LYCar – Launching Your Career
LYCar Company Project Report

What are the key factors influencing the travel behavior of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier's potential market?

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REPORT REQUIREMENTS	CHECKLIST
LYCar Company Project Report is written in English and is professional, including common basic components such as Intro, ToC, Conclusion etc.- see HTH Reading & Writing Guide	√
LYCar Company Project Report is max. 11.000 words (counting after Table of Content, incl. text in tables) - visual proof of wordcount is included in Appendices.	√
Harvard Referencing Style is used consistently, referencing to primary sources only, List of References is well presented.	√
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Ethical, integrity and data management requirements are met.	√

Executive Summary

This LYCar *Company Project Report* aims to investigate the main topic area of active/adventure tourism, and more specifically the factors influencing the travel behavior of an Abruzzo-based active hospitality supplier's potential market. The research takes places and the problem mess is tackled by following the *Design-Based Research (DBR) steps*: firstly, the problem, the topic of interest and the *Main Research Question (MRQ)* are defined; afterwards, following a thorough literature review and research, the analysis and diagnosis take place. Once conclusions can be drawn from the research, recommendations are formulated, which lead to the design of a solution. The solution is implemented and, finally, it is evaluated.

After the halt of international travels due to Covid-19 the expectations, needs and wants of leisure travelers have changed: the new generation of tourists is looking to experience meaningful and unique travel adventures, whereby they can participate into open-air sport and cultural activities, while generating a positive impact on the hosting cultures and environment. Active tourism meets these wishes by providing responsible travel solutions requiring physical and mental participation from the tourist, and following the maxims of sustainability, protection of biodiversity and conservation of culture.

Abruzzo is a wonderful Italian region with golden beaches, rocky mountains and authentic, undiscovered cultural heritage… and an incredible tourism potential, that is yet to be fully discovered. Abruzzo could be the perfect destination for an active trip; however, due to the challenging local industry and relatively low tourism influx, there are only very few established businesses currently operating within this field, as most "lack longer-term perspective, monitored policies and efficacy".

After a preliminary research, it was found that, at the moment, the little existing literature on Abruzzo tourism does not provide a clear picture of the current/potential target market for active tourism. Market research is invaluable in determining a business' potential, getting in touch with prospective customers and understanding both their behavior and the factors that influence it. Understanding the travel behavior of an Abruzzo active tourism provider's potential market is a critical pre-condition for developing new concepts and ideas and improving the existing products/services.

Following this analysis, the following Main Research Question, which guided the research, was formulated:

"What are the key factors influencing the travel behavior of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier's potential market?"

As can be observed from existing literature, active or adventure travellers are usually young- to middle-aged travelers who are motivated by several interests and a strong will to live a unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience, which can challenge and transform them while having a positive impact on their surroundings. On the other hand, people who visit Abruzzo are for the most part habitual tourists who spend their holiday at the beach: as a market, their behaviour is not easy to understand or influence.

According to existing theories about individual behaviour, individuals usually engage in a specific behaviour when their propensity to do so is met by an actual opportunity to engage in that behaviour; similarly, travellers will buy an active tourism product/service when: the combination of their motivations and personal characteristics results in a propensity to engage in an active tourism experience; and there is a perception of "availability" and "quality" linked to that activity, which results in the concrete opportunity to join that experience.

Conducting continuous research into travellers behaviour and demand today is more crucial than ever because, since Covid-19 has affected and irreparably changed the market and the aspects that can drive their demand. A gap has been found within this area: despite Abruzzo's strong tourism potential, there is no recent data upon which strategic decisions could be based; to improve the services and products offered by existing local businesses, it is crucial to know: what aspects must be a part of an active/adventure tourism concept; who is the market that needs to be addressed and what factors can influence the travel behavior of this potential market. In order to address these themes, the following *Research Questions (RQs)* were formulated:

RQ1: What is the potential market of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier and what are the characteristics of this market?

RQ2: What are the key factors influencing market demand for an active tourism supplier?

RQ3: What characteristics are necessary for an active/adventure tourism product/service to drive demand?

After developing a conceptual framework to visualize these concepts and defining a relevant methodology, research was conducted by means of a mixed-method approach. Firstly, quantitative research was conducted by collecting data with a *survey:* by means of convenience sampling, the researcher was able to gather 264 responses from the accessible population of international (active/adventure) travellers. The survey responses were therefore collected and, after performing the steps of data validation, data cleaning and editing, and data coding, descriptive analysis was used to analyse the findings.

Afterwards, qualitative data was collected through two semi-structured interviews with industry experts, namely Abruzzo-based tour operators, which were selected by purposive sampling; a short list of questions was asked, and several topical paths were followed. The interviews transcripts were then translated into Italian and analyzed by means of thematic analysis.

After discussing the findings, the researcher was able to answer the MRQ as follows: *The key factors influencing the travel behaviour of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier's potential market are:*

1. The market demographics and motivations
The market's own characteristics are a direct cause for its propensity to engage in a specific travel activity, thus a key factor that directly affects its travel behaviour. The

market that holds the highest potential for Abruzzo active tourism is young travellers with a strong willingness to learn and engage in cultural experiences or sport activities and to live a unique, inspiring experience; their main priority when booking a trip is finding the best deal. They mostly book activities online so, if uncertain, they are inclined to favour travel solutions that provide thorough information and more flexibility.

2. A proven great value for money
The perception that the products/services provided by the supplier are of high quality is a necessary requirement for travellers to sense a real opportunity to engage in an active experience. The aspects that affect this perception are price-friendliness, a strong online reputation, and uniqueness: they are sensitive to price, receptive to friends/family recommendations, and attentive to exclusivity.

3. Inclusive, accessible solutions
The most basic key factors which can influence the travel behaviour of the Abruzzo active/adventure tourism market are those factors which make the product/service available and accessible: necessary information should always be at hand, mobility solutions should be provided, safety/security and inclusivity must be guaranteed, and sustainability should be considered.

The recommendations based on these aspects, namely *Boost reputation with pricing strategies* and *Use scarcity to build on exclusivity* were developed and included in a relevant solution, namely the concept proposal for a new experience, "*Goldsmith for a Day*": this experience tells the story of an old Abruzzese traditional charm and gives travellers the opportunity to become craftsmen for a day. and first-hand experience the Abruzzo heritage. The solution provides specific directions regarding all themes resulting from the research, namely online presence and visibility, accessibility, mobility solutions, sustainability, marketing and reputation, price, and uniqueness and quality.

A feasible implementation plan for this experience was defined, which mentions both specific steps and the relevant stakeholders for each step. In order to evaluate this solution, there will be two evaluation moments: the first one will analyse the concept's feasibility and viability, while the second one will try to understand whether the solution proposed will have targeted the potential market that has been identified in the research analysis, and whether the design and actual implementation of this experience will have resulted in a perceived availability and quality of the concept, thus resulting in the travellers' perception of opportunity to engage in the activity. Where possible, specific KPIs will be used.

It is expected of the researcher to share the knowledge generated to relevant stakeholders. This was done by sharing the research report and concept proposal via email and by means of a presentation; the dissemination will continue to be done for as long as the knowledge will be considered valuable.

Lastly, an academic reflection was written, and recommendations for futher research were given.

Preface

Launching Your Career (LYCar) is the last challenge for students at Hotelschool The Hague (HTH), before they can graduate and embark on a new journey. During this course, students are requested to demonstrate readiness to kickstart their career by completing a management-level internship, conducting bachelor-level research and showcasing their growth as an International Hospitality Leader. After receiving the approval for the *Career Launching Plan* (CLP) and *LYCar Proposal*, the *Career Portfolio* and *Company Project Report* are the last deliverables that students must hand in: together, these two documents describe the *LYCar Execution* phase.

In the *Company Project Report,* I conducted research on a topic of choice by means of the *Design-Based Research* (DBR) steps: Problem Definition, Analysis and Diagnosis, Solution Design, Implementation and Evaluation. In addition, I explained how the report findings were shared with relevant stakeholders; finally, a reflection was included regarding the implications and limitations of the research, together with a recommendation on further research that can be done to deepen the understanding of the topic at hand.

List of Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMR	Allied Market Research
AQ	Adaptability Quotient
ARP	Adversity Response Profile
ATTA	Adventure Travel Trade Association
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CES	Customer Effort Score
CLP	Career Launching Plan
Covid-19	Coronavirus 2019
CSAT	Customer Satisfaction Score
DBR	Design-Based Research
EQ	Emotional Quotient
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
HTH	Hotelschool The Hague
IHL	International Hospitality Leadership
LER	LYCar Execution Report
LYCar	Launching Your Career
MRQ	Main Research Question
NPS	Net Promoter Score
OTA	Online Travel Agency
PDC	Personal Duty Category
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PLO	Program Learning Outcome
RQ	Research Question
SRQ	Sub-Research Question
TIES	The International Eco-Tourism Society
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNWTO	United Nations World Travel Organization
WTO	World Travel Organization

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1. Problem Definition

In 2020 the world experienced the spread of Covid-19, which caused a nearly complete standstill of travels around the globe and highlighted weaknesses and shortcomings in the volatile and uncertain tourism industry (John Hopkins University, 2021). Consequently, over the last years companies operating in this industry have had to develop adequate recovery plans/policies, optimizing the destinations' resources to allow for the territory's development in a way that is compatible with the preservation of resources and well-being of the locals (Dupeyras and MacCallum, 2013; Martín et al, 2019; Salinas Fernández et al, 2022).

Abruzzo is an Italian region which holds a wide and varied heritage of cultural attractions, historical and architecture resources, amazing wine and food and a plethora of breath-taking heterogeneous environments and landscapes (Fuschi and Evangelista, 2017). At the moment, tourism in Abruzzo is an underdeveloped and weak sector, which lacks evidence-based decision making and market knowledge, and which remains essentially polarized around two basic segments (the seaside/summer segment and the mountain/snow-based one) (ibid).

After Covid-19, active/adventure tourism has gained momentum as it provides the perfect travel solution for tourists who are looking to travel more responsibly, support local communities, disconnect from devices, and prioritize physical and mental wellbeing (G Adventures, 2021). During the pandemic, adventure travel was the leading recovering segment in terms of online search activity, and this trend is expected to continue (WTTC, 2022). Being a recently booming sector, active/adventure tourism is far from reaching saturation and offers therefore great investment opportunities for both existing companies and new ventures (Misrahi and Jus, 2021). In Abruzzo specifically, active tourism could be the perfect compromise between increasing the incoming tourists flow and creating value for local activities, while safeguarding the region's natural heritage.

However, in order to lead a successful business, pre-planning is quintessential. Among the reasons behind the failure of new businesses there are several common errors such as lack of careful, methodical, strategic planning (Schaefer, 2022). Market research is an invaluable tool, not only to determine a business idea's potential, but also to get in touch with prospective customers and understand both their behaviour and the factors that influence it (Spaeder, 2022). In addition, market research can contribute to existing knowledge about a topic with new, valuable information and insights.

Il Bosso is a long-established company that has been operating in the field of environmental- and eco-tourism and promoting research programs on responsible tourism for 20 years (Il Bosso, 2022a). The company aims to promote Abruzzo by organizing experiential activities such as canoe and kayak guided tours, trekking and hiking tours, guided tours and visits to the Wolf Visit Center, E-Bike tours in the mountains and along the coastline, and Km0 holidays (ibid). Each year, more than 50.000 travellers choose *Il Bosso* for one of their experiences; additionally, in 2020 and 2021 Il Bosso was awarded by Touring Club Italiano for "working for several decades in the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park, favoring the development and environmental protection of the

territory, through engaging and groundbreaking experiences, such as canoeing on the Tirino river" (Setta, 2022; Il Bosso, 2022a).

Over the last decades several adverse events, including Covid-19, have completely distorted and shifted the Abruzzo tourism market, its characteristics, needs and wants (Stroveglia, 2022). Additionally, due to its potential, the Abruzzo active tourism industry has recently been "invaded by improvised commercial operators" which lack a longer-term perspective, monitored policies and efficacy (Fuschi and Evangelista, 2017).

To appeal to a new generation of travellers, conducting ongoing market research becomes a crucial element even for existing businesses, who could set realistic targets, achievable by employing new effective strategies or solving the business' biggest challenges, could investigate a possible expansion of the existing business or portfolio, or consider reviewing the existing products/services based on recent, reliable findings (Netigate, 2022).

The goal of this research is therefore to gather relevant information regarding Active Tourism in Abruzzo, the potential target market for this industry, and understand which are the factors that can be more or less effective in influencing the behaviour of this market. The outcome of this research will be specific knowledge which will contribute to a better understanding of the topic; this knowledge will be made available and will be valuable to Abruzzo-based tour operators, who can benefit from a thorough market research report and significant recommendations.

The Main Research Question, which will guide the entire research process, was defined as follows:

Main Research Question (MRQ): *What are the key factors influencing the travel behaviour of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier's potential market?*

2. Analysis and Diagnosis

2.1 Literature Review

Active & Adventure Tourism

Koščak and O'Rourke (2018) describe **active tourism** as "responsible travel to foreign areas, requiring both physical and mental participation from the tourist, and following the maxims of sustainability, protection of biodiversity and conservation of culture". Active tourism combines education with recreation and should benefit both the tourists and the destination (ibid). One of the key aspects of active tourism is that tourists are given the opportunity to fully enjoy the host region by taking part into numerous local experiences (Active Tourism, 2002).

The notion of active tourism is intertwined with the concepts of sports, physical activities, and adventure. Gibson and Fairley (2011) write about *active sports tourism* to refer to all individuals who travel for leisure, and whose purpose of travel can be found in participating in physical activities. Active sports tourists travel to actively practice sports such as hiking, cycling, skiing etc (Higham and Hinch, 2018).

A more widely adopted definition within the available literature is **adventure tourism**. Despite Koščak and O'Rourke (2018) introduce adventure tourism as a sub-category of active tourism, the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) and United Nations World Travel Organization (UNWTO) describe adventure tourism as "a trip that involves two of the following elements: physical activity, natural environment, and cultural immersion", thus providing an image that almost entirely overlaps that of active tourism (UNWTO, 2014a).

Adventure tourism is a large tourism segment consisting of many niche markets (CBI, 2021). It is often divided into two main categories depending on its primary activity, the level of risk and exposure to nature or wilderness: soft and hard adventures (UNWTO, 2014a). Soft adventures are relatively safe and do not require many skills or extensive experience, while hard adventures are riskier and usually call for some degree of experience and skills (CBI, 2021).

ACTIVITY	TYPE
Archaeological expedition	Soft
Attending local festival/fairs	Other
Backpacking	Soft
Birdwatching	Soft
Camping	Soft
Canoeing	Soft
Caving	Hard
Climbing (mountain/rock/ice)	Hard
Cruise	Other
Cultural activities	Other
Eco-tourism	Soft
Educational programs	Soft
Environmentally sustainable activities	Soft
Fishing/ fly-fishing	Soft
Getting to know locals	Other
Hiking	Soft
Horseback riding	Soft
Hunting	Soft
Kayaking/sea/whitewater	Soft
Learning a new language	Other
Orienteering	Soft
Rafting	Soft
Research expeditions	Soft
Safaris	Soft
Sailing	Soft
Scuba Diving	Soft
Snorkelling	Soft
Skiing/snowboarding	Soft
Surfing	Soft
Trekking	Hard
Walking tours	Other
Visiting friends/family	Other
Visiting historical sites	Other
Volunteer Tourism	Soft

Figure 1: Activities Categorization - Soft and Hard

(UNWTO, 2014a)

Active tourism encourages socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable practices. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) identifies three pillars of sustainable development:

- **Social sustainability**, an equitable distribution of benefits, with an emphasis on respecting the local culture/communities, and avoiding exploitation (UNEP, 2005).
- **Environmental sustainability**: conserving/managing resources, minimizing pollution, protecting the local biodiversity (ibid; Active Tourism, 2002).
- **Economic sustainability**, i.e. supporting the destination country's economy (UNEP, 2005). g's 2014 industry snapshot showed that more than 65% of the total trip cost for an adventure tourist is estimated to remain in the destination visited, above tourism average (UNWTO, 2014b).

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council - GSTC (2019) has listed criteria to assess the sustainability performance of tourism destinations and practices, around the themes of **sustainable management**, **socio-economic impacts**, **cultural impacts**, and **environmental impacts**. The performance indicators were developed while considering the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals; they aim to highlight the importance of a multifaceted approach to sustainability within the tourism sector, while creating a common understanding of the minimum that any tourism business should aspire to reach (GSTC, 2022).

As the Active Tourism website (2002) depicted, not all types of adventure tourism can be considered sustainable, as some activities are neither sustainable nor beneficial to the local community, economy, and environment (Fritz, Pötsch and Zamaraite, 2020).
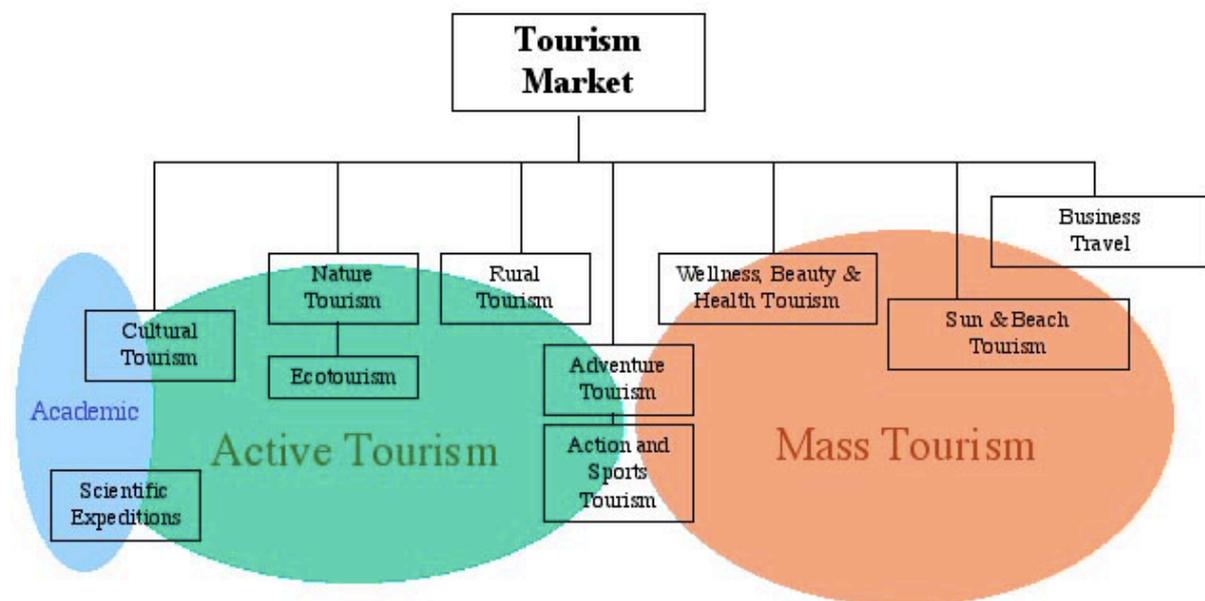
Figure 2: Different Kinds of Tourism

(Active Tourism, 2002)

It should be noted that, for the purpose of this research, the concept of active/adventure tourism that is taken into consideration does not overlap with mass tourism.

Adventure tourism is certainly one of the most rapidly growing tourism categories (Kumar and Deshmukh, 2021). A report by Research and Markets (2021) predicts the adventure tourism market to grow at a CAGR of 13,7% until 2027. Currently, Europe accounts for the highest market share in 2020 and it is expected to hold its leading position until 2028 (AMR, 2021; Trombin, 2021).

The Market

According to the 2021 AMR Adventure Tourism Market Report, most **adventure tourists** are usually 30-41 years old, travel in couples and are more likely than non-adventure tourists to make use of professional services such as guides, tour operators and boutique service providers for their vacation (AMR, 2021; UNWTO, 2014a). On the other hand, although each year 1.3 million tourists visit Abruzzo, the region is mostly chosen by younger or older segments, with a small share of foreign families or couples: there is a lack of adult tourists who, in terms of income level, amount of physical energy and multiplicity of interests, could be an attractive segment for the region and for active tourism solutions (ISTAT, 2022; Regione Abruzzo, 2021).

Adventure tourists are **motivated by several factors**: fun and independence, vacation, health and recovery, wanderlust, nature (Dey and Sarma, 2010). Fritz, Pötsch and Zamaraite (2020) found that adventure travel is the consequence of several desires: tourists look for wellness by means of a new experience, which has the potential to challenge and transform them, while leaving a positive impact on their surroundings.
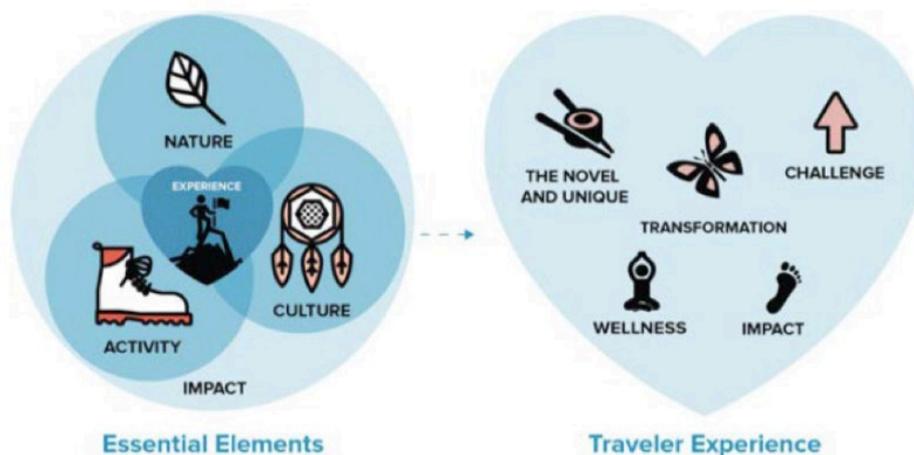
Figure 3: Motivating Factors for Adventure Tourists

(ibid)

In a 2016 survey analyzing preferred vacation types in Italy, about 13 percent of the respondents chose active holidays with sports and excursions, 41 percent selected cultural/discovery holidays, while the remaining 45 percent of respondents mentioned they would opt for a relaxing vacation (Statista, 2016). Likewise, tourists choosing Abruzzo usually have multiple **interests** (gastronomy, sport, shopping, culture, events), and often

take part into excursions in the local natural areas/parks, engage in sport activities (biking, walking) or visit the local beaches; participation in some events is often included. These tourists are habitual, tend to organize their holiday independently, and are not easily influenced by social media (Regione Abruzzo, 2021).

Consumer Behaviour and Demand

Although academic literature on **consumer behaviour** suggests that product or service selection is usually determined by pre-purchase expectations, in the after-Covid context the factors influencing their decision-making have irreparably changed too (Orden-Mejía et al, 2022).

Chapin (1974) shows that individual behaviour is strictly linked to one's perceived opportunity to engage in an activity and their propensity to do so:
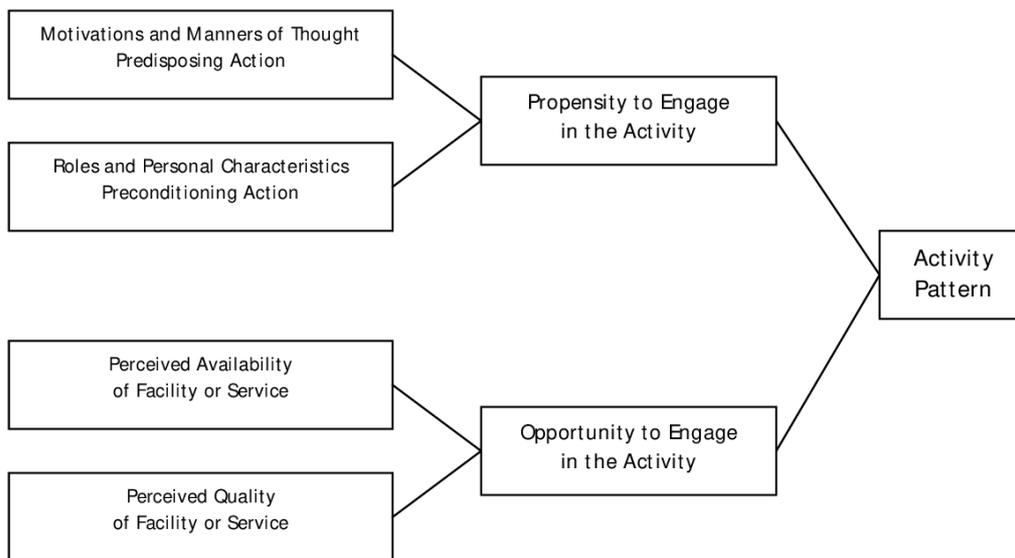
Figure 4: Chapin's Theory on Individual Behaviour

(Chapin, 1974)

In fact, as seen above, this theory shows that travellers will engage in a specific activity when:
1. The combination of predisposition, i.e., showing motivation to complete a certain action, and personal characteristics generates, from the traveller's side, **propensity** to complete an action or engage in an activity.
2. There is a perception of "availability" and "quality" linked to the facilities or services necessary to perform the action, thus resulting in the concrete **opportunity** to engage in that activity.

Most studies available focus on the consequences of Covid-19 on economic factors, tourism destinations resilience and offerings, while only few papers have investigated travellers'

decision-making and behavior, and tourist demand (Hartwell et al, 2012; Zenker and Kock, 2020). Orden-Mejía et al (2022), on the other hand, conducted a study to discover specifically which factors can most affect tourists' expectations for post-Covid destinations:
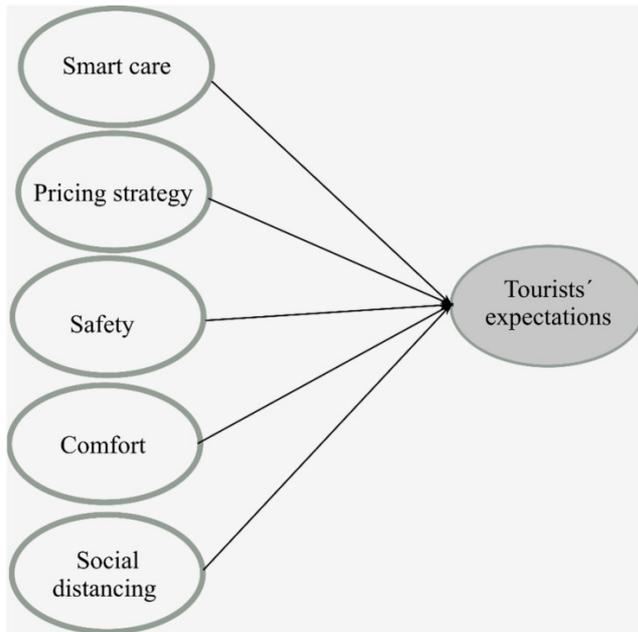
Figure 5: Post-Covid Tourists' Expectations

(Orden-Mejía et al, 2022)

The first factor that resulted is **Smart Care**: technologies such as chat bots, robots, applications, and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
The second factor was **Price Strategy**: low prices, discounts, and tourist services. The third factor, **Security**, is related to protection and care issues contemplated in destinations once tourism is reactivated. The fourth factor, **Comfort**, describes the intention to visit a destination where activities can be carried out with small groups of people and where the itineraries are short (ibid).

These factors all have the potential to affect demand. Usually, demand is the relationship between the quantity demanded of a certain product/service and the factors that influence this quantity; when talking about **tourism demand**, on the other hand, we distinguish between the demand for a specific destination, and that for a specific tourism-related product/service (Dwyer et al, 2010).

