillars is a solution to managing tourist flows but must be more regulated to ensure better management of these flows.

The first sub-section will go through the definition of a qualitative approach. It will also develop the importance and the determination of the sample. The choice of the types of questions for the interviews will also be explained. It will also explore the topic of the administration of the questions and the choice of organizations and people who will be interviewed. Moreover, the last subject that will be analyzed within this sub-part is data processing.

The second sub-section will focus on the semi-structured interview. It will develop the objectives and the questions that will be asked. This sub-part aims to understand the importance and the relateness of setting up this type of strategy for this master's thesis.

4.1 Definition and overview of the qualitative research

In order to start and comprehend the choice of a qualitative methodology to carry out this research, it is essential to acknowledge the differences and especially the benefits of choosing to collect data through semi-structured interviews. Compared to a quantitative approach, a qualitative approach uses a significantly smaller sample and takes less time to collect data. It is crucial to remember that the interview analysis is done on a case-by-case basis and takes more time. Additionally, the interview needs to be well-prepared, and transcription of the interviews is required. On the other hand, a qualitative method permits an exhaustive and comprehensive examination, which consequently permits the investigation of a specific problem. The primary objective of a qualitative method, which is the opposite of a quantitative approach, is to gather data from a small sample. It involves asking questions, collecting information, examining the data, and searching for trends and themes. The goal of this study's qualitative approach is to establish a semi-structured interview. More information can be collected and more questioning flexibility is available during this kind of interview. It is possible that this data is not accurate enough for statistical analysis, though. Establishing the sample, selecting the questions, posing the questions, and processing the data are the steps involved in creating a semi-structured interview.

4.1.1 Determination of the sample

The selection of the sample is essential, and considering the period needed for each interview and its preparation, it is typically very small. Indeed, quality is preferred over quantity because the goal is to make the greatest possible use of every interview in order to collect data and information for the study. Moreover, there are several steps that are important to determine the sample. The first one is to clearly define the purpose which is to collect the opinions of professionals working in the DMCs on their involvement and impact in the management of tourist flows. The second objective is to determine criteria such as the socio-professional background, age... For this research, the choice will be to interview managers from different Destination Management Companies all around the world. The next step

will be to select participants for the semi-structured interview, in order to do this, the objective will be to find out about companies and then contact them on LinkedIn. The fourth step will be to determine the size of the sample, the aim will be to interview 5 to 10 persons. The last step consists of considering the evolution of the work and adapting the size of the sample accordingly.

4.1.2 Choice of the questions

As previously mentioned, the choice of questions is the next step in the qualitative approach after selecting the sample. Interviews that are semi-structured will be used to conduct the qualitative research. These interviews offer more flexibility and give the interviewer more control over the sample. It is made up of open-ended questions that make it possible to collect more specific data. Furthermore, the questions are not predetermined; instead, they might change based on the topic of discussion. The questions in this study will be divided into several sections. The first section aims to determine the profile of the respondent and the Destination Management Company he is working in. The next one is focused on the idea of data collection. The third section of questions addresses the importance of the choice of their stakeholders. The next is about the implementation of sustainable stay and the last section will be the conclusion of this whole interview. The questions of the semi-structured interview will be developed and described in the following sub-part.

4.1.3 Administration of questions

Understanding that the goal of the study is to find out if Destination Management Companies affect the management of tourist flows, and if the choice of stakeholders represents a major component in this study without taking into account location. Indeed, the objective is to research the different company methods used by organizations around the entire world. The semi-structured interview will be administered over the phone or via videoconference rather than in-person in order to accomplish this. For this research, as explained above, the interviewee will be contacted via LinkedIn and the questions will be asked via videoconference taking into account the time difference. Concerning the choice of the organization, the aim is to interview people at managerial positions within DMCs all around the world.

4.1.4 Data processing

The data analysis has several goals. It aims to highlight the main terms, concepts, and notions explained by the interviewees. It also aims to do a constant comparison between the different interviews and points of view. Moreover, the objective of the data analysis will also be to interpret the difference between deductive and inductive thinking. The last thing that is important to consider is the interpretations to generate meaning.

The data processing will be divided into two parts, the first one aims to explain the data collected. The second one aims to analyze these responses. These two steps will take place after all interviews and have the final objective to validate or refute the initial hypotheses.

These four steps, which are the determination of the sample, the choice of the questions, the administration of the questions and the choice of organization, and the data processing aim to structure the interviews and more globally the research. As explained above, concerning the sample, the objective is to interview around five to ten people. For the choice of the questions, as it will be a semi-structured interview, it will be mainly open-ended questions that make it possible to collect more specific data. The third section developed the choice of the organization and the administration, as explained, the questions will be asked to people working in DMCs and in particular to management posts. Concerning the administration of the interview, it will be mainly done thanks to videoconferences. For the last step, the data will be processed thanks to two parts, the first one will be the explanation of the responses and the second one will be the analysis of the data. The final aim of these steps will be to confirm or refute the hypotheses.

4.2 The concrete semi-structured interview

As said above, in order to confirm or refute a semi-structured interview will be created and conducted for this qualitative approach part. First of all it is crucial to understand the choice of a qualitative analysis. A qualitative approach is:

“the analysis of the interviews is generally limited to what takes place during the concrete interaction phase with its questions and responses. In contrast to this, there is reason to believe that excellent interview research does not just communicate a number of answers to an interviewer’s questions (with the researcher’s interpretive interjections added on), but also includes an analytic focus on what Briggs called “the larger set of practices of knowledge production that makes up the research from beginning to end” (Leavy (ed.) 2020, p. 427; Briggs 2007, p. 566)

In the book *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, the author Patricia Leavy (2020) explains that there are two types of approaches in a qualitative study, the first one is the traditional approach. The traditional approach includes the concrete interaction phase. The second approach is the comprehensive one, it aims to understand all the complexity around an interview. This phase implies that the interviewer should go beyond the simple analysis of the responses. The full process of knowledge production needs to be included in the study as explained by C. Briggs (2007). This involves taking into account every step and choice that influences the research from the beginning to the end.

Concerning the semi-structured interview, as a definition *“It is defined as an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena”* (Kvale et Brinkmann 2009, p. 6). The authors explain that this type of approach mainly focuses on interpreting and evaluating the lived experiences of the interviewees and the conclusions they make about them. Moreover, according to P. Leavy, (2020), the semi-structured interview is the most used approach in qualitative research. She also explains that:

“compared to structured interviews, semistructured interviews can make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing much more leeway for following on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee; as well, the interviewer has a greater chance of becoming visible as a knowledge-producing participant in the process itself, rather than hiding behind a preset interview guide” (Leavy (ed.) 2020, p. 437).

According to this sentence, semi-structured interviews are better than structured ones in producing richer, deeper information because they give the interviewer more

freedom to actively participate in the knowledge-production process and explore the interviewee's point of view.

For this study, as said above, the choice of a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews. The objective of this qualitative approach is to understand the importance of DMCs over tourist flow management, and if they have a direct impact on the number of tourists in a destination and participate in over-tourism. Moreover, the second objective of this approach is to validate or refute hypotheses and go deeper thanks to solutions that could be provided by the interviewee. In order to conduct these interviews an interview schedule that aims to develop each question has been made. The figure 9 represents the interview schedule with the different sections and questions. It is also important to note that the comment line aims to be completed during the interviews. The first section is the profile of the respondent and the company. It aims to have an overview of the profile thanks to four general questions that determine the position of the interviewee, the mission and value of the company... Within these general there is also a question which has as objective to introduce the topic, it is "How would you describe "tourist flow management"?". The second section will develop the collection of data within Destination Management Companies. This section is divided into four questions which aim to understand the importance of data collection. This part of the question also addresses the question of the competitive advantages brought by the data collection and, consequently, the management of tourist flows. The third section examines the importance of the choice of stakeholders within DMCs in order to manage tourist flows. These three questions address the choice of tour operators and travel agencies. Moreover, there is also a question about the importance of having a large database of services "Would you say that you have a large database of services to put into your stays?". The fourth section aims to develop the trend of sustainable stay and its impact on the management of tourist flows. This section is important to determine the type of travel the DMC is selling and if sustainable stay represents a challenge and an objective for the company. The final section will conclude the semi-structured interview. It will be divided into two questions. The first one aims to summarize the interview by talking about the aspects of data collection, choice of

stakeholders, and sustainable stay. The last question aims to open the discussion on the topic of the importance of DMCs over the management of tourist flows.

Theme	Questions	Comments
PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENT AND THE COMPANY	What is your position within the company?	
	What are the values and missions of your company?	
	Which value would you say is the most important?	
	How would you describe sustainable tourism and eco-responsible stay? Do you sell sustainable / eco-responsible stays?	
	How would you describe “tourist flow management”?	
DATA COLLECTION	Do you use specific software to collect data on your customers? If yes, which one?	
	How does data collection provide your company with a tourist flow management strategy?	
	In what way does collecting data allow a competitive advantage?	
CHOICE OF STAKEHOLDERS	How do you choose the tour operators or travel agencies you are working with?	
	Is your choice of stakeholder part of a tourist flows management strategy?	
	Would you say that you have a large database of services to put into your stays?	

SUSTAINABLE STAY	What is the major type of stay you are creating?	
	How does sustainable stay impact your company?	
	Does it represent a challenge?	
CONCLUSION	Have you been able to assess the effectiveness of these tools (data collection, choice of stakeholders, sustainable tourism)?	
	Would you say that the management of tourist flows represents an advantage for a Destination Management Company?	

Figure 9: Interview schedule

5. Conclusion of a mixed-methods research

Through chapter four of this second part of the master's thesis, the objective was to develop the general methodology of quantitative and qualitative research. For the research and in order to analyze the research question: How do Destination Management Companies use management of tourist flows and choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage? The objective was to understand the choice of setting up a mixed method research with the quantitative and qualitative study. Moreover, the chapter four developed the theoretical part of these two approaches with the definitions, choice of the sample, choice of the questions, administration of the questions, and data processing. But it also highlights the concrete survey and semi-structured interviews that will be conducted.

The first objective of this chapter was to understand the organization of this master's thesis going from the first-year dissertation to the end of this work. As explained, the first-year dissertation aimed to set up the general method and research topic. For the second year, the objective was to make an evolution on the subject and to explore different points of view.

The second objective of this chapter was to develop the quantitative research. The first sub-part defined the concept of the quantitative approach which the choice of the sample, the determination of the questions, the administration of the survey, and

the data procession. The second sub-part developed the concrete survey that will be done for this research. As it has been explained, there is a lot of subtlety that needs to be chosen carefully in order to have the expected results. The choice was to create a survey that will be shared with the employees of the Irish company Abbey Group. The objective of the quantitative approach will be to determine the accuracy of the hypotheses. Moreover, it will help to prepare the interview for the qualitative research.

The third and last goal of this chapter was to develop the importance of setting up a qualitative approach in order to confirm or refute the hypotheses. The first sup-part developed the definition of a qualitative interview and how it operates. It also highlighted the choice of the sample, the choice of the questions, the administration of the semi-structured interviews, and the data processing. This section developed the choice of creating a semi-structured interview instead of a structured one. Moreover, the second sub-part developed the concrete interview which will be conducted. It highlights the importance of each question and section. This sup-part also developed the importance of setting up mixed method research and the advantages of each type of approach.

Conclusion

This second part aimed to develop the research going through the research question, the concepts and notions, the hypotheses, and the methodology of the master's thesis and the study. Moreover, this second part is the continuity of the global research and has been developed thanks to the previous analysis made in the first part. These analyses of the literature review and of the company Abbey Group helped to develop existing gaps and debates.

The first chapter of this second part has the objective to define the research question. Therefore, thanks to some questions that have been highlighted within the first part, it help to define the following research question: How do Destination Management Companies use management of tourist flows and choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage? This research question was created because of the lack of information on the topic of the management of tourist flows by DMCs, as explained in the previous parts, there is a lot of data and analysis on the impact of local companies but not of Transnational corporations.

The second chapter of this part has the objective of developing the key themes of the research question. The first sub-section defined the tourist flow and highlighted a few concepts such as "touristicité", tourism carrying capacity, and territorial attractiveness, relying on the studies of the authors Lozato-Giotart et al. (2012) and Acampa (2020). The second section aimed to define the notion of management of tourist flows, it developed the different strategies settled up. It also highlighted the need and positive benefits on the destination of sustainable tourism. The third sub-part defined the role and strategies of Destination Management Companies and transnational corporations. Moreover, the last section aimed to develop the concept of the zone of uncertainty and the power exercised by companies over others in order to obtain a competitive advantage. The zone of uncertainty has been highlighted thanks to the study of the book written by Crozier and Friedberg (1977). Overall this chapter established the foundation for developing hypotheses in the next chapter, which concentrated on the function of DMCs in managing tourist flows and understanding their competitive advantages.

The third chapter aimed to define three hypotheses based on the research question. These hypotheses are also based on the analysis of the literature review. The hypotheses are the following:

- a. Hypothesis 1: Destination Management Companies use data collection to organize their stay and have an influence on tourist flow management which allows them to exercise their power and assert a competitive advantage.
- b. Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose their stakeholders, especially the tour operators and travel agencies they are working with.
- c. Hypothesis 3: Sustainable tourism with its three pillars is a solution to managing tourist flows but must be more regulated to ensure better management of these flows.

The fourth chapter developed the methodology for this master's thesis and for the research that will be led. The research question and the hypotheses guided the choice of setting up a mixed-method approach. The first section of this chapter developed the global organization of the master thesis. The second sub-part highlighted the choice of quantitative research. It first developed the definition, the choice of the sample, the choice of the questions, the administration of the questions, and the data processing, and then the second objective was to develop the concrete survey that will be analyzed later. The third section developed the qualitative approach and the importance of setting up a semi-structured interview. As for the quantitative approach, it highlights the definition and the global strategy of this approach. The second sub-part developed the concrete interview with the interview schedule.

The objective of this second part was to understand the global methodology of this master's thesis. The third part which will follow, will be the last step of this research and aims to analyze the mixed method approach. The final objective will be to confirm or refute the hypotheses.

PART 3: ANALYSIS OF THE MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The previous parts aimed to analyze the existing literature review, the concrete case of the Irish company Abbey Group, the theoretical framework, the research question, the hypotheses, and the methodology of the mixed-method research. The first part of the master's thesis highlighted the lack of information on the topic of the management of tourist flows and on Destination Management Companies. Moreover, it shows the issue that represents over-tourism. The analysis of the company Abbey Group helped to understand the concrete operation of a DMC. The link between the Irish company and the issue of the management of tourist flows within the tourism system has also been highlighted thanks to the examination of the professional, economic, and social context and issues.

The second part of the master's thesis developed the research question have has been underlined thanks to the analysis of the existing literature review and the study of the concrete case of Abbey Group. This research question is the following: "How do Destination Management Companies use management of tourist flows and choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage?" After developing the research question, the theoretical framework have been developed thanks to the definition of the key notions and concepts. Thanks to the definition of these concepts and notions, three hypotheses have been developed. To finish, this part explains the methodology of this master's thesis. As explained, the researcher will do mixed-method research with a quantitative and qualitative approach thanks to a survey and semi-structured interviews.

This third part will be based on the following plan. The first chapter will be the transcription and interpretation of the survey and the semi-structured interviews. This chapter will develop the methodology and result of the quantitative and the qualitative approach.

The second chapter will be the analysis of the mixed-method research. It will first verify the accuracy of the three hypotheses thanks to the quantitative approach. The second objective will be to develop and analyze the qualitative approach which is

the semi-structured interviews. Moreover, this chapter will confirm or refute the hypothesis based on the analysis of the interviews.

The third chapter will develop the recommendations and discussions based on the complete study. These recommendations will be divided per hypothesis.

The last chapter of this third part will be a global feedback of the research. It will start by developing the limits of the study and of the methodology and will finish with the contribution of this master's thesis to the tourism system.