Zamparini et al (2016), conducted an assessment on the determinants of local tourism demand: the findings highlighted how climate, a **wide and high-quality supply of tourist services and facilities** and **exclusive products/services resulting from local entrepreneurship** are the aspects that have the largest impact on tourism demand. In fact, according to Dwyer et al (2010), **non-price factors** and specifically **qualitative factors** such as destination image, quality of tourist services etc., are some of the aspects which can potentially affect demand.
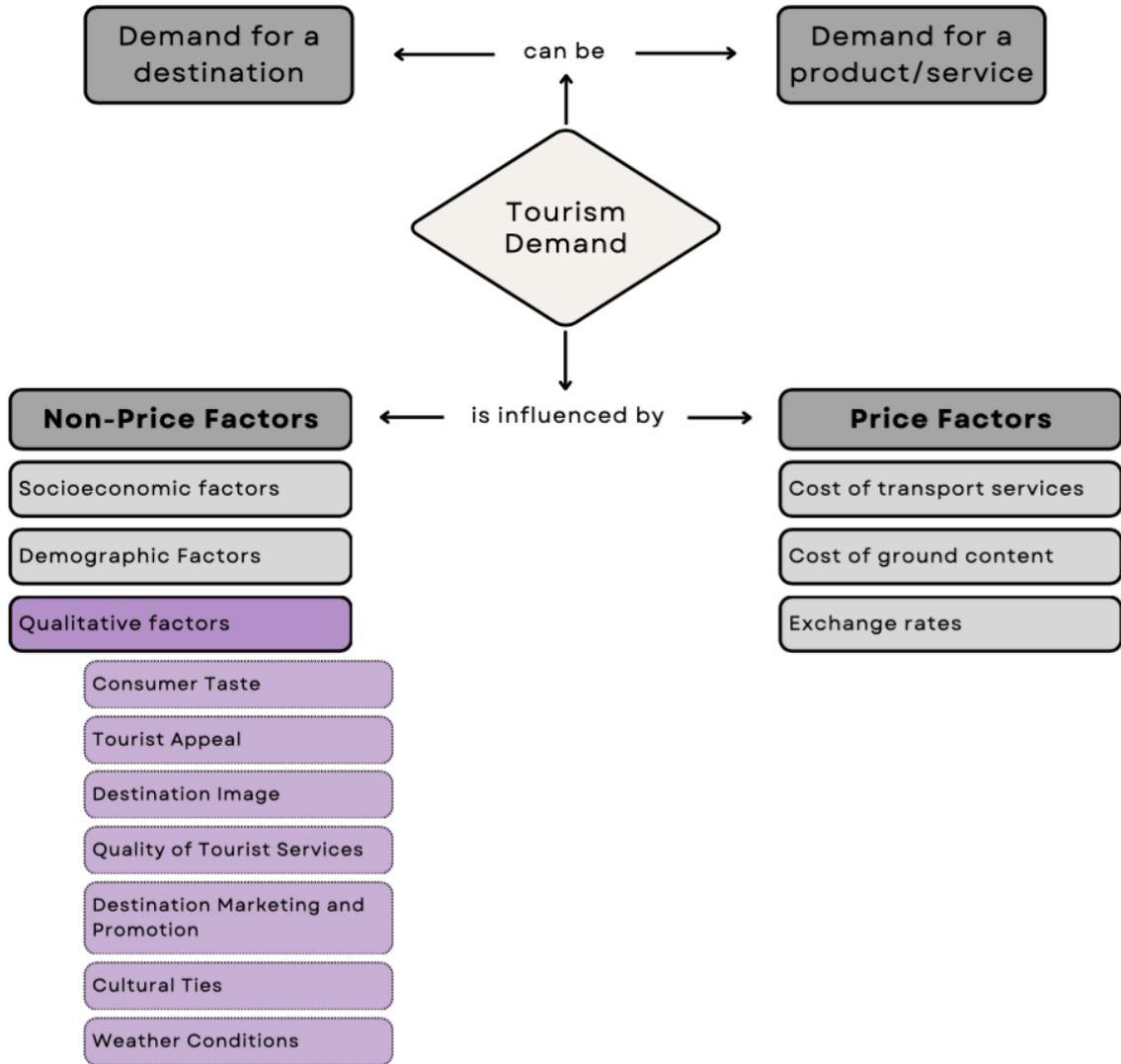
Figure 6: Theoretical Framework on Tourism Demand

2.2 Gap and Relevance

The research gap identified in the literature review shows that currently, despite the potential of active and adventure tourism in Europe and Italy specifically, there are not many businesses offering active/adventure tourism solutions in Abruzzo and, for this reason, this remains a relatively unexplored field. The few operating businesses are small and do not seem to show fact-based decision making. The little existing literature on this topic and scope, however, does not provide a clear picture of the current/potential target market for this sort of business, which is crucial for the success of a hospitality project.

In fact, although the industry in the Abruzzo region is far from reaching saturation and active/adventure travel is gaining popularity and meeting the needs of an increasing number of tourists, this destination is currently mostly chosen by returning guests who do not look for novelty in their trips. In addition, after Covid-19 has disrupted travels all over the world for the last two years, it is even more important to understand what needs to be offered, to whom and how.

Before tour operators can improve their services and products and create new hospitality concepts, it is crucial to know: what aspects must be a part of an active/adventure tourism concept; who is the market that needs to be addressed; what factors can influence the travel behavior of this potential market, thus driving demand.

2.3 Sub-Research Questions

RQ1: What is the potential market of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier and what are the characteristics of this market?

As seen in Chapin's theory (1974), one of the main aspects defining the behaviour of a market is their propensity to engage in a specific activity, which derives from that market's characteristics and motivation. For this reason, the first question was formulated in order to better understand what the potential market of an active tourism supplier based in Abruzzo looks like, and what are the main characteristics of these travellers. To fully answer this question it is not only crucial to conduct market research, but it is also very important to consult experts who currently work in this field.

RQ2: What are the key factors influencing market demand for an active tourism supplier?

The second precondition which, according to Chapin (1974), is necessary the generate a certain behaviour, is the perceived opportunity to engage in the activity. This factor is defined by two main aspects: perceived quality and perceived availability. The study conducted by Orden-Mejía et al (2022) discovered some of the factors that affect tourists' expectations for post-Covid destinations. In addition, Zamparini et al (2016) and Dwyer et al (2010) introduce qualitative factors which can potentially affect market demand and consumer behaviour. In the last few years, Covid-19 has strongly affected travellers'

behaviour and changed their needs, wants and priorities (Abdullah et al, 2020). This question aims to discover the factors that can condition people's perceived quality with regards to the products/services of an Abruzzo active tourism supplier.

RQ3: What characteristics are necessary for an active/adventure tourism product/service to drive demand?

The second aspect determining the perceived opportunity to engage in an activity is, as Chapin (1974) states, the perceived availability of the involved facilities or services: once the factors influencing an active tourism supplier's market demand are clear and travellers' propensity to engage in an active/adventure travel activity is established, it becomes necessary that the products or services are not only perceived as high-quality by travellers, but they are actually available, accessible and feasible. The objective of this question is therefore to define the necessary aspects of an active tourism package, product, or service.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework describes the relationship between the various concepts of the literature study and topic at hand (Adom et al, 2018):

Market demand can be driven and/or influenced by tackling all those aspects that directly affect **consumer behaviour**. As observed by Chapin (1974), personal motivations and characteristics define one travellers' propensity to engage in a certain activity; anyways travellers are only able to actually engage in the activity if the facilities or services necessary for this activity are considered "available" and "high-quality". If this is the case, demand can be driven.

In addition, there are several aspects which can directly affect tourism demand, such as specific **qualitative factors** such as destination image, or quality of tourist services and facilities; after the Covid-19 pandemic, some additional factors might need to be considered.

The features of the products/services provided by a new active/adventure travel provider play a significant role in influencing the relationship between potential market's travel behavior and its demand.
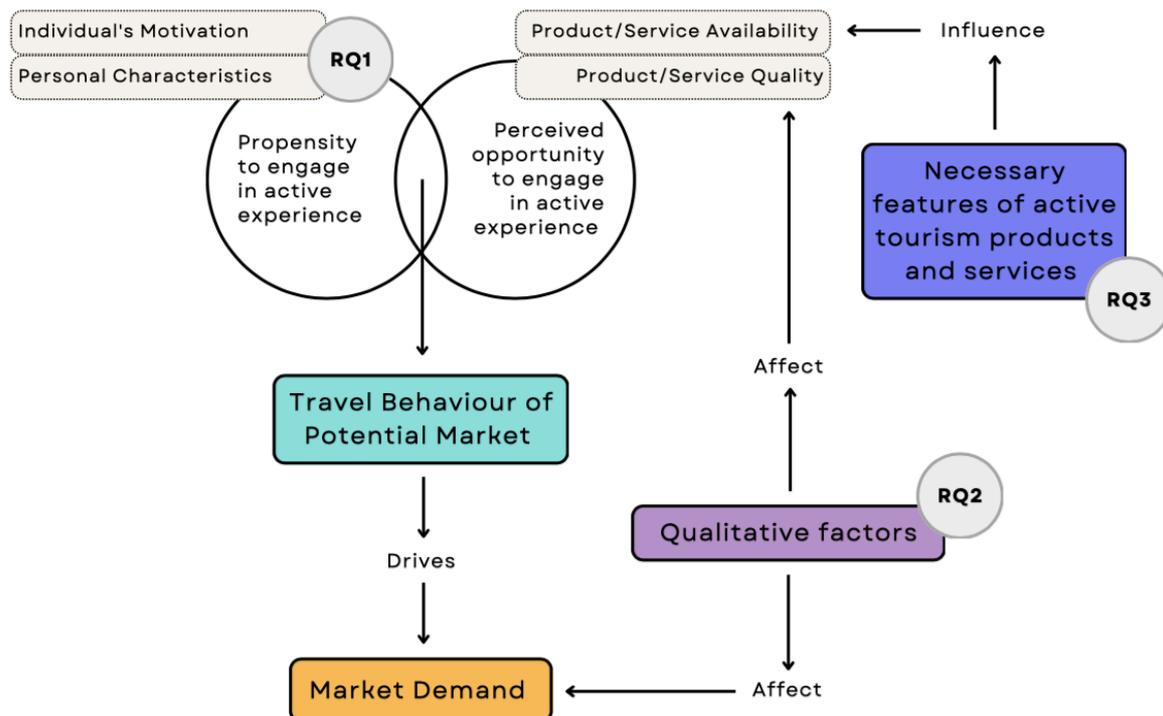
Figure 7: Proposed Conceptual Framework

2.5 Methodology

The research will be conducted from June to September 2022, with a mostly unstructured approach. All necessary aspects of business research were included and properly structured, underpinning why the research should be taken seriously (Crotty, 1998).

2.5.1   Research Model

Throughout the research process, the structure provided by Saunders et al's (2019) *Research Onion model* was followed. To properly answer the research questions, all layers were "peeled" starting from the outer ones, the relative steps were followed and an explanation for the strategy/method/techniques chosen was provided (ibid).
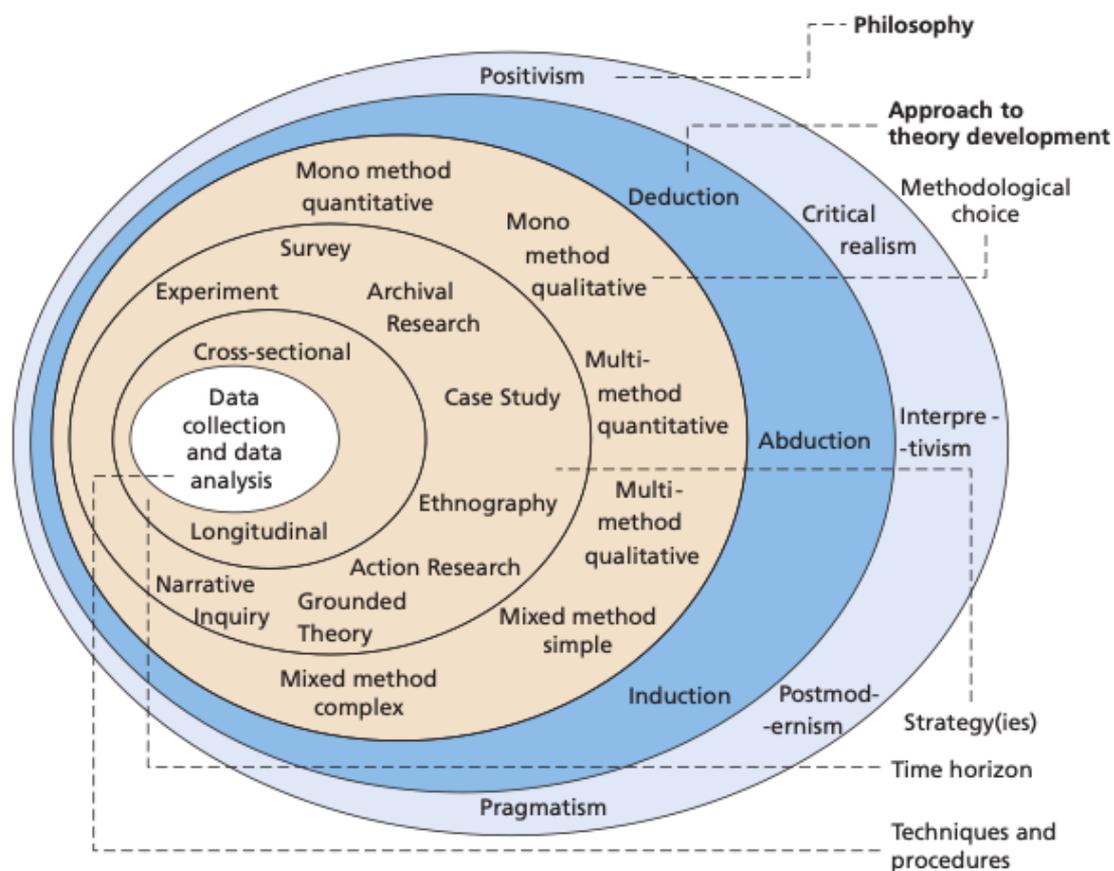
Figure 8: Research Onion Model

 (Saunders et al, 2019).

2.5.2   Research Philosophy

As the data collected during the research is predominantly subjective, the findings might not always be error-free, they might be inconsistent and difficult to generalize (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Therefore, a well-suited research philosophy is necessary to ensure that the research be coherent and credible (Saunders et al, 2019).

This research follows the philosophy of *Critical Realism:* the research is aware that they are biased despite their effort to remain objective; in addition, since the collected data is inherently subjective, the research aims to make a step towards the truth rather than hoping to uncover it (ibid; McEvoy and Richards, 2006; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

2.5.3   Research Approach

As stated by Reed (2005), one of the presuppositions of critical realism is committing to a "retroductive" method of research and explanation: mechanisms were defined from the observations level, and the source of these mechanisms was uncovered by means of a retroductive process (McEvoy and Richards, 2006). Different research methods can be used with critical realism, depending on the research question (ibid; Reed, 2005).

2.5.4   Research Method

In critical realism, notions of causality cannot be reduced to statistical correlation (Reed, 2005). The most effective research method with this research philosophy, and a highly endorsed method for business research, is a **mixed method**, in which both quantitative and qualitative data is collected and analyzed (McEvoy and Richards, 2006; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). A mixed approach to tourism research is a relatively recent practice, which has substituted, over the last thirty years, the exclusive use of either quantitative or qualitative methods (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

2.5.5   Quantitative Research

In the initial exploratory phase, patterns were identified and the relationship between different variables was investigated, after a numerical analysis, by means of **quantitative research** (Saunders et al, 2015). This method allowed the researcher to reach a wider audience, thus approximating the population as closely as possible (Napolitano, 2020).

To conduct quantitative research, the data collection method that was chosen is a **survey.** A survey is a method of gathering information using relevant questions from a sample of people, with the objective to understand the respective population as a whole (Qualtrics, 2022).
Due to time considerations, the chosen sampling method for the surveys was **nonprobability sampling**, and specifically convenience sampling: the members of the

population that responded to the survey did not have a predetermined chance of being selected as research subjects (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Moreover, since the research population does not consist of an exact portion of the general population, the **sample size** for this method is **unknown** (ibid). For an estimated population size between 75 thousand and 1 million, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table suggested 380 subjects. However, due to time constraints and the researcher's effort to avoid biased responses, the number of people who submitted a response to the survey was 264.

The chosen population should be relevant and provide reliable and valuable data. At the same time, especially in business research, knowing and understanding the opinion of the target audience is crucial (Kotler, 2012). Therefore, the target population selected for the surveys is international **(active/adventure) travellers** of all ages and backgrounds: travellers who, in their past or future trips, have and/or might be looking for an experience that fits within the active tourism criteria. Moreover, Due to the ongoing restrictions and regulations in place to halt the spread of Covid-19, the sample always consisted of the **population** that was **accessible** during the study period (Bartlett et al, 2001).

As both the survey collected the population's opinion at a given point in time, this can be defined a cross-sectional study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

Quantitative Data Collection Method

Young (2015) defines surveys as research instruments that present respondents with statements/questions that they need to react to, providing the researcher with demographic information, opinions, behaviors etc. This method allows for the collection of large numbers of data, as it can be easily administered to a wide pool of people (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

Fao (2022) describes 9 steps that are involved in the creation of a questionnaire. The steps were followed as described below:

FAO'S STEPS	ACTION
1. Decide the information required.	After the Problem Analysis and Literature Review, the information required was identified in the research gap.
2. Define the target respondents.	The target respondents were thoroughly selected and described in the sampling methods and population.
3. Choose the method(s) of reaching your target respondents.	Deciding on the question content followed from the three RQs and their sub- questions.
4. Decide on question content. 5. Develop the question wording.	The question content was determined by breaking down the MRQ into sub-questions and by researching the

		quintessential elements and questions that should be included in market research. The questions asked were a combination of (multiple answers) multiple-choice questions, Likert scale questions and open-ended questions, together with demographic questions. This combination allowed the researcher to gather both data organized in the most suitable categories and unfiltered answers, while also gaining the ability to identify their respondents (Brancato et al, 2006).
6.	Put questions into a meaningful order and format.	The questions were organized into a logical order by means of four sections (Travel Profile, Trip Planning and Organization, Concept Development and Demography) and Google Forms was used in order to have a user-friendly format.
7.	Check the length of the questionnaire.	The length of the questionnaire and the time required to complete it were measured. According to Sharma (2022), a good questionnaire should be of 25-30 questions and should be completed within 30 min to keep the participants' interest and attention intact. The questionnaire therefore included 27 questions, with a completion time of <10 minutes.
8.	Pre-test the questionnaire.	Although the questionnaire should have been pre-tested with a pilot survey administered to a small pool of participants, due to time constraints the test was only conducted informally with a few available candidates.
9.	Develop the final survey form.	After receiving feedback on the questionnaire, the final version of the survey was developed and shared with the participants.

Please refer to appendix 9.2

After gathering the data, descriptive analysis was used for the surveys.

Descriptive analysis summarizes a given data set, which is the representation of the sample chosen for this research (Hayes, 2021). This method repurposes difficult-to-understand quantitative insights across large data sets into smaller descriptions (ibid). Before employing this method, however, the researcher needed to make sure that raw data be converted into meaningful information. Therefore, to analyse survey results, the following steps were followed:

1. **Data validation**: all questions were marked as mandatory.
2. **Data cleaning and editing**: basic data checks were conducted to identify outliers and remove data points that could affect the results' accuracy (as in this survey question).

3. **Data coding**: where necessary, for the sake of data analysis, values were assigned to different responses to questions (such as <u>here</u>).
4. **Descriptive analysis**: the findings were summarized into bite-sized descriptions.

For the <u>open-ended survey questions</u>, **thematic analysis** and specifically the **colour-coding method** were employed.

2.5.6   Qualitative Research

After conducting quantitative research, it became necessary to collect, quantify, and rationalize expert opinions on the research topic at hand from a smaller group of people, thus becoming able to answer the research questions by means of a mainly descriptive method (Gall et al, 2007). For this purpose, **qualitative research** was conducted.

For the qualitative research the data collection method that was chosen were interviews, as they allow the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the variables identified from quantitative analysis while still leaving room for additional patterns and concepts too complex to be explained with predetermined responses (Bernard, 1994; McEvoy and Richards, 2006; Reed, 2005).

By choosing **purposive sampling** for the **interviews**, the researcher collected data specifically from the available population. The interviews were conducted until "saturation" was reached and no additional insights were generated (Malterud et al, 2015). Although the estimated **sample size** for the interviews is approximately 8-12, the concept of **information power** was applied: the more relevant information is provided by the sample, the lower number of participants is necessary (ibid).

The population chosen for this method was **industry experts**, namely representatives from two active tourism companies operating in Abruzzo. This choice ensured that the data collected results from field knowledge and experience within the sector.

Just like the surveys, the interviews took place on multiple days, but all within the same week. For this reason, this was also a cross-sectional study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

Qualitative Data Collection Method

After fully understanding the survey results, qualitative research took place as **semi-structured interviews.** With in-depth interviews, the amount and variety of obtainable information can be maximized and, by building trust with the interviewee, the researcher might gain information otherwise unobtainable (Wengraf, 2001; Adams and Schvaneveldt, 1991). Thanks to this method, the researcher was able to integrate the survey answers with an expert opinion, by:

- Asking pre-defined questions, which aimed to research specifically into those topics and subjects that had not been fully explored with quantitative research
- Following topical paths that emerged during the conversations and encouraging the interviewee's spontaneous expression of thoughts, opinions from allowing for the participants' individual verbal expressions while selecting which topical trajectories to follow (Kallio et al, 2016; Cridland et al, 2015).

The structured survey questions that were asked during the interviews were:

1. What are the demographics of people that choose *name of company*?
      Who is your current market?
      Who is your potential market?
2. What are, from your market's point of view, the most and least appreciated aspects of active tourism?
3. What are, in your opinion, the aspects that are necessary in order to develop a valid, high-quality active tourism offer, that is able to attract people?
4. How do you deal with the aspect of sustainability?

After conducting the interviews, the data was analyzed by means of **Thematic Analysis**, which was employed for the interviews specifically by using the colour-coding method.

Thematic analysis strives to identify patterns of themes in the interview data (Mortensen, 2020). The steps to detect the most important themes in the data are:

1. **Familiarization** with the data –the audio-recordings were transcribed and translated from Italian to English, notes were taken.
2. **Generating initial codes**: assigning preliminary codes to the data to describe the content.
3. **Searching for themes**: colliding multiple codes across the interviews into themes that say something about the data.
4. **Reviewing themes** and avoiding overlapping or contradictions.
5. **Defining and naming themes**.
6. **Producing a report** to present the findings in an engaging manner (ibid)

Please see the interviews analysis here.

2.5.7   Ethical Data Management

According to Cote (2021), there are 5 principles to ethical data management:

- Ownership
- Transparency
- Privacy
- Intention
- Outcomes

To ensure that the research be conducted ethically, the following measures were applied during the research process: firstly, the individuals who took part into the research always held ownership of the information they provided, and permission was always asked before collecting data, e.g. by means of a <u>consent form</u> or by expressly agreeing to the informed participation in the research; the research respondents and participants were made aware of the reasoning behind the questions, and of the way data was to be handled; to maintain anonymity, Personally Identifiable Information (PII) were not shared; the reasoning and the goal behind the research was always made clear by the researcher (ibid).

2.6 Limitations

Firstly, it should be noted that there are two definitions to express the same concept: active tourism and adventure tourism. There is no clearly defined differentiation between the two expressions, and they are often used interchangeably in the pool of existing literature and knowledge in English. In Italian, the researched topic is almost uniquely referred to as "active tourism". The researcher decided to use both expressions to refer to the same concept and communicated this choice to the people involved in the study. This choice, however, might undermine the clarity of the paper.

As Sekaran and Bougie (2016) and Jennings (2011) state, a mixed-method approach might become time consuming and require significant resources. The research, in fact, suffered the repercussions of limited access to both time and resources.

As mentioned in the methodology, the suggested number of subjects for the survey was 380; however, time constraints and the researcher's effort to avoid biased responses resulted in an actual sample size of 264.

Moreover, with regards to the non-probability sampling method, Saunders et al (2015) mention how, already during the sampling phase, it is possible to incur in error: a sample chosen randomly will almost never reflect the population that is being researched. For these reasons, and although the survey respondents represented different age groups, nationalities and backgrounds, there might still be a lack of representation for the entire population.

When collecting data with a survey, survey fatigue should be considered: although the respondents were not able to terminate the questionnaire prematurely, it should be considered that some of them might have given less thoughtful answers to the last questions (Macarthur and Conlan, 2012).

On the other hand, limitations associated with interviews as a qualitative research method include bias arising from verbal and non-verbal actions or reactions of the researcher (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 2008). Moreover, the data drawn from interviews should be considered less statistically significant and less representative of the population (Atieno, 2009).

As purposive sampling was employed for the interviews, the researcher might have focused more on the ability of the sample to provide relevant information regarding the topic at hand, rather than ensuring that the sample is an accurate representation of the population (Saunders et al, 2015).

Moreover, to give interviewees the opportunity to fully express their opinion and give their expert contribution, the researcher decided to conduct the interviews in Italian, translate the interviews transcription, and analyse the English version of the transcriptions. This process resulted not only to be extremely time-consuming, but it might have impacted the trustworthiness and accuracy of the concepts that were analysed.

Finally, as the topic of active/adventure travel is relatively new to the Italian tourism industry, there is little literature available on this trend, especially within the Italian scope. In addition, most relevant and reliable sources/data available online are written in Italian, thus requiring a translation in order to be employed.

Another consequence to the lack of pre-existing extensive research on this topic is that there is no framework available which could be used by the researcher to gather data.

It should be noted that the demographics of the survey respondents is significantly different than the demographic of people who currently visit Abruzzo that resulted from the literature review: although, at first, this aspect could be considered a limitation, upon conducting the interviews, the researcher understood that the survey respondents' demographics is in line with the potential market of Abruzzo Active Tourism providers.

2.7 Findings & Discussion

For the detailed survey results, see <u>here</u>
For the summary of survey results, see <u>here</u>
For the interviews thematic analysis, see <u>here</u>
For the summary of interviews results, see <u>here</u>

Following an in-depth review of existing literature, the researcher proposed a conceptual framework for the research, where the relationships between all variables relevant to the topic at hand are depicted. Thanks to the knowledge resulted from the <u>survey</u> and <u>interviews</u>, the proposed conceptual framework was therefore further developed to include the research findings as follows:
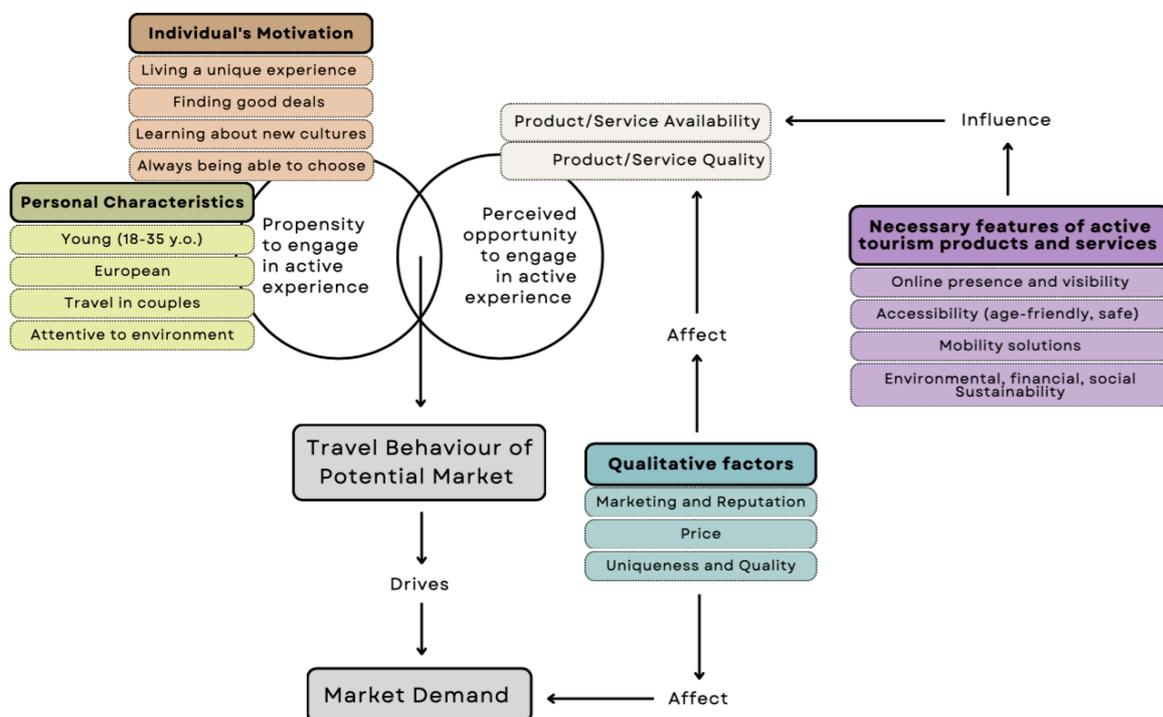
Figure 9: Conceptual Framework derived from Research

The level of understanding of the topic at hand that is presented in the framework is the following:

Abruzzo active tourism providers should target young, motivated travellers…

Those who are most likely to buy an active/adventure product or experience are travellers between 18 and 35 years of age, as it resulted that they are the age group that is most likely to either engage in an active/adventure trip over the next year or include an active/adventure element in their next vacation. These travellers are a market rich in potential for active tourism since they are young, full of energy, and they are conscious about the environment. Abruzzo is the perfect destination for them, since their travels are

motivated by a strong will to discover a new culture, learn, and eat good food, and considering that, whenever they can, they enjoy adding sports to their vacation. All these elements together define this market's high propensity to engage in active experience.