Chapter 1: Transcription and interpretation of the survey and the semi-structured interviews

1. Introduction to the methodologies of qualitative and quantitative research

After defining and justifying the choice of creating quantitative and qualitative research in order to conduct this study this chapter will aim to discover and understand the various analysis methods. Concerning the quantitative approach, the book *Research in Organization* by R. Swanson and E. Holton (2005) will be studied. Two different methods of analysis will be examined. For the qualitative approach, the various steps of the analysis will be explored thanks to the vision of the author P. Burnard (1991). The objective of this chapter will also be to choose and adapt these strategies of analysis to the below analysis of the research of this master thesis.

The second goal of this chapter will be to present the results obtained thanks to the survey and the qualitative research. As explained in the second part of this master's thesis, the survey has been sent to every employee of the Irish company Abbey Group which represents a total of around two hundred people. Concerning the semi-structured interview, the objective was to interrogate from five to ten persons. These results will be then analyzed in the second chapter of this part.

2. Result of the quantitative research

This first sub-section aims to develop the general methodology of the analysis of a quantitative research. This methodology will have to be adapted to the study of this master's thesis. Two types of analysis will be developed and defined thanks to the observation of the book *Research in Organization* made by R. Swanson and E. Holton (2005). The objective will be then to make the correct choice according to the research and the survey made. The second sub-part will describe the results obtained thanks to the survey made with the employees of the Irish company Abbey Group.

2.1 Methodology of the interpretation of the results

In the book *Research in Organization*, the authors R. Swanson and E. Holton (2005) decided to develop all the steps in order to create adapted quantitative research. Moreover, they explained two types of analysis methods to study a survey. They introduce the factor analysis methods and the meta-analysis methods which will be developed below.

The factor analysis method *“nowadays is preferred as the common term representing several related statistical procedures that explain a set of observed variables in terms of a small number of hypothetical variables, called factors”* (Swanson et Holton (eds.) 2005, o. 182). Thanks to this sentence, the authors develop a definition of the factor analysis method. This definition highlights a few key concepts which are:

- the dimensionality reduction which aims to simplify complex data;
- the hypothetical variables which are also called factors, these factors are deducted from the observable variables;
- the exploratory and confirmatory analyses which are important and will be developed below;

As explained above, the factor analysis method can be divided into two major parts, the confirmatory factor analysis and the exploratory factor analysis:

“Two factor analysis techniques are commonly used: exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). EFA is normally used to discover a set of a small number of latent constructs (i.e., factors) for a given larger number of observed variables, whereas CFA is more appropriate for confirming a predetermined factor structure based on theory or prior research” (Ibid.)

The authors start by developing the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), they explain its objective which is to investigate and identify the possible underlying causes that might account for the relationship between the variables. The process is also explained, using this method connected variable clusters are found and afterwards understood as hidden ideas. This data-driven methodology aids in the early phases of research when the theoretical foundation is not yet well-established. The EFA is very helpful for conducting preliminary research, such as creating new scales or

exploring unfamiliar areas where it is unknown how variables relate to one another. Moreover, concerning the extraction method, the authors explain that “*There are several extraction methods for common factor analysis, including least square, maximum likelihood, principal axis factoring, alpha factoring, and image factoring*” (Tinsley et al. 1987; Swanson et Holton (eds.) 2005, p. 190). For the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), in contrary, this type of method is used when the researcher has concrete hypotheses. The objective is to establish whether the data, on the basis of previous studies or theoretical presumptions, matches this predefined model. The number of factors and the observed variables that are anticipated to load into each factor are specified by the researcher in CFA.

The authors conclude by saying that important factors in the factor analysis method are highlighted in this sub-part. Although CFA validates a factor structure based on theory or previous research, EFA is used to find hidden structures from an expanded collection of observable data. Even if statistical software is user-friendly, researchers should not rely only on the default settings. A strong understanding of the factor analysis method is crucial to use this effective technique responsibly.

The meta-analysis methods: this method is defined by Niemi (1986) in *Meta-analysis: Quantitative Methods for Research Synthesis* as “*the application of statistical procedures to collections of empirical findings from individual studies for the purpose of integrating, synthesizing, and making sense of them*” (Niemi 1986, p. 5). Moreover, in the book *Research in Organization*, the authors develop this definition by saying that, the medical area, where there is a great demand for complicated and nuanced answers with occasionally extremely different findings, is where meta-analysis first emerged (Rosenthal et DiMatteo 2001; Swanson et Holton (eds.) 2005, p. 202). Three basic principles in the meta-analysis method are often cited, simplicity, accuracy, and clarity. The authors Swanson and Holton decided to explain the five key steps in order to conduct this type of analysis method. The five steps are the following:

- Identify the relevant factors and develop the study question or questions;
- Conduct a systematic literature search to find relevant empirical research;
- Classify earlier research and choose an acceptable effect size index;
- Examine the information collected via earlier empirical research projects;
- Analyze the findings and make pertinent research conclusions.

An effective method for combining and synthesizing empirical and quantitative research is meta-analysis. This sub-part goes over its definition, basic principles, and key steps. The theoretical foundations of primary investigations must be carefully reviewed by researchers. When applied correctly, meta-analysis can promote theoretical progress and provide an overview of previous studies.

2.2 Results of the survey for the quantitative approach


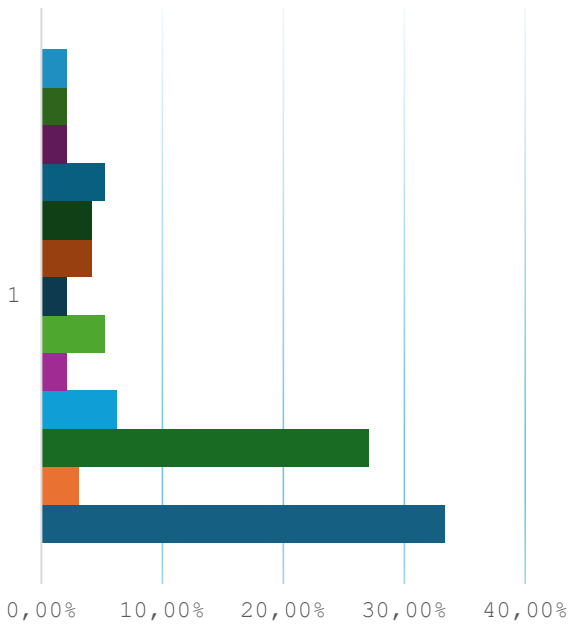
As explained in the second part of the master's thesis, in order to verify the accuracy of the three hypotheses which will be cited below, quantitative research has been made. This quantitative has been made thanks to a survey which aims to determine the accuracy of these hypotheses:

- a. Hypothesis 1: Destination Management Companies use data collection to organize their stay and have an influence on tourist flow management which allows them to exercise their power and assert a competitive advantage
- b. Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose their stakeholders, especially the tour operators and travel agencies they are working with
- c. Hypothesis 3: Sustainable tourism with its three pillars is a solution to managing tourist flows but must be more regulated to ensure better management of these flows

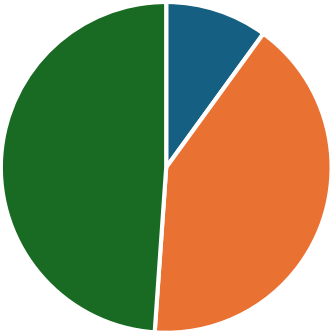
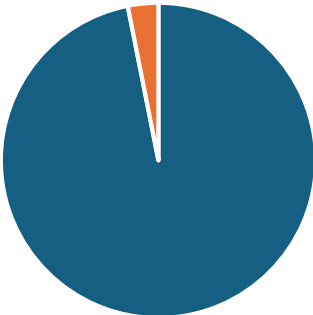
This first overview of the quantitative approach helped to determine the key elements and to justify the choice of creating a survey. Therefore, the choice of doing a survey instead of the experiment study because its objectives and functions are more adapted to the following research. Moreover, another goal of this chapter was to determine the sample. The researcher started by defining the population of this research which corresponds to all the DMCs all around the world. The second step was to determine the sample, the choice was to share the survey with every employee of the Irish Destination Management Company Abbey Group. As explained previously, this is a purposive sampling because the choice was to select and target a small group. The Abbey Group company is composed of around two

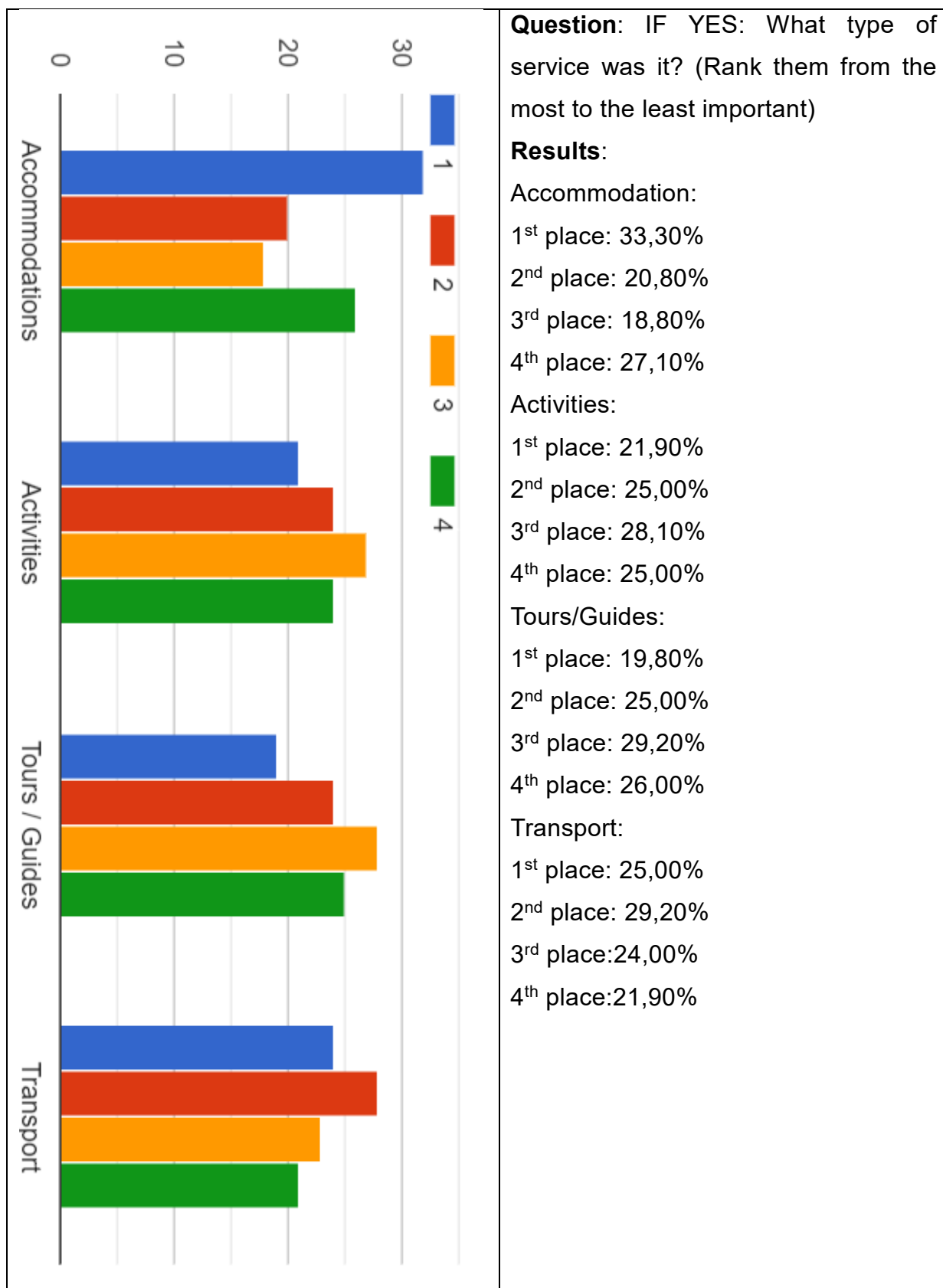
hundred employees. The goal was to reach a total of forty people which represent around twenty percent of the employees. The total of answers the researcher received is ninety-six which represent almost fifty percent of the employees. It represents also twice the number of answers expected. The second objective was to determine the choice of the questions. These questions, as explained are mainly closed-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, and one rating question. The multiple-choice questions and more particularly the section “other” aimed to highlight a few keywords that will be developed in the analysis part. The third objective was to determine how to administrate the questions. The choice was to create the survey on the software Google Forms and to share it through email. The survey has been shared with everybody at Abbey Group thanks to the Leisure Department Manager at Moloney and Kelly. Concerning the software it is an easy-to-use tool which allows to have as many responses as possible. Moreover, with seventeen questions and a majority of close-ended questions, this survey was really quick to complete. For the fourth part which represents the data processing, as explained in the previous part, there are various ways to analyze the data collected thanks to a survey. This subject will be developed in the second chapter of this part. Therefore the most adapted analysis is the factor analysis method and more precisely the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).


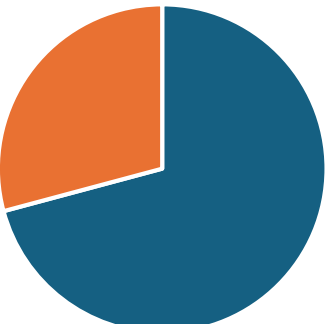
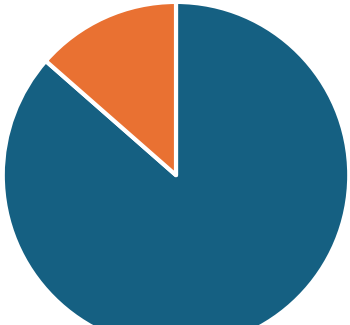
The data collected thanks to the survey from the employees of Abbey Group will be analyzed in the next chapter. The objective will be to determine the accuracy of the three hypotheses. Moreover, Appendix A represents the table with all the data collected. The following table aims to show the various results obtained thanks to the survey from the ninety-six (almost fifty percent of the total employees) employees of the Irish DMC Abbey Group:


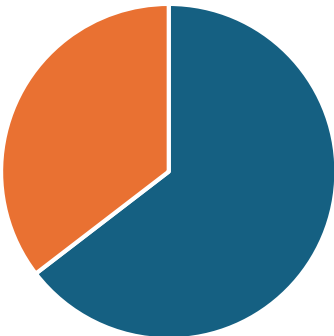

Schema	Results obtained
 <p>■ Abbey Group Ireland and UK ■ Moloney and Kelly</p>	<p>Question: In which sector of the company are you?</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Abbey Group Ireland and UK: 76,00%</p> <p>Moloney and Kelly: 19,80%</p> <p>Conference and Event: 3,10%</p>
 <p>1</p> <p>■ Incentive department ■ Finance ■ Conference and event ■ Customer care ■ Human resources ■ Digital service ■ Coaching ■ Business development ■ Accommodation ■ Contracting service ■ Group department ■ Operations ■ FIT department</p>	<p>Question: What is your workstation?</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>FIT Department: 33,30%</p> <p>Group department: 27,10%</p> <p>Contracting service: 6,30%</p> <p>Business development: 5,20%</p> <p>Customer care: 5,20%</p> <p>Digital service: 4,20%</p> <p>Human resource: 4,20%</p> <p>Operations: 3,10%</p> <p>Accommodation: 2,10%</p> <p>Coaching: 2,10%</p> <p>Conference and event: 2,10%</p> <p>Finance: 2,10%</p> <p>Incentive department: 2,10%</p>

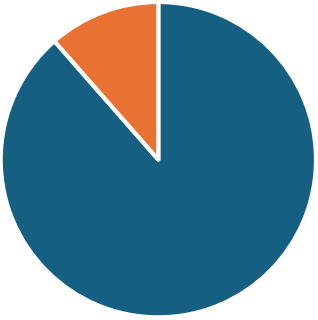
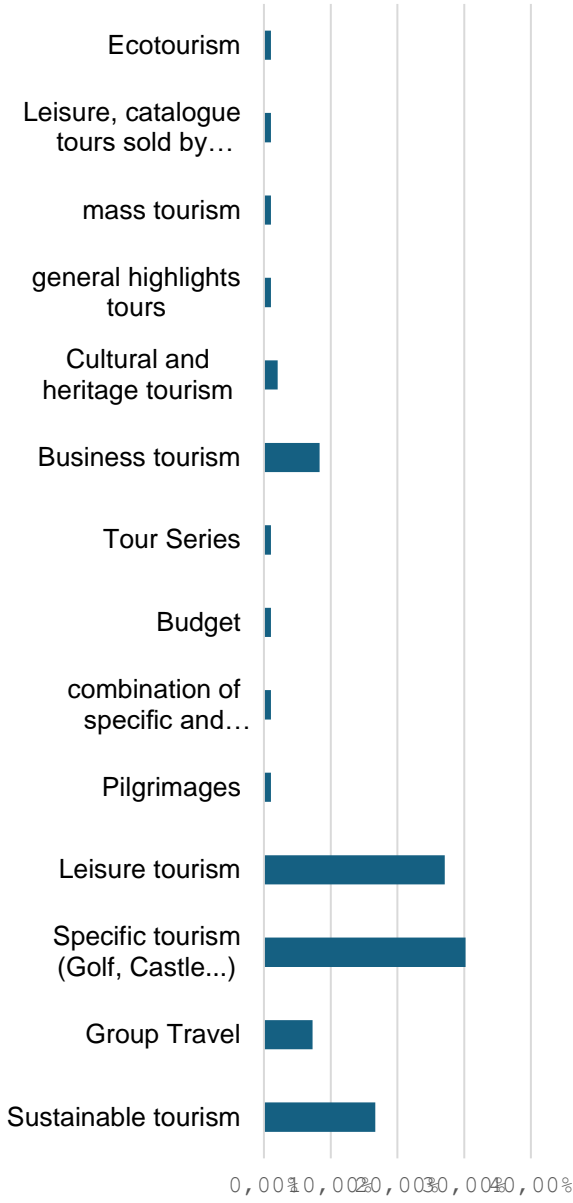
<p>■ Fixed term contract ■ Long-term contract ■ Internship</p>	<p>Question: What is your type of contract?</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Long-term contract: 67,70%</p> <p>Internship: 18,80%</p> <p>Fixed-term contract: 13,50%</p>
<p>■ 0 to 6 months ■ 6 months to 1 year ■ 1 to 5 years ■ 5 to 10 years ■ more than 10 years</p>	<p>Question: How long have you been in the company?</p> <p>Result:</p> <p>1 to 5 years: 37,50%</p> <p>0 to 6 months: 21,90%</p> <p>More than 10 years: 15,60%</p> <p>6 months to 1 year: 13,50%</p> <p>5 to 10 years: 9,40%</p>
<p>■ Yes ■ No</p>	<p>Question: Do you think there is any mass tourism in the destinations we are working with?</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Yes: 90,60%</p> <p>No: 9,40%</p>

 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All our destinations are mass tourism ■ A few of our destinations are mass tourism ■ The majority of our destinations are mass tourism 	<p>Question: IF YES: Would you say:</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>The majority of our destinations are mass tourism: 49,40%</p> <p>A few of our destinations are mass tourism: 40,50%</p> <p>All our destinations are mass tourism: 10,10 %</p>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes ■ No 	<p>Question: At your workstation did you notice a service (accommodation, activity, tour, transport...) which is frequently booked?</p> <p>Result:</p> <p>Yes: 96,90%</p> <p>No: 3,10%</p>



 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Often in the same cities ■ Not particularly in the same cities but in the same region ■ Scattered throughout the country ■ Always in the same cities 	<p>Question: Would you say that accommodation are booked:</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Often in the same cities: 64,60%</p> <p>Always in the same cities: 14,60%</p> <p>Not particularly in the same cities but in the same region: 12,50%</p> <p>Scattered throughout the country: 8,30%</p>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes ■ No 	<p>Question: Do you think Abbey Group need to set up actions for the management of tourist flows?</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Yes: 70,80%</p> <p>No: 29,20%</p>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes ■ No 	<p>Question: Do you think the company could have an impact on the management of tourist flows?</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Yes: 86,50%</p> <p>No: 13,50%</p>

 <p>■ Positive ■ Negative</p>	<p>Question: IF YES: Would it be a positive or negative impact?</p> <p>Results: Positive: 95,30% Negative: 4,70%</p>
 <p>■ Yes ■ No</p>	<p>Question: Would you say that the company have enough stakeholders in order to not send tourists in the same place?</p> <p>Results: Yes: 64,60% No: 35,40%</p>
 <p>■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know</p>	<p>Question: Do you think that data collected by the company are used to manage tourist flows?</p> <p>Results: Yes: 25,00% No: 22,90% I don't know: 52,10%</p>

 <p>■ Absolutely ■ Not at all</p>	<p>Question: Would you say that using data collection is effective?</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Absolutely: 88,50%</p> <p>Not at all: 11,50%</p>
 <p>0,00% 10,00% 20,00% 30,00% 40,00%</p>	<p>Question: According to you, what is the most represented type of tourism within the company?</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Specific tourism (Golf, Castle...): 30,20%</p> <p>Leisure tourism: 27,10%</p> <p>Sustainable tourism: 16,70%</p> <p>Group travel: 7,30%</p> <p>Business tourism: 8,30%</p> <p>Pilgrimages: 1%</p> <p>combination of specific and mass tourism: 1%</p> <p>Budget: 1%</p> <p>Tour series: 1%</p> <p>Cultural and heritage tourism: 2,10%</p> <p>general highlights tours: 1%</p> <p>Mass tourism: 1%</p> <p>Leisure, catalog tours sold by travel agencies: 1%</p> <p>Ecotourism: 1%</p>

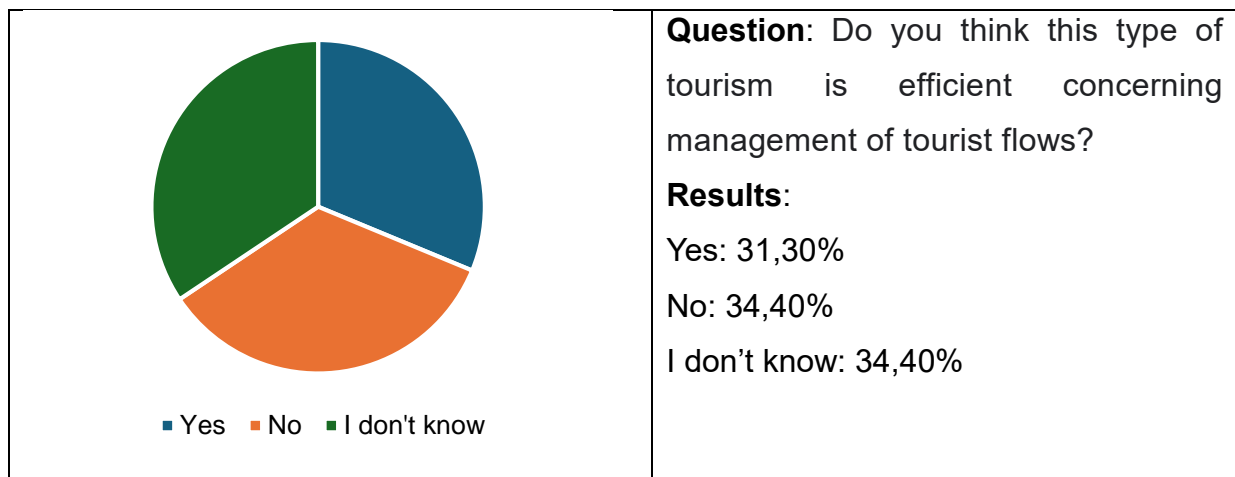


Figure 10: Results of the survey for the quantitative research

To conclude this first sub-section, as explained above, there is a multitude of ways and methods to analyze a survey. According to the research conducted in this master's thesis, the most adapted technique is the factor analysis method and more precisely the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Moreover, the second sub-part aimed to present the results of the survey. It highlighted the concrete results obtained after choosing these various aspects of the survey: the determination of the sample, the choice of the questions, the administration of the questions, and the processing of the data collected. This sub-section concludes by presenting the results obtained thanks to the survey. These results will be analyzed in the next chapter of this part.

3. Results of the qualitative approach

This sub-section will develop one of the many methods existing to analyze a qualitative approach. The objective is to understand the process in order to make a relevant analysis and to make sure it is a complete study. Moreover, the notion of justifying the validity of qualitative research will be explored. The last sub-part aims to develop and highlight the results obtained thanks to the qualitative research made for this study. It will be focused on the results of the semi-structured interviews which were presented in the second part of this master's thesis.

3.1 Methodology of the interpretation of the results

First of all, before analyzing the qualitative interview with the semi-structured interview, it is important to develop the concept, definition, and objectives of an analysis. According to the author P. Burnard in the article *A Method of Analysing Interview Transcripts in Qualitative Research*, the aim of the analysis is to “*produce a detailed and systematic recording of the themes and issues addressed in the interviews and to link the themes and interviews together under a reasonably exhaustive category system*” (Burnard 1991, p. 461-462). The author describes the objective of a qualitative analysis which is to create a comprehensive and manageable category system by organizing the themes and concerns that emerge from interviews in a methodical manner.

In the article *A Method of Analysing Interview Transcripts in Qualitative Research*, the writer decided to divide the analysis of the qualitative research into fourteen stages which are the following:

- a) Stage one: the objective of this first step is to ensure notes after each interview, moreover, the interviewer can also write “memos” about the data’s classification methods (Field et Morse 1987; Burnard 1991, p.462), For this study the notes will be taken in the comments part of the interview schedule;
- b) Stage two: the objective of this interviewer for this step is to transcript the interview thanks to the notes made. It aims to highlight some general themes (*Ibid.*, p. 462), concerning the semi-structured interview made for this research, the transcription will be made thanks to the record of the interview made with the agreement of the interviewee;
- c) Stage three: The transcription will be read again and again, as many times as necessary in order to highlight categories and describe the content (*Ibid.*, p. 462);
- d) Stage four: the objective of the fourth step is to reduce the number of categories and create some more general themes (*Ibid.*, p. 462). For this research, the general themes will correspond to the “theme” column on the left of the interview schedule plus some other notions that might be highlighted thanks to the interviewee;

- e) Stage five: the objective of the fifth stage is to finalize the list of categories and sub-themes (*Ibid.*, p. 463);
- f) Stage six: the author explains the need to present his work to two colleagues without showing the categories already made. The objective of this exercise is to have another point of view and another classification of the various themes (*Ibid.*, p. 463);
- g) Stage seven: the transcription needs to be re-read and the final list of categories is chosen (*Ibid.*, p. 463);
- h) Stage eight: for this stage, each interview done with the interviewees needs to be divided into a list or table with the categories and the sub-themes (*Ibid.*, p. 463);
- i) Stage nine: concerning this stage, the author said that the transcripts are divided into categories that correspond to each code, and all of the items associated with each code are collected collectively (*Ibid.*, p. 463);
- j) Stage ten: for this tenth step, each category and theme is divided into sections with appropriate titles and names (*Ibid.*, p. 463);
- k) Stage eleven: according to the author, for this stage, the respondents are asked to verify the various answer and categories with the table made. Some adjustments can be made according to their answers (*Ibid.*, p. 464);
- l) Stage twelve: for this step, the writing of the findings starts. The objective is to make links with the various interviews and sections made within the previous steps (*Ibid.*, p. 464);
- m) Stage thirteen: The aim is to continue the writing with all the sections put together. The researcher needs to start with the first section and go through the whole interview and sections (*Ibid.*, p. 464);
- n) Stage fourteen: for this last step, according to the author, the researcher needs to choose if he wants to link the data collected thanks to the interviews with the literature review made previously. He then needs to write the findings of the study (*Ibid.*, p. 464).

Not all these steps described by the author will be followed by the researcher in the following chapter in order to analyze the semi-structured interview made. As an example, stage eleven will not be done because as explained previously, the

interviewees need to be anonymous and will only be invited to read the final document of the study.

Moreover, after going through all these steps, the author addresses the question of the validity of the qualitative interview which is an important topic. This validation of the analysis of the qualitative research can be made into two different methods. The first one consists on asking to two colleagues or persons who are not involved in the research but are familiar with the topic and the process to read the analysis and identify categories. The next objective is to compare the results and to see if they are similar (*Ibid.*, p. 465). Then, if the analyses are similar, there are three possibilities:

- The initial category analysis was accurate and comprehensive (*Ibid.*, p. 465);
- The initial category analysis was overly comprehensive and too broad, making it simple to identify (*Ibid.*, p. 465);
- The person was giving the researcher what he wanted to hear and wondering on the types of categories the researcher might have discover (*Ibid.*, p. 465).

The second way to verify the validity of the analysis of the qualitative research is to also ask to a third person. This other person has to be three of the interviewed people. They have to read the analysis and try to understand the categorization system. The next objective is to see if there are some similarities and to adjust the categories and analysis based on discussions with the interviewees.

3.2 The results

As developed in the second part of this master's thesis, in order to respond to the research question: "How do Destination Management Companies use management of tourist flows and choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage?" and to confirm or refute the hypotheses, the choice of doing a qualitative interview was made. Therefore, the mixed-method research is composed of the first part which is the quantitative approach and has been developed in the first sub-section of this chapter. As explained, this first stage aims to verify the accuracy of these

hypotheses. The second step is the qualitative research which will be done as a semi-structured interview. The objective as explained was to do from five to ten interviews and to adapt this number accordingly to the development of the study. Because of the context which will be developed in the feedback on the methodology and the limits of the study part, the researcher made two semi-structured interviews. These interviews have been made with people working at two different workstation in two different Destination Management Companies. The results obtained during this qualitative research are the following, moreover, these responses will be analyzed in the second chapter.

Theme	Questions	Comments
PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENT AND THE COMPANY	What is your position within the company?	Workstation: Development Manager
	What are the values and missions of your company? Which value would you say is the most important?	Value: Authenticity, sustainability, and customer satisfaction Missions: the central element of the clients, agencies, and services
	How would you describe sustainable tourism and eco-responsible stay? Do you sell sustainable / eco-responsible stays?	It is a tourism that considers economic, environmental, and social impacts Yes they sell sustainable stay
	How would you describe "tourist flow management"?	Because of the development of

		social network, media, transportation, and the development of the low coast, there are more tourists and today travel companies have to create systems to make tourism more fluid
DATA COLLECTION	Do you use specific software to collect data on your customers? If yes, which one?	Yes, it is "Client Base"
	How does data collection provide your company with a tourist flow management strategy?	These data are not really used to set up a management of tourist flows strategy
	In what way does collecting data allow a competitive advantage?	It helps to learn more about clients and their habits which allows the agency to better answer their needs
CHOICE OF STAKEHOLDERS	How do you choose the tour operators or travel agencies you are working with?	They choose their stakeholders according to the value and reputation
	Is your choice of stakeholder part of a tourist flows management strategy?	Yes but unconsciously

	Would you say that you have a large database of services to put into your stays?	Yes totally because the company has evolved over time and developed its database thanks to new services
SUSTAINABLE STAY	What is the major type of stay you are creating?	They are now focused on sustainable stay but also sell different types of travel such as gastronomic stay, cultural stay...
	How does sustainable stay impact your company? Does it represent a challenge?	The DMC developed their sustainable stays after the COVID pandemic which represents a real challenge for them
CONCLUSION	Have you been able to assess the effectiveness of these tools (data collection, choice of stakeholders, sustainable tourism)?	The data collection aims to make analysis of the situation and make choice for the future of the company
	Would you say that the management of tourist flows represents an advantage for a Destination Management Company?	This DMC still need to adapt and develop itself to the growing problem of the management of tourist flows

Figure 11: Responses of the qualitative research with the "Interviewee 1"

Theme	Questions	Comments
PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENT AND THE COMPANY	What is your position within the company?	Leisure Department Executive in a DMC
	What are the values and missions of your company? Which value would you say is the most important?	Missions: work with our clients, staff, and suppliers Values: Respect, Integrity, Team Spirit, Excellence, Passion and Open Communication
	How would you describe sustainable tourism and eco-responsible stay? Do you sell sustainable / eco-responsible stays?	They created a new sustainable stay in Ireland this year and encourage their clients to book an electric car
	How would you describe “tourist flow management”?	The interviewee does not know
DATA COLLECTION	Do you use specific software to collect data on your customers? If yes, which one?	They collect data about their clients on the software “Tourplan” Data are about where the clients are from, the number of people per booking, the agency they booked through their ages...
	How does data collection provide your company with a tourist flow management strategy?	The company does not have a specific

		strategy for the management of tourist flow
	In what way does collecting data allow a competitive advantage?	It allows the company to monitor its revenue They also keep a close eye on the numbers of travellers, people numbers per booking, bookings per agency, and revenue per agency
CHOICE OF STAKEHOLDERS	How do you choose the tour operators or travel agencies you are working with?	There is a long process before they start collaborating with a new tour operator or travel agency
	Is your choice of stakeholder part of a tourist flows management strategy?	The interviewee doesn't know if a management of tourist flow strategy is set up
	Would you say that you have a large database of services to put into your stays?	Yes with a lot of different services
SUSTAINABLE STAY	What is the major type of stay you are creating?	Focus on luxury travel and sell custom stays and packages with a North American client base
	How does sustainable stay impact your company? Does it represent a challenge?	The company is at the beginning of its sustainability journey

		They are aware that sustainability is the future of the industry
CONCLUSION	Have you been able to assess the effectiveness of these tool (data collection, choice of stakeholders, sustainable tourism)?	The interviewee does not know
	Would you say that management of tourist flows represent an advantage for a Destination Management Company?	That could be interesting but no idea if they could really have an impact

Figure 12: Responses of the qualitative research with the "Interviewee 2"

To summarize, the qualitative approach will be analyzed thanks to P. Burnard's (1991) method. These fourteen steps which have been developed above will be adapted to this research in order to do the right analysis. The major steps such as the classification, the creation of the sections, and the writing process... will be followed. Moreover, as explained previously, it is important to verify the validity of the analysis. This part will also be developed in the second chapter of this part with the analysis of the semi-structured interview.