...by developing unique, high-quality price-friendly products and services...

There are certain specific aspects which have the potential to directly affect the perceived quality of an active tourism product or service. The ideal active tourism product or service must therefore be extremely competitive in terms of:

a.   Marketing and Reputation

The target market relies heavily on the opinions and reviews of their friends and family, and word of mouth is usually how they discover new destinations; travellers will engage into active/adventure experiences because of positive reviews, recommendations received locally, or even due to endorsements from influencers. Therefore, a strong reputation and positive reviews are aspects that need to be highlighted. Another factor that can improve the perceived reputation is an expert, effective online communication, which includes endorsements from previous customers and a strong social media presence boasting captivating, inspiring photos and videos.

b.   Price

As the market is strongly sensitive to price, the presence of discounts and promotions or other price-related strategies must be considered, since it can positively affect the perceived quality of the active tourism experiences and the traveller's perceived opportunity to engage in one. Providing packages and solutions suitable for travellers with different spending potentials and making use of promotions, although not too relevant for return travellers, seems to be extremely important when targeting demand from new markets.

c.   Uniqueness and Quality

To be considered high-quality, the Abruzzo active tourism offer must differentiate itself from other Italian regions or other local tour operators. Uniqueness and quality play a crucial role in this. To influence travellers' behavior, it is indispensable to offer experiences that can't be found anywhere else, which are made for a small number of people and allow travellers to connect with the true core of the Abruzzo culture. In addition, a significant tool is continuous investments in training, to create true expertise and generate quality that is visible to the travellers' eyes.

...and making the products/services accessible, convenient and sustainable.

It is not enough to have high-quality, unique products and services, if these are not accessible and available to the target market; for this purpose, the essential elements defined by Fritz, Pötsch and Zamaraite (2020) must necessarily be integrated with some additional basic requirements which need to be present:

a.   Online Presence and Visibility

The internet is one of the most used means of researching a travel destination and booking a trip; therefore, it is extremely important to ensure that information about the activities

(in English and other languages), and the possibility to book them, are easily available on all the relevant on-, and offline platforms;

b.   Accessibility

As the target market highlighted, accessibility has the potential to convince them to buy an active product/service: there must be a wide range of active tourism products and activities which must be available for and accessible by people of different ages, especially families with children, but also people in different physical conditions etc. As the risk could be higher in some of the experiences, strict safety and security measures must be included and highlighted in the communication with the guests.

c.   Mobility Solutions

The target market is aware of the fact that Abruzzo is not conveniently connected or easily reachable; this aspect should be addressed and the inconvenience should be minimized, as it could negatively affect the perceived availability of the products/services. Providing travel solutions and/or directions could tackle this issue.

d.   Sustainability

Sustainability is one of the pillars of active/adventure tourism: travellers want to know that their vacation is not impacting negatively on the destination's environment or society. Therefore, the target market needs to be informed on the initiatives that are in place to ensure that the experiences are environmentally, financially and socially sustainable.

Based on these findings, the RQs and MRQ were answered.

2.8 Conclusion & Recommendations

> *What are the key factors influencing the travel behaviour of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier's potential market?*

The research conducted in this report had the goal to identify which are the most influential aspects for the potential market of an active tourism operator in Abruzzo.

After conducting in-depth literature review, a conceptual framework was proposed which highlighted two main aspects that, together, can lead travellers to engage in an active experience, namely their propensity to engage in the activity and their perceived opportunity to do so. In order to break these two aspects down to individual factors, existing literature was combined with quantitative and qualitative research: to observe the market's perspective, a survey was administered to international travellers, and descriptive analysis was employed to analyze the 264 responses registered; afterwards, two semi-structured interviews were conducted which, after a thematic analysis to process the information, contributed towards gaining industry-specific opinions and expertise.

The information collected was brought together to answer the RQs, which addressed three main topics within the conceptual framework. Thereby, answering the MRQ by means of the following themes:

→ *The key factors influencing the travel behaviour of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier's potential market are:*

1. The market demographics and motivations
A thorough knowledge of the target market that should be addressed is the first step towards being able to understand and anticipate it, since the market's own characteristics are a direct cause for its propensity to engage in a specific travel activity, thus a key factor that directly affects its travel behaviour. The market that holds the highest potential for active tourism suppliers in Abruzzo is aged between 18 and 35: the young age results in plenty of energy and a strong willingness to learn and engage in cultural, educational experiences or even sport activities. These tourists do not usually travel alone; for this reason, they look for activities and experiences that are adventurous but safe enough to be joined by everyone, even young children. They usually take between one and four leisure trips per year and, having grown up in the social media era, their travel is motivated by a desire to live a unique, inspiring experience; anyways, their main priority when booking a trip is finding the best possible deal and saving money on all expenses, and this could be, for them, a convincing factor. They are independent and take upon themselves to organize their travels and book everything online so, if uncertain, they are inclined to favour travel solutions that provide thorough information and more flexibility.

2. A proven great value for money
The perception that the products and services provided by the supplier are of high quality is one of the requirements that are necessary for individuals to sense a real opportunity to engage in a specific behaviour. When it comes to the potential market of an Abruzzo-

based active tourism supplier, this perception is the result of several key factors, all of which therefore influence the travel behaviour of such market: price-friendliness, strong online reputation, and uniqueness. In fact, as saving money is the target market's priority when booking a trip, implementing pricing strategies to make the products/services available to travellers with different spending potentials, such as promotions or discounts, could be the factor that is most effective in incentivizing the purchase of an active/adventure tourism product/service. In addition, the market is both highly exposed and very sensitive to social media content and opinions from friends and family, and these channels play a crucial role especially in the first stages of the travel booking journey; for this reason, for an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier to influence the travel behaviour of its potential target market, it needs to invest in a well-thought online communication which boasts inspiring and captivating videos and photos on different social media platform, and showcases testimonies and positive reviews. The last key aspect that can affect the perceived value for money and influence the market's travel behaviour is by satisfying the travellers' desire for uniqueness, for example with limited-edition experiences or workshops with local artisans.

3. Inclusive, accessible solutions
High-quality active tourism products and services can attract the attention of the target market but, on their own, they cannot influence the travellers' behaviour: the most basic key factors which can influence the travel behaviour of the Abruzzo active/adventure tourism market are those factors which make the product/service available and accessible. Although the market does not always book activities online, the internet is one of the most used means of researching a travel destination: ensuring that tourists are able to get in touch with the products/services even before departing is crucial. Furthermore, to make its products and services physically reachable, the active/adventure tourism supplier needs to address the region's lack of mobility solutions. As observed, one of the most mentioned availability-related factors is the inclusivity of the products/services: an experience is only perceived as available by a traveller if it is safe, suitable and thus inclusive of all potential participants. The last factor to consider, sustainability, is a key requirement for active or adventure tourism: all active/adventure tourism services and products need to be environmentally, financially, and socially sustainable.

The value of the research findings should be exploited by means of recommendations that can be beneficial to the research commissioner, namely an active tourism provider of products/services based in Abruzzo, *Il Bosso*. The recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1: Boost reputation with pricing strategies
As the target market has been proven to be extremely price-sensitive, the researcher recommends the implementation of pricing strategies such as penetration pricing: when trying to introduce a new experience in the existing portfolio or when trying to target a new market (such as the Dutch market), competitive prices will be set in order to build a consistent customer base; afterwards, positive reviews and word of mouth will ensure that the products/services can reach a wider audience. Another pricing strategy that could be implemented is the use of discount codes to be given to travellers who have joined an experience and leave a review: this initiative would ensure that the travellers' positive experiences are shared, more endorsements can be put together for the tour operator to build a strong reputation, and word-of-mouth between friends and family members is incentivized.

Recommendation 2: Use scarcity to build on exclusivity

When talking about factors that could potentially convince them to buy an active/adventure product or service, the target market highlighted the importance of feeling like they are living a unique, one-of-a-kind experience that cannot be done anywhere else. This aspect should be addressed by developing limited-edition experiences: for instance, during the easter period, travellers will be given the opportunity to take part into an exclusive Easter-edition cooking workshop, which will involve a real *Nonna Abruzzese,* who will share the Abruzzo Easter heritage by means of stories and anecdotes, while showing the travellers how to make *pupe* and *cavalli*. These initiatives should focus on cultural, experiential tourism rather than sports-related activities, in order to make them accessible to anyone. They should only be made available for a selected number of days, as scarcity will make the product more exclusive. A social media content creator could be invited, whose testimony and marketing material would spark the market's interest.

Additional recommendations were included in the Concept Proposal.

3. Solution Design

Please see <u>here</u> for the Research Report and Concept Proposal

After setting the context, understanding the problem, and gathering primary and secondary data thus answering the research questions, the researcher was able to create a clear overview of the factors that are most important for active travelers when planning their next holiday.

The researcher was not able to continue along the entrepreneurial path and therefore decided not to establish a new active tourism business in Abruzzo; nevertheless, the researcher developed a solution for the research commissioner*:* the introduction, in the company portfolio, of new experiences that satisfy the conclusions of the research and target all the aspects that can influence the behaviour of the potential target market.

Within the scope of the Company Project Report, this solution will be presented in the form of *Concept Proposal for a new Active Experience in Abruzzo.* This choice was made after both the commissioner and the researcher expressed the willingness to put the research results to use and develop a new concept that can be inserted in the portfolio of the tour operator*.* The experience that the researcher decided to design is called "*Orafo per un giorno",* in English "*Goldsmith for a day".*

To fully describe the concept, the main topics and themes resulting from the research will be used; a number, from 1 to 7, was assigned to each of these aspects as can be seen below:
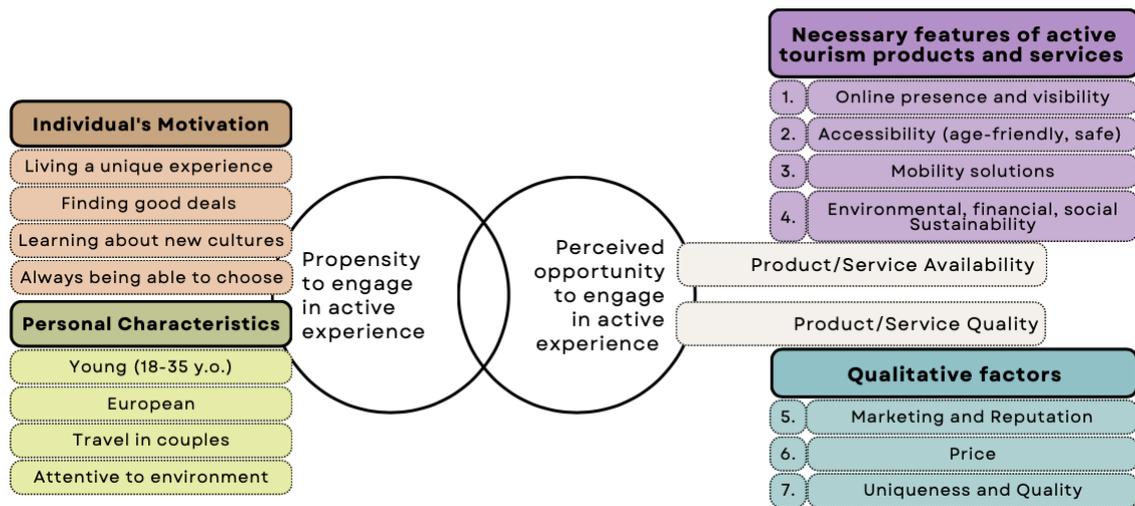

Figure 10: Framework for Concept Development

Concept description "Goldsmith for a day"

The concept that is proposed is a cultural experience where tourists will be given the exclusive opportunity to visit the town of Sulmona and join a workshop at the *Scuola Orafa Sulmonese,* the local goldsmith school, where they will learn about the ancient technique of Abruzzo jewellery making by means of a hands-on experience: guided by the *Maestro Orafo* Mauro Pacella, they will be told the story of an Abruzzese traditional charm, the *Presentosa*, a skillfully crafted pendant made of woven threads of white or yellow gold which is typically given from a man to his soon-to-be wife; afterwards, with the tourist's choice of silver or gold, they will become goldsmiths for a day and create their own jewel, to keep or share with their loved one (Orafi Pacella, 2022; AirBnB, 2022).

This experience will be a unique, authentic tourism product which can only be found in Abruzzo; it will give tourists the opportunity to learn about the local heritage and become a *maestro orafo abruzzese* for a day*.*

Availability (Overarching Principles)

1. Online Presence and Visibility
As it was observed that the internet is still a widely used method to find new information about travel activities, information about this experience will be made available in all online and offline channels: a landing page will be inserted into the tour operator website where this experience is described in detail, in Italian and English, and where captivating pictures and videos will be included with the aim to inspire travellers. In addition, flyers will be distributed to the hotels and other hospitality facilities which currently serve as a touchpoint between the tour operator and its customers. As most travellers prefer booking their experiences locally, being featured on platforms such as AirBnB and TripAdvisor Experiences could be very beneficial (Rappensperger, 2022).

2. Accessibility
As travellers mentioned the need for the activities to be suitable for children as well as adults, this experience will not involve a hard activity (for the categorization of active tourism activities, see here), it will be **available to travellers of all ages and physical conditions**; considering the nature of the activity that will be conducted, to ensure that the experience be inclusive, young travellers or families with children will be given the opportunity to participate in children workshops, where jewels can be made with simpler materials and child-friendly procedures (Surman, 2022). The workshop will be conducted in Italian and English.

3. Mobility Solutions
One of the challenges that Abruzzo has to face is its territorial accessibility and ineffective mobility solutions. This experience will take place in Sulmona, which is a town in the middle of the region, quickly reachable to travellers coming by car from Rome and Naples, and conveniently located less than an hour away from Pescara Airport. Anyways, as Auslander (2022) suggests, effective communication will be extremely important in making travellers feel like Abruzzo is accessible: featured on the experience landing page, there will need to be a detailed, updated description of all means of travelling to Sulmona. In addition, the

tour operator might consider a cooperation with a local provider of sustainable mobility solutions by means of which travellers could book their transportation to Sulmona as an add-on service for the experience.

4. Sustainability

This experience will be developed in a way that is beneficial to all stakeholders involved by addressing the twelve goals for sustainable tourism provided by UNEP (2005) together with WTO: firstly, this experience will be developed as a cooperation between two or more local businesses: this way, *local prosperity* will be maximized, as the travellers' presence on the territory and their spending will be retained locally; in addition, *Il Bosso*'s current *employment quality*, which creates local jobs and invests in local manpower, will be reflected in the hiring and employment process of this experience; *visitor fulfillment* will be reached by providing a safe, satisfying experience which is available to all, without discriminations etc. (ibid). In a more practical sense, whenever transportation will be required by travellers, this service will be outsourced to a company which makes use of electric vehicles.

Quality

5. Marketing and Reputation

Several initiatives and strategies can be implemented in order to ensure that travellers who read or hear about this experience are inspired by it and are therefore influenced to engage in it. For example, the launch of this new experience will be announced, via email, to all previous customers, who are most likely not only to buy it, but also promote it to their own networks (McCormick, 2022). During the pilot testing some of the most loyal customers and local influencers will be invited to join the launch of the experience by participating at no cost: in this occasion, a content creator will be present to take photos and make videos that will be used on the experience landing page, on social media platforms (such as Instagram and TikTok) and on advertisement material.

6. Price

The experience proposed cannot be considered a "cheap" experience, as its selling price needs to include 4-5 hours of instructed workshop time, all the materials and tools needed, together with locally grown snacks (AirBnB, 2022). Several strategies will therefore be implemented in order to address the travellers' no.1 priority when planning a trip: firstly, penetration pricing will be employed and the experience will be sold at a "discounted price" in order to build a strong initial interest in the product; then, with a market that relies heavily on opinions and recommendations from friends and family, referral discounts might be an effective strategy to address price-sensitivity, while incentivizing word-of-mouth marketing (Inside Marketing, 2022).

7. Uniqueness and Quality

From the information available online, it seems that this experience is currently not offered by any tour operators. The uniqueness of this experience lies in the fact that the *Presentosa* is a traditional piece of craftsmanship that is unique to the Abruzzo territory:

actively learning about this jewel's history and the historical significance it holds from a true Abruzzese artisan, while creating a lifelong memory and crafting a small jewel is an exclusive experience that cannot be done anywhere else. To ensure the feasibility and dedicated attention to each participant, the experience will be suitable for couples or small groups of people, up to 8: smaller groups will ensure that the experience is able to connect like-minded travellers without giving the impression of a tourist attraction (AirBnB, 2022). Lastly, some limited-edition, exclusive versions of this experience will be created and sold: for instance, during the Easter week, travellers will have the opportunity to combine this experience with the *Madonna Che Scappa (Runaway Madonna)* ceremony, an Easter ritual which has been taking place on each Easter Sunday for more than 800 years (Italian Ways, 2016).

4. Intervention/Implementation

The implementation of this concept, namely the implementation of the *Goldsmith for a Day* experience, is a relatively complex process, due to the many aspects that need to be considered and the stakeholders involved.

In order to develop a thorough action plan which clearly describes the steps required before the solution can be implemented, a combination between the tool from Business MakeOver (2022) *and the Model for the Development of Innovative Tourism Products* by Custódio Santos et al (2020) was used, so the following steps were defined:

STEP	DESCRIPTION	ACTIONED?	RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS
1	Design and describe the concept: the solution should be defined and the reasoning behind it should be explained.	Yes (Chapter 3)	Researcher, Tour Operator
2	Describe the actions that have to be taken: divide the implementation into specific actions, based on the business units involved.	Yes (see below)	Researcher, Tour Operator
3	Determine the critical moments by marking the actions that have the biggest impact on the company and stakeholders.	Yes (see below)	Researcher, Tour Operator
4	Conduct an evaluation of the concept and its feasibility.	To be completed	Researcher, Tour Operator, Partners
5	Development: schedule and perform the actions defined in step 2 until completion. Conduct a pilot test.	To be completed	(Researcher), Commissioner, Partners, Suppliers, Prospect customers
6	Introduction: Insert concept in the portfolio and share it on all relevant channels/POS defined in step 1 and step 4.	To be completed	Commissioner, Partners, Suppliers, Customers
7.	Evaluation of final result: the success of the experience is evaluated based on different criteria (Chapter 5).	To be completed	(Researcher), Commissioner

(Business Makeover, 2022; Custódio Santos et al, 2020).

Step 1: Firstly, the underline solution was defined by the researcher, based on the research results and recommendations, together with the feedback received from the tour operator that commissioned the project, *Il Bosso.*

Step 2 and 3: The implementation was subdivided into specific actions, relative to the different business units or stakeholders involved (people, processes, technology etc.), the actions were assigned to the relevant person within the company and the critical moments were highlighted, as can be seen below:

implementation plan

name Lucia Del Rosario

Business idea Creating and implementing the experience "Goldsmith for a day" in the activities portfolio of Il Bosso

	Actions	Critical	Responsible	~~Deadline~~
People	Schedule a training session/course for the Il Bosso staff with goldsmith Mauro Pacella	YES	Claudia Castricone (Training planning manager)	
	Communicate concept to current partners (staff from local hotels…)	YES	Paolo Setta (director for tourism promotion)	
Processes	Make a menthly/yearly schedule for the experiences			
	Define cooperation details and processes with Scuola Orafa Sulmonese	YES	Cristian Moscone (Legal representative)	
	Organize processes for private bookings or special requests		Alessia Fiamma (Coordinator for planning and environmental consultancy)	
Technology	Create landing page and build connection with all relevant POS	YES	Mirco di Profio (Responsible for multimedia)	
Partners	Contact local provider of sustainable mobility solutions to define transportation options		Alessia Fiamma (Coordinator for planning and environmental consultancy)	
	Contact national/international travel magazines to publish article and feature experience		Paolo Setta (director for tourism promotion) + Mirco di Profio (Responsible for multimedia)	
Knowledge or materials	Define necessary safety/security measures for participants	YES	Cristian Moscone (Legal representative) + ~~Alessia Fiamma (Coordinator for planning and environmental consultancy)~~	
	Define necessary means to secure intellectual property of idea		Cristian Moscone (Legal representative)	
Marketing or sales	Define and share communication for launch of experience (email content, flyer design…)	YES	Mirco di Profio (Responsible for multimedia)	
	Develop limited-edition versions of this experience (e.g. Easter)			
	Use content from pilot testing to create social media material (TikTok, Instagram etc.)		Mirco di Profio (Responsible for multimedia)	

date 29/09/2022

Figure 11: Implementation Plan

(Business Makeover, 2022; Custódio Santos et al, 2020; Il Bosso, 2022b)

The next step, step no.4, will consist in a meeting between the researcher and the relevant departments from *Il Bosso*, where all elements of the proposal will be thoroughly reviewed, and a selection will be made between the elements that are going to be further developed and those that are not feasible/viable. Afterwards, all remaining steps will be completed until the experience *Goldsmith for a Day* will become part of the active tourism activities offered in Abruzzo.

5. Evaluation

As can be observed in <u>Chapter 4</u>, in the implementation plan derived from the combination of the Business Makeover (2022) tool and the model developed by Custódio Santos et al (2020), the evaluation stage is conducted twice:

The first evaluation moment takes place in step 4 as a preliminary evaluation including a rapid appraisal of the project's technical, financial, legal, and market aspects (ibid). In this phase, all the elements included in the experience are reviewed by the researcher together with the tour operator and the partners involved. This step is necessary before the concept can be taken to the development phase and all the implementation actions are scheduled.

The second evaluation moment takes place after the solution, namely the *Goldsmith for a Day* experience has been launched, customers have taken part into this activity, and feedback by all involved stakeholders has been collected. The main goal of this second evaluation is understanding:

- Whether the solution proposed has targeted the potential market that had been identified in the analysis of the research results.
- Whether the design and actual implementation of this experience has resulted in a perceived availability and quality of the concept, thus resulting in the travellers' perception of opportunity to engage in the activity.

To address the first objective, it will be necessary to analyze the characteristics of travellers who will take part into the experience by means of a short survey or observation (Grenier, 2022). The aspects that will be investigated are all those aspects which can be compared to the previous research findings, namely the travellers' demographics, their travel profile and their usual trip planning and organization habits.

To evaluate whether the proposed concept is perceived as available and high-quality, after their participation in the experience, travellers will need to be asked specific questions regarding all qualitative factors (marketing and reputation, price, uniqueness and quality) and overarching principles (online presence and visibility, accessibility, mobility solutions, sustainability). This could be done in the form of transactional emails or customer surveys (Vardhan, 2022). Some of the KPIs that will be analyzed to evaluate this aspect are:

- The Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT), to indicate the participants' level of satisfaction.
- The Customer Effort Score (CES), which can be measured by asking the travellers' to rate their engagement with the business (from 1 to 7, for example), and will indicate how much effort is required of the customer to book an activity (thus rating the information accessibility).
- The Net Promoter Score (NPS), which will measure how likely the travellers are to recommend the experience to friends/family (Userpilot, 2022).

Finally, to evaluate the success of the *Goldsmith for a Day* experience on a more business-oriented level, the KPIs already in place at *Il Bosso* will be used, in order to be able to compare this experience's performance to the portfolio average.

6. Stakeholders & Dissemination

By conducting bachelor-level research and writing the *Company Project Report,* thus completing the LYCar course at Hotelschool The Hague, extensive knowledge was gained especially regarding the topic at hand, namely Active/Adventure Tourism in Abruzzo.

The key stakeholders for this project were identified as follows, based on their power to affect my project and their interest:

Stakeholder Analysis

Keep Satisfied • Survey respondents (international travellers)	**Manage Closely** • LYCar Coach • Interviews respondents (industry experts)
Monitor (minimum effort) • Industry • Market	**Keep Informed** • LYCar Commissioner

POWER: HIGH / LOW — INTEREST: LOW / HIGH
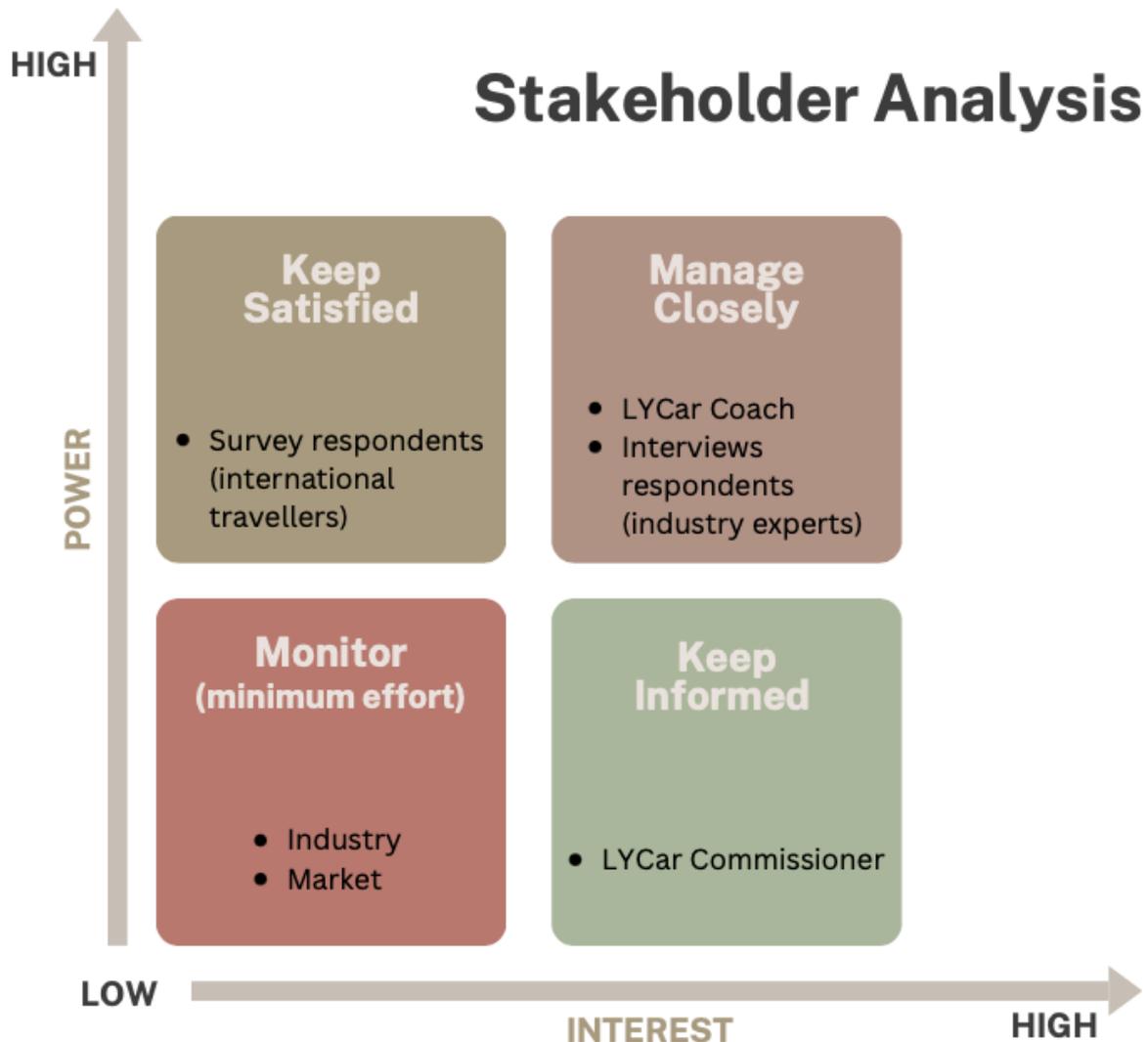
Figure 12: Stakeholder Analysis

The **survey respondents,** international travellers who shared their opinion on active tourism in Abruzzo, can be considered of high power since their answers highly affected the results of my research, while their interest in knowing the research results is low. For this reason, and considering that, due to data ethics concerns, their email addresses were not requested, there won't be an act of dissemination with this stakeholder.