4. Conclusion of the analysis methodology of qualitative and quantitative approach

This chapter started by highlighting two different analysis methodologies of the quantitative research developed in the book *Research in Organization*. The first analysis method developed was the factor analysis which is divided into two concepts. The first one is the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), which is used to find hidden structures from an expanded collection of observable variables and data. The second one is the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) which aims to validate a factor structure based on theory or previous research. As explained above, the method chosen by the researcher to conduct this study will be the CFA. Moreover, another objective of this first part was to present the results of the survey. As shone

above, there the quantitative research obtained a total of ninety-six answers with a total of around two hundred employees at Abbey Group. This number represents almost fifty percent of the company.

The sub-section of this chapter developed the methodology of analysis of a qualitative approach. Based on P. Burnard's article *A Method of Analysing Interview Transcripts in Qualitative Research*, the researcher developed fourteen steps to follow. These stages aim to do a complete analysis of the qualitative approach. Moreover, as explained in this sub-part, some of these steps will not be followed and be adapted by the researcher to the research made in this master's thesis. The second sub-part presented the results obtained thanks to the semi-structured interviews. These results will be divided into categories and sections in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Analysis of the mixed-methods research and confirmation or refutation of the hypotheses

1. Introduction to the analysis of the survey and the semi-structured interview

This second chapter of the third part of this master's thesis will develop the analysis of the mixed-method research. It will start by the analysis of the survey which is part of the quantitative approach, this work will be done based on the factor analysis developed on the book *Research in Organization*. This survey was made within the company Abbey Group and has been sent to every employee. This survey was made in order to understand the point of view of people working directly in a Destination Management Company. Moreover, thanks to this first analysis, the accuracy of the hypotheses will be verified. The second sub-section of this chapter will develop the semi-structured interviews made for the qualitative approach. This qualitative approach has been made with two different interviewees from two different DMCs. It aims to confirm or refute the hypotheses highlighted in the second part of this master's thesis. The last sub-section will develop the accuracy of the hypotheses and also aim to confirm or refute these three hypotheses.

2. Analysis of the survey for the quantitative research

As explained in the first chapter, the objective of the quantitative approach with the survey is to verify the accuracy of the hypotheses. This survey has been sent to every employee of the Irish company Abbey Group. A total of ninety-six people answered which make a total of almost fifty percent of the employees. This percentage validates the viability of the quantitative research. Therefore, as explained above, the objective was to reach a minimum of twenty percent of the employees in order to have a viable study with correct results. Moreover, as explained in the first chapter, this survey will be analyzed thanks to the factor analysis developed in the book *Research in Organization* and more precisely the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The objective is to establish whether the data,

on the basis of previous studies or theoretical presumptions, matches this predefined model. In order to analyze the survey, and to follow this method, the data obtained thanks to the survey will be crossed.

The first step of this analysis will be to develop the percentages presented on the first chapter, the second stage will cross the various data obtained thanks to the survey. The easiest and most efficient way to cross and analyze data is to create a pivot table. This type of table is a tool that aims to calculate, synthesize, and analyze data obtained thanks to the survey. Moreover, this table will cross data such as the workstation of the employee and if they think a strategy of management of tourist flows needs to be set up, of the type of tourism which is more sell and if it is efficient for tourism flow management... These cross-data will be developed below and will aim to verify the accuracy of the hypotheses.

Analyze of the survey:

Among the key and most important data present in the first chapter, there is the question of the presence of over-tourism within the destinations sell by the company. As it was shown in the diagram, there is a total of almost 10% of the respondents who think there is no mass tourism. Within the 9 people who answered “No” to this question, there is a total of 4 persons working in the FIT department. It is also important to highlight the fact that the FIT department represents 33,30% of the respondents. Moreover, what is important to remember with this question of over-tourism with the destinations is that over 90% answered “Yes”. And almost 50% of these “Yes” said that the majority of the destinations Abbey Group is selling are mass tourism.

Within the following questions, the objective was to understand if the employees of the company notice a service that is booked often, this could be linked to a small database or a lack of stakeholders. These services have been divided into four categories which aim to be ranked: accommodations, activities, tours and guides, and transports. A total of 96% of the respondents said that they noticed a service which is frequently booked. The 3 people who answered “No” are either working in the finance department, digital service, or human resources. These three workstations as shown in the first part of the master’s thesis with the Figure 5, are not directly involved in the management of tourist flows. The question 8 of the survey

which asked the respondents to rank the services from the most booked to the least booked does not allow to highlight a huge difference, the results are all between 18,80% and 33,30%. The final classification from the most to the least booked is the following: accommodations (33,30%), transports (29,20%), tours and guides (29,20%), and accommodation (27,10%). The services “Accommodations” are the most represented at the first and the fourth position.

Because “accommodation” is the most answered (at the first place) answer, the following question was relevant. This question was “Would you say that accommodations are booked...”. To this question, the huge majority of the answer is “often in the same cities”.

The next section aimed to interrogate the importance of setting up a strategy for the management of tourist flows. A small majority of the respondents (70,80%) answered that Abbey Group needs to set up actions to manage tourist flows. Among the people who said “No” the majority are working at the FIT or Group department, moreover, they are also mostly in long-term contracts (21 people out of the 28 people who answered “no”). Another important question within this section was if the company could have a positive or negative impact on the management of tourist flows. For this question, there is a total of only four people who said that it would have a negative impact. These four people all said that Abbey Group needs to set up action to manage tourist flows.

The last section aimed to develop and interrogate the employees of Abbey Group on the various solutions that could be set up in order to manage tourist flows. The first question developed the question of the number of stakeholders. Only 64,60% of the respondents answered “Yes”. Thanks to the pivot table, it highlighted the fact that 100% of the people who said that Abbey Group does not have enough stakeholders also said that they noticed a service at their workstation that is often booked. A second important question has been raised in this conclusion section. This question is “Do you think that data collected by the company are used to manage tourist flows?”, the answers were scattered, and the majority said that they do not know. This question highlighted a lack of information among the employees of the company. Moreover, this question is linked with the following which is more general and asks if according to the respondents, using data collection can be effective to manage tourist flows. A huge majority (85,50%)

answered “Yes” to this question. A big part (44 people out of 50 people) of the people who do not know if Abbey Group collects data and uses it to manage tourist flow said that it could be effective to set up this kind of action. The last part of this section developed the question of the type of travel that is selling and if this type is efficient in managing tourist flows. According to the respondents, the types of travel that are the most common at Abbey Group are specific tourism, leisure tourism, and sustainable tourism. It is also important to note that one of the respondents proposed an answer: “Mass tourism” which highlights the problems that could cause tourism over destinations. Another respondent said “ecotourism” which represents one specific part of sustainable tourism. The last question asked about the efficiency of these types of tourism in the management of tourist flow. Among the three most quoted type of tourism, leisure tourism is the one with the majority of “No”, and sustainable tourism is the one with the majority of “Yes”.

To summarize, the ninety-six employees of the Irish company Abbey Group who answered the survey helped to highlight some important information which will be quoted below. Moreover, this summarized part aimed to verify the important answers which will help to verify the accuracy of the three hypotheses:

- a) Only 64,60% of the respondents said that Abbey Group has enough stakeholders to scatter tourists throughout the country which highlights a debate within the company. Therefore, there is only a small majority that answered “Yes” to this question. These questions and answers from the employees of Abbey Group helped to verify the accuracy of hypothesis 2 “To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose their stakeholders, especially the tour operators and travel agencies they are working with”.
- b) A majority (52,10%) of the employees do not know if the data collected by the company are used to manage tourist flows. This question highlighted a lack of communication and information on the topic of the collection of data. Moreover, 85,50% of the employees said that it could be interesting and efficient to use data collection to manage tourist flows. These questions

aimed to validate the accuracy of hypothesis 1 “Destination Management Companies use data collection to organize their stay and have an influence on tourist flow management which allows them to exercise their power and assert a competitive advantage”.

- c) Sustainable tourism represents the third most quoted type of tourism after specific tourism and leisure tourism. Moreover, sustainable tourism is the type of travel that had the most number of answers “Yes” to the question of the efficiency of tourist flow management. These responses and questions aimed to verify the accuracy of hypothesis 3 “Sustainable tourism with its three pillars is a solution to managing tourist flows but must be more regulated to ensure better management of these flows”.

3. Analysis of the semi-structured interviews for the qualitative research

The objective of this qualitative approach which is part of the mixed-method research is to confirm or refute the hypotheses. In order to reach this goal, the two semi-structured interviews will be analyzed following the major steps developed by P. Burnard's (1991) method. These major steps are the following: to take notes during the interviews, transcription of the interviews, determine the major categories and sections, cross the data, and analyze them. Before doing all of these stages and before the interviews, the researcher decided after contacted the future interviewees, to send them the interview schedule in order for them to be prepared. The first and the second steps have been followed during and just after the interviews. The interview 1 and interview 2 have been developed and synthesized in Figure 11 and Figure 12. Moreover, the transcription of these interviews have been done and are in Appendices B and C. The next objective will be to categorize and create sections according to the answers of the interviewees. The first part of this objective has already been done by classifying the various sections: the profile, the data collection, the choice of stakeholders, the sustainable stays, and the conclusion which aims to broaden the subject.

Analyze of the interview 1:

As explained above, the semi-structured interview was already divided into categories, the objective will be to go through each interview and to highlight sections.

Concerning the first category, as explained in the interview schedule, the researcher interviewed a development manager in a French Destination Management Company. The interviewee 1 (I1) developed the main values of the company: authenticity, sustainability, and customer satisfaction. Moreover, during the interview, I1 developed their decision to choose sustainability and the challenge that it represent. This DMC decided to develop its sustainable products a few years ago because of customer demand, but according to I1, the most important value of its company is customer satisfaction. The next questions aimed to ask the interviewee to define different terms: sustainable tourism, and tourist flow management. I1 defined sustainable tourism as tourism that considers economic, environmental, and social impacts, she also explained *“the aim is really to meet the needs of tourists and professionals alike”*⁴⁸ (Interviewee 1, development manager, extract from interview on 12/08/2024). For the definition of tourist flow management, I1 mentioned the technology and social network evolution, media, and development of low cost. She also talked about the impact that it can have on the viability of the destinations, and the importance of the creation of *“quotas to ensure that our heritage is not destroyed”*⁴⁹ (Interviewee 1, development manager, extract from interview on 12/08/2024). This first category highlighted the different sections which are sustainable tourism, the importance of tourist demands and needs, and professionals.

For the second category, the interview was focused on the data collection. The first question aimed to determine if I1's company they are collecting data and with which software. I1 explained that they are collecting data thanks to “Client Base” in order to have monitoring statistics and to analyze them. This collection of data helps them to set up strategies for the future of the company. They are collecting information such as personal information, travel history, passports... She also explained that the company does not set up a strategy of management of tourist

⁴⁸ Translated by Alexandra Quintard

⁴⁹ Translated by Alexandra Quintard

flows based on data collection. Concerning the third question, this one is more general and addresses the topic of competitive advantage. The interviewee does not really answer this question, she developed the importance of the collection of data. She said, *“the more we get to know our customers, the more we learn to meet their needs, and just get to know them [...] and the better able we are to meet their needs, the more we will be able to distinguish ourselves through our knowledge”*⁵⁰ (Interviewee 1, development manager, extract from an interview on 12/08/2024). I1 developed the importance of the client’s satisfaction and answering the client’s needs. The sections highlighted within this part are the monitoring statistics and the importance of tourist demands and needs.

The third category developed the choice of stakeholders and particularly the choice of tour operators and travel agencies. The interviewee explained that they select their stakeholders according to the value of the companies and their reputation. Within these values, I1 mentioned the sustainability. The second question aimed to ask if the choice of stakeholders is part of a strategy of management of tourist flows. I1 explained that they do not have a real strategy of management of tourist flow but, it could be considered as one indirectly. According to her, the choice of stakeholders according to their value and reputation, *“indirectly, I think that yes, it may well make it possible to put in place a tourist flow strategy”*⁵¹ (Interviewee 1, development manager, extract from an interview on 12/08/2024). The next question was “Would you say that you have a large database of services to put into your stays?”. I1 answered “Yes” because the company grew over time and developed itself. This category highlighted the following sections: value and sustainable tourism.

The fourth category was focused on sustainable stays. I1 developed a lot of this topic in the previous categories because it is part of their value and objective of development. The first question was about the type of travel the company is selling. The interviewee talk about sustainable tourism and also developed the other types such as gastronomic tourism, cultural, and specific tourism. The second question addressed the topic of the impact of sustainable tourism on the company and the challenge it could represent. Talking about sustainable stays, the interviewee said

⁵⁰ Translated by Alexandra Quintard

⁵¹ Translated by Alexandra Quintard

*"We have had some difficulties, but today we don't regret our decision at all"*⁵² (Interviewee 1, development manager, extract from an interview on 12/08/2024). She also underlines the importance of clients and understanding their needs within this strategy. The various sections highlighted in this part are sustainable tourism and the importance of tourist demands and needs.

The last section which is the conclusion aims to develop and go deeper into the subject of tourist flow management. The first question asked about the efficiency of the collection of data, the sustainable stay, and the choice of stakeholders. The interviewee talked about the collection of data and its importance in the development of the company. Moreover, she developed the importance of the choice of stakeholders, according to her *"this has an impact on the growth of the agencies we work with and the growth of the holidays we offer"*⁵³ (Interviewee 1, development manager, extract from an interview on 12/08/2024). The last question was the following "Would you say that the management of tourist flows represents an advantage for a Destination Management Company?". I1 explained that this company does not have a concrete strategy for the management of tourist flows, but their choice could be considered as a strategy. Moreover, she said that it could be a great idea to develop this type of strategy and that DMCs need to adapt and develop themselves to the growing problem of the management of tourist flows. This conclusion underlines the following sections: sustainable stays and strategy of management of tourist flows.

This interview highlights the following sections which represent the major topics mentioned by I1:

- Sustainable tourism;
- the importance of tourist demands and needs;
- professionals;
- monitoring statistics;
- value;
- strategies of management of tourist flows.

⁵² Translated by Alexandra Quintard

⁵³ Translated by Alexandra Quintard

Analyze of the interview 2:

The first category of the interview aimed to understand the profile of the respondent and the company. The second interviewee (I2) is a leisure department executive in a Destination Management Company. Concerning the missions, she explained that it is important for the DMC to work “*in partnership with our clients, our staff, and our suppliers*” (Interviewee 2, Leisure Department Executive, extract from an interview on 26/08/2024). The main objective is also to satisfy the needs of each stakeholder. I2 also developed the six value of the company which are respect, integrity, team spirit, excellence, passion, and open communication. The next objective of this first category is to define some of the major notions of this master’s thesis. The interviewee talked about sustainable tourism and explained that they developed a sustainable stay in Ireland last year. Moreover, they choose to work with hotels that respect and are committed to sustainability. They also encourage their clients to choose a hybrid or electric car for their travel. Concerning the last question which was about the definition of tourist flow management, I2 decided to not answer. The different sections highlighted in this part are the suppliers, the importance of stakeholders’ needs, and sustainability.

The second category of the interview developed the importance of the data collection. The first question was about their strategy for data collection, she explained that they are using the software “Tourplan”, and they are collecting some basic data such as clients’ contacts, where they are from, their ages, the number of travelers per booking, and the agency they booked through. She also explained that the company does not have a real strategy of management of tourist flows. The last question of this question was about the competitive advantage that it can bring. I2 explained that collecting data “*allows the company to monitor our own revenue and growth year on year*” (Interviewee 2, Leisure Department Executive, and extract from an interview on 26/08/2024) it also helps them to keep an eye on their target, projections, and findings. This second category underlines the following section of the data collection.

The third category focuses on the choice of stakeholders and the importance it could have on the management of tourist flows. I2 developed the long process of their choice of stakeholders. They start by providing rates and an overview of the services they offer, the agencies and tour operators that provide contracts, and the

number of clients or the volume of bookings they would expect to send to the DMC. It is also important to say that their major characteristic is that it is a luxury DMC, so they are only working with luxury tour operators and travel agencies. She also explained that they do not have a strategy of the management of tourist flows. The last question was about the database, the interviewee explained that they do have a large database of services such as accommodations, transportation, chauffeurs, activities... This category which was focused on the choice of stakeholders developed the following sections: stakeholders, and database.

The fourth category of the interview developed the importance of sustainable stays. As the interviewee explained previously, they decided one year ago to develop a sustainable stay with hotels focus on sustainability. Moreover, they encourage clients to select electric or hybrid cars. The first question was about the type of stays they are creating. I2 explained that in her department, they are focused on luxury travel with the majority of their clients based in North America. Concerning the impact of sustainable stays on the company, the interviewee explained that they are only at the beginning of their sustainability journey. I2 developed "*We are aware that sustainability is the future of the industry and are committed to working with more sustainable practices*" (Interviewee 2, Leisure Department Executive, and extract from an interview on 26/08/2024) they are also trying to lower their carbon footprint. This fourth category highlights the following sections: sustainability and luxury travel.

The last section, which is the conclusion, has two different questions which were difficult to answer. The first question was about the effectiveness of the data collection, the choice of stakeholders, and sustainable tourism. She explained that at her workstation, she does not have this information, she also asked her colleagues but they do not know either. The second section was about the advantage that management of tourist flows could bring to Destination Management Companies. I2 said that it "*could be interesting to set up strategies of the management of tourist flows, these companies may have an impact*" (Interviewee 2, Leisure Department Executive, and extract from an interview on 26/08/2024), but she doesn't know in what way it could impact it. The section highlighted in the category is strategies and impacts of management of tourist flows.

The various sections highlighted in the second interview are the following:

- suppliers and stakeholders;
- the importance of stakeholders' needs;
- sustainability;
- data collection and database;
- strategies and impacts of management of tourist flows.

Cross-analyze of the interviews:

As explained above, the analysis of the qualitative research needs to follow some steps. The first point was to take notes during the interviews and transcribe them afterward. The second objective was to determine the major categories and sections that have been made above. The next point that will be done aims to cross data and analyze them thanks to a word cloud which will highlight the majors' term. This word cloud helps to analyze the most important subjects developed by the two interviewees.



*Figure 13: Word cloud of the most important topic mentioned during the two interviews
(created by Alexandra Quintard)*

There are two words that have the same size within this word cloud, these words are “Sustainability” and “Services”. This underlines the importance of the development of sustainable tourism nowadays and the importance of the choice of

services. This master's thesis develops the importance of the choice of stakeholders such as tour operators and travel agencies in order to set up actions to manage tourist flows, but it does not address the significance of the choice of services. The two interviewees talked about the choice of services such as accommodation, transportation, activities... Moreover, I2 explained the importance of choosing hotels that develop their sustainability. The second more important word is "strategy", although, the two interviewees said that they do not have specific management of tourist flow strategy. Therefore they talked about strategies to manage their company thanks to data collection. I1 said that it could be interesting to develop strategies to manage tourist flows and that they have indirectly already a strategy thanks to the choice of their stakeholders. The third most important notions are "suppliers" and "stakeholders". These two words are linked and they all refer to the same concept. It highlights the importance of the choice of stakeholders and suppliers. Concerning the choice of stakeholders (tour operators and travel agencies) I1 explained that they are choosing them according to their value while I2 said that they have a whole process before choosing new stakeholders. The other important notions are "data", "value", and "clients". Therefore, the two interviewees talked a lot about the data collection but, they are not using it to set up strategies to manage tourist flows although they are using it to analyze their work and set up strategies for the future of the company.

To summarize, these two interviews address some important sections and thematic. They agreed on certain points and developed some debates. As example, concerning value, the first company is more focused on the clients' well-being and satisfaction while the second company is focused on its employees' well-being. Moreover, concerning the choice of stakeholders, it is important to say that the two interviewees first talked about the choice of services before mentioning tour operators, travel agencies, and suppliers. Concerning the data collection, I1 and I2 explain that they are not using it to set up strategies to manage tourist flows although they are using it to analyze their work and set up strategies for the future of the company. To conclude, they both said that they do not have a direct strategy of management of tourist flow. I1 developed that they may have an indirect strategy

which consist of choosing their stakeholders according to their major value which is the sustainability.

4. Confirmation or refutation of the hypotheses

The objective of the following sub-section will be to confirm or refute the hypotheses mentioned and developed in the second part of the master's thesis. In order to do this, the researcher decided to set up a mixed-method research. This mixed method was divided into two parts. The first one was the quantitative approach which was a survey sent to every employee of the Irish company Abbey Group. This survey which has been developed and analyzed in the previous sub-sections and chapters, helped to verify the accuracy of the three hypotheses. The second step of this mixed-method research is the qualitative approach which consist of doing semi-structured interviews. This qualitative approach has been developed and analyzed in the previous sub-sections and chapters. The objective of these semi-structured interviews which have been conducted with two interviewees is to confirm or refute the hypotheses.

4.1 Hypothesis 1

As a reminder, the first hypothesis aimed to develop the question of the data collection and its implication in the strategy of the management of tourist flows, it also mentioned the hypothetic competitive advantage that it could bring to the company. The first hypothesis is the following:

- Hypothesis 1: Destination Management Companies use data collection to organize their stay and have an influence on tourist flow management which allows them to exercise their power and assert a competitive advantage.

First of all the accuracy of this hypothesis has been verified thanks to the following analysis: A majority (52,10%) of the employees of Abbey Group do not know if the data collected by the company are used to manage tourist flows. This question highlighted a lack of communication and information on the topic of the collection of

data. Moreover, 85,50% of the employees said that it could be interesting and efficient to use data collection to manage tourist flows. These questions aimed to validate the accuracy of hypothesis 1.

The two interviewees explained that they are collecting data thanks to different software, the data collected are general information such as the number of travelers, the destination, the agency they booked through... These data are then analyzed and used to work on strategies to make the company grow and work on the future of the company. Moreover, they do not use these data to manage tourist flows. These answer highlighted the fact that it is not possible to confirm this hypothesis.

4.2 Hypothesis 2

This second hypothesis which has been developed in the second part of the master's thesis is focused on the choice of stakeholders and more particularly the choice of tour operators and travel agencies and the link it could have with the strategies set up to manage tourist flows. The second hypothesis which is focused on the choice of stakeholders is the following:

- Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose their stakeholders, especially the tour operators and travel agencies they are working with.

The accuracy of this hypothesis has been verified thanks to the following arguments: Only 64,60% of the respondents of the survey said that Abbey Group has enough stakeholders to scatter tourists throughout the country which highlights a debate within the company. Therefore, there is only a small majority that answered "Yes" to this question. These questions and answers from the employees of Abbey Group helped to verify the accuracy of the second hypothesis.

Thanks to the qualitative approach, the interviewees developed their point of view on this topic. As explained, I1 said that the choice of stakeholders such as tour operators and travel agencies is indirectly linked to a strategy for managing tourist flows. According to her, it is not a conscious choice. While I2 developed the importance of the choice of suppliers and services. According to I2, within the

company, they are paying attention to the choice of services, and an example they are choosing accommodation which takes attention to sustainability.

According to the responses obtained thanks to the two interviews, this hypothesis can to be confirmed nor refuted. In order to be confirmed and based on the answers obtained, this hypothesis needs to be modified and include the choice of services.

The new hypothesis 2 which can be confirmed is:

- Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose the stakeholders (tour operators and travel agencies) and services they are working with.

4.3 Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis aimed to highlight the importance of sustainable stays and the general concept of sustainability within DMCs. This hypothesis is the following:

- Hypothesis 3: Sustainable tourism with its three pillars is a solution to managing tourist flows but must be more regulated to ensure better management of these flows.

The accuracy of this hypothesis has been verify thanks to the following arguments: Sustainable tourism represents the third most quoted type of tourism after specific tourism and leisure tourism. Moreover, sustainable tourism is the type of travel that had the most number of answers “Yes” to the question of the efficiency of tourist flow management. These responses and questions aimed to verify the accuracy of the third hypothesis.

Concerning the importance of sustainability, was an important topic for the first interviewee. She explained that within her company, they are creating a majority of sustainable stay, and they are choosing their stakeholders according to this value. Sustainability also represents an important and new challenge according to the second interviewee. She explained that the DMC she is working in is currently working on this aspect and is trying to develop it. Thanks to these answers, this third hypothesis can be confirmed but still needs time to be set up.

To summarize, the qualitative approach helped to confirm or refute the hypothesis. The first hypothesis has been refuted because of the responses from the interviewees. Concerning the second hypothesis, in order to be confirmed and based on the answers obtained, this hypothesis needs to be modified and include the choice of services to the original hypothesis. The new hypothesis 2 which can be confirmed is: "Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose the stakeholders (tour operators and travel agencies) and services they are working with". Concerning the third hypothesis, it is still a new topic that takes time to be implemented, although, this hypothesis has been confirmed.

5. Conclusion to the analysis of the survey and the semi-structured interview

This second chapter developed the analysis of the mixed-method research. This mixed-method is divided into two parts, the first one which is quantitative research, and the second one which is qualitative research. These two analyses have been made thanks to the two methods of analysis developed in the first chapter. The quantitative research analysis was made based on the factor analysis developed in the book *Research in Organization*. For the qualitative research, the analysis was based on P. Burnard's (1991) article *A Method of Analysing Interview Transcripts in Qualitative Research*. This chapter also aimed to verify the accuracy of the hypotheses and then confirm or refute them.

The first objective was to verify the accuracy of the hypotheses thanks to the survey made with the employees of Abbey Group. The ninety-six employees of the Irish company Abbey Group who answered the survey helped to verify the accuracy of every hypothesis.

The second objective was to analyze the qualitative approach. The two interviews address some important sections and thematic. They agreed on certain points and

developed some debates. Concerning the choice of stakeholders, it is important to say that the two interviewees first talked about the choice of services before mentioning tour operators, travel agencies, and suppliers. They both said that they do not have a direct strategy of management of tourist flow. I1 developed that they may have an indirect strategy which consist of choosing their stakeholders according to their major value which is the sustainability.

The last objective was to confirm or refute the three hypotheses based on the two interviews. The first hypothesis has been refuted because of the responses from the interviewees. Concerning the second hypothesis, in order to be confirmed and based on the answers obtained, this hypothesis needs to be modified and include the choice of services to the original hypothesis. The new hypothesis 2 which can be confirmed is: "Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose the stakeholders (tour operators and travel agencies) and services they are working with". The third hypothesis, it is still a new topic that takes time to be implemented, although, this hypothesis has been confirmed.

Chapter 3: Discussion based on the results and recommendations given

1. Recommendation and discussion per hypotheses

This third chapter aims to develop the recommendations and discussions highlighted thanks to the whole master's thesis. These recommendations that will be developed below have been possible to underline thanks to the study of the existing literature review on the topic of the management of the tourist flow by Destination Management Companies. But also thanks to the mixed-method research which aimed to interrogate employees of the DMC Abbey Group and interviews of people working in DMCs.

Moreover, the objective of this chapter is to answer to the research question thanks to concrete recommendations that could be set up within DMCs. As a reminder, the research question is the following: How do Destination Management Companies use management of tourist flows and choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage? These discussions and recommendations will be divided per hypotheses and will be based on the literature review, analysis of Abbey Group, the quantitative research (the survey), and the qualitative research (the semi-structured interviews).

1.1 Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis developed the notion of data collection and its importance for DMCs in order to set up actions to manage tourist flows. As explained in the second chapter, based on the answers collected and on the observations, this hypothesis has not been confirmed, it has been refuted. This hypothesis is the following: Destination Management Companies use data collection to organize their stay and have an influence on tourist flow management which allows them to

exercise their power and assert a competitive advantage. Even if it was refuted, this hypothesis is still interesting to be developed.

The first recommendation would be to broaden the study and develop this topic. The two interviewees for the qualitative approach explained that they are both using and collecting data in order to analyze them and to develop the company. Thanks to these data collections, Destination Management Companies could anticipate trends in demand and adjust tourist flows accordingly. In order to control the flow of visitors to meet strategic goals, they may work with nearby businesses to develop packages, custom travel, or events that attract tourists to particular times or locations.

The second recommendation would be to adjust and personalize the tourist offerings. As a result, DMCs collect an extensive amount of information about tourists' preferences, spending habits, and feedback. By using these data, experiences may be personalized to the needs of particular market segments, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Personalized services are also one way that DMCs set themselves apart from the competition.

Moreover, as explained, thanks to these data collections, DMCs are planning the future of the company. But they could also analyze these data for strategic planning that aim to manage tourist flows. DMCs can use predictive analytics to identify trends and make well-informed decisions about distributing resources and product development. Thanks to their vision, they are able to keep one step ahead of their competitors and react immediately to changes in the market or in demand.

These three recommendations (development of the information and studies about this topic, adjust and personalize the tourist offerings, and using predictive analytics to plan strategies) would be interesting to be set up in DMCs in order to manage tourist flows.

1.2 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis developed the idea that DMCs set up strategies to manage tourist flows thanks to their choice of stakeholders, especially tour operators and travel agencies. This hypothesis has been confirmed after being modified. The new hypothesis is: “Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose the stakeholders (tour operators and travel agencies) and services they are working with”. This new hypothesis does not only consider the choice of stakeholders but also includes services that represent an important part of the DMCs’ work.

The first recommendation would be to collaborate with local services. Local accommodations, restaurants, and attractions are frequently in close collaboration with DMCs. They may create experiences that are unique and attractive by selecting services that share their strategic objectives. Due to their selection of stakeholders, DMCs are able to provide unique experiences or packages, which gives them an advantage over competitors. This particular attention to the choice of services must also include the choice according to the values.

More than just the choice of stakeholders and local services, the development of collaboration with local policies is really important. DMCs have the ability to affect local tourism-related policies through their strategic collaborations with government organizations or tourism boards. For example, they might vote for improvements to the infrastructure that facilitate the transportation of tourists to particular locations. Their ability to shape policy further reinforces their authority in managing the destination's tourism environment.

These two recommendations also evoke discussions about the development of the choice of stakeholders and services within the Destination Management Companies’ sector.