In addition, both the **industry** and the **market**, have relatively low power to influence my projects and are also not intrinsically interested to know the results. Therefore, although the project and research results will be made available online, for these two stakeholders there also won't be a specific act of dissemination.

Although the **research commissioner** does not have much power to affect the project, they have had a very high interest in the project from the very beginning, since they expressed their interest in finding out more regarding the research topic. Additionally, it can be said that both the **LYCar coach**, Dr. Lim, and the **industry experts** who participated in the interviews, hold a relatively high power when it comes to this project; their interest in the report and the knowledge generated is also high.

The dissemination of this report and the knowledge it entails will take place during the LYCar Defense; anyways, additional acts of dissemination took place or will take place, to ensure that the relevant stakeholders defined above can receive and benefit from the content of this report and the additional knowledge that was generated on the research topic.

For example, on September 29th, an **online presentation** was conducted with the LYCar commissioner and one of the two industry experts who participated in the interviews.

In addition, all involved stakeholders will receive, if possible, the **research report and concept proposal** where the main findings and conclusions of the research are represented in a more engaging and eye-catching format, by means of infographics. Additionally, a copy will be sent to anyone who shows interest in the topic or expresses the wish to read about the research process.

7. Client Evaluation of Deliverable

The research findings shared with the commissioner by means of presenting the research report and an <u>infographic</u>.

The feedback was given via the <u>Client Evaluation Form</u>, which was received and then implemented into the final report.

The client was positively surprised with the way the research was conducted and the results were analyzed. He appreciated the layout of the research report and the contents included in the presentation, together with the design chosen. One point of improvement he gave was to include more numerical data in the infographics, as these would give more credibility to the findings I was sharing

After the presentation, he expressed his satisfaction in the recommendations given, and mentioned that the research results are perfectly in line with his expectations.

At the end of the meeting, he mentioned "I hope that talents like you will stay in Abruzzo and contribute to the success of our beautiful region. Good luck with your graduation, Lucia. As soon as you are done, please come and pay us a visit at our office. I am sure you can be a great asset for us, and I also think that we might represent an opportunity for you".

8. Academic Reflection

The main objective of this research was to answer the MRQ, "*What are the key factors influencing the travel behaviour of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier's potential market?*" thus generating additional knowledge on the topic of Active/Adventure tourism within the Abruzzo regional scope; the final product for the commissioner was a market research report; the solution chosen in order to address the themes resulting from the research was the development of a new active experience, namely *Goldsmith for a Day*, which would be integrated into the commissioner's portfolio.

In addition to the initial reflection on the research points of improvement presented in the limitations chapter, relevant points for reflection were:

Despite being a very interesting topic, active/adventure tourism is still a relatively unknown field, which does not facilitate research in this topic: an example of the challenges that were faced, as mentioned in the limitations, is the fact that, in some sources the terms *active tourism* and *adventure tourism* were used to refer to the same concept, while in other instances a clear distinction was made.

Another challenge that was faced during the phases of preliminary research and literature review was the scarcity in recent, relevant data with regards to tourism within the Abruzzo scope: the region's underdeveloped tourism sector seems to be both the cause and the consequence for the systematic lack of valuable information. The hope is certainly that this paper will contribute to reverse this trend.

Among others, time-related constraints were certainly a factor that conditioned the development of this process and report: despite having acknowledged the extensive time and resources that would be necessary in order to conduct research by means of a mixed-method approach, the extent to which these factors could affect the researcher's further decisions was underestimated. For example, the time required to transcribe, translate, and analyze the interviews was significantly more than expected.

8.1 Implications for Future Research

As previously mentioned, in the field of active and adventure tourism there is plenty of room for new knowledge; therefore, future research could be extremely beneficial to the industry. Based on the research presented in this report, an interesting path to follow in future research could be conducting the same or a similar market research wile defining specific targets for the population. Furthermore, one of the main recommendations regarding the survey data analysis would be to conduct an SPSS correlation analysis, which would provide more insights into how the themes are connected. This would ensure higher reliability and validity. With regards to future industry research on this topic, an interesting topical path would be understanding how the Regione Abruzzo can improve its tourism offerings by addressing the aspects of mobility, accessibility and visibility.

9. Appendices

9.1 Survey

Figure 13: Survey Design

Scanno Lake, Abruzzo
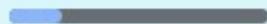
Avanti   Pagina 1 di 5   Cancella modulo

Abruzzo Adventure Travel Research

Travel Profile

The purpose of this section is to analyze your travel preferences.

Over the 5 years before covid-19, on average how many leisure trips per year did you take? *

○ <1 (less than one)

○ 1-2

○ 3-4

○ 5-6

○ >6 (more than 6)

Have you already traveled to Italy for leisure? *

○ Yes

○ No

Have you already visited Abruzzo for leisure? *

○ Yes

○ No

Please indicate the type of travel that best describes your preference *

○ Adventure tourism, active tourism, sports tourism

○ Ecotourism, nature tourism

○ Culture tourism, educational tourism, food tourism

○ Business leisure, city tourism

○ Altro: _____

The Adventure Travel Trade Association defines adventure travel as any tourist *
activity including at least two of the following components: a physical activity, a
cultural exchange or interaction, and engagement with nature. Have you, in the
last five years, engaged in a trip that falls under this definition?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Not sure

How likely is it that you will engage in one or more active/adventure trip(s) in the *
next year?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unlikely	○	○	○	○	○	Very Likely

How likely is it that you will include one or more active/adventure elements (such *
as hiking, trekking, biking etc.) in your next trip?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unlikely	○	○	○	○	○	Very likely

Which of the following activities would you consider including in your next trip? *

☐ Archaeological expedition/Research expedition

☐ Attending local festival/fairs

☐ Backpacking/Orienteering/Walking tours

☐ Birdwatching

☐ Camping

☐ Canoeing/Kayaking/Rafting

☐ Caving

☐ Climbing (mountain/rock/ice)

☐ Cultural activities/Getting to know locals

☐ Fishing

☐ Hiking/Trekking

☐ Horseback riding

☐ Learning a new language

☐ Sailing/Surfing

☐ Scuba diving/Snorkelling

☐ Skiing/Snowboarding

☐ Visiting historical sites

☐ Altro: _____
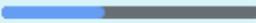
Indietro   Avanti   ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ Pagina 2 di 5   Cancella modulo

Abruzzo Adventure Travel Research

Trip Planning and Organization

In the next section you will be asked questions regarding your habits when planning a trip.

Who is typically in charge of organizing your trips? *

○ I organize them myself, or I delegate a friend/family member

○ A tour operator in my home country

○ A tour operator in the destination country

○ Altro: _____

When do you usually book your travel? *

○ Less than one week before the trip date

○ Between one and two weeks before the trip date

○ Before two weeks and a month before the trip date

○ More than a month before the trip date

○ Altro: _____

How do you usually first get acquainted with your travel destination? *

- [ ] Online Advertisement
- [ ] Social Media
- [ ] Friends and Family
- [ ] Travel Agents and/or Tour Operators
- [ ] Articles in Newspapers or Magazines
- [ ] Travel Catalogues
- [ ] Travel Guidebooks
- [ ] Posters
- [ ] TV Advertisement
- [ ] Altro: _____

How do you usually find additional information about your travel destination? *

- [ ] Online Research
- [ ] Social Media
- [ ] Friends and Family
- [ ] Travel Agents and/or Tour Operators
- [ ] Articles in Newspapers or Magazines
- [ ] Travel Catalogues
- [ ] Travel Guidebooks
- [ ] Documentaries/Movies
- [ ] Altro: _____

Where do you usually book your trip? *

- [ ] On the internet
- [ ] I employ a travel agent and/or tour operator
- [ ] I make use of both methods
- [ ] Altro: _____

Please complete the following sentence: "When I plan for my next trip..." *

○ I always make sure to include an active/adventure element (sports, planned physical activity etc.)

○ I sometimes include an active/adventure element

○ I don't feel the need to include an active/adventure element

Please complete the following sentence: "When I plan for my next trip..." *

○ I usually plan and book my activities before traveling

○ I usually plan my activities before traveling, but I book them once I'm on vacation

○ I do not plan my activities beforehand; I plan and book them while I am on vacation

○ Altro: _____

Please complete the next sentence: "When I plan for my next trip, my no.1 priority *
is..."

○ Finding the best deals and saving money on my flight/accommodation/activities

○ Ensuring that every aspect of my trip (flight/accommodation/activities) is booked before I travel

○ Avoiding any possible stress resulting from the organization of my trip

○ Altro: _____

Abruzzo Adventure Travel Research

Concept Development

The following section seeks to identify opportunities for the development of an active/adventure tourism project in Abruzzo.

How important would the implementation of advanced technologies (such as chat bots, AI and an app) be in convincing you to buy an active/adventure tourism package for your next trip?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely important

How important would the availability of promotions and discounted packages be in convincing you to buy an active/adventure tourism package for your next trip?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely important

How important would the presence of strict safety and security measures be in convincing you to buy an active/adventure tourism package for your next trip?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely important

How important would receiving a tailor-made, all-inclusive service be in convincing you to buy an active/adventure tourism package for your next trip?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely important

What other aspect(s) could play an important role in convincing you to buy an active/adventure tourism package for your next trip?

La tua risposta

What additional feedback do you have regarding the idea of developing an active/adventure tourism concept in Abruzzo? Be honest, I love feedback

La tua risposta

What budget would you set aside for a 7-days long adventure trip in Abruzzo (INCLUDING all accomodation, transport, sport/cultural activities etc and EXCLUDING flights to/from the meeting location, travel insurance, visa, some meals, and personal spending)?

○ Less than 500 euros

○ 500-750 euros

○ 750-1000 euros

○ More than 1000 euros

○ Altro: _____
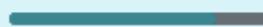
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Abruzzo Adventure Travel Research

Demographic

Finally, in this last section, I will try to get to know you better.

1. What is your age? *

- ⃝ 18-25
- ⃝ 26-35
- ⃝ 36-45
- ⃝ 46-55
- ⃝ 56+

2. What is your gender?

- ⃝ Male
- ⃝ Female
- ⃝ Prefer not to say
- ⃝ Altro: _____

3. What is your nationality? *

La tua risposta

4. Where do you currently live? *

◯ North America

◯ South America

◯ Europe

◯ Asia

◯ Central America/Caribbean

◯ Pacific

◯ Africa

◯ Polar

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9.2 Survey Results

9.2.1   Demographic
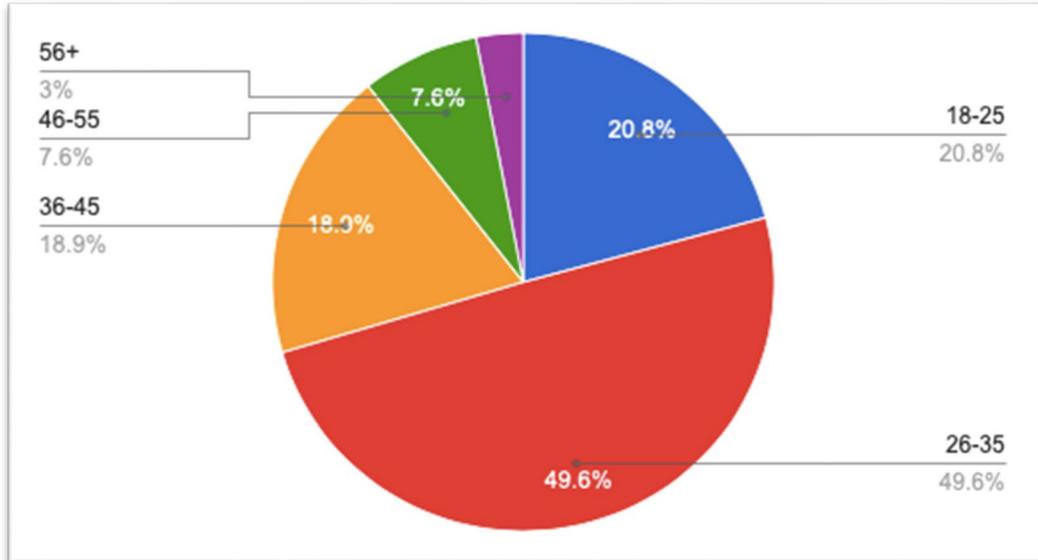
Figure 14: Respondents' Age

Almost 50% of all respondents (49,6%, 127 respondents) belong to the 26-35 age group, followed by respondents aged 18-25 (20,8%, 55 respondents) and those aged 36-45 (adding up to 18,9%, 50 participants). The remaining 10,6% of respondents is 46 years old or older (28 respondents).

Figure 15: Respondents' Nationality

Out of 264 respondents, the majority is Italian (44 respondents, about 17,05% of the total number of participants); in addition, there is a significant number of:

- American respondents (24 respondents, about 9,30%);
- Danish participants (18 respondents, 6,98%);
- British participants (17 respondents, 6,59%);
- German respondents (15 respondents, 5,81%);
- Romanian respondents (12 respondents, 4,65%).

The total number of nationalities represented is 53; some answers, such as "white", "European" or "prefer not to say", were not included in the calculation as they were not valid values. In addition, it should be noted that, before representing the results of this question in a graph and analyzing them, the steps of **data cleaning** and **data validation** took place: inconsistencies among the answers were detected and removed (e.g., answers such as *Italy, Italia, Italiana* etc. became "Italian").

Q: Where do you currently live?
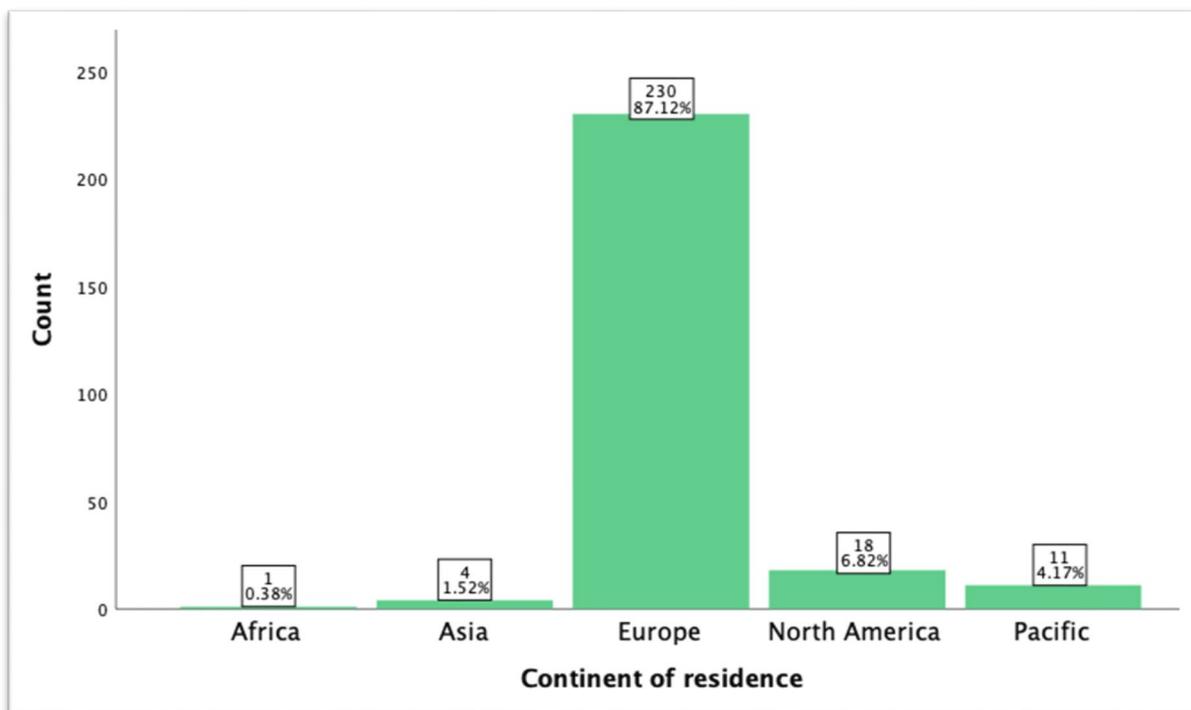
Figure 16: Respondents' Continent of Residence

In line with the previous findings, it was observed that 230 respondents currently reside in Europe, representing 87,12% of all survey participants; few participants are residents of North America (18), Pacific (11), Asia (4) and Africa (1).
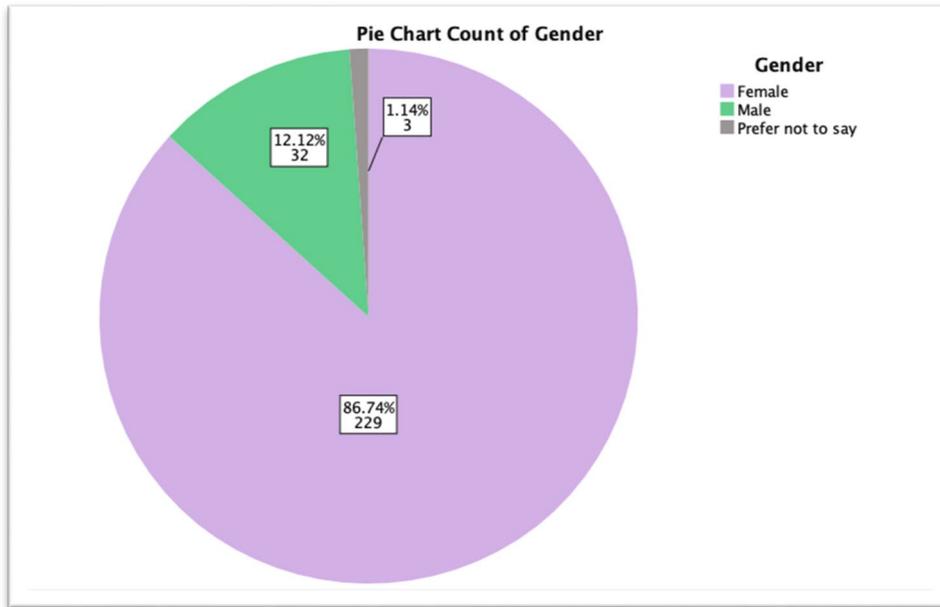
Figure 17: Respondents' Gender

229 out of 264 respondents are female, representing 86,74% of all participants, while 32 respondents (12,12%) are male. A tiny fraction of all respondents accounting for 1,14% of the total, preferred not to specify their gender.

9.2.2   Travel Profile

Q: Over the 5 years before covid-19, on average how many leisure trips per year did you take?
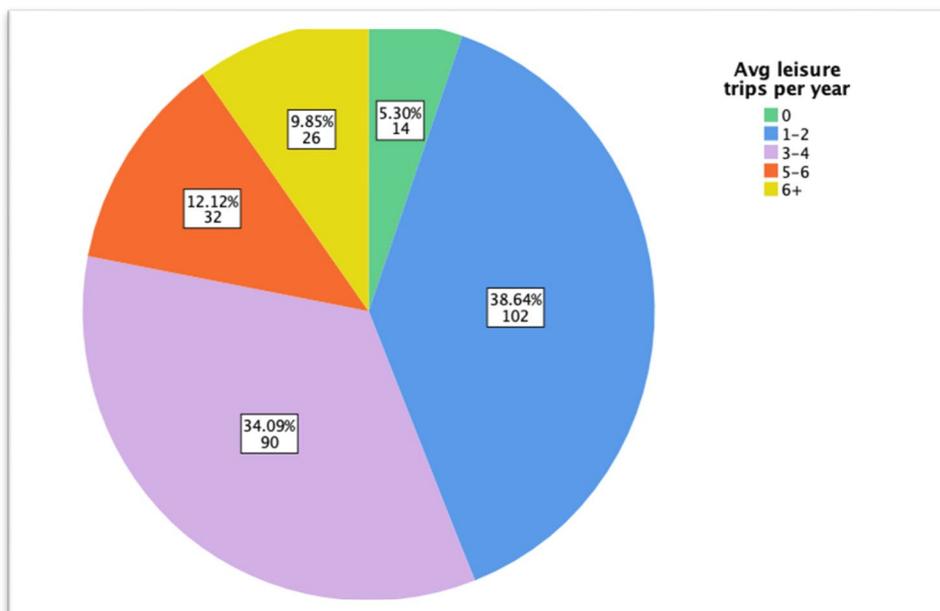
Figure 18: Average leisure trips taken per year

For this question, the respondents were asked to consider the years before the pandemic, as Covid-19 disrupted national and international travels and highly affected the habits of travellers.

About 40% (38.64%) of respondents mentioned that in a normal year they usually take between one and two trips; 34.09% of respondents usually take three or four trips per year, while 58 out of 264 respondents are used to travelling more than five times yearly (12.12% of all answers was "5-6", while 9.85% was "6+"). Only 5.3% of all respondents mentioned that, regardless of Covid-19, they are not used to traveling.

Q: Have you ever traveled to Italy for leisure?
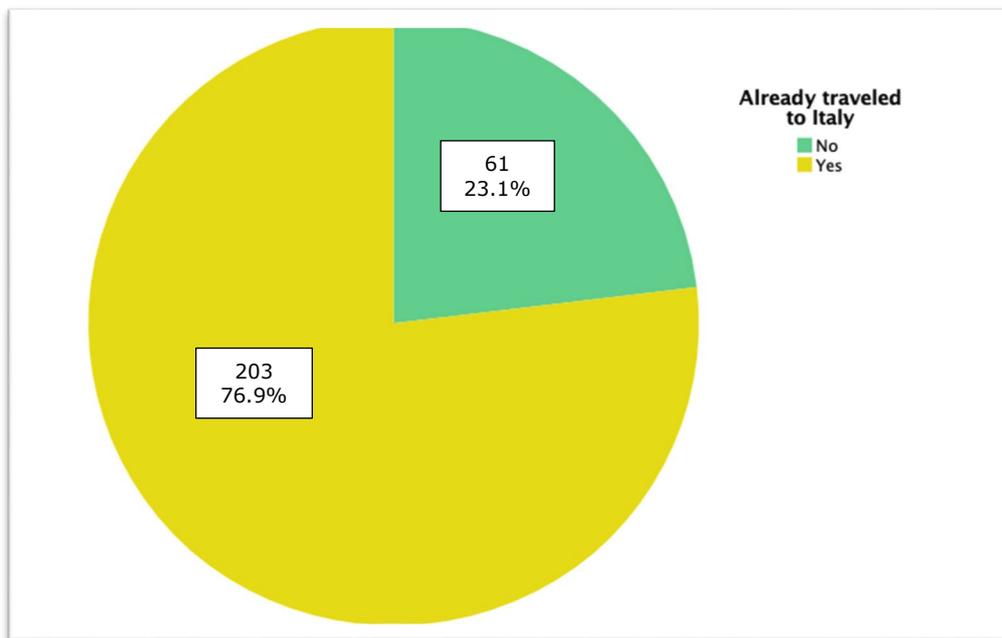
Figure 19: Respondents' past travels to Italy

As can be seen above about two thirds of all respondents (203 out of 264, accounting for 76.9% of the total) have already engaged in a leisure trip in Italy. The remaining 61 respondents (23.1% of the total) have never been to Italy for leisure.

Q: Have you ever visited Abruzzo for leisure?
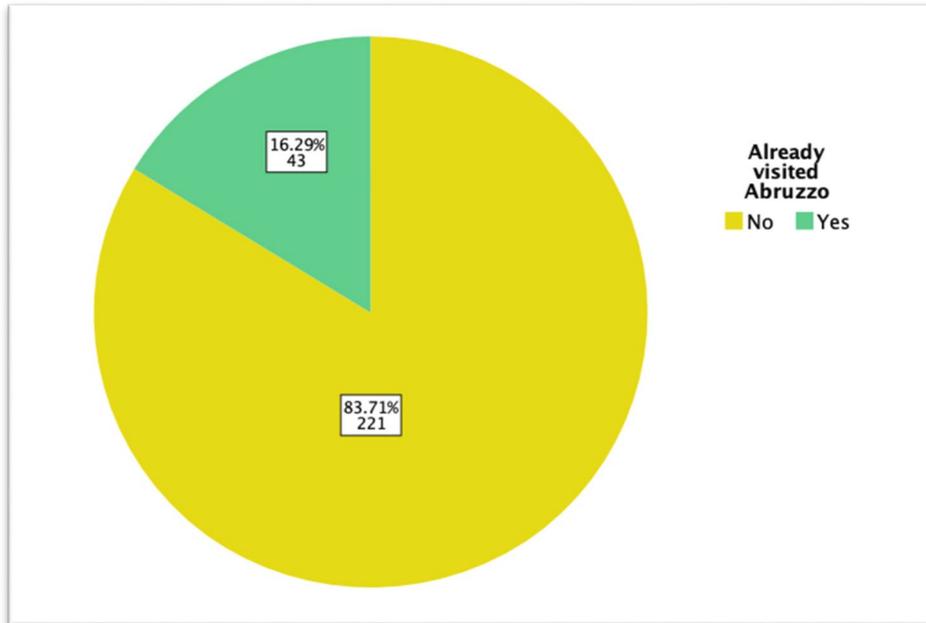
Figure 20: Respondents' past travels to Abruzzo

Contrary to the results about Italy, most respondents (83.71%, 221 respondents) have never visited Abruzzo for leisure; only 43 out of all respondents (16.29%) has already been on a leisure trip to Abruzzo. This result is in fact not surprising and actually in line with the expectations: most respondents belong to age groups 26-35 and 36-45, the same age groups that have visited Abruzzo the least in the past.

Q: Please indicate the type of travel that best describes your preference
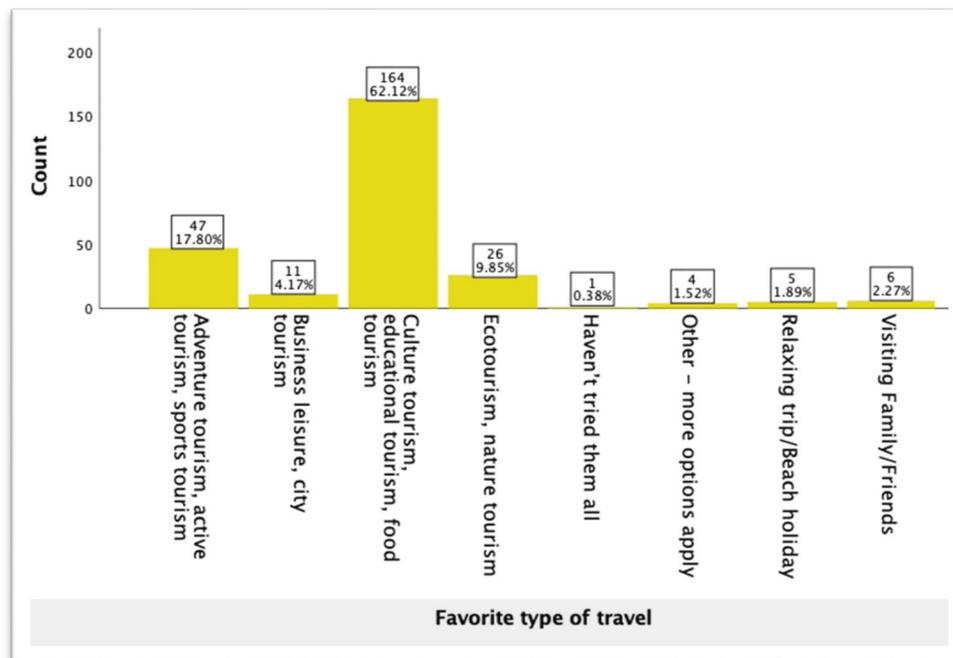
Figure 21: Respondents' favourite type of travel

The type of travel that is preferred by 62.12% of all respondents (164 participants), is *Culture tourism, educational tourism, food tourism*; the second and third most preferred types of travel among respondents were *Adventure tourism, active tourism, sports tourism,* and *Ecotourism, nature tourism* which were chosen respectively by 17.80% and 9,85% of the population (47 respondents, and 26 respondents). *Business leisure, city tourism* was chosen as preferred type of travel by 11 respondents.