1.3 Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis developed the importance of sustainable tourism within the tourism sector and moreover Destination Management Companies. As explained in the first part of this master's thesis, the examination of the existing literature review highlighted the importance of the development of sustainable tourism. Even if it is still a new topic, it represents a lot of advantages and constraints for the tourism sector. This hypothesis has been confirmed in the previous chapter thanks to the semi-structured interview. The third hypothesis is the following: "Hypothesis 3: Sustainable tourism with its three pillars is a solution to managing tourist flows but must be more regulated to ensure better management of these flows".

The first recommendation would be for DMCs to develop sustainable tourism practices. DMCs can support sustainable tourism by controlling tourist flows and in another way, they can develop management of tourist flows thanks to the development of sustainable tourism. They can encourage tourists to select eco-friendly choices or lesser-known attractions, protecting well-known locations while promoting lesser-known ones. Their authority is made even stronger by this sustainable strategy, which not only places them in a responsible position but also gives them the ability to impact the tourism strategy.

Another recommendation would be to manage the tourist capacity of destinations. As developed in the theoretical framework chapter, this is one way to define the management of tourist flows. Over-tourism can be avoided by promoting the management of carrying capacity through sustainable tourism. This idea can be applied by DMCs to control the density of tourists in particular regions, dispersing them more fairly throughout a destination. DMCs are able to prevent the negative consequences of overpopulation, maintain the quality of the experience for tourists, and protect the delicate environment by controlling capacity. This improves the position of Destination Management Companies in the market and gives them more control over the destination.

These two recommendations and discussions (the development of sustainable tourism practices and the tourist capacity of destination management) aim to develop strategies of the management of tourist flows by DMCs.

To summarize, in order to respond to the research question thanks to the hypotheses which have been confirmed, refuted or modified to be confirmed, the following recommendations and discussions have been made. Concerning the first hypothesis which is based on the data collection. The recommendations would be to develop information and studies about this topic, adjust and personalize the tourist offerings, and use predictive analytics to plan strategies. For the second hypothesis which is focused on the choice of stakeholders and services. The two recommendations and discussions are to collaborate with local services and local policies. As explained, thanks to these two solutions, DMCs might vote for improvements to the infrastructure for tourists. Concerning the third hypothesis, the objective was to focus on the importance of sustainable tourism. The discussions and recommendations developed are the following, the development of sustainable tourism practices and the tourist capacity of destination management.

Chapter 4: Feedback on methodology and contributions of the research

This fourth chapter of the methodology, results, and recommendations part aims to provide feedback on the whole research. This feedback will develop the assets and limitations of the study. This last chapter will be divided into two general parts, the first one is the limits and the second will develop the contribution of this master's thesis.

1. Limitation of the research

This first sub-section will develop the different limits faced by the researcher while working on this master's thesis. The limits will be divided into three parts, the limitation of the literature review, the limitation of the methodology, and the time limits which will all be developed below.

1.1 Limitation of the literature review

The first objective is to underline the theoretical limits. These limits that will be developed below represent an issue in the understanding of the global context and the difficult of analyzing it.

- a) The lack of existing literature review: it is a major problem, the lack of available literature or limited research in the tourism sector and more precisely on the impact of Destination Management Companies over the management of tourist flows has restricted the ability to place the results in a wider context.
- b) The lack of data: It was difficult to obtain concrete and recent data as well as for the literature review.

- c) A restricted theoretical framework: the choice of such a specific theoretical framework limits the perspective of the research and might ignore other relevant theoretical approaches.
- d) Changing context: The results of the study may be affected by rapid changes in the economic, social, and technological context of the tourism sector.

1.2 Methodological limits

This research work also had methodological limits concerning mixed-method research. This sub-section aims to detail these limits observed during the research work.

The analysis of the quantitative approach:

- a) Missing some general questions: even if the first objective was to understand the concrete opinion of the employees of the Irish DMC Abbey Group, it would have been interesting to develop some more general questions. These questions could have helped to better answer to the second objective which was to verify the accuracy of the three hypotheses. As an example, the question “What would be the most effective type of tourism to ensure the management of tourist flows?” could have been interesting for the third hypothesis.
- b) Questions about tour operators and travel agencies: at the beginning the second hypothesis was focus on the importance of the choice of tour operators and travel agencies DMCs’ are working with. However the survey was more focused on the types of services and did not include any questions about stakeholders such as tour operators and travel agencies.
- c) Missing some open questions: the survey developed a lot of topics in order to understand the point of view of the employees over the tourism sector with the example of Abbey Group. It could have been really interesting to include questions where the respondents have the opportunity to express their points of view.

The analysis of the qualitative approach:

- a) Number of interviews: as explained in the second part of the master's thesis, the objective was to obtain between five to ten interviews. This objective has not been reached, a total of only two interviews have been made.
- b) The type of interview: after conducting the interviews and analyzing them, the researcher thought it would have been more logical to do structured interviews instead of semi-structured interviews. Indeed, the interviewer did not develop other subjects than the list of questions.
- c) The topic of competitive advantages: one of the initial objectives of the research question was to develop the question of the competitive advantages obtained thanks to the management of tourist flows. This goal was maybe too ambitious because the topic of the management of tourist flows by DMCs is difficult to study and obtain information on. The notion of competitive advantage, even though it has been mentioned, there have been no responses from the interviewees.

1.3 Time limits

This master's thesis also faced time limits such as:

- a) Collection time: the constraints of time can have limit the amount of data that has been collected. Indeed the major part of the research has been made during the summer time, which is a difficult period in the tourism sector. The majority of people working in the tourism system during summer are either in vacation or are working a lot because of the high season.
- b) Duration of the research: the time allotted to complete the master's thesis was not sufficient for in-depth exploration. Indeed, the researcher was doing an internship while writing and working on the dissertation.

2. Contribution of this master's thesis

This study even though it is a difficult and complex topic aims to highlight a gap in the tourism system. As explained in the introduction, the management of tourist flows is a huge problem nowadays, and more and more destinations are setting up strategies in order to face over-tourism. This problem generates ecological, social, and economic issues. Moreover, this master's thesis developed the importance that Destination Management Companies can have on the management of destinations and more precisely on the management of tourist flows. As explained, they can use different strategies such as the choice of stakeholders, the choice of services they are working with, the development of sustainable tourism... Moreover, even if the first hypothesis developing the use of data has not been confirmed, it still can be used to ensure the development of a strategy of the management of tourist flows.

Conclusion

This third part of the master's thesis aimed to develop the analysis of the mixed-method research, to confirm or refute the three hypotheses, to explain the recommendations and to develop the limits and contributions of this research.

The first chapter of this part developed the methodology of the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative research. For the quantitative approach which is a survey sent to all the employee of the Irish DMC Abbey Group, the methodology developed is based on the book *Research in Organization*. This analysis will be based on the confirmatory factor analysis developed by the authors. This first chapter also developed the whole results of the survey. The second objective was to examine a methodology of analysis of a qualitative approach. Based on P. Burnard's article *A Method of Analysing Interview Transcripts in Qualitative Research*, the researcher developed fourteen steps to follow. This sub-section also presented the results obtained thanks to the semi-structured interviews.

The second chapter developed the whole analysis of the quantitative and qualitative research, moreover, it also concludes with the confirmation or the refutation of the three hypotheses. The first objective was to verify the accuracy of the hypotheses thanks to the quantitative approach. The three hypotheses have been approved. The second objective was to confirm or refute the hypothesis thanks to the qualitative research and more precisely the two semi-structured interviews. The first hypothesis has been refuted because of the responses from the interviewees. Concerning the second hypothesis, in order to be confirmed it has been modified. The new hypothesis 2 which is confirmed is: "Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose the stakeholders (tour operators and travel agencies) and services they are working with". The third hypothesis, it is still a new topic that takes time to be implemented, although, this hypothesis has been confirmed.

The third chapter developed the discussions and recommendations for each hypothesis, and in order to respond to the research question. Concerning the first hypothesis which is based on the data collection. The recommendations would be to develop information and studies about this topic, adjust and personalize the

tourist offerings, and use predictive analytics to plan strategies. For the second hypothesis which is focused on the choice of stakeholders and services, the recommendations are to collaborate with local services and local policies. Concerning the third hypothesis, the objective was to focus on the importance of sustainable tourism. The discussions and recommendations developed are the following, the development of sustainable tourism practices and the tourist capacity of destination management.

The last chapter explained the limits and contribution of this research. The limits were divided into three parts, the limitation of the literature review, the limitation of the methodology, and the time limits which will all be developed below. Concerning the contribution, the researcher developed the importance of this research on the tourism system. This master's thesis developed the gaps and the importance that Destination Management Companies can have on the management of destinations and more precisely on the management of tourist flows.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

From a complete investigation to concrete recommendations

This whole master's thesis which was divided into a two-years study aimed to understand to potential impact of Destinations Management Companies on the management of tourist flows. More precisely, the objective was to answer and examine the following research question: How do Destination Management Companies use the management of tourist flows and the choice of stakeholders as a strategy to exercise their power and allow them to have a competitive advantage?

The analysis of the existing literature review helped to examine the existing gaps such as the discussions on the definition of the tourism system, the role of DMCs, and the difficulty of defining the concept of "management of tourist flows". This examination demonstrates how difficult and contentious it is to define the tourist system. One of the arguments that has been discovered, for example, is whether the system should be considered linear or non-linear. P. Violier's (1999) description of the tourism system has been selected for the following study. He describes it as a network that links small businesses to big corporations. Moreover, it highlights the main debates on the management of tourist flows and the lack of information about the involvement of DMCs in these types of strategies. The first part of the dissertation also examines the concrete case of the Irish DMC Abbey Group with the internal and external analysis of the environment. The research shows the links between the management of tourist flows and the difficulty in defining Abbey Group's strategy and involvement concerning the management of tourist flows. This links have been highlighted thanks to the analysis of the professional, economic, and social context and issues.

The second part of this master's thesis developed the research question highlighted thanks to the whole analysis. Moreover, after defining this question, the objective was to define key concepts and notions which are the tourist flows, the issue of the management of tourist flows, DMCs, and the sociology of power exercises by companies and zones of uncertainties. This analysis of the different terms and concepts helped to define three hypotheses which are the following:

- a) Hypothesis 1: Destination Management Companies use data collection to organize their stay and have an influence on tourist flow management which allows them to exercise their power and assert a competitive advantage.
- b) Hypothesis 2: To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMC needs to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose their stakeholders, especially the tour operators and travel agencies they are working with.
- c) Hypothesis 3: Sustainable tourism with its three pillars is a solution to managing tourist flows but must be more regulated to ensure better management of these flows.

The first hypothesis addresses the concept of data collection, the second develops the importance of the choice of stakeholders, and the third hypothesis talks about the possibility of setting up sustainable tourism in order to manage tourist flows. The last objective of this part was to define the methodology which has been followed of this research work. As explained by the researcher, the choice was to set up a mixed-method research divided into two parts. The first part developed the quantitative approach with the creation of a survey. This survey which has been sent to every employee of Abbey Group aimed to verify the accuracy of the three hypotheses. Concerning the second method, the researcher developed a semi-structured interview which is part of a qualitative approach strategy. This qualitative approach aims to confirm or refute the hypotheses.

The third part of this master's thesis developed the results obtained thanks to the quantitative and qualitative research. The objective was to analyze these results and to refute or confirm the hypotheses accordingly. Moreover, another objective of this part was to highlight recommendations based on the whole research work. The end of this master's thesis also developed the limits and contributions of this work to the tourism industry. This part will be developed deeper below.

Results of the research

Thanks to the quantitative approach which is part of the global mixed-method research, the accuracy of the three hypotheses listed above has been verified. The second objective of this methodology was to confirm or refute the hypotheses thanks to the qualitative approach based on the semi-structured interview made.

The first hypothesis which was focus on the collection of data has been refuted after the analysis of the results. However, the researcher offer different recommendations, such as doing a more in-depth study. Another recommendation and discussion would be to adjust and personalize the tourist offerings and use predictive analytics to plan strategies thanks to the data collection.

The second hypothesis which is focus on the importance of the choice of stakeholders especially tour operators and travel agencies has been modify and confirm. The new hypothesis which has been confirmed is "To manage tourist flows and assert a competitive advantage, DMCs need to set up a meticulous selection thanks to a list of criteria to choose the stakeholders (tour operators and travel agencies) and services they are working with"? As explained by the interviewee, the choice of services is really important, that's why this new hypothesis includes this notion. The recommendations that have been made for this hypothesis are the following to collaborate with local services and local policies.

The third hypothesis focuses on the development of sustainable tourism within DMCs in order to manage tourist flows. This hypothesis has been confirmed thanks to the interviewees' responses. However, it is important to consider that it is a recent topic that takes time to set up strategies. For this hypothesis, the various recommendations are the following the development of sustainable tourism practices and the tourist capacity of destination management.

Limitations of the research work

This master's thesis represents some limitations that need to be considered. There are literature review limitations, methodological limits, and time limits.

The literature review limitations that need to be considered are the following. Theoretical constraints limited comprehension and analysis:

- a) Limited research: More expansive contextualization was made difficult by a lack of literature on destination management companies (DMCs) and tourist flow management.
- b) Lack of data: It was difficult to find current, accurate data.
- c) Restricted framework: It's possible that additional pertinent strategies were ignored by the particular theoretical framework.
- d) Changing context: The study's conclusions might have been impacted by the quick changes that took place in the economic, social, and technological environment of tourism.

This master's thesis also faced some methodological limitations with its mixed-method research. Concerning the quantitative approach, the limitations are the following:

- a) General questions are missing: More general questions, such as determining the most effective types of tourism to control tourist flows, would have better addressed the study hypotheses.
- b) Questions about stakeholders (tour operators and travel agencies): Although this survey was focused on service, it excluded questions concerning travel agencies and tour operators.
- c) Missing some open questions: If these had been included, respondents may have given more in-depth feedback.

For the qualitative approach, the limitations are the following:

- a) Limited number of interviews: Out of the intended five to ten, only two were carried out.
- b) Interview format: It is possible that structured interview worked better than semi-structured ones.
- c) Competitive advantages: Because interviewees offered limited data, the topic's exploration was excessively ambitious.

The last limitations that need to be considered are the time limits:

- a) Time constraints restricted the collection of data, particularly as the majority of the research was conducted during the high travel season when significant respondents were not accessible.
- b) Duration of research: Given that the researcher was simultaneously doing an internship, the period allocated for the thesis was insufficient for a thorough investigation.

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Appendix A: Table of data collected thanks to the survey

Section 1: Profile			
Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
In which sector of the c	What is your workstat	What is your type of co	How long have you been i
1 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Fixed term contract	6 months to 1 year
2 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	5 to 10 years
3 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
4 Abbey Group Ireland and	Operations	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
5 Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
6 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
7 Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
8 Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
9 Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Fixed term contract	0 to 6 months
10 Abbey Group Ireland and	Contracting service	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
11 Abbey Group Ireland and	Accommodation	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
12 Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
13 Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
14 Abbey Group Ireland and	Business development	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
15 Abbey Group Ireland and	Accommodation	Fixed term contract	1 to 5 years
16 Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	5 to 10 years
17 Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
18 Abbey Group Ireland and	Coaching	Long-term contract	6 months to 1 year
19 Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
20 Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
21 Abbey Group Ireland and	Business development	Long-term contract	5 to 10 years
22 Abbey Group Ireland and	Contracting service	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
23 Abbey Group Ireland and	Digital service	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
24 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
25 Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Long-term contract	6 months to 1 year
26 Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Internship	0 to 6 months
27 Abbey Group Ireland and	Human resources	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
28 Abbey Group Ireland and	Customer care	Long-term contract	0 to 6 months
29 Abbey Group Ireland and	Business development	Long-term contract	0 to 6 months
30 Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
31 Conference and Event	Conference and event	Internship	0 to 6 months
32 Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Internship	0 to 6 months
33 Abbey Group Ireland and	Coaching	Long-term contract	5 to 10 years
34 Abbey Group Ireland and	Finance	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
35 Abbey Group Ireland and	Business development	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
36 Abbey Group Ireland and	Operations	Long-term contract	5 to 10 years
37 Abbey Group Ireland and	Customer care	Internship	0 to 6 months
38 Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Internship	0 to 6 months
39 Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Long-term contract	6 months to 1 year
40 Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Internship	0 to 6 months
41 Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Long-term contract	6 months to 1 year
42 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Fixed term contract	0 to 6 months
43 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Fixed term contract	6 months to 1 year
44 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
45 Abbey Group Ireland and	Digital service	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
46 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
47 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	5 to 10 years
48 Abbey Group Ireland and	Customer care	Internship	0 to 6 months
49 Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	5 to 10 years
50 Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
51 Conference and Event	Conference and event	Fixed term contract	1 to 5 years
52 Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Fixed term contract	1 to 5 years
53 Abbey Group Ireland and	Contracting service	Internship	6 months to 1 year

54	Abbey Group Ireland and	Finance	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
55	Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
56	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Fixed term contract	6 months to 1 year
57	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
58	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
59	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Fixed term contract	0 to 6 months
60	Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
61	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
62	Abbey Group Ireland and	Customer care	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
63	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
64	Abbey Group Ireland and	Human resources	Internship	6 months to 1 year
65	Abbey Group Ireland and	Customer care	Long-term contract	6 months to 1 year
66	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	5 to 10 years
67	Abbey Group Ireland and	Contracting service	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
68	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
69	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
70	Moloney and Kelly	Incentive department	Internship	0 to 6 months
71	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
72	Abbey Group Ireland and	Business development	Long-term contract	5 to 10 years
73	Abbey Group Ireland and	Operations	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
74	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
75	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
76	Abbey Group Ireland and	Contracting service	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
77	Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Long-term contract	more than 10 years
78	Abbey Group Ireland and	Contracting service	Long-term contract	5 to 10 years
79	Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Fixed term contract	1 to 5 years
80	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Fixed term contract	more than 10 years
81	Abbey Group Ireland and	Operations	Internship	0 to 6 months
82	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
83	Moloney and Kelly	Incentive department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
84	Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Internship	0 to 6 months
85	Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Internship	0 to 6 months
86	Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Internship	6 months to 1 year
87	Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Fixed term contract	6 months to 1 year
88	Abbey Group Ireland and	Human resources	Internship	0 to 6 months
89	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Internship	0 to 6 months
90	Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
91	Abbey Group Ireland and	FIT department	Internship	0 to 6 months
92	Conference and Event	Digital service	Long-term contract	6 months to 1 year
93	Abbey Group Ireland and	Group department	Internship	0 to 6 months
94	Abbey Group Ireland and	Human resources	Long-term contract	1 to 5 years
95	Moloney and Kelly	FIT department	Long-term contract	0 to 6 months
96	Abbey Group Ireland and	Digital service	Fixed term contract	6 months to 1 year

Section 2: Destination							
Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8				Question 9
Do you think...	IF YES: Would you...?	At your destination...	IF YES: Would you...?	IF YES: Would you...?	IF YES: Would you...?	IF YES: Would you...?	Would you say that the...
1 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	1	2	3	4	Often in the same cities
2 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	2	1	3	4	Not particularly in the same cities
3 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	2	1	4	3	Scattered throughout the same cities
4 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	4	3	2	1	Scattered throughout the same cities
5 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	1	2	4	3	Often in the same cities
6 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	4	3	1	2	Always in the same cities
7 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	3	4	2	1	Not particularly in the same cities
8 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	2	1	3	4	Often in the same cities
9 No	A few of our cities	Yes	3	4	2	1	Always in the same cities
10 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	1	2	4	3	Often in the same cities
11 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	4	3	2	1	Often in the same cities
12 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	3	4	2	1	Often in the same cities
13 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	3	4	1	2	Always in the same cities
14 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	2	1	3	4	Often in the same cities
15 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	4	3	2	1	Always in the same cities
16 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	1	4	3	2	Often in the same cities
17 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	4	2	1	3	Often in the same cities
18 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	2	3	4	1	Often in the same cities
19 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	1	2	4	3	Often in the same cities
20 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	3	4	2	1	Not particularly in the same cities
21 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	1	3	4	2	Often in the same cities
22 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	1	2	3	4	Scattered throughout the same cities
23 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	1	2	3	4	Often in the same cities
24 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	3	4	1	2	Often in the same cities
25 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	1	3	4	2	Often in the same cities
26 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	3	4	1	2	Not particularly in the same cities
27 No		Yes	3	1	2	4	Always in the same cities
28 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	4	3	2	1	Often in the same cities
29 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	1	4	3	2	Often in the same cities
30 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	3	4	2	1	Often in the same cities
31 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	4	3	2	1	Often in the same cities
32 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	4	3	1	2	Often in the same cities
33 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	2	1	4	3	Often in the same cities
34 Yes	The majority of our cities	No	1	2	4	3	Often in the same cities
35 No		Yes	4	1	3	2	Often in the same cities
36 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	3	4	1	2	Always in the same cities
37 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	2	3	4	1	Not particularly in the same cities
38 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	2	1	3	4	Always in the same cities
39 No	A few of our cities	Yes	1	2	4	3	Scattered throughout the same cities
40 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	1	2	4	3	Always in the same cities
41 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	2	1	4	3	Often in the same cities
42 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	4	1	3	2	Scattered throughout the same cities
43 No	A few of our cities	Yes	3	1	2	4	Often in the same cities
44 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	3	4	2	1	Always in the same cities
45 Yes	A few of our cities	No	4	3	2	1	Often in the same cities
46 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	3	4	2	1	Often in the same cities
47 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	2	1	3	4	Often in the same cities
48 No		Yes	2	1	3	4	Always in the same cities
49 Yes	All our destinations	Yes	1	3	4	2	Scattered throughout the same cities
50 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	4	1	2	3	Often in the same cities
51 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	1	4	2	3	Often in the same cities
52 Yes	A few of our cities	Yes	1	2	3	4	Often in the same cities
53 Yes	The majority of our cities	Yes	4	3	2	1	Often in the same cities

54	No		Yes	4	3	1	2	Often in the same cities
55	Yes	The majority	Yes	4	2	3	1	Often in the same cities
56	Yes	The majority	Yes	4	2	1	3	Not particularly in the sar
57	Yes	The majority	Yes	3	1	4	2	Often in the same cities
58	Yes	The majority	Yes	4	3	2	1	Not particularly in the sar
59	Yes	The majority	Yes	2	1	3	4	Often in the same cities
60	Yes	All our destin	Yes	4	3	1	2	Often in the same cities
61	No		Yes	2	1	4	3	Often in the same cities
62	Yes	The majority	Yes	2	1	4	3	Always in the same cities
63	Yes	The majority	Yes	4	2	3	1	Often in the same cities
64	Yes	The majority	Yes	1	4	3	2	Often in the same cities
65	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	4	3	1	2	Often in the same cities
66	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	3	4	1	2	Often in the same cities
67	Yes	The majority	Yes	2	1	3	4	Often in the same cities
68	Yes	All our destin	Yes	1	2	4	3	Often in the same cities
69	Yes	All our destin	Yes	4	3	1	2	Always in the same cities
70	Yes	All our destin	Yes	1	3	4	2	Often in the same cities
71	Yes	The majority	Yes	1	4	3	2	Always in the same cities
72	Yes	The majority	Yes	2	4	1	3	Not particularly in the sar
73	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	1	3	4	2	Not particularly in the sar
74	Yes	The majority	Yes	1	4	3	2	Not particularly in the sar
75	Yes	The majority	Yes	1	4	3	2	Often in the same cities
76	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	1	2	4	3	Often in the same cities
77	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	1	3	4	2	Not particularly in the sar
78	Yes	The majority	Yes	1	2	3	4	Often in the same cities
79	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	4	3	2	1	Often in the same cities
80	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	1	4	2	3	Often in the same cities
81	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	2	4	1	3	Often in the same cities
82	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	2	4	3	1	Often in the same cities
83	Yes	The majority	Yes	1	2	4	3	Often in the same cities
84	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	3	2	4	1	Scattered throughout the
85	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	3	4	2	1	Often in the same cities
86	Yes	All our destin	Yes	4	3	1	2	Often in the same cities
87	No		Yes	1	3	2	4	Often in the same cities
88	Yes	The majority	Yes	2	3	1	4	Often in the same cities
89	Yes	The majority	Yes	4	3	1	2	Scattered throughout the
90	Yes	All our destin	Yes	1	2	3	4	Often in the same cities
91	Yes	The majority	Yes	1	2	4	3	Often in the same cities
92	Yes	The majority	Yes	4	1	2	3	Often in the same cities
93	Yes	The majority	Yes	4	2	3	1	Often in the same cities
94	Yes	All our destin	No	1	2	3	4	Always in the same cities
95	Yes	A few of our d	Yes	2	1	3	4	Not particularly in the sar
96	Yes	All our destin	Yes	3	2	1	4	Often in the same cities

Section 3: Tourist flow management		
	Question 10	Question 11
	Do you think A	Do you think the con
		IF YES: Would it be a positive or negative impact?
1	Yes	Yes
2	Yes	Yes
3	Yes	Yes
4	No	Yes
5	Yes	Yes
6	Yes	Yes
7	Yes	Yes
8	Yes	Yes
9	Yes	Yes
10	Yes	Yes
11	Yes	No
12	Yes	Yes
13	Yes	Yes
14	Yes	Yes
15	Yes	Yes
16	Yes	Yes
17	Yes	Yes
18	No	Yes
19	Yes	Yes
20	Yes	Yes
21	Yes	Yes
22	No	Yes
23	No	Yes
24	Yes	Yes
25	No	No
26	No	No
27	Yes	Yes
28	No	Yes
29	Yes	Yes
30	Yes	No
31	No	Yes
32	Yes	Yes
33	Yes	Yes
34	Yes	Yes
35	Yes	Yes
36	Yes	No
37	Yes	Yes
38	Yes	Yes
39	No	Yes
40	Yes	Yes
41	No	No
42	Yes	Yes
43	No	Yes
44	Yes	Yes
45	No	Yes
46	No	Yes
47	No	Yes
48	No	Yes
49	No	Yes
50	No	Yes
51	Yes	Yes
52	Yes	Yes
53	Yes	No

54	No	No	
55	Yes	Yes	Negative
56	No	Yes	Positive
57	Yes	Yes	Positive
58	Yes	Yes	Positive
59	Yes	Yes	Positive
60	No	No	
61	No	No	
62	Yes	Yes	Positive
63	Yes	Yes	Negative
64	Yes	Yes	Positive
65	Yes	Yes	Positive
66	No	Yes	Positive
67	Yes	Yes	Positive
68	Yes	Yes	Positive
69	Yes	Yes	Positive
70	No	Yes	Positive
71	Yes	Yes	Positive
72	Yes	Yes	Positive
73	Yes	Yes	Positive
74	No	Yes	Positive
75	Yes	Yes	Positive
76	Yes	Yes	Positive
77	Yes	Yes	Positive
78	No	No	
79	Yes	Yes	Positive
80	Yes	Yes	Positive
81	Yes	Yes	Positive
82	No	No	
83	No	Yes	Positive
84	No	No	
85	Yes	Yes	Positive
86	Yes	Yes	Positive
87	Yes	Yes	Positive
88	Yes	Yes	Positive
89	Yes	Yes	Positive
90	Yes	Yes	Positive
91	Yes	Yes	Positive
92	Yes	Yes	Positive
93	Yes	Yes	Positive
94	Yes	Yes	Positive
95	Yes	Yes	Positive
96	Yes	Yes	Negative

Section 4: Solutions					
	Question 13	Question 14	Question 15	Question 16	Question 17
	Would you say that	Do you think that	Would you say that	According to you,	Do you think this t
1	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Group Travel	No
3	Yes	No	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	No
4	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	I don't know
5	No	Yes	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	I don't know
6	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	Yes
7	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	I don't know
8	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	I don't know
9	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	Yes
10	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	I don't know
11	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Group Travel	No
12	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
13	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	Yes
14	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Group Travel	Yes
15	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Pilgrimages	I don't know
16	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
17	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
18	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	Yes
19	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	combination of spec	No
20	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
21	No	No	Not at all	Leisure tourism	No
22	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	Yes
23	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	Yes
24	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	I don't know
25	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	I don't know
26	Yes	No	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
27	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	I don't know
28	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	Yes
29	No	No	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	I don't know
30	Yes	No	Absolutely	Budget	No
31	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	I don't know
32	No	I don't know	Not at all	Specific tourism (Gc	No
33	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	No
34	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Business tourism	I don't know
35	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Tour Series	No
36	No	No	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
37	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	I don't know
38	Yes	No	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	No
39	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	Yes
40	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
41	Yes	I don't know	Not at all	Specific tourism (Gc	I don't know
42	Yes	No	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	Yes
43	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	Yes
44	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
45	Yes	No	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
46	No	No	Not at all	Specific tourism (Gc	No
47	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	Yes
48	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	Yes
49	No	Yes	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	Yes
50	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Cultural and heri	I don't know
51	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	Yes
52	No	Yes	Absolutely	Business tourism	Yes
53	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gc	I don't know

54	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gd	I don't know
55	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gd	Yes
56	Yes	No	Not at all	Cultural and heritage	I don't know
57	No	No	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
58	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
59	No	I don't know	Not at all	Group Travel	I don't know
60	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	I don't know
61	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	I don't know
62	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gd	No
63	Yes	No	Absolutely	Group Travel	No
64	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Business tourism	Yes
65	Yes	No	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gd	No
66	Yes	No	Not at all	Leisure tourism	I don't know
67	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gd	I don't know
68	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	general highlights to	Yes
69	No	I don't know	Not at all	Leisure tourism	I don't know
70	No	Yes	Absolutely	Business tourism	Yes
71	No	Yes	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
72	No	No	Absolutely	Group Travel	No
73	No	I don't know	Not at all	Leisure tourism	Yes
74	No	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gd	I don't know
75	Yes	No	Absolutely	mass tourism	No
76	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gd	I don't know
77	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Leisure tourism	No
78	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Group Travel	No
79	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Business tourism	Yes
80	Yes	Yes	Not at all	Sustainable tourism	I don't know
81	Yes	No	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	Yes
82	No	No	Absolutely	Leisure, catalogue t	I don't know
83	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	I don't know
84	Yes	I don't know	Not at all	Sustainable tourism	I don't know
85	No	Yes	Absolutely	Business tourism	No
86	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gd	Yes
87	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gd	I don't know
88	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Business tourism	No
89	No	No	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	Yes
90	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	Yes
91	No	No	Absolutely	Specific tourism (Gd	No
92	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Ecotourism	Yes
93	Yes	No	Absolutely	Business tourism	I don't know
94	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	Yes
95	Yes	Yes	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	Yes
96	Yes	I don't know	Absolutely	Sustainable tourism	I don't know

Appendix B: Interview number 1

INTERVIEW NUMBER 1

Interviewee: Development manager in a French DMC

Interviewer: the author of this master's thesis, Alexandra Quintard

Translation: Alexandra Quintard

Date: 12th of August 2024

Duration: 32 minutes

Meeting format: video conference

Language: French

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENT AND THE COMPANY

Author: Bonjour Madame,

Interviewee 1: Bonjour

Author: Comme je vous l'ai dit dans mon mail, je vais vous poser quelques questions dans le cadre de mon mémoire sur la thématique de la gestion des flux touristiques par les agences réceptives. Cette interview sera divisée en plusieurs parties. La première partie développera votre profil ainsi que le profil de l'entreprise dans laquelle vous travaillez. Pour commencer, j'aimerais savoir quel est votre poste au sein de l'entreprise ?

Interviewee 1: Oui, bien sûr, moi, comme vous le savez, je suis chargée de développement au sein de l'agence. Donc mes missions vraiment au quotidien, sont de trouver en fait de nouveaux prestataires avec qui on pourrait grandir ensemble et proposer de nouvelles, découvertes innovantes et durables pour les clients des agences avec qui nous travaillons.

Author: Merci ensuite pour ma deuxième question, j'aimerais maintenant savoir quelles sont les valeurs et les missions de votre entreprise ?