Please note: before analysing the data, the answers that were manually inserted in the "*Other"* section were manually reviewed and were organized into additional categories e.g., *Family visit, family, visiting a friend* etc. were included under the category "Visiting Family/Friends" and *Beach - lazy - reading & eating, Relax, Beach* etc. were included under the category "Relaxing trip/Beach holiday".

Q: The Adventure Travel Trade Association defines adventure travel as any tourist activity including at least two of the following components: a physical activity, a cultural exchange or interaction, and engagement with nature. Have you, in the last five years, engaged in a trip that falls under this definition?
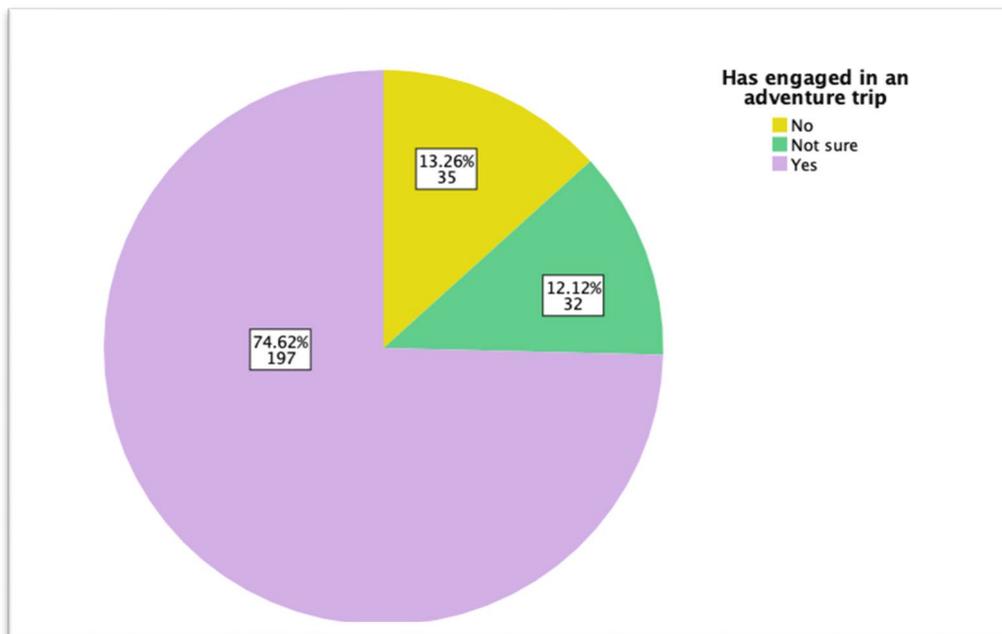
Figure 22: Respondents' past active/adventure trips

On the one hand, 74.62% of respondents believe that they have already engaged at least once during their lifetime in a trip that falls under the definition of *adventure travel* provided by the Adventure Travel Trade Association. On the other hand, 35 out of 264 respondents have never been on an adventure trip, while 32 respondents are not sure.

In questions analysing likelihood, numerical values were assigned to the responses as follows: Very unlikely → 1; Unlikely → 2; Neutral → 3; Likely → 4; Very Likely → 5.
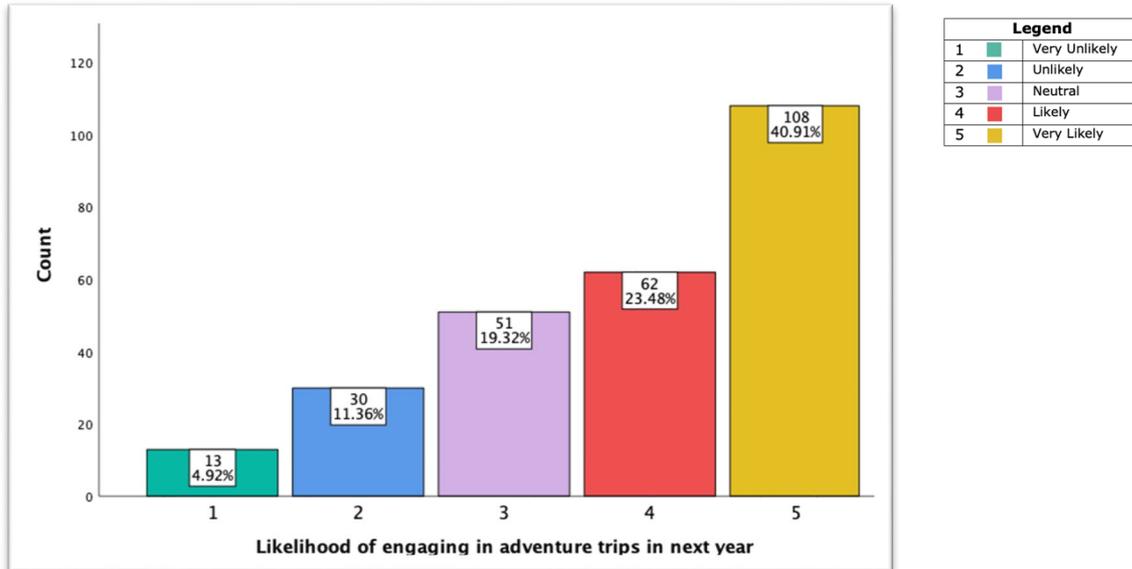
Figure 23: Likelihood of engaging in adventure trips

In line with the results to the previous question, 170 respondents mentioned that, in the next year, they are likely (23.48%, 62 respondents) or very likely (40.91%, 108 respondents) to engage in one or more adventure trip(s). 43 respondents do not believe that they will engage in an adventure trip over the next year, and 51 said they are neutral.

Q: How likely is it that you will include one or more active/adventure elements (such as hiking, trekking, biking etc.) in your next trip?
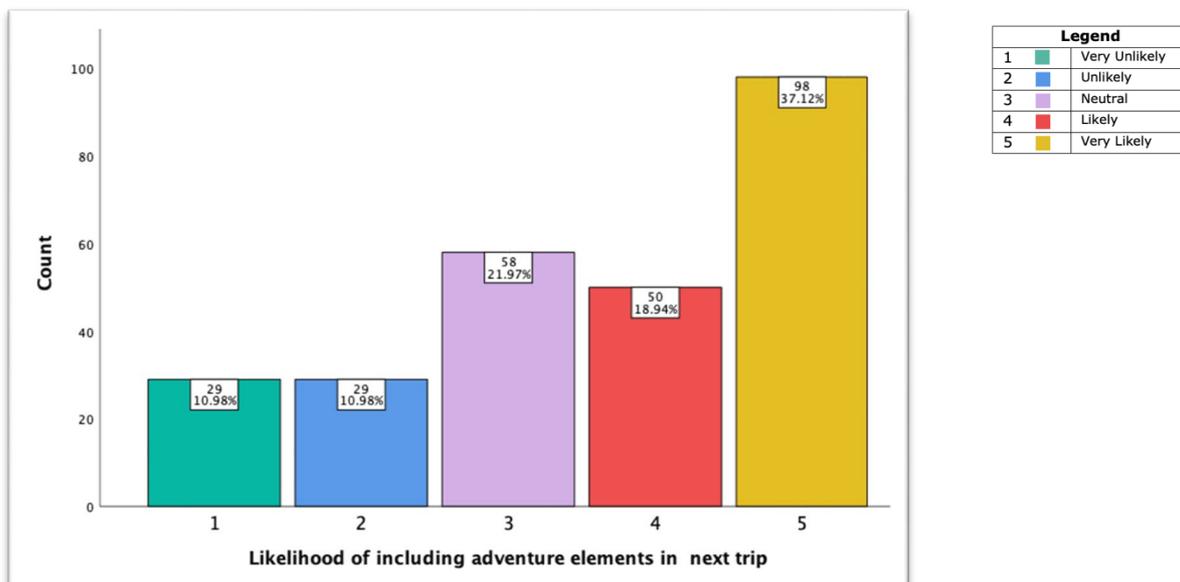
Figure 24: Likelihood of including adventure element in next trip

Although most respondents believe that they will engage in an adventure trip within the next year (see previous question), when asked whether they believe they will include an active/adventure element in their next trip, 58 respondents (21.96%) said that they are either very unlikely or unlikely to do so; 58 respondents selected "neutral" as their answer. On the contrary, 18.94% of respondents are likely to include an active/adventure element in the next trip, and the biggest share of respondents (98, 37.12%) is very likely to do so.

Q: Which of the following activities would you consider including in your next trip?
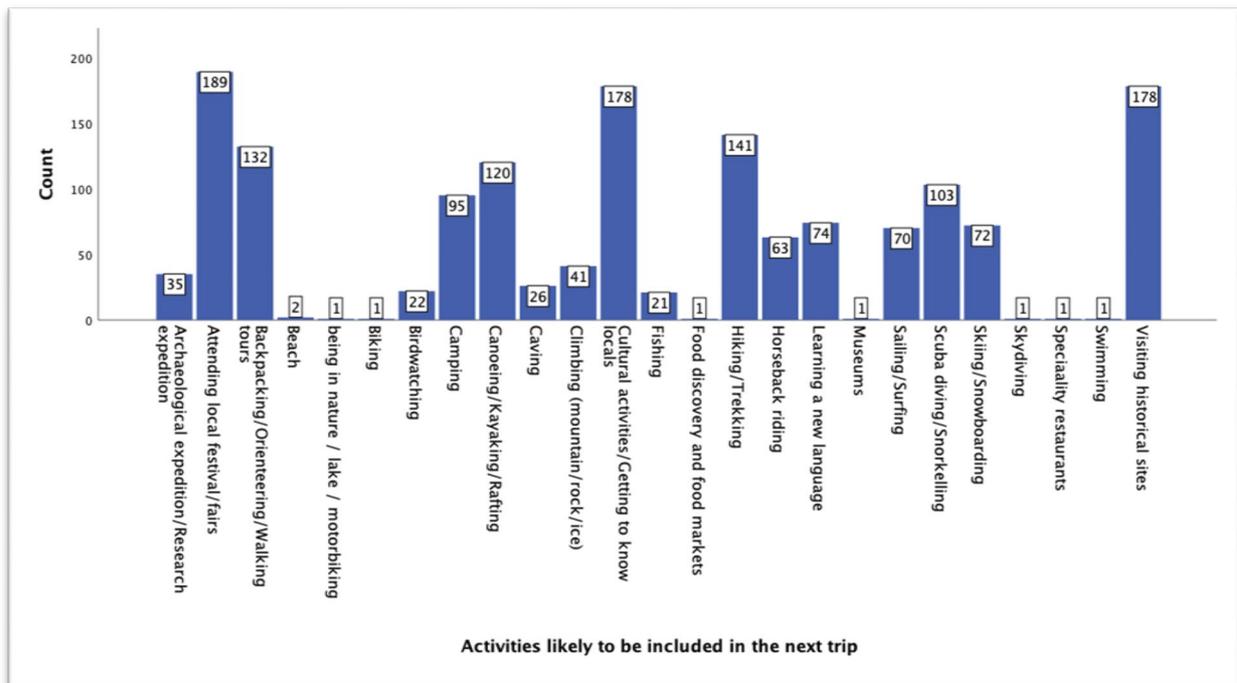
Figure 25: Activities likely to be included in the trip

When the respondents were asked to choose the activities that they would consider including in their next trip, the most popular activity was *attending local festival/fairs*, which was selected 189 times; in second place there are *cultural activities/getting to know locals* and *visiting historical sites* (both received 178 votes). Other activities that were selected by many respondents are, in order: *hiking/trekking* (141 votes), *backpacking/orienteering/walking tours* (132 votes), *canoeing/kayaking/rafting* (120 votes), *scuba diving/snorkeling* (103 votes), *camping* (95 votes), *learning a new language* (74 votes), *skiing/snowboarding* (72 votes), and *sailing/surfing* (70 votes).

9.2.3   Trip Planning and Organization

Q: Who is typically in charge of organizing your trips?
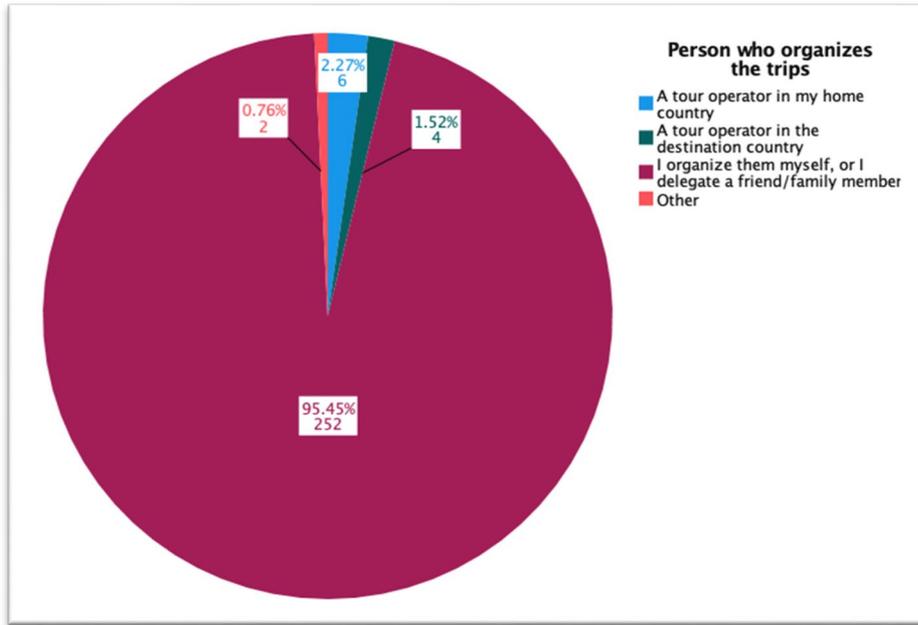
Figure 26: Person in charge of organizing trips

From the answers to this question, it can be observed that, in most cases, the organization of trips is done independently: The almost entirety of respondents (95.45%, 252 respondents) organizes their vacation themselves, or delegate an acquaintance (friend or family member). Only 10 respondents make use of a tour operator in their home country (6 respondents, 2.27%) or in the destination country (4 participants, 1.52%).
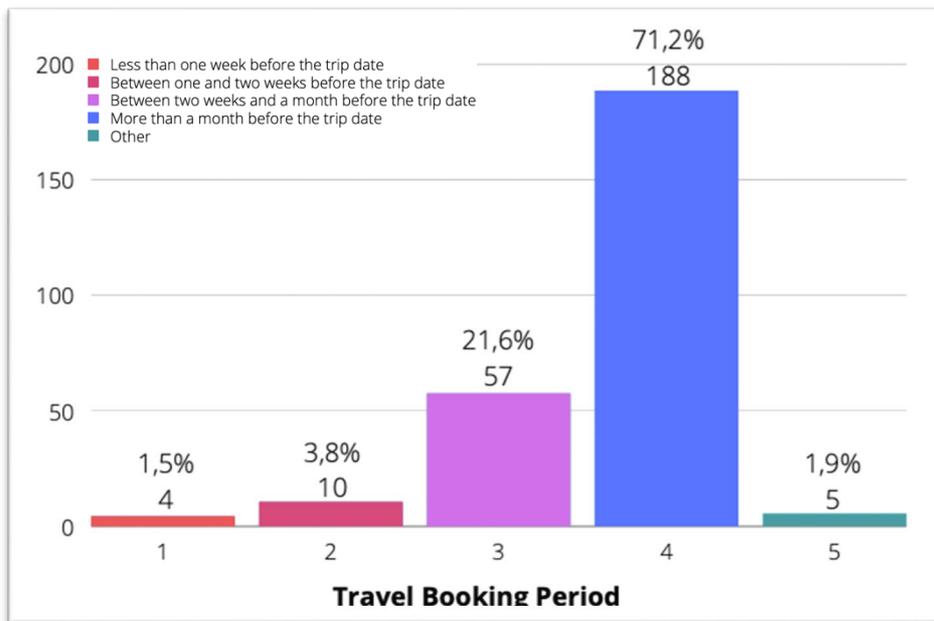
Figure 27: Travel booking period

71.2% of respondents prefer to plan their trip in advance and book their travels more than a month before they depart. About a fifth of respondents (21.6%, 57 respondents) proceeds to book their vacation two weeks to a month prior to the trip date; a small percentage of travellers book their trip between one and two weeks before the trip date (3.8%) and only 1.5% of respondents book last minute (one week or less in advance).

Q: How do you usually first get acquainted with your travel destination?
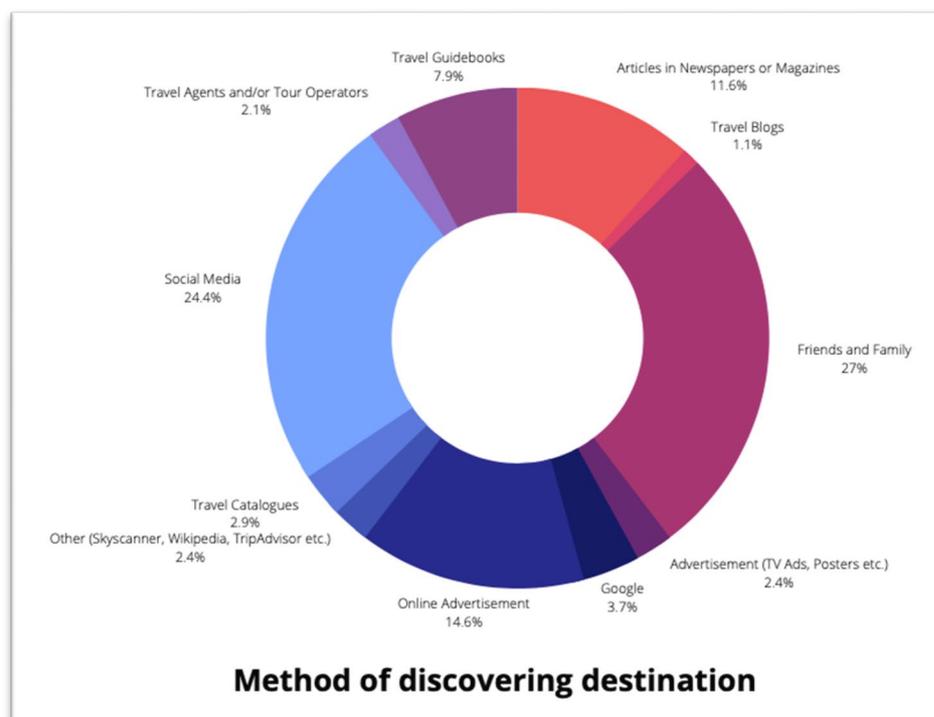
Figure 28: Method of discovering destination

Most respondents are usually introduced to their travel destination thanks to *friends and family* (27%) or by discovering it on *social media* (24.4%). *Online advertisement* (14.6%) or *articles in newspapers or magazines* (11.6%) are also effective means of bringing attention to a destination, since these were the methods used, respectively, by 91 and 72 respondents. 7.9% of respondents first get acquainted with their travel destination by means of *travel guidebooks*, while surprisingly enough, *Google* was chosen only 23 times.

Q: How do you usually find additional information about your travel destination?
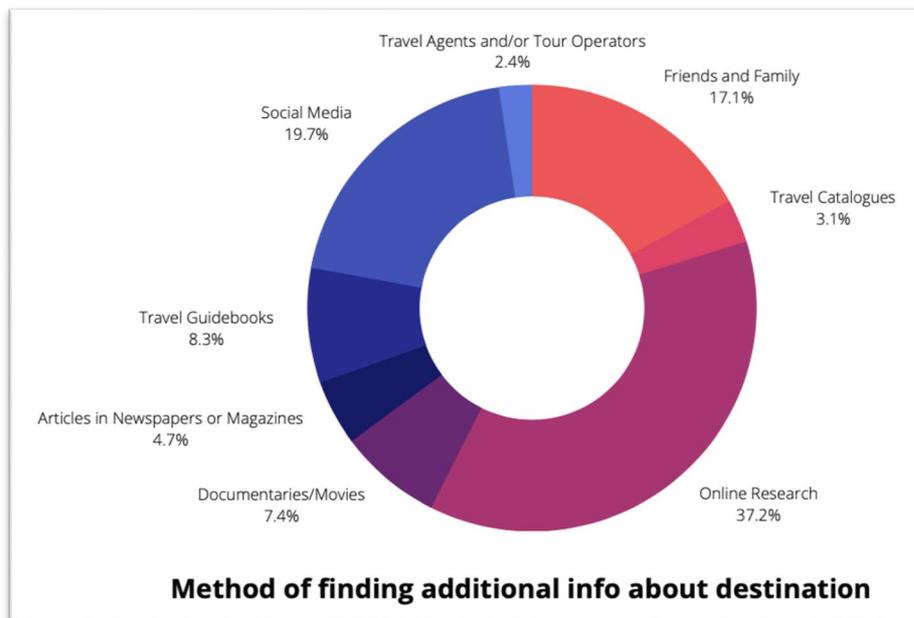
Figure 29: Method of finding additional info about destination

Once a new destination has been discovered, the most widely used method to look for additional information is *online research* (37.2%, chosen 251 times). *Social media* and *friends and family* are extremely relevant in this phase of the booking process too, since these methods were selected respectively 133 and 115 times. Other methods that are used are *travel guidebooks* (56 mentions), *documentaries/movies* (50 mentions) and *articles in newspapers or magazines* (32 mentions).
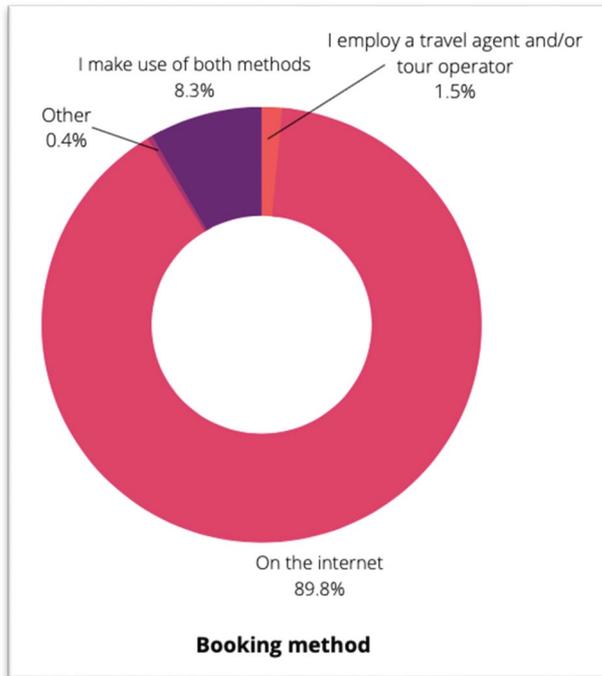
Figure 30: Booking method

When it comes to booking the trip, almost all respondents (89.8%) do it on the internet; only 1.5% of participants delegate this responsibility to a travel agent or tour operator. A mix of both methods is the compromise chosen by 8.3% of respondents.

Q: Please complete the following sentence: "When I plan for my next trip..."
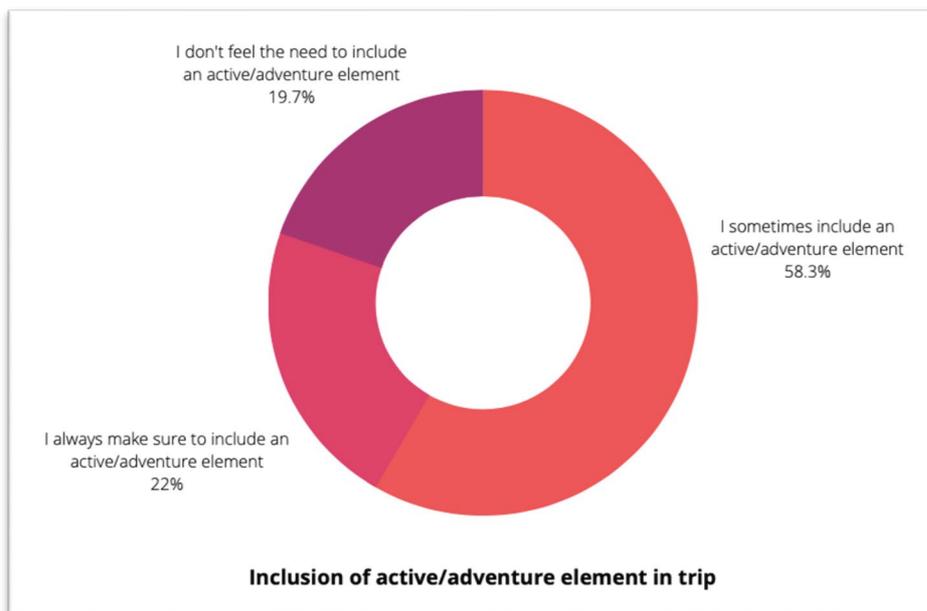
Figure 31: Inclusion/Exclusion of active/adventure element in trip

When asked about the planning for their next trip, 22% of respondents said that they always make sure to include an active/adventure element; on the contrary, 19.7% of respondents do not feel the need to do so. Anyways, the majority of respondents (58.3%) said that they sometimes include an active/adventure element in their trip.
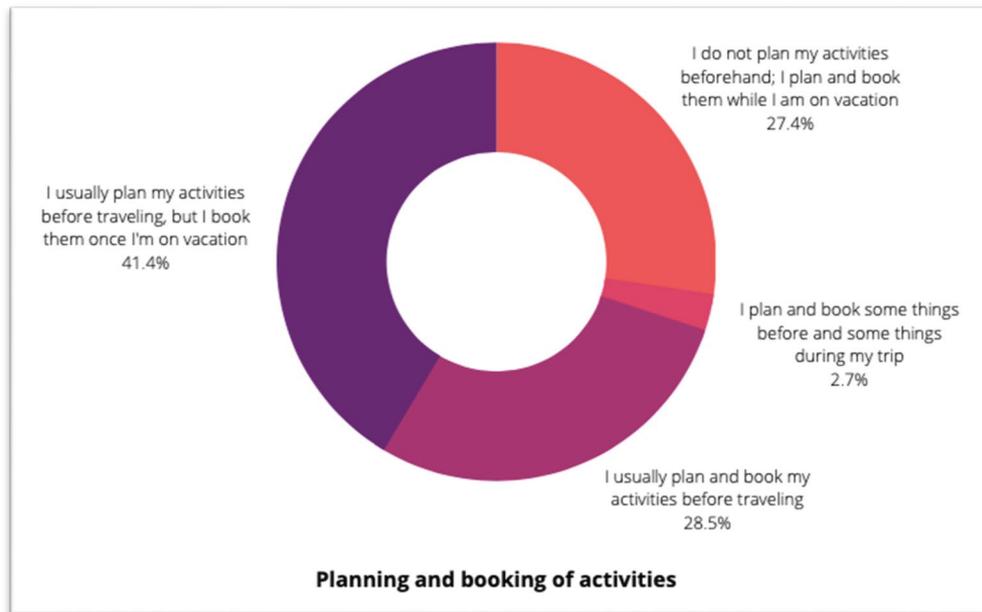
Figure 32: Planning and booking of activities for trip

With regards to planning and booking activities for their travels, respondents were quite evenly divided between the options: 41.4% of respondents usually plan their activities beforehand but only book them once they are on vacation; 27.4% of respondents neither plan nor book their activities before departing and prefer to do both while on vacation; 28.5% of respondents, on the other hand, prefer going on vacation with their activities already planned and booked. A small share of respondents (2.7%) plan and/or book certain activities in advance, while planning and booking other activities directly while on vacation.

Q: Please complete the next sentence: "When I plan for my next trip, my no.1 priority is..."
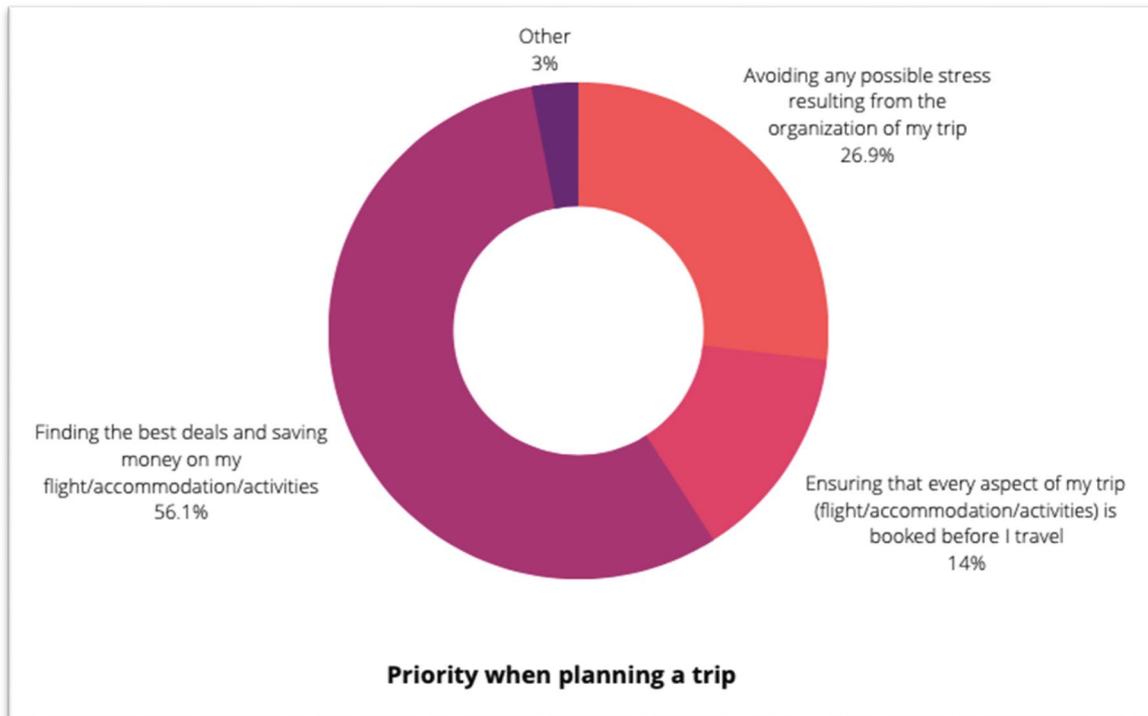
Figure 33: Priority when planning a trip

When planning a trip, *finding the best deal and saving money on flight/accommodation/activities* was chosen as the main priority for 56.1% of respondents; the second most important aspect (selected by 26.9% of travellers) is *avoiding any possible stress resulting from the organization of the trip.* As observed in the previous graph, for some people organization is key: the priority for 14% of respondents is *ensuring that every aspect of the trip (flight/accommodation/activities) is booked before they travel.*

9.2.4   Concept Development

Q: How important would the implementation of advanced technologies (such as chat bots, AI and an app) be in convincing you to buy an active/adventure tourism package for your next trip?
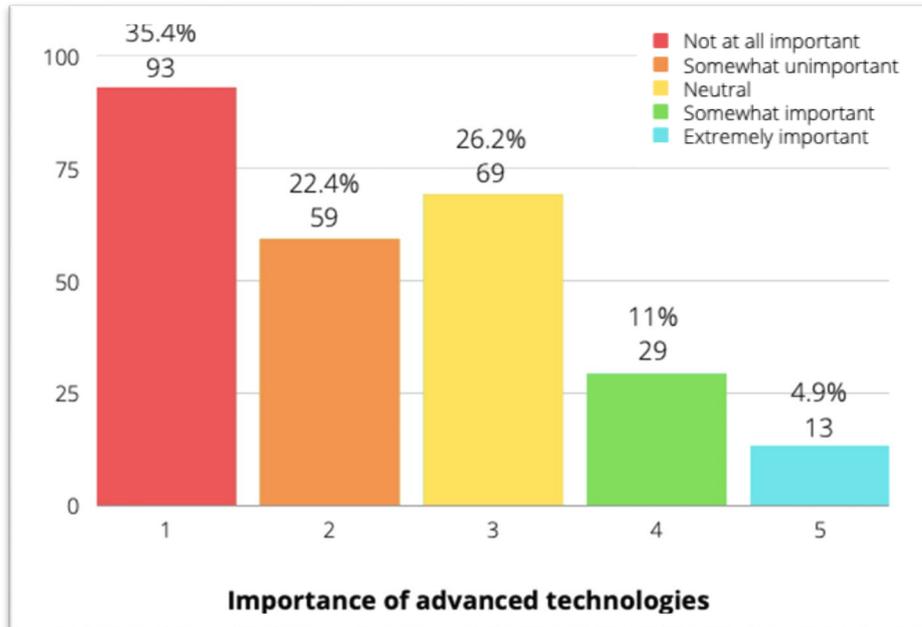
Figure 34: Importance of advanced technologies

When asked about the importance that the implementation of advanced technologies could have in convincing travellers to buy an active/adventure tourism package: More than one third (35.4%) of respondents described advanced technologies as not important at all, and an additional 22.4% of travellers considers them not important. 26.2% of respondents considers advanced technologies neither important nor unimportant.

Only respectively 11% and 4.9% of respondents believes that advanced technologies are somewhat important or extremely important.
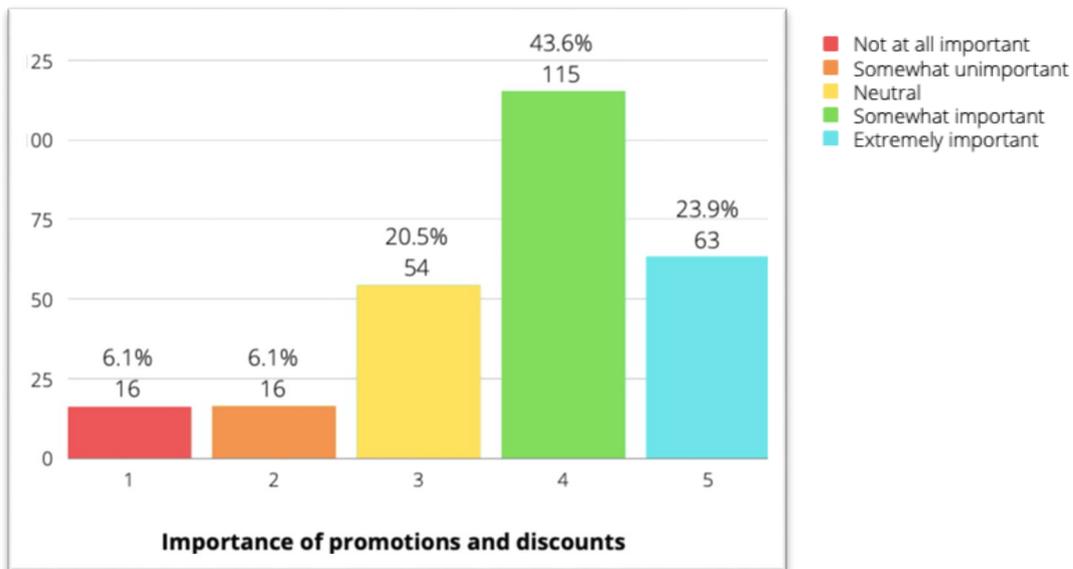
Figure 35: Importance of promotions and discounts

In line with the no.1 priority of travellers when booking a trip (see question), promotions and discounted packages are considered fairly important on average: in fact, 63 respondents (23.9%) believe this aspect is an extremely important convincing factor, and 115 respondents (43.6%) consider it somewhat important.

20.5% of respondents preferred to remain neutral, while a total of 32 respondents think that promotions and discounted packages are either a somewhat-unimportant or a not-important-at-all factor in their decisional process.
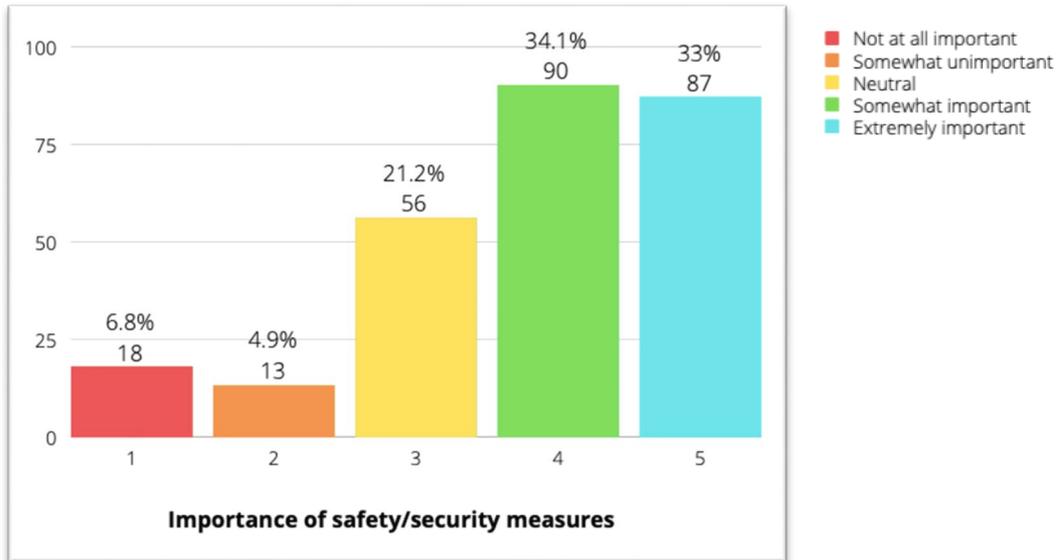
Figure 36: Importance of safety/security measures

The presence of strict safety and security measures is considered either extremely important, as indicated by 33% of respondents, or important, as selected by the biggest share of respondents (90 respondents, 34.1%). 21.2% of respondents believe that strict safety and security measures are neither important nor unimportant, while a total of 31 responses considers them somewhat unimportant (4.9%) or not important at all (6.8%).

Q: How important would receiving a tailor-made, all-inclusive service be in convincing you to buy an active/adventure tourism package for your next trip?
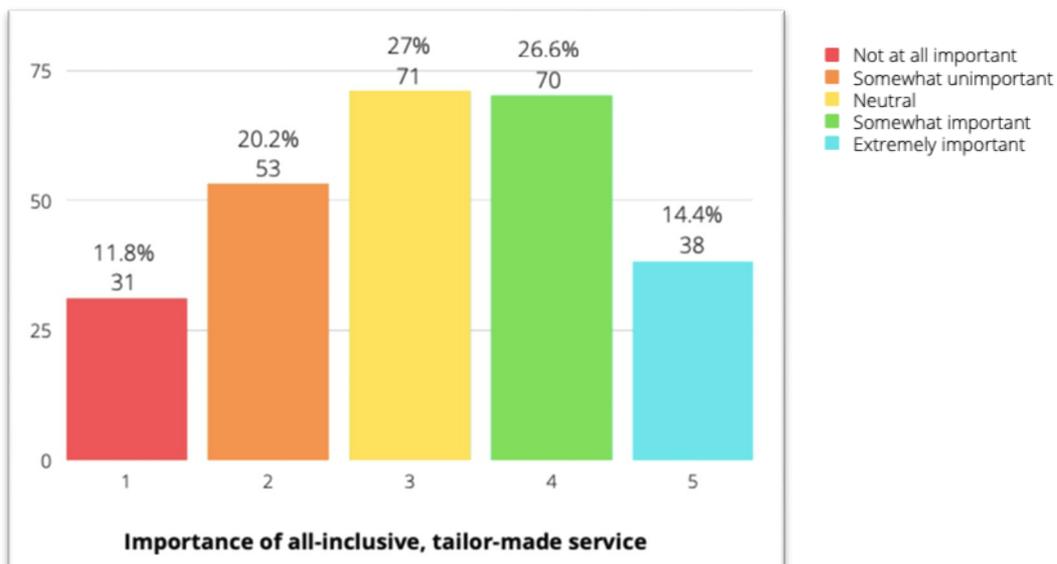
Figure 37: Importance of all-inclusive, tailor-made service

When it comes to the receiving a tailor-made, all-inclusive service, the answers from respondents are quite homogeneously divided. This factor is in fact considered neutral by the biggest share of respondents (71 out of 264, 27%). Many respondents (26.6%, 70) consider this type of service to be important for them, and 38 travellers (14.4%) even view it as extremely important. Anyways, there is also quite a few respondents (53 respondents, 20.2%) who believe that providing a tailor-made, all-inclusive service is a somewhat unimportant factor for an active/adventure tourism package provider. Lastly, 11.8% of the travellers that responded to the survey believe that this aspect is not at all important in convincing them.

Q: What budget would you set aside for a 7-days long adventure trip in Abruzzo (INCLUDING all accomodation, transport, sport/cultural activities etc and EXCLUDING flights to/from the meeting location, travel insurance, visa, some meals, and personal spending)?
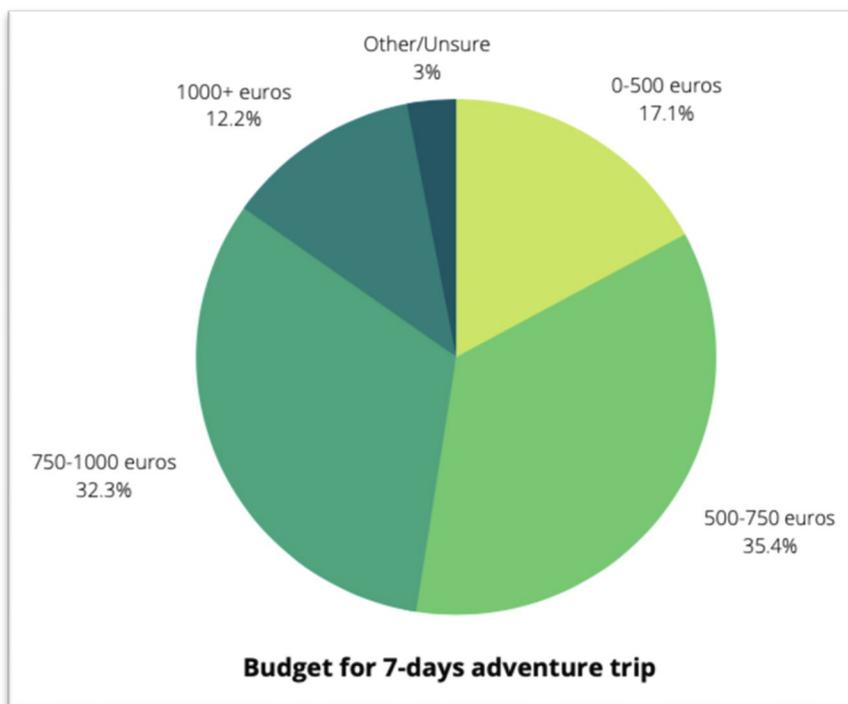
Figure 38: 7-Days adventure trip budget

For a 7-days long adventure trip in Abruzzo including all accomodation, transport, sport/cultural activities etc and excluding flights to/from the meeting location, travel insurance, visa, some meals, and personal spending, about a third of all respondents (35.4%) are willing to pay between 500 and 750 euros; a not-much-lower share of travellers (32.3%) is even willing to pay between 750 and 1000 euros. 17.1% of participants would set a lower budget for this kind of product (0-500 euros), while a small share of those asked (12.2%) believe that a 7-days long adventure trip in Abruzzo could be worth more than 1000 euros.

In the section *Other/Unsure,* answers such as "I don't know" or "I'm going to be honest I have never heard of Abruzzo, I have no idea how much money I would need there" etc. were grouped together.

Q: What other aspect(s) could play an important role in convincing you to buy an active/adventure tourism package for your next trip?

For open-ended questions, thematic analysis was conducted: themes were defined (age-friendliness, convenience, location, marketing & reputation, other, participants, price, safety & security, sustainability, uniqueness and quality) and a different colour was assigned to each theme; afterwards, the question responses were screened, and the information provided was categorized under the most applicable category; lastly, a summary of all responses was written for each category.

CATEGORIES
Age-friendliness
Convenience
Location
Marketing and reputation
Other
Participants
Price
Safety & security
Sustainability
Uniqueness & quality

ANSWERS
A good value for price.
A real understanding of what doing things with different aged children involves.
Activities for kids
activities that can be done with small children
Affordability
Affordable, safe, and fun.
An unique experience or unusual activity
Assurance that it's suitable for people who haven't done the activity before
Availability for non expert sportspeople, historical/cultural information, eco friendly tourism and local food
Catering for families with children of different ages. Focus on local sustainable small companies
Childfriendly
Combine with ecotourism where possible!
Convenience and practicality. Pickups, including food/guide etc

Cost, inclusions
Could be an all inclusive package, or just a cool website that shows all the possible activities in the place I'm travelling
Cultural Exchange
Demographic of attendees
Destination price
Different levels (+/- hard)
Discount
Ease of access
Ease of information about the activity
Ecological impact of the trip
Fair price
Family friendly, beginner friendly, easy
Finding something that I want to do
Flexibility
Flexibility to make changes under date
Flexibility to make changes under date
friendly budget
Genuine testimonials of people that have experienced that same package.
Going somewhere interesting that is hard to get to by public transport
Good references from a trusted person
Good review and price
Good trusted reviews, and perhaps pictures/videos from other people's experiences
Great communication
Great deal
Great photography of the area, well written articles and adventure video to watch
Group of people with follow It.
Having access to transportation or easy ways to travel to an area.
Having an accredited web site where I can find all the informations about the destination of my next trip, maybe developed by some of the most known travel influencers and video-makers.
How impacted with other tourists it is. Typically I move away from large tourist group attractions
How interesting it is for me and if it is an activity that I want to do.
I am Unlikely to purchase a tourism package as I prefer the flexibility of booking everything myself direct with the operators
I am not a big package tourisme person, I like to be free in deciding what I will do when I feel like it on holiday. But maybe if it was something I've never done before, full new experience/ retreat.
I don´t want active tourism package
I have a family, including a toddler. Difficult to plan the kind of adventures with children
I like to not have too many plans set and booked so I can still experience everything the location has to offer. Not too strict

I prefer a more spontaneous way of travelling.
I shouldn't feel it's touristic or salesy whatsoever
I would not consider this
I'm not really an adventure person so nothing
inspiring article in magazine
Is it environmentally friendly, are animals involved, living wage?, am I supporting local or is my money funnelled offshore?
It should allow even people from Abruzzo like me to discover places I wasn't aware of
It's the combination of the price and what I get for a price. If I buy a tour it should be not the biggest part of my whole trip abroad and preferably with small group of people from different countries.
Know the most beautiful itineraries watch captivating presentation videos
Knowing what I am seeing is extremely well worth it
level of difficulty of the activity
Location
Location and my husbands interests
Location, price
Make evident what you could gain with this trip in comparison to other options. What would make this one different from the others.
Marketing/Images
meeting lovals/opportunity to connect with culture
More similar minded people buying the trip
Nice accommodation, alternative activities to choose from, leisure days in between (not too much planned), age range of the group
No mask/vaccine
Online Reviews
original/local experiences not to be found elsewhere
Personality, not feeling like a "number" and having personalized or not preset experiences
più pubblicità sulla cultura del posto
Price
Price
Price
Price
Price
Price and the activities
Price,
Price, accessibility, transportation
Reading other tourists' experiences/reviews
Recommendations/Reviews
Reputation of the agent
Reputation of the company ie reviews. Videos of people doing the activity
Reviews

Reviews
Reviews from others
Reviews of other travellers, weather
Reviews/ Testimonials
Right now, planning the trip is part of the experience. So I wouldn't want someone else to do it. Maybe when I'll be older with kids this could be interesting, especially if it would give feedback in regards to difficulty of the activities for children of different ages.
Small group, different experience, unexpected, local
Social aspects
Social media presence + all the information I need clearly available, such as opening hours, how to reach the place and so on
That I had the money for it-
That it is not too 83dventurous.
That there is something for a senior person aswell as a young person not too fit
The activity is something unique that I can't do in other places
The place, what there is to see. I don't need to go hiking abroad if I feel like it. The place needs to be interesting
The possibility of free cancellation if necessary
The possibility of special activities for children
The quality of the adventure package
the sense thay´t i won`t waste my money is the key. Even if i don`t get something exactly of my taste, it is super important to give quality to whatever u do
time and how long would it take to travel to the location.
To be a destination that i want to visit
Transparency in service scope and price.
Transportation available from a "big" city to the site
Travel hours (distance from cph) - not more than 4 hours flying
Unique experience + environmentally friendly
Usually I avoid to buy package because it's pretty expensive. Depending on the package.
Value, credibility of the tour guide and operating company, how interested I am in the itinerary
VIP treatment. Promising and good services. Welcoming staff

Figure 39: Most mentioned convincing factors for active/adventure package

When asked what other aspect(s) could play an important role in convincing them to buy an active/adventure tourism package for their next trip, travellers mentioned a broad variety of elements; as this was an open-ended question, before analysing the answers it was crucial to data validation, data cleaning and editing; only after following these steps it was possible to proceed with the descriptive analysis.

As it could be expected, *price* is considered an extremely important aspect for travellers: there were several answers such as "price", "discount" and "fair price"; it is therefore clear that, if travellers were to decide whether to buy an active/adventure package, price could be a deal-breaker.

Another aspect that was mentioned several times was *uniqueness and quality*: travellers want to be sure that they are engaging in an exclusive experience, that the destination is not overcrowded and that they are spending money on an unexpected experience that cannot be found elsewhere, in a location that is different than what they are used to.

Marketing and reputation were reoccurring themes throughout the answers: as observed in previous questions, respondents usually discover a destination thanks to recommendations from friends and family; similarly, it can be seen here that they truly value genuine reviews and a strong yet credible presence on social media and online. Travellers want to be able to easily find both inspiring videos and pictures, and informative material about the packages and products/services, together with opinions of people who took part in past experiences.

Another relevant factor is *convenience*: from being able to cancel or make changes to the reservations without charges to being offered efficient means of transportation to reach the destination, travellers need flexibility. Some respondents also believe it is

important for the traveller to be given the choice when it comes to the amount and kind of activities that are scheduled, and the number of days that are planned.

Some of the respondents, moreover, would be more easily convinced if they feel that the activities offered can be adapted to participants from different ages: *age-friendliness* of the activities could convince at least some respondents to buy an active/adventure tourism package for their trips.

Lastly, some additional aspects that were mentioned by respondents are *safety and security*, *location* and *sustainability*: respondents would like to be able to choose from a range of activities with different levels of difficulty, that are therefore suitable for more adventurous people, as well as less active travellers. For 8 respondents, location is a relevant factor, while 7 respondents believe that the presence of sustainable practices, both for the environment and also for the people involved, might support them in their decision.

Q: What additional feedback do you have regarding the idea of developing an active/adventure tourism concept in Abruzzo? Be honest, I love feedback

-
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activities targeted by age or physical condition
After doing this questionnaire I already want to go
As above. Ethical treatment of workers, where's the money I spend end up, am I supporting local, will I learn about the place and history?
As I don't know the area, I can't answer
Authenticity is key. Nothing's worse than a „standard" Adventure which is organized to the minute and doesn't leave space to explore/adapt to your personal needs. Kind of goes against the purpose of an adventure 😜
better advertising on what Abruzzo can offer
Curious to hear more.
Do different packages for different targets: family package, single package, couple package...
documentary film about this location
Don't know Abruzzo
Get people that are into sports
Go for it! I love this idea!
Good idea
Good luck
Great
Have a company doing different activities such as being a hike/climb/canyoning guide, have camping site, have eating or cooking facilities
Have some trips win, focus on young people, the more people participate the cheaper it gets, have picture taken for free

Highlighting the specificities of the region as it might not be the most famous in Italy, coupling it with a gastronomic discovery
I am from Abruzzo myself and I know several options for adventure tourism activities because I am local. However, I think they could advertise those more consistently and create strategic partnerships with other tourism businesses
I am probably not your target. But when I went to a WWF adventure camp there when I was 8?That was great.
I apologize for not knowing anything about Abruzzo to suggest. But perhaps feedback would be to position Abruzzo as an adventure touristic destination.
I do like this idea, but a lot of package tours seem either pretty scammy or aimed at specific types of people (usually young travellers or old people, I'm neither). But we have done day trips or shorter which were really nice (kayaking trips, food tours, etc) and are still open to that kind of thing - and willing to pay for it! It seems mostly worthwhile when I get to go somewhere I wouldn't otherwise or where it uses some kind of equipment I don't have (eg a kayak heh) or gives some local insight/info I wouldn't get on my own. But I'm not looking for someone to take over my whole holiday.
I do not take part in predatory tourism that includes animals in captivity or damage the local environment. I enjoy activities mostly when it is done by locals. We have a 10-year old daughter, so it's important that activities are fun for her as well.
I don't enjoy "enforced prebooked fun" I prefer exploring a place, getting the vibe & understanding what makes it special then choosing activities accordingly
I don't know.
I find the idea interesting. Especially if it will develop thebtourism and there isn't many other possibilities. If there was any agricultural activities in the area (grapes-wine making, etc.) it may be interesting to include this in your concept. So that people may actively see how the vineyards are held etc...
I had never heard of Abruzzo before but just googled it and looks INCREDIBLE. Add good food to your packages, try to be as inclusive as possible with your planning of the activity (dont only consider the jocks), pick a few instagramable spots (which is not difficult) and you re good to go!
I have never been, but I would love to go! Maybe it is not well promoted as a destination, still?
I love the idea
I love the idea of activities/adventure with local guides who know the area well and can also give cultural perspective!
I only know Abruzzo from the earthquake unfortunately and never thought of it as a holiday destination so there is probably a fair bit of awareness raising and promotion of the area that needs to be done first. I don't think it's by the sea either (lack of knowledge as mentioned), and when most people go to Italy they think of the sea. So this needs to be overcome as well I think.
I think Abruzzo can be a good place to start an activity like that because it offer a lot of beautiful place to visit.
I think it could be a great idea to develop that as Italy is one of my favorite destinations 🤍🤍

I think it is a fantastic idea and will definitely be very successful for both Italian and foreign travellers
I usually don't plan excursions or activities ahead, I get a feel for the place when I'm there, see what's about and what I might like to do. We do maybe a local boat trip, Cookery, or sightseeing, not very active people on holiday
I would absolutely love it. I've been trying to go to Italy for years!
I would love to know more about Abruzzo, I don't really know that place in italy
I would say finding some sort of novel concept to attract people. Weather it is regarding nature, learning, sports wellbeing..
I'm not your target group sorry
I'm sure there'll be people interested, if the place is pretty and it's easy to travel there
If you love Abruzzo, leave it alone. This type of activities destroys nature. It's hard to avoid turism, but at least learn about sustainable tourism and how to create awareness. Ask yourself, what do I want to get of this project ? How can I make a difference? Is it only for the people to enjoy nature (and then think about the consequences) is it about Abruzzo?
Info about weather conditions and what happens if I book sth and the weather is bad
Is good included?
Is it suitable for families with small kids, or is the main focus young energetic people without children?
It also depends on the type of active tourism. It was not clear what type of activity concept there is in Abruzzo. All you showed was the picture of the lake and no description of any kind of adventure actually
It should be addressed mostly to youngster, there are many backpackers social media pages, I am sure they would be very interested
It sounds great, but from my experience Abruzzo is not a well connected region. This factor needs to be accounted for
It's a good idea
italy has one of the biggest brand name regaridng food and gastronomy. You should definitely add something food related
Italy will always be attractive by its gastronomy. Use it to convince people to join the trip.
Make it more friendly for internationals, just basic English skills and more cultural history
Maps and datew
More information about the area.
more publicity, it's a beautiful but little known region
mostly convience , not having to rely on other pple for everything i need , the cost should also be right , and also avoiding crowds , cheap but crowded , no thanks . Most of all very confortable accomodation
Never been. But looks fantastic.
No clue i am sorry
None really
None-but I'm going to find out more about the area now!
people who like nature and adventure usually do things on their own to feel even more the adventure spirit and the one-on-one connection with nature. Don't focus on

organizing things for them, but rather on being a trustable source to find local events, great/secret spots and connection to businesses that provide gears and tools to enable adventures
Pictures of the trips offered, introduction of the tour operator
Promote promote promote. Take example from Puglia and the Apulia region: in the past few years there has been heavy international promotions for these location abroad and now loads of tourists from EU and beyond choose to go there.
Share info about the area
Since I'm not familiar with Abruzzo, I would appreciate a comparison to destinations I already know and also getting unique insights on what to expect and look forward to.
Sounds interesting
Spontaneity is great for making memories. Abruzzo is great and the area has rich history mixing them would be great - not only being adventuristic but melding different forms of experience with some addrenaline or "effort" may make the experience better. People with strict adventurism would likely seek different spots in Italy
The adventure package should be paired to an arrosticini-themed dinner
The photo looks amazing, I would love to visit for hiking for sure 😊
Utilize influencer marketing
Water activities, late night outs within the group, arranging theme parties within the trip (should be decided early to people can prepare to buy dresses), mingle with locals there
We've looked into buying a second home here but haven't found a lot of info on the area, so as I stated in the previous question, well made videos and articles with great photography would be enticing! We are avid travellers and have lived all over the world. I have a travel blog and am a photographer and videographer so these things are important to me. Happy to help out as well when you plan this! We go to Italy often 😊
What can be done on a low budget? I'm poor
Wine. Food. More wine.
Work to Natural tourism of our region (I think that's the way to improved pur regional tourism).

9.3 Summary Survey Results

9.3.1   Summary Demographic

About half of all respondents are aged between 26-35, followed by respondents aged 18-25 and those aged 36-45. Only 10,6% of respondents are 46 years old or older. Most respondents are Italian, and many responses were received by American participants too; other nationalities with a relevant number of respondents are Danish, British, German, and Romanian. The total number of nationalities represented is 53.

In line with the nationalities, it was observed that 87,12% of all survey participants currently reside in Europe, a few participants are residents of North America (18), Pacific (11), Asia (4) and Africa (1).

229 out of 264 respondents are female, while 32 respondents are male. A tiny fraction of all respondents preferred not to specify their gender.

9.3.2   Summary Travel Profile

In a normal year, about 39% of respondents usually take between one and two trips; 34% of respondents usually take three or four trips per year, while 22% of respondents are used to travelling more than five times yearly. Only 5.3% of all respondents mentioned that, regardless of Covid-19, they are not used to traveling.

On the one hand, about two thirds of all respondents have already been on a leisure trip in Italy, while the remaining 23% of respondents have never been to Italy for leisure. On the other hand, most respondents (84%) have never visited Abruzzo for leisure; only 16% of participants have already been on a leisure trip to Abruzzo. This result is in line with the statistics provided by Regione Abruzzo (2021): most respondents belong to age groups 26-35 and 36-45, the same age groups who visit Abruzzo the least.

The type of travel that is preferred by 62% of all respondents is *Culture tourism, educational tourism, food tourism*; the second and third most preferred types of travel among respondents were *Adventure tourism, active tourism, sports tourism,* and *Ecotourism, nature tourism*. *Business leisure, city tourism* was the least preferred type of travel.

About 75% of respondents believe that they have already engaged at least once during their lifetime in some sort of *adventure travel*. 13% of respondents have never been on an adventure trip, while 12% are not sure. At the same time, 170 respondents mentioned that, in the next year, they are likely (23%) or very likely (41%) to engage in one or more adventure trip(s).

Although most respondents believe that they will engage in an adventure trip within the next year, 22% of respondents said that they are either very unlikely or unlikely to include an active/adventure element in their next trip. On the contrary, 19% of respondents are likely to include an active/adventure element already in the next trip, and the biggest share of respondents (37%) is very likely to do so.

Among respondents, the most popular activities to include in the next trip was *attending local festival/fairs*, which was selected 189 times; in second place there are *cultural activities/getting to know locals* and *visiting historical sites* (both received 178 votes). Other activities that were selected by many respondents are, in order: *hiking/trekking, backpacking/orienteering/walking tours, canoeing/kayaking/rafting*, *scuba diving/snorkelling, camping, learning a new language, skiing/snowboarding,* and *sailing/surfing*.

9.3.3   Summary Trip Planning and Organization

In most cases the organization of trips is done independently: almost all respondents (95%) organize their vacation themselves or delegate an acquaintance (friend or family member). Very few respondents use of a tour operator in their home country or in the destination country.

71% of respondents book their travels more than a month before they depart, while about 22% of respondents proceeds to book their vacation between two weeks and a month prior to the trip date; a small percentage of travellers book their trip between one and two weeks before the trip date or even last minute (one week or less in advance). Most respondents are usually introduced to their travel destination thanks to *friends and family* (27%) or by discovering it on *social media* (24%). *Online advertisement* (15%) or *articles in newspapers or magazines* (12%) are also effective means of bringing attention to a destination. 8% of respondents first get acquainted with their travel destination by means of *travel guidebooks*. Surprisingly enough, *Google* was only chosen by few respondents.

Once a new destination has been discovered, the most widely used method to look for additional information is *online research* (chosen 251 times). *Social media* and *friends and family* are extremely relevant in this phase of the booking process too: these methods were selected respectively 133 and 115 times. Other methods that are used are *travel guidebooks* (56), *documentaries/movies* (50) and *articles in newspapers or magazines* (32).

When it comes to booking the trip, almost all respondents (90%) do it on the internet; only 2% participants delegate this responsibility to a travel agent or tour operator. A mix of both methods is the compromise chosen by 8% of respondents.

When asked about the planning for their next trip, 22% of respondents said that they always make sure to include an active/adventure element; on the contrary, 20% of respondents do not feel the need to do so. Anyways, most respondents (58%) said that they sometimes include an active/adventure element in their trip.

With regards to planning and booking activities for their travels, respondents were quite evenly divided: 41% of respondents plan their activities beforehand but only book them on vacation; 27% of respondents plan and book activities while on vacation; 29% of respondents, on the other hand, pre-plan and book activities before departing. A small share of respondents (3%) plan and/or book certain activities in advance, while planning and booking other activities directly while on vacation.

When planning a trip, *finding the best deal and saving money on flight/accommodation/activities* is the main priority for 56% of respondents; the second most important aspect (selected by 27% of travellers) is *avoiding any possible stress resulting from the organization of the trip.* As observed previously, the priority for 14% of respondents is *ensuring that every aspect of the trip (flight/accommodation/activities) is booked before they travel.*

9.3.4   Summary of Concept Development

When asked about the importance that several aspects could have in convincing travellers to buy an active/adventure tourism package, the following findings were discovered:

    a. The implementation of advanced technologies is considered not important at all by 36% of respondents, and somewhat unimportant by 22% of respondents; 26% of respondents considers advanced technologies neither important nor unimportant; Only respectively 11% and 5% of respondents believes that advanced technologies are somewhat important or extremely important.

    b. In line with the <u>no.1 priority of travellers when booking a trip</u>, promotions and discounted packages are an extremely important convincing factor for 24% of respondents, and an additional 44% considers this aspect somewhat important. 21% of respondents preferred to remain neutral, while only 32 respondents think that promotions and discounted packages are either somewhat unimportant or not important at all.

    c. The presence of strict safety and security measures is considered either extremely important, as indicated by 33% of respondents, or important, as selected by 34% of respondents. 21% of respondents consider strict safety and security measures neither important nor unimportant, while respectively 5% and 7% considers them somewhat unimportant or not important at all.

    d. Receiving a tailor-made, all-inclusive service is considered a "neutral" factor by the biggest share of respondents (27%). Another 27% consider this type of service to be important, and 14% view it as extremely important. Anyways, there is also quite a few respondents (20%) who believe that providing a tailor-made, all-inclusive service is a somewhat unimportant factor for an active/adventure tourism package provider. Lastly, 12% of travellers who responded to the survey believe that this aspect is not at all important in convincing them.

For a 7-days long adventure trip in Abruzzo including all accommodation, transport, sport/cultural activities etc and excluding flights to/from the meeting location, travel insurance, visa, some meals, and personal spending, about 35% of all respondents are willing to pay 500-750 euros; 32% is willing to pay between 750-1000 euros. 17% of participants would set a lower budget for this kind of product (0-500 euros), while a small share of those asked (12%) believe that a 7-days long adventure trip in Abruzzo could be worth more than 1000 euros. Some other answers were received such as "I don't know" or "I'm going to be honest I have never heard of Abruzzo, I have no idea how much money I would need there" etc.

9.4 Interviews Consent Form

Informed Consent Form LYCar research
Liberatoria ricerca LYCar

Research on Active Tourism in Abruzzo: interview
Tesi di laurea sul turismo attivo in Abruzzo: intervista

I, the intended research participant, have received information regarding this project. I was given the opportunity to ask additional questions. If I had any questions these have been answered to my satisfaction. I have had enough time to decide whether or not I wish to participate.

Io, partecipante alla ricerca, ho ricevuto informazioni su questo progetto. Mi è stata data l'opportunità di porre ulteriori domande. Nel caso in cui io abbia avuto domande, queste hanno ricevuto risposta con mia soddisfazione. Ho avuto abbastanza tempo per decidere se partecipare o meno alla ricerca.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Comprendo che la mia partecipazione è completamente volontaria. Comprendo che sono libero di recedere in qualsiasi momento, senza fornire alcuna motivazione.

I understand that some people have access to the personal details I provide. These people have been mentioned (in the information etc.).

Comprendo che alcune persone hanno accesso ai dati personali che ho fornito. Queste persone sono state specificate (nelle informazioni ecc.).

I consent to the use of my details, for the purposes that have been described by the researcher.

Acconsento al trattamento dei miei dati, per le finalità indicate dalla ricercatrice.

I consent to the recording of the interview being kept for further analysis by the university Hotelschool The Hague (if applicable) for a maximum of 15 years after this research project has ended.

Acconsento che la registrazione dell'intervista venga conservata per ulteriori analisi da parte dell'università Hotelschool The Hague (se applicabile) per un massimo di 15 anni dopo la fine di questo progetto di ricerca.

I hereby give my informed consent to take part in this research project.

Esprimo il mio consenso informato a partecipare a questo progetto di ricerca.

Name of participant: Antonio Stroveglia

Signature: X   Date : 19 / 09 / 2022

(The participant agreed to the terms of the research verbally)

I, the researcher, confirm that I have fully informed this participant about the above research project.

Io, la ricercatrice, confermo di aver informato pienamente questo partecipante sul progetto di ricerca di cui sopra.

If any new information arises in the duration of the research project that could potentially influence the participant's consent, I will inform the research participant.

Se durante la durata del progetto di ricerca emergono nuove informazioni che potrebbero potenzialmente influenzare il consenso del partecipante, informerò il partecipante.

Name of researcher (or his/her representative):

Signature: Date: 19 / 09 / 2022
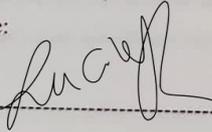
Additional information has been provided by (if applicable):

Name:

Occupation:

Signature: Date: __ / __ / __

I hereby give my informed consent to take part in this research project.

Esprimo il mio consenso informato a partecipare a questo progetto di ricerca.

Name of participant:

Signature: Date : 22/09/22

I, the researcher, confirm that I have fully informed this participant about the above research project.

Io, la ricercatrice, confermo di aver informato pienamente questo partecipante sul progetto di ricerca di cui sopra.

If any new information arises in the duration of the research project that could potentially influence the participant's consent, I will inform the research participant.

Se durante la durata del progetto di ricerca emergono nuove informazioni che potrebbero potenzialmente influenzare il consenso del partecipante, informerò il partecipante.

Name of researcher (or his/her representative):

Signature: Date: 22/09/22
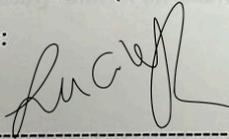
Additional information has been provided by (if applicable):

Name:

Occupation:

Signature: Date: __ / __ / __

9.5 Interviews Transcripts and Translations

9.5.1   Interviews Transcripts

Interview 1

Researcher: Buongiorno, ciao!
Interviewee 1: Buongiorno a te, ciao. Eccoci qui!
Researcher: Prima di tutto piacere di conoscerti, io sono Lucia.
Interviewee 1: Che fai di bello? Aspetta che sposto il telefono in modo che mi è più comodo.
Researcher: Dai allora faccio anch'io lo stesso, ok ecco qua! Allora, io al momento, come ti dicevo, sto scrivendo la mia tesi di laurea; ho fatto l'università ad Amsterdam, ho studiato Hospitality Management e ho deciso di fare appunto la mia tesi di laurea sul turismo attivo in Abruzzo
Interviewee 1: E di dove sei?
Researcher: Sono di Chieti, adesso sono in Italia, sto lavorando per una catena di hotel che si chiama Phi Hotels. Non so se la conosci, con donato sambuco… e niente, quindi sto cercando appunto di laurearmi e devo consegnare la tesi tra tre settimane più o meno, quindi sto cercando di finire le ultime cose.
Interviewee 1: Va bene, sono a disposizione!
Researcher: Grazie mille!
Interviewee 1: In realtà tantissimi in questi ultimi 10 anni hanno fatto tesi o ricerche o su WolfTour o su uno dei progetti che seguiva WolfTour, quindi abbiamo dato sempre massima disponibilità.
Researcher: Ottimo, grazie mille! Anche perché ho visto che di fatto il turismo esperienziale o comunque anche turismo attivo e sostenibile è un trend che ho osservato sta crescendo tanto. E l'Abruzzo penso che sia una regione con molto potenziale in questo senso, visto che è ancora diciamo poco sfruttata, il che è una cosa buona ma è anche una cosa che potrebbe essere cambiata in modo positivo. Allora, prima di tutto ti dico: alla fine di questa chiamata ti manderò un documento da firmare giusto per darti la certezza che i tuoi dati verranno trattati con la massima confidenzialità. Se a volte sbaglio con qualche parola e perché io tutta la tesi la sto scrivendo in inglese quindi a volte la traduzione magari non è esatta o utilizzo una parola sbagliata quindi mi scuso per quello. Ti dirò già che non verrà incluso il tuo nome nella tesi ma se preferisci posso farlo. Ma per mantenere come dicevo la confidenzialità, posso anche includere solamente il titolo di lavoro o comunque anche solamente il nome dell'azienda che, come ti dicevo, ho già inserito come best practice nella tesi.
Interviewee 1: Scegli tu questo, a me se lo inserisci ed è utile per te va benissimo.
Researcher: Va benissimo, grazie mille. Allora, come ti dicevo non ti farò tante domande; cerco di mantenere tutta l'intervista o comunque questo processo breve e parto subito con la prima domanda se non vuoi aggiungere qualcosa tu…
Interviewee 1: No no magari fammi le domande e poi alla fine se posso ti aiuto con qualche riflessione, non conosco bene l'argomento.

Researcher: Va benissimo. Allora io ti do una breve introduzione: io ho già condotto una ricerca di mercato, ho fatto ovviamente già una ricerca su quelli che sono i turisti che al momento vengono in Abruzzo. Ho visto bene o male l'età media appunto, che sono turisti molto giovani o anziani e che quindi c'è un gap di età che non è molto motivato a visitare la nostra Regione; e questo è il gap che in realtà sarebbe molto più utile per quanto riguarda il turismo attivo, perché è quello dell'età, più o meno, tra i trenta e i quarant'anni: persone che hanno potere d'acquisto e che hanno ancora ovviamente le energie e la capacità fisica di fare esperienze attive. Quindi per questo io ti volevo dire: al momento qual è il mercato che sceglie WolfTour? Quindi quali sono le caratteristiche di questo mercato? E in più volevo chiederti: quale pensi che sia il potenziale mercato? Quindi, quali pensi che siano le persone che dovranno essere, diciamo, "attirate" verso i progetti di turismo attivo nel futuro? (Visto anche il Covid e come sono cambiate tutte le abitudini dei viaggiatori)

Interviewee 1: Allora, diciamo che il mercato del turismo, così come hai fatto tu la fotografia di questo scenario negli ultimi anni a seguito di fattori esterni naturalmente: terremoti, valanga di Rigopiano, e pandemia, è stato più volte stravolto completamente ti faccio un esempio per capire però che sia utile nell'elaborazione del documento che stai facendo: l'anno scorso con la chiusura delle frontiere, ai voli e quindi al turismo o alle attività ludiche, l'Abruzzo è stato, come mai era successo prima, invaso da una serie di persone che amano viaggiare ma che non erano mai state in Abruzzo, perché non lo ritengono - tu l'hai detto nel tuo passaggio - un territorio attrattivo per vari motivi. Il motivo principale è l'assenza dei servizi di base al turismo. Io divido i servizi al turismo in servizi di base e servizi secondari; se facciamo l'esempio del cicloturismo, che è il movimento che muove più persone in questo momento in Abruzzo, escludiamo gli abitudinari del mare - cioè quelli che fanno il 75% delle presenze in Abruzzo - che sono persone che vengono qui da trent'anni e che quindi diciamo sono difficili sia da studiare che da capire parlando di turismo potenziale come facevi tu. E allora sono venute tantissime persone dalla Toscana, che è un mercato che non ha mai toccato l'Abruzzo; la provenienza della Lombardia, che è una provenienza storica, è triplicata; la provenienza dal Veneto, che è una provenienza storica e legata esclusivamente alla parte mare nelle aree interne, è quintuplicata. Io ti sto dando dei dati veri. Comuni che facevano l'anno scorso o prima del terremoto del 2009 15/20.000 presenze all'anno, hanno fatto 80.000 presenze. Non ti parlo di presenze intese come pernottamenti, ma di presenze legate ad eventi turistici ecc. Quindi il mercato è drogato da tutto quello che è successo, la pandemia ha creato questa situazione; la conseguenza di questo nel brevissimo periodo è stata che tanti hanno capito che il turismo può essere un modo per rendere sostenibile economicamente un territorio, e in realtà è una conseguenza che diventerà un boomerang nei prossimi anni: cioè, si è creata una situazione in cui molti si sono improvvisati operatori turistici, quindi con una bassissima qualità dei servizi ecc. Quindi faccio, per rispondere alla tua domanda, un passaggio indietro: tu mi hai fatto una domanda, "come si può attirare un turismo?". Per me per attirare il turismo bisogna fare sviluppo locale, cioè non esiste possibilità di fare turismo vero, cioè attirare potenziali clienti in maniera strategica, se non si va a incidere sui tre assets fondamentali di un territorio, che sono: la mobilità, cioè come faccio a spostarmi in un territorio? io posso dire… la Regione Abruzzo va in tutte le fiere con la foto di Campo Imperatore, ma non c'è modo di arrivarci se non ti accompagna qualcuno.

Researcher: Si…

Interviewee 1: Non ci sono mezzi pubblici, le strade sono assurde ecc. quindi mobilità: io mi devo poter muovere in un territorio, altrimenti diventa un turismo avventura, non più vacanza attiva o vacanza culturale; allora io vado in Nepal, vado in Patagonia, so che non troverò nulla e quindi vado con quell'approccio. Ma se io vado in Appennino penso di trovare dei servizi, magari in qualche parte più, qualche parte meno… invece in Abruzzo non esistono proprio.

Researcher: Sì, si si.

Interviewee 1: Cioè tu prova ad affittare una macchina per andare in giro in Abruzzo, diventa un'impresa impossibile. Ma ti dirò una cosa ancora più importante: se tu vai sul sito VisitTrentino, visto che il Trentino è spesso considerato un punto di riferimento, ma anche Umbria o Marche, io all'interno di un'unica piattaforma riesco più o meno ad organizzarmi una vacanza; c'è dove andare a dormire, dove andare a mangiare, dove affittare la bicicletta, dove affittare l'escursione. Questo in Abruzzo non esiste, io per andare a fare una vacanza in Abruzzo devo andare su 10 piattaforme diverse.

Researcher: Si…

Interviewee 1: In una parte faccio l'escursione, in una parte faccio la macchina, in una parte faccio dove dormire, in una parte faccio mangiare sui trabocchi ecc. ed è tutto molto complesso. E le persone, se in 4/5 click non riescono a dare soddisfazione al proprio bisogno di vacanze, se ne vanno da un'altra parte. Quindi questo è un altro motivo per cui ti rispondo ai "clienti potenziali": chi arriva qui spesso ci arriva un po' per caso, perché è molto difficile da Parigi o da Londra dire "io vado in Abruzzo e vado a fare ste cose". Quindi mobilità, primo asset su cui intervenire.
Sicurezza e sanità: non esiste modo di fare turismo su un territorio se lì non è sicuro fare turismo, e allora è inutile che promuoviamo l'Abruzzo come rete sentieristica, rete cicloturistica… è il mio lavoro eh, quindi so esattamente quello che sto dicendo… quando se viene una persona anziana che ha un malore in montagna non ha neanche modo di chiamare i soccorsi, quando l'ospedale più vicino ai posti turistici è a due ore di macchina! Perché poi, quando vengono i turisti delle fasce che hai detto tu, cioè molto piccoli o molto anziani, queste cose guardano, non guardano altro. Perché che si mangia bene qui lo sanno tutti; quindi loro vanno a guardare la questione della sicurezza.
E infine, ma per me diventa il problema prioritario a questo punto, visto quello che è successo con la pandemia, istruzione e formazione: cioè, non esiste modo di fare turismo se le persone che operano su quei territori non sono formate per fare turismo. A partire dalla scuola quindi, istruzione e formazione continua. Guarda che questi tre assets sono gli stessi individuati, non a caso, dalla strategia nazionale delle aree interne. Perché l'Abruzzo, pur avendo una costa, di fatto per il 60% è un territorio collinare e montuoso. Quindi è sostanzialmente quasi interamente area interna, dove è tutto più difficile, ma è difficile anche riscaldare gli hotel d'inverno perché costa. Non so se sai che quest'anno probabilmente tantissimi hotel di quelli che rimanevano aperti durante la stagione di adesso, probabilmente non apriranno.

Researcher: Si, assolutamente.

Interviewee 1: Ma anche frantoi, non apriranno i frantoi, per esempio, per il periodo di raccolta delle olive. Quindi WolfTour che è un tour operator, di fatto è un tour operator totalmente diverso dagli altri che operano in Appennino perché gran parte delle attività di WolfTour è legata alla progettazione turistica, e noi non siamo

semplicemente un creatore di pacchetti turistici o un intermediario di pacchetti turistici. Noi creiamo il prodotto turistico nel senso che scriviamo i progetti per la mobilità lenta, per la formazione, e per la sicurezza.
Researcher: Assolutamente.
Interviewee 1: E quindi come si può attrarre, per rispondere alla tua domanda – scusami, mi sono dilungato…
Researcher: No no no, assolutamente.
Interviewee 1: …Ma credo sia importante per te avere queste riflessioni
Researcher: Certo!
Interviewee 1: Come si può attrarre nuovo turismo? Lavorando su questi tre assets, perché tutti quelli che arrivano, arrivano per caso altrimenti.
Researcher: In realtà durante la mia ricerca di mercato, questi sono alcuni dei punti che sono venuti fuori, cioè l'importanza… ho chiesto di quali aspetti potessero essere importanti per convincere qualcuno ad acquistare un pacchetto di turismo attivo in Abruzzo e avendo ricevuto molte risposte - più o meno 264 risposte da tutto il mondo praticamente - molte delle persone che non conoscevano la regione hanno menzionato questi aspetti, quindi quanto effettivamente sia semplice raggiungere il luogo, spostarsi nel luogo… Anche il fatto di avere la certezza che le attività siano fatte con regole o comunque con misure di sicurezza adeguate…
Interviewee 1: Guarda, ti interrompo per darti un dato. Adesso entriamo nel tecnicismo, perché poi tieni conto che noi, essendo un tour operator, siamo un'antenna di quello che succede nel mondo del turismo. Il problema principale dell'Abruzzo è l'abusivismo. Cioè, tu hai detto una parola: come si fanno le cose fatte in regola. C'è una disciplina rigidissima in Italia, in altri paesi europei non è così, che sostanzialmente dice esattamente chi può fare cosa e a quali condizioni: che cosa può fare la guida alpina, cosa può fare il maestro di sci, cosa può fare l'accompagnatore turistico, cosa può fare il tour operator… e in Abruzzo c'è un abusivismo ormai dilagante, quindi abbassamento del livello della qualità. Quindi il problema principale è proprio questo, che si è generato un meccanismo contorto e distorto del mercato, spesso spinto anche dalle istituzioni, che ascoltano poco il territorio, i bisogni espressi e i bisogni inespressi del territorio. Quindi anche quando la regione Abruzzo scrive un bando per favorire la competitività delle imprese del turismo, sempre legato al fatto "come faccio ad attrarre potenziali clienti", lo scrive non sulla base di una dimensione territoriale dalla quale sono emerse da parte degli operatori quali sono le necessità, ma sulla base di qualcosa che loro pensano sia dovuto o necessario al territorio e che, di fatto, poi crea dei mostri. Questo è quello che succede.
Researcher: Si… e purtroppo effettivamente questo è un problema da affrontare nella nostra regione.
Interviewee 1: Se invece vuoi una risposta tecnica, ti dico che ci sono due scelte da fare su come attrarre nuovi clienti. Questa è la risposta tecnica da direttore tecnico di un tour operator: allora, la domanda è "vuoi lavorare sulla destinazione o sul prodotto?". Perché di questo si tratta. Quando io propongo un prodotto turistico posso scegliere se lavorare sulla destinazione o sul prodotto. Il Salento è una destinazione turistica, l'Abruzzo non è una destinazione turistica.
Researcher: No, infatti.
Interviewee 1: Nonostante la governance regionale prevede le DMC e le PMC, cioè i club di prodotto e le compagnie di destinazione, di fatto non lo è… perché, lo abbiamo

detto prima, mancano i servizi di base. E allora l'unico modo per attrarre nuovi clienti è lavorare sul prodotto. Quindi, tu sei appassionata di bici? Allora io lavoro su quella tua parte emotiva perché non riuscirò mai a convincere te che abiti a Parigi a spendere i tuoi soldi per andare in un posto che non sai nemmeno dove sta sulla cartina. Ma forse ti riesco a convincere se lavoro sulla parte della tua passione, cioè la bicicletta, lo sci, l'arrampicata – se parliamo di vacanza attiva – se parliamo di vacanza culturale su altro.

Researcher: Assolutamente, grazie mille. È molto interessante fare queste considerazioni, specialmente per me che, diciamo, vengo introdotta adesso a questo mondo… Volevo chiederti, mi sei dare qualche informazione riguardo le informazioni demografiche delle persone che scelgono WolfTour? Sai magari dirmi, più o meno, il range di età, la provenienza…

Interviewee 1: So esattamente nei minimi dettagli questo, naturalmente, è il nostro lavoro quindi…

Researcher: Io chiedo ovviamente, ti chiedo questo tipo di domanda perché non so quello che riesci o che puoi condividere quindi ovviamente…

Interviewee 1: No vabbè a me fa piacere aiutare, e credo che sia un motivo anche per far poi crescere il territorio, no? Quando si diffondono…

Researcher: Assolutamente, questo verrà condiviso in Olanda davanti a molte persone…

Interviewee 1: Allora, ti faccio una domanda: questa domanda è legata a quello che succede oggi o prima della pandemia, o prima del terremoto del 2016 e 2018? Perché sono stati stravolti i dati…

Researcher: Eh, questo l'ho notato anch'io. Penso che sia, al momento, più interessante focalizzarci sull'oggi, perché non penso che si torni indietro con queste cose. Si andrà a cambiare, ma…

Interviewee 1: Ok, oggi il mercato è rappresentato per il 70% da un mercato nazionale. Prima era il contrario sulle aree interne, io escludo dal mio discorso il 75% delle presenze in Abruzzo che si fanno sulla costa dove ci sono famiglie abitudinarie ecc. Quei dati li puoi trovare sui siti della regione. Io ti parlo della parte restante: 70% mercato nazionale, all'interno di questo le regioni più rappresentate sono, in ordine di importanza (ti parlo di WolfTour)… sono, in ordine di importanza: Lombardia, Lazio, Campania, Veneto.

Researcher: Ok.

Interviewee 1: Una significativa fetta di questa torta è rappresentata dalla Lombardia; sia come turismo di ritorno, cioè persone che sono terza generazione o quarta generazione di originari abruzzesi; sia come persone che, sulla base del fatto che comunque è passata un po' l'idea che in Abruzzo c'è un ambiente ancora integro con zone wilderness ecc., vengono qui con l'idea di fare un'esperienza immersiva, cioè nel senso di vivere il territorio. Noi parliamo infatti di "genialità dei luoghi" – "genius logi", questo per darti un altro termine da crew che si usa adesso. Sul mercato straniero, prima il dato principale era legato al turismo proveniente dalla Francia: un turista molto esigente dal punto di vista dei servizi; oggi i dati principali sono legati a Inghilterra e Olanda a pari merito.

Researcher: Ottimo!

Interviewee 1: E poi tutto il resto. Olanda perché ci sono alcune famiglie olandesi che si sono trasferite in Abruzzo; te ne cito una, ad esempio, a Roccafinadamo: gestiscono un campeggio, e quindi c'è un flusso continuo di persone che spendono

magari pochissimo per alcuni servizi (per mangiare, per dormire) e spendono tanto per fare esperienze.

Researcher: Ottimo, questo è un mercato che penso abbia molto potenziale per il mondo delle esperienze, perché avendo vissuto anche quattro anni in Olanda, so dell'attenzione che mettono gli olandesi quando viaggiano in quello che fanno, per rendere il loro viaggio speciale e non una vacanza semplice al mare.

Interviewee 1: Ok, rispetto all'età… sono rappresentate in maniera uguale sia la fascia che va dai 29/30 fino ai 45/46 anni - noi li abbiamo classificati di ogni 15 anni i target, a differenza di quello che fa l'Istat, abbiamo fatto un po' più stretti i target - sia la fascia che va dai 50 anni ai 65… questo per la vacanza attiva, perché tu hai chiesto vacanza attiva, eh?

Researcher: Si!

Interviewee 1: Spesso portano con loro figli che sono anche minorenni, quindi nelle esperienze in canoa e le esperienze in bicicletta, nelle esperienze in arrampicata succede questo. Naturalmente ti segnalo anche la presenza, tra le tante esperienze che abbiamo fatto quest'estate, di americani, sudamericani tanti, brasiliani ad esempio…

Researcher: Americani e sudamericani, ok. Questo è ottimo, grazie mille! Almeno così ho anche un'idea… io ho ricevuto molte risposte anche dall'America; quindi, molte delle persone che hanno risposto al mio questionario provenivano dagli Stati Uniti. Ho anche ricevuto tante risposte che, appunto, includevano il bisogno di avere attività che vadano bene anche per i bambini; quindi, questi dati li ritrovo…

Interviewee 1: I due prodotti di più successo, diciamo così, sono: in prima posizione sicuramente l'esperienza in canoa o in kayak.

Researcher: Si, ho visto che avete una sezione a parte, infatti, per questo.

Interviewee 1: La canoa sul lago di Penne, anche con la risalita di un fiume. Poi gestiamo invece i kayak sulla Costa dei Trabocchi, sia a Punta Aderci, sia a Torino di Sangro. Così com'è sulla Costa dei Trabocchi, tu sei di Chieti quindi… facciamo escursioni in mountain bike elettrica. Però i primi due sono sicuramente la canoa come prima posizione e la seconda posizione, in termini numerici, si chiama "un giorno con il pastore".

Researcher: Ah ok, questo l'ho letto, sì.

Interviewee 1: Pensa che l'anno scorso, Radio Rai Uno, quindi il telegiornale di Radio Rai Uno, ha scelto questa esperienza come un'esperienza da raccontare e quindi è venuta a documentare in diretta mentre portavamo un gruppo a fare questa cosa. Si tratta di una cosa, per noi abruzzesi, quasi banale…

Researcher: Assolutamente!

Interviewee 1: Però di cosa si tratta: portiamo alle 10:00 - quindi non alle 04:00 come succede al pastore vero - in azienda agricola queste persone, loro portano a spasso il gregge. È quasi una cosa simbolica, perché poi il gregge in realtà è già uscito, quindi si fa per loro… però in un'azienda agricola vera, non un modello pensato per i turisti. Poi loro fanno il formaggio, poi si fa lo "sdijuno"… e quando spieghi cos'è lo "sdijuno" diventano tutti pazzi: cioè il segreto dei centenari abruzzesi. Ma questa cosa è diventata talmente virale che l'anno scorso Radio Rai Uno in diretta venne a documentare questa cosa.

Researcher: Ottimo, sembra molto interessante infatti ho notato…

Interviewee 1: Soprattutto stranieri partecipano.

Researcher: Immagino! Perché, come dicevamo, gli italiani tendono a considerare questo come un qualcosa di legato alla tradizione e non più interessante in un certo senso purtroppo. Allora… posso chiederti se riesci a darmi un'idea su quali sono gli aspetti che, secondo te, vengono più apprezzati e meno apprezzati di questo tipo di viaggio? Ti menziono qualche aspetto: magari anche il fatto di avere tanta organizzazione, perché ovviamente nella mia ricerca ho trovato anche persone che mi dicevano "io, se devo fare il turismo attivo, non voglio che venga già organizzato per me e voglio farlo io da me, voglio organizzare tutto da solo". Quali sono, secondo te, gli aspetti che vengono più apprezzati e meno apprezzati di questo tipo di turismo?

Interviewee 1: Allora, ti rispondo come WolfTour giusto? Non genericamente… ok. Ti do tre fattori che determinano il piccolo successo di WolfTour: il primo fattore è che noi facciamo tutto su misura, nel senso: noi è vero che lavoriamo su alcuni prodotti con prodotti calendarizzati - ti faccio l'esempio delle biciclette sulla Costa dei Trabocchi – là è una cosa necessaria per la buona riuscita del prodotto…

Researcher: Sì.

Interviewee 1: Ma il tutto il resto dei nostri prodotti è su misura, cioè, nel senso: noi lo facciamo per due persone, per sei persone, per otto persone… con gli orari che vanno bene a te. Se andiamo a fare la passeggiata in bicicletta e tu vuoi, per esempio, per dirti una battuta: due giorni fa abbiamo portato in bicicletta una ragazza che lavora per la Banca d'Italia a Francoforte e una ragazza che lavora per le Nazioni Unite a Roma… per dirti che poi vedi, più si alza il livello culturale, più c'è questa ricerca dell'esperienza immersiva. Questo è un altro dato importante; naturalmente spesso, a livello culturale alto corrisponde anche una maggiore capacità di spesa…

Researcher: Assolutamente

Interviewee 1: Neanche chiedono quanto costa l'esperienza: "si può fare questa cosa a questo orario con questa esigenza? Si" e quindi il fatto di farlo su misura è importante. Se tu vai a fare un giro in bicicletta e ti vuoi fermare a fare una foto o vuoi farti il bagno al fiume perché passi là, è chiaro che lo puoi fare solo se fai un'esperienza su misura, perché se sei con un gruppo e quello si deve fermare a fare la pipì, e quello vuole fare la foto, e quello che vuole mangiare il panino… diventa ingestibile!
Quindi noi lavoriamo molto sul "su misura"; questo comporta, certe volte, di lavorare anche sottocosto eh. Però è un investimento strategico per avere un mercato quasi di nicchia, che è quello che interessa a noi: a me non interessa fare numeri grandi, mi interessa fare numeri importanti. Tieni conto che tu, che mi hai detto che fai ricerche di mercato per la tesi… per me si tratta di fare ricerche di mercato, perché quando io vado a scrivere il progetto per la regione o per l'Ente Parco, è chiaro che se mi siedo al tavolo con un mio competitor di progettazione, e devo confrontarmi con chi vuole scrivere un progetto sulla canoa - e non è mai salito in canoa - è chiaro che là emerge la differenza. Quindi noi scriviamo i progetti su quello che facciamo realmente, perché io mi metto i pantaloncini e vado in canoa, prendo la bicicletta… e quando si parla di formazione, io stesso, ma anche gli altri ragazzi che stanno dentro WolfTour, siamo in strutture di arrampicata, accompagnatore di canoa… cioè abbiamo investito soldi e tempo per formarci. Ecco perché quando scriviamo un progetto, quel progetto è vero. Ci tengo molto a ribadire questa cosa.
Quindi ti ho detto tre cose su come attrarre…

Researcher: Si.
Interviewee 1: Ti dico due cose invece… questa è la prima, ti ho detto, il "su misura" che è l'aspetto fondamentale. Ma ti dico due cose che di primo impatto sono cose che i turisti giudicano quasi come una cosa negativa, ma quando vanno via, sono talmente dentro gli argomenti che li fanno propri: Il fatto di gesticolare tantissimo è diventato un modo per, come dire, creare empatia con loro, cioè all'inizio loro quasi sono intimoriti da questo fatto, noi invece lo accentuiamo tantissimo. E loro quando vanno via, dopo che abbiamo fatto il pranzo insieme ecc. sono contentissimi e ci prendono in giro, e diventa quasi una cosa simpatica. Però loro ce lo fanno notare tantissimo, soprattutto gli stranieri, questo fatto che gesticoliamo tantissimo - anche io che ne parlo adesso, lo sto facendo, quasi per farti capire quello che voglio dire… e questo quindi diventa un argomento quasi di creare distanza, perché dopo noi andiamo a spiegarlo questo fatto: perché noi abbiamo necessità di gesticolare? Perché voglio essere sicuro, soprattutto parlando una lingua diversa, che quello che io ho in mente tu l'hai capito […] quindi perché l'italiano è portato a gesticolare? Perché ha sempre questa necessità di farsi capire e farsi capire fino in fondo, capito? Quindi, come dire, il movimento delle mani è legato a questo. E noi cerchiamo di spiegarlo a loro e ci escono risate di ogni tipo.   Il terzo aspetto è il cibo. Ci prendono in giro perché dicono che noi siamo - noi genericamente - siamo ossessionati dal cibo, nel senso che la mattina appena ci si vede "dove andiamo a mangiare?"; appena finito il pranzo "dove andiamo stasera?"… Per loro non è così, cioè il cibo è semplicemente mettere la benzina per andare avanti.
Researcher: Si…
Interviewee 1: Quando non gli spieghiamo che il concetto di fare una cena non è semplicemente mangiare, mangiare bene sicuramente, ma è il momento conviviale della giornata perché ognuno ha la possibilità di confrontarsi, di parlare di una cosa bella, di condividere un problema con gli amici… Loro poi capiscono questa situazione, noi gli spieghiamo anche la differenza del concetto tra locanda - se parliamo con gli inglesi ad esempio – e pub. Cioè, il concetto di locanda in un paese va oltre il mangiare: è un posto di aggregazione, di condivisione ecc. "domani devo raccogliere le olive, chi viene ad aiutarmi?"… cioè queste cose loro non le capiscono; il concetto di piazza ecc. Quindi ripeto, "su misura", "cibo" e "gestualità" sono i tre fattori che fanno innamorare un po' della visita chi viene.
Researcher: Ottimo!
Interviewee 1: Quindi su questo noi ci lavoriamo tantissimo.
Researcher: Perfetto.
Interviewee 1: Lo storytelling di fatto è questo, si è sempre fatto, e adesso lo raccontiamo con metodi innovativi, però raccontiamo le nostre storie che sono queste, no?
Researcher: Sì, assolutamente. E invece qualche aspetto che non pensi venga molto apprezzato o qualche aspetto che pensi bisognerebbe migliorare ancora per andare incontro, appunto, ai clienti?
Interviewee 1: Sull'aspetto da migliorare ti rifaccio i tre assets che ti ho detto all'inizio, cioè la mobilità, la sicurezza e sanità, e l'istruzione e la formazione. Quello che non viene apprezzato - ma questa volta, in maniera anche orgogliosa, dico che non è il caso di WolfTour, perché noi abbiamo fatto tantissimo – è che c'è molta improvvisazione nel turismo, quindi tante volte noi ci troviamo persone che dicono

"ieri siamo andati là, ma cavoli, è successa questa cosa e ci siamo rimasti malissimo"… e quindi c'è molta improvvisazione: cioè, per accompagnare una persona in bicicletta non bisogna semplicemente saper andare in bicicletta. A parte che anche lì bisogna fare un percorso di formazione…

Researcher: Quindi anche poca qualità?

Interviewee 1: Assolutamente si! Sai quante sono le aziende che fanno realmente turismo in Abruzzo? Saranno 6/7. Che significa fare realmente servizi? Che se tu oggi alzi il telefono e dici "io oggi pomeriggio voglio venire al parco avventura" oppure vai su "Il Bosso" per esempio - che ti invito anche a intervistare…

Researcher: Si, infatti sono in contatto anche con Paolo…

Interviewee 1: E dici "voglio venire a fare la canoa". Se tu invece provi a chiamare altre situazioni, è difficile che riesci a fare quelle esperienze perché non sono fruibili, poi, di fatto, tranne per un piccolissimo periodo dell'anno. L'abusivismo si traduce anche in operatori che lavorano tantissimo a livello promozionale, che però di fatto non hanno i requisiti per fare quel lavoro. Tu sai che per essere tour operator, cioè vendere servizi che non gestisci direttamente, regolati da una legge nazionale e insieme da una legge regionale, bisognerebbe avere una serie di assicurazioni, una serie di competenze tecniche, una serie di strumentazioni certificate ecc. Domani si sveglia il tizio di Chieti, per dirti, e dice "no la voglio fare anche io questa cosa, quanto è figo are questa sta cosa" e mette in piedi un sistema totalmente abusivo. Quando arrivano persone da fuori percepiscono che c'è qualcosa che non funziona.

Researcher: Assolutamente, assolutamente… Va benissimo, grazie mille, questa risposta è molto utile anche per me, per evitare appunto di andare a fare gli stessi sbagli che vengono fatti da molti. Allora, poi volevo chiederti secondo te quali sono gli aspetti - e adesso forse questa domanda è stata già risposta quando mi hai menzionato i tre aspetti di appunto mobilità… - quali sono, secondo te, gli aspetti che sono necessari per sviluppare un pacchetto di turismo attivo? Cioè, quali sono gli aspetti che devono essere assolutamente presenti per, appunto, sviluppare un pacchetto che sia valido di turismo attivo, che riesca ad attirare le persone e che vada ad essere un pacchetto di qualità?

Interviewee 1: Di fatto ti ho già risposto, però aggiungo una riflessione a questo: noi, come Italia, abbiamo una grandissima tradizione nella creazione dei pacchetti turistici, e secondo me siamo i più bravi a noi siamo confrontati con i progetti trans-nazionali, siamo andati a New York, siamo andati a Londra, siamo andati anche ad Amsterdam a fare un evento ecc.
Io mi rendo conto che la competenza che c'è nella progettazione italiana sul turismo è elevatissima; quello che secondo me manca è la consapevolezza di avere questa competenza, e allora spesso mancano gli strumenti, la conoscenza degli strumenti…
Ti faccio un esempio: la legge nazionale sui cammini, recepita e pubblicata da una legge regionale, dice una cosa molto semplice: per chiamarti cammino, tu devi avere questi 11 requisiti.

Researcher: Si.

Interviewee 1: E allora questo approccio metodologico, che è banalissimo… tu mi hai chiesto" quali sono i fattori, i requisiti: sono scritti! Le leggi, basterebbe rispettare quelle cose. Allora, ti faccio l'esempio dei cammini, che di fatto è un prodotto turistico. Tu oggi avrai visto che, tra il boom delle biciclette e il boom dei camminatori, tutti parlano di cammino…

Researcher: Si.

Interviewee 1: Tecnicamente, io faccio una domanda da direttore di un tour operator: si, ma come si fa uno a chiamare "cammino"? Ci sono 11 requisiti… ce li hai? Sei un cammino; non ce li hai? Non sei un cammino, cioè non puoi andare sul mercato perché il tuo prodotto non è interessante.

Allora, tra questi undici te ne dico 3/4, così ti rispondo. Primo: ci vuole un organismo di gestione di quel prodotto; se il prodotto non è gestito, non è un prodotto turistico, quindi non è proponibile sul mercato. Io voglio fare il cammino "via del sale" - chi lo gestisce? Se c'è un problema, se devo dire qualcosa a chi chiedo? È individuabile quella cosa? Se non è individuabile […].

Seconda cosa: i requisiti fisici. Per chiamarti cammino, la legge regiornale dice che tu devi avere massimo il 40% di itinerario che si sviluppa sull'asfalto. Quindi è inutile che tu ti vai scervellando – tu generico naturalmente - a chiamare cammino quella cosa che hai in mente, dietro casa tua. Non è un cammino se non ha quel requisito! Perché c'è questa legge? Non è inventata da qualcuno; è frutto di anni e anni di confronti a livello nazionale e comunitario per capire cos'è un cammino e come funziona.

Terzo requisito: i servizi essenziali di base, che sarebbero dove dormo, dove mangio, e dove mi posso lavare - questi sono i servizi di base - devono stare, al massimo, nel raggio di 5km dall'itinerario; se tu mi fai un cammino dove io, se c'è il problema di dove mangiare, dove dormire o dove lavarmi, non riesco ad accedere a questi servizi… non è interessante per il mercato.

Allora, io ti ho detto tre caratteristiche, ne sono 11, ma solo su queste tre, io ti dico che il 90% di quelli che si spacciano come cammini non esistono sul mercato. Poi la gente si meraviglia perché non ci va nessuno; ma perché è sbagliato il punto di partenza: il tuo non è un prodotto turistico interessante per la vacanza attiva; perché chi fa la vacanza attiva ha bisogno della soddisfazione dei bisogni primari, che sono quelli che ti ho detto… i secondari invece sono più specializzati: se vado con la bicicletta - tu lavori in un hotel, mi hai detto - quando arrivo in un hotel, devo avere: 1- Un luogo o locale dove mettere in sicurezza la mia bicicletta che magari vale 10.000€; non mi puoi dire, come spesso succede, "no, mettila lì, tanto non la prende nessuno"… perché così succede in Abruzzo! No, se viene l'ospite dalla Germania, quello che gli stai dicendo, "mettila lì, tanto non la prende nessuno" non significa niente. Tu devi dare un locale allarmato dove non può entrare nessuno.

Researcher: Si.

Interviewee 1: 2- Mi devi mettere a disposizione un minimo di officina; io devo lubrificare la catena, devo lavarmi la maglietta che porto, devo poter rigonfiare una gomma… Questi sono i bisogni secondari, cioè specifici per ogni tipo di vacanza.

Researcher: Assolutamente, e questo è anche un altro…

Interviewee 1: Ti ho dato solo qualche riflessione…

Researcher: No, no, ma è ottimo!

Interviewee 1: Se vuoi ti posso girare il materiale!

Researcher: Assolutamente, accetterei qualsiasi cosa perché mi aiuta veramente tanto. Poi ti volevo fare un'altra domanda su un argomento che non ho affrontato appieno nella ricerca di mercato ma che, secondo me, è molto molto rilevante; è l'argomento della sostenibilità. La mia idea ovviamente, quando penso di voler sviluppare un pacchetto di turismo attivo, è comunque quella di essere positiva sia per l'ambiente, in quanto appunto a sostenibilità ambientale, ma anche sulle persone che abitano sul territorio stesso… quindi di avere un impatto positivo a tutto tondo,

ecco. Mi sai dire qualcosa di più sulla sostenibilità, appunto, non solo ambientale, ma anche riguardo al capitale umano che è coinvolto con WolfTour?

Interviewee 1: Su questo si, assolutamente, sostenibilità ambientale, finanziaria, economica e procedurale direi anche…

Researcher: Assolutamente.

Interviewee 1: Abbiamo detto prima che il problema è l'abusivismo

Researcher: Esatto sì

Interviewee 1: Io parlerei di progetti candidabili, che significa? Che se io ho in mente di fare un punto informazioni o una banchina su un fiume, io devo essere sicuro che quella cosa si può fare anche a livello autorizzativo e procedurale. Ma io ti sto parlando di una cosa che non esiste. E questo succede sempre nei bandi, perché molte aziende abruzzesi sono "costrette" ad accedere ai fondi pubblici per acquistare, non so, le biciclette, piuttosto che l'attrezzatura, ma quella cosa che ho in mente si può fare? Che tipo di autorizzazioni servono? Quindi cantierabilità - anzi io parlerei semplicemente di immediata cantierabilità dell'iniziativa che tu vuoi mettere in atto. Aspetta, qual era la domanda? Mi sono scordato.

Researcher: Sostenibilità, in generale, come la affrontate.

Interviewee 1: Sulla sostenibilità invece ti do un metodo di lavoro, perché la sostenibilità non può essere semplicemente una dichiarazione di intenti, ma deve essere misurabile.

Researcher: Assolutamente.

Interviewee 1: Anzi, tutto quello che io voglio fare in teoria si dovrebbe misurare, dovrebbe essere misurabile. Cioè quante persone io riesco a portare in canoa in una stagione? Se prevedo 3000 e faccio 4000 sono stato bravo, se ne faccio 1000 ho toppato. Poi i motivi saranno colpa mia colpa, di fattori esterni, avrà piovuto tutti i giorni... e va bene. Sulla sostenibilità del capitale umano, cioè sostenibilità del valore del capitale umano, noi abbiamo fatto tantissimi interventi. Tieni conto che noi siamo azienda madrina in ambito universitario, ed esempio noi con l'università di Pescara ospitiamo i tirocini formativi, dove non solo i ragazzi vengono con noi e stanno un periodo con noi e vedono tutto quello che succede all'interno della società che si opera di turismo; ma noi, gestendo anche una scuola di escursionismo naturalistico – perché WolfTour, tu magari conosci solo WolfTour, ma diciamo che è un mondo dove attorno ci stanno tante altre situazioni: c'è una rete di impresa, la prima fatta in Abruzzo ad esempio, c'è una scuola di escursionismo naturalistico riconosciuto dalla regione, ci sono una serie di progetti - quindi non solo noi lavoriamo con questi ragazzi, ma alla fine del nostro percorso questi ragazzi ricevono – e parliamo di vacanza attiva sempre – tre attestati di frequenza che sono… a livello di curriculum attestano delle competenze. E sono: l'accompagnatore di canoa canadese, la guida local di MTB (mountain bike) e l'addetto al parco avventura. Quindi sono anche professionalizzanti, essendo che per loro, molti di loro, poi cominciano a lavorare con noi.

Researcher: Ottimo!

Interviewee 1: Quindi non solo misuriamo il numero le persone che riusciamo a formare, ma ti dico anche che il 30% di questi, cioè quelli che sostanzialmente risiedono nei territori dove andiamo ad operare, comincia a lavorare noi. Chiaramente, quelli che vengono a fare il corso dalla Basilicata poi tornano a casa, ma chi risiede qui vicino comincia a lavorare, quindi è molto interessante. Non solo: nei progetti che noi facciamo, ad esempio con il GAL (Gruppi di Azione Locale) o ad

esempio con le DMC (Destination Management Companies) ecc., noi inseriamo sempre delle attività di animazione territoriale e di formazione continua. In questo momento, ti dico oggi che io il 22, 23 e 24 Settembre vado a Sextantio, che è l'hotel di Santo Stefano…
Researcher: L'albergo diffuso…
Interviewee 1: Noi facciamo formazione ai dipendenti di Sextantio, è un progetto di formazione continua. Il 27 Settembre facciamo formazione all'Abruzzo Marina Hotel a Silvi Marina, l'hotel più grande di Silvi. Questo per dire che noi investiamo tantissimo nella nostra formazione e noi stessi poi siamo formatori degli operatori che collaborano con noi.
Researcher: Ottimo.
Interviewee 1: Ti do un altro: questa formazione, che ha un costo naturalmente, noi la finanziamo con i progetti di Fondimpresa - che è il fondo interprofessionale - quindi per questi hotel che ti ho detto, Sextantio ed Abruzzo Marina (ma ne sono tantissimi, adesso vediamo quello che succede questa settimana, il costo della formazione è zero. Nel senso, noi non solo facciamo la formazione a questi soggetti ma gli troviamo anche il canale di finanziamento per farla a costo zero. Perché poi il problema vero della sostenibilità è quello economico: è vero che tutti vorrebbero formarsi ma è pure vero che costa formarsi, sia denaro sia tempo. Perché se io mi sto formando, non sto facendo nel frattempo un'altra cosa.
Researcher: Si, assolutamente… e invece un aspetto molto più pratico per quanto riguarda appunto la sostenibilità ambientale? Perché ovviamente in questi anni è diventato un tema molto molto importante, ed è prevalente in qualsiasi ambito.
Interviewee 1: Ti faccio due esempi su quello pratico…
Researcher: Vai!
Interviewee 1: Il primo è che noi, sempre nel lago di Penne, noi due giornate all'anno le dedichiamo a ripulire il lago da rifiuti; e questo non solo è un dato concreto, nel senso che poi pesiamo quanti rifiuti abbiamo recuperato, che dal fiume arrivano al lago, ma coinvolgiamo le scuole! Quindi tutti i ragazzi delle scuole sanno che quella è un'attività sostenibile per l'ambiente. Facciamo dei progetti di ri-piantumazione in alcune situazioni, e all'interno dei rapporti che abbiamo con le scuole o con i campi estivi - perché noi facciamo anche campi estivi - facciamo dei laboratori sull'ambiente; quindi sia in ambito faunistico, ad esempio noi ci chiamiamo WolfTour, wolf come "lupo" appunto, quindi sia con il lupo – vicino ai nostri uffici c'è un'area di studio, da parte dell'università, dei lupi, ci sono sei lupi. Quindi vengono ragazzi da Berlino, da Milano, da Roma, a studiare questi lupi, il comportamento dei lupi; e quindi noi su quello ci lavoriamo tantissimo. C'è un orto botanico sul quale lavoriamo tantissimo ecc. Abbiamo un rapporto con uno zoologo che si chiama Osvaldo Locasciulli che, nei momenti più importanti dell'anno, viene con noi a incontrare i ragazzi.
Researcher: Benissimo, grazie mille. Le domande per quanto riguarda, appunto, gli argomenti che volevo affrontare e le informazioni di cui avevo bisogno sono terminate.
[…]
Interviewee 1: Va benissimo.
Researcher: Grazie mille.
Interviewee 1: Ci sentiamo, ciao!
Researcher: Ciao!

Interview 2

Interviewee 2: …scusami, ero in un'altra telefonata!
Researcher: Non ti preoccupare!
Interviewee 2: Diciamo così, che mi difendo… Come stai?
Researcher: Non ti preoccupare assolutamente. Sto bene, tu?
Interviewee 2: Bene, grazie, dove sei?
Researcher: Sono a Chieti.
Interviewee 2: Ah, perfetto, perché tu sei abruzzese giusto?
Researcher: Si si, sono di Chieti, esatto. Ho fatto l'università ad Amsterdam ma sono nata a Chieti e ho fatto la scuola, diciamo, fino al liceo a Chieti.
Interviewee 2: Ok bene bene, allora torni in Olanda o resti in Abruzzo?
Researcher: Torno in Olanda tra più o meno un mese per laurearmi, e adesso sto lavorando in Abruzzo sto lavorando per la catena Phi Hotels