Interviewee 1: Je dirais que nous, au sein de l'entreprise, nous avons vraiment trois valeurs qui nous sont chères, enfin en tout cas 3 notions sur lesquelles on mise et que l'on regarde au quotidien. La première est l'authenticité. On propose des voyages qui permettent aux clients de découvrir vraiment les cultures locales, les traditions des lieux. Un petit peu hors des sentiers battus, si je peux dire ça comme ça. Après, nous avons la durabilité, on sait qu'on est dans un monde qui évolue et du coup on est vraiment engagé aujourd'hui dans le tourisme responsable, ça a été un virement à 360° pour notre agence. Il y a quelques années on a pris la décision de minimiser l'impact environnemental dans nos voyages. Tout en favorisant du coup des pratiques respectueuses des communautés locales des transports locaux. Et bien sûr notre troisième valeur est la satisfaction client, on mise tout sur nos clients, c'est une priorité et on veille à ce que chacun et à chaque étape du voyage, ce soit une expérience mémorable.

Author: Et concernant les missions ?

Interviewee 1: Nous, on est vraiment, je dirais le l'élément central entre les clients, les agences et les prestataires avec lesquels on travaille. Nous, notre rôle c'est vraiment de faire en sorte que tout se passe bien pour les clients finaux qui sont les voyageurs. Et de faire en sorte que tout soit fluide.

Author: Et selon vous, quelle est la valeur la plus importante pour votre agence ?

Interviewee 1: Je dirais que c'est la satisfaction client. En fait, sans elle, on n'existerait pas. On le sait tous aujourd'hui, les avis positifs de nos clients nous font aussi rapporter du business. Et on travaille pour rendre les touristes heureux.

Author: D'accord, merci. Maintenant, je vais passer sur des définitions. Comment est-ce que vous décrivez, selon vous, le tourisme durable et les séjours écoresponsables ? Et est-ce que vous en vendez au sein de votre agence ?

Interviewee 1: Je dirais que le tourisme durable, c'est vraiment un tourisme qui prends en compte les impacts économiques, sociaux et environnementaux, qu'ils soient actuels ou futurs. Et le but, c'est vraiment de répondre aux besoins des touristes et des professionnels. Et du coup, comme je vous l'ai dit, pour nous la durabilité c'est vraiment un de nos un de nos piliers. Il y a 4 ans, on a pris la décision d'axer nos offres et nos services sur ce point-là. Il y a eu, vous savez, le COVID et suite au COVID, on a constaté vraiment un retour. Un retour déjà à la France, un retour à la simplicité, un retour aux sources... Et par et par ce biais, nous, on a décidé de vraiment mettre l'accent sur le respect de l'environnement, de la culture et donc la durabilité.

Author: Et est-ce que je peux vous demander de décrire la gestion des flux touristiques ?

Interviewee 1: Juste vraiment la définition de la gestion des flux.

Author: Oui, comment est-ce que vous la définiriez selon vous ?

Interviewee 1: Je pense que aujourd'hui, avec l'évolution de la technologie, l'évolution des réseaux sociaux, des médias, le fait que le monde soit ouvert à cette connexion-là. Et avec le développement des low cost. Les gens ont beaucoup plus de facilité à se déplacer et à se rendre dans certains endroits très touristiques. Par exemple, cet été, Rome était noire de monde. Et donc pour la viabilité des villes, des espaces, des territoires, des environnements, les entreprises dans le secteur du tourisme sont obligées aujourd'hui de créer des systèmes pour fluidifier le tourisme. Créer des quotas pour faire en sorte, de ne pas détruire notre patrimoine.

DATA COLLECTION

Author: Nous allons passer maintenant à la deuxième partie du questionnaire qui va concerner la collecte des données sur les clients. La première question est, utilisez-vous les des logiciels spécifiques pour collecter des données sur vos clients ? Si oui, lequel ?

Interviewee 1: Oui bien sûr on utilise un CRM (Customer Relationship Management) qui est spécialisé pour les agences réceptives. Ça s'appelle « Client Base ». Et du coup, nous collections les données classiques, donc infos personnelles sur les voyageurs, passeport, visa, et cetera, on a tout ce qui va être historique de voyage, réservation, destination... Et on peut aussi avoir des informations complémentaires, par exemple sur les préférences alimentaires, les allergies, ce genre de choses et ça nous permet en fait d'avoir un suivi quotidien, et de pouvoir faire nos stats de suivi.

Author: Alors la deuxième question de cette partie est, comment la collecte de données apporte-t-elle à votre entreprise une stratégie de gestion des flux touristiques ?

Interviewee 1: Je dirais que aujourd'hui, on n'a pas réellement de stratégie de gestion des flux touristiques. Comme je vous l'ai dit, on fait attention à la question d'environnement, et de bien être des voyageurs. En revanche, quand on collecte des données, c'est vraiment pour en aval les analyser et anticiper les années suivantes. En revanche, aujourd'hui, on n'a pas de stratégie de gestion des flux touristiques.

Author: Alors la troisième question sera, en quoi la collecte de données permet-elle un avantage concurrentiel selon vous ?

Interviewee 1: Je dirais que plus on apprend à connaître nos clients, plus on apprend à satisfaire leurs besoins, et juste à les connaître. Et plus on sera à même de répondre à leurs besoins et donc de se distinguer par notre savoir.

CHOICE OF STAKEHOLDERS

Author: On va maintenant passer à la troisième partie pour les questions qui s'axera sur le choix des différents partenaires avec qui vous travaillez. La première question est, comment choisissez-vous les tours opérateurs ou les agences de voyages avec lesquelles vous travaillez ?

Interviewee 1: Lorsque l'on doit choisir un nouveau partenaire ou même lorsque l'on doit changer de partenaire, ce qui est le plus important et le plus primordial à nos yeux, ça va être le fait d'être aligné avec nos valeurs et notre vision. Depuis qu'on a pris ce virage, on insiste davantage sur la durabilité. Il est vraiment essentiel pour nous de s'allier avec des gens qui vont partager la même la même vision que nous afin d'offrir une expérience incroyable aux voyageurs. Bien sûr, la réputation aussi des agences est importante ainsi que la qualité des services qu'ils proposent.

Author: Merci, alors la deuxième question est, est-ce que le choix de vos partenaires s'inscrit dans une stratégie de gestion des flux touristiques ?

Interviewee 1: Alors, c'est un peu compliqué comme question, je dirais que oui, enfin, pas directement. Oui, je dirais plutôt indirectement parce que comme je vous l'ai dit, on cherche quand même des agences et des tours opérateurs qui présentent les mêmes valeurs que nous, que notre entreprise. Donc, comme nous sommes axés principalement sur la durabilité, comme je l'ai dit précédemment. Bien évidemment, on cherche des agences qui ont les mêmes valeurs. Et du coup indirectement, je pense que oui, cela peut permettre peut-être bien de de mettre en place une stratégie de de flux touristique.

Author: Ma troisième question sera, diriez-vous que vous disposez d'une large de base de données de services à mettre dans votre séjour ?

Interviewee 1: Oui, oui, oui. Nous on propose des séjours partout en France. Du coup, au fur et à mesure des années d'expérience et des années de vécu de l'entreprise, bien évidemment que nous avons une bonne base de données de de services qui s'est développé.

SUSTAINABLE STAY

Author: Nous allons maintenant passer à la partie quatre de cette interview qui concerne les séjours durables. Quel est le principal type de séjour que vous créez au sein de votre agence ?

Interviewee 1: Comme je vous l'ai dit tout à l'heure, nous on est vraiment axé sur la durabilité donc oui, on développe principalement des séjours axés sur le développement durable d'où notre choix d'agence et de tour opérateur qui sont vraiment axés là-dessus. Après, bien évidemment, c'est pas notre seul type de séjour, on propose également des séjours à thème, des séjours gastronomiques, des séjours religieux, des culturels ou même des séjours ruraux.

Author: Concernant la deuxième question, quel est l'impact du séjour durable sur votre entreprise et représente-t-il un défi ?

Interviewee 1: Sans vous mentir, ça a été un réel challenge. On a pris du temps à le mettre en place. On a eu certaines difficultés mais aujourd'hui on ne regrette pas du tout cette décision. On en est même très fier et on sait que c'est un tournant pour l'entreprise. Et on constate aujourd'hui d'ailleurs que de nombreux clients le prennent avec nous donc on en est super fier.

CONCLUSION

Author: Alors nous allons maintenant passer à la conclusion. Première question, avez-vous pu évaluer l'efficacité de ces outils (collecte de données, choix des acteurs, tourisme durable, et cetera).

Interviewee 1: Je dirais que forcément, l'impact de la collecte de data est palpable. Ça, se recense ça s'évalue et ça se ressent dans nos décisions. Et on peut dire effectivement aussi que le choix de nos nouveaux partenaires est en accord avec nos décisions et on ressent que cela joue sur la croissance de nos agences avec qui l'on travaille et la croissance des séjours que l'on propose.

Author: Pour la dernière question, diriez-vous que la gestion des flux touristiques représente un atout pour une agence réceptive comme la vôtre ?

Interviewee 1: Bien sûr, bien sûr et je trouve que discuter avec vous de la gestion des flux touristiques, ça ouvre les yeux. Ça promet de nouvelles stratégies, de nouvelles décisions et je pense que ce serait intéressant que notre entreprise prenne le pli dessus et fasse en sorte de passer le cap. Et de s'adapter aux changements que l'on aperçoit aujourd'hui, d'autant plus que nous sommes vraiment axés sur la durabilité et sur l'écotourisme, donc ce serait vraiment intéressant pour notre agence de définir une réelle stratégie de gestion des flux.

Author: Merci beaucoup. Je vous remercie pour votre temps, vos réponses et votre implication dans cette étude.

Appendix C: Interview number 2

INTERVIEW NUMBER 2

Interviewee: Leisure Department Executive in a DMC

Interviewer: the author of this master's thesis, Alexandra Quintard

Translation: Alexandra Quintard

Date: 26th of August 2024

Duration: 15 minutes

Meeting format: video conference

Language: English

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENT AND THE COMPANY

Author: So as I explained in the context of my master's thesis, which is about the impacts of destination management companies on the management of tourist flows. I am doing some semi-structured interviews in order to analyze the concrete case of this subject with people working within destination management companies and what is their point of view. So in this context, we will do this little interview together. This interview is divided into 5 parts. For the first question, it is: what is your position within the company?

Interviewee 2: I am a Leisure Department Executive, in an Irish destination management company which is part of the Company X

Author: OK, perfect. Great. What are the value and mission of your company and which value would you say that is the most important?

Interviewee 2: Concerning the mission of Company X which is as I explained the destination management company is part of is to work in partnership with our clients, our staff, and our suppliers, all of whom are core stakeholders for Company X. We seek to foster a positive working environment that will ensure we satisfy the needs of each of these three stakeholder groups. Which represents an important value for us.

Our business is about people. We work to provide continual training to our dedicated teams to help them deliver the highest quality service to our clients. Our aim is to provide our clients with creative and innovative products to sell. Equally, our objective is to work with our supplier partners in an efficient, fair and professional manner.

Our values govern the way we work with our clients, colleagues, and suppliers...they are our Code of Conduct. The six of the Company X core values are Respect, Integrity, Team Spirit, Excellence, Passion, and Open Communication

Author: Great. The next question is How would you describe sustainable tourism and eco-responsible stay? And do you sell sustainable or eco-responsible stays?

Interviewee 2: Oh yes. This year we have released a sustainable Ireland tour as part of our self-drive package offerings. We only include hotels and services with excellent sustainability practices and we encourage clients to rent an electric or hybrid car for touring.

Author: Ok, thank you. How would you describe "tourist flow management"?

Interviewee 2: Hum, honestly it is a really difficult question and I don't really have an answer, sorry.

DATA COLLECTION

Author: No it's ok, no worries. We will now go to the second section which is about data collection. For the first question, do you use specific software to collect data on your customer and if yes, which one?

Interviewee 2: Yes we do collect basic information on the software "Tourplan". The basic data that we have are: where the clients are from, the number of travelers per booking, the agency they booked through their ages, etc. We also have information such as their contact, their email and their phone number.

Author: OK, how does data collection provide your company with a tourist flow management strategy?

Interviewee 2: That I am aware of, we do not have a specific tourist flow management strategy. I have also asked my colleagues and I didn't receive any positive answers, so I would say no

Author: OK, great. For the next question, in what way does collecting data allow a competitive advantage for your company?

Interviewee 2: It allows the company to monitor our own revenue and growth year on year. We keep a close eye on the total traveler numbers, person numbers per booking, bookings per agency, and revenue per agency throughout the year and company targets are set based on projections and findings.

CHOICE OF STAKEHOLDERS

Author: OK, great. We will now go through questions about the choice of stakeholders. So the first one is how do you choose the tour operators or travel agencies you are working with?

Interviewee 2: There is generally a lengthy tender process before we begin working with a new tour operator or a travel agency. We would provide rates and an overview of the services that we can provide, and they would provide contracts and indicate the volume of clients or the volume of the bookings they would expect to send to us. It is also important to say that we are only working with luxury travel agencies and tour operators.

Author: OK, great. So is your choice of stakeholders part of a tourist flow management strategy?

Interviewee 2: As I said, I don't believe that we have a tourist flow management strategy.

Author: And would you say that you have a large database of services such as accommodation, transportation, and so on to put into your stays?

Interviewee 2: Yes we do have a large database of services, chauffeurs, accommodations, etc.

SUSTAINABLE STAYS

Author: OK, great. We will now go through the sustainable stay part. So the first question is, what is the major type of stay you are creating?

Interviewee 2: As I said, in the destination management company's Leisure Department we are focused on luxury travel. So we are creating custom luxury itineraries for a primarily North American client base. And we are also creating packages travel.

Author: OK, great. How does sustainable stay impact your company and does it represent a challenge for you?

Interviewee 2: I would say that the Company X is currently at the beginning of its sustainability journey. We are aware that sustainability is the future of the industry and are committed to working with more sustainable practices. This year we should achieve our sustainability credentials with the sustainable tourism network and then going forward we will look to lower our carbon footprint year on year.

CONCLUSION

Author: OK, great, thank you. We will now go through the questions of the conclusion. Have you been able to assess the effectiveness of these tool like data collection, choice of stakeholders, and sustainable stays?

Interviewee 2: Hum, honestly I don't know and, I asked my colleagues but they don't know either. But it would be great to analyze these data and see their effectiveness.

Author: And would you say that management of tourist flows represents an advantage for a Destination Management Company?

Interviewee 2: I have no idea concerning the Company X, as I said, they do not have a tourist flow management strategy

Author: Yes thank you, and what about destination management companies in general, not just your company?

Interviewee 2: I don't really know, I think that could be interesting to set up strategies of the management of tourist flows, these companies may have an impact.

Author: Thanks a lot for your answers.

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RESUME

Le système touristique est une industrie complexe qui englobe les compagnies locales, les grandes entreprises et les touristes. Ce mémoire se concentrera sur le rôle des entreprises transnationales avec un intérêt particulier pour les agences réceptives. Bien qu'elles soient considérées comme les géants de l'industrie touristiques, il existe encore un manque d'informations sur ce sujet. Plus précisément le mémoire se concentrera sur la gestion des flux touristiques qui représente un sujet important et actuel due à ses enjeux écologiques, sociaux et économiques. La plupart des articles scientifiques se réfèrent à l'implication des pays, régions et entreprises locales quant à la mise en place de stratégie de gestion touristique. L'objectif principal de ce mémoire est de comprendre l'importance pour les agences réceptives de mettre en place des stratégies de gestion touristiques afin d'avoir un avantage compétitif.

MOTS-CLEFS : Agences réceptives – gestion – flux touristiques – avantages compétitifs – système touristique

ABSTRACT

The tourism system is a complex industry that include local companies, big corporations, and tourists. This dissertation will be focused on the role of transnational companies with a particular interest on Destination Management Companies (DMC). Even if they are considered as the giant of the tourism industry, there is still a lack of information on this topic. More precisely this dissertation will focus on the management of tourist flows, which, because of its ecological, social, and economic issues is an important and actual subject. Most of the scientific papers found on this topic show the implication of countries, regions, or local tourism companies in the elaboration of a management strategy. The main goal of this dissertation is to understand the importance for DMCs of setting up management of tourist flows strategy to engender a competitive advantage.

KEYWORDS: Destination Management Companies – management – tourist flows – competitive advantage – tourism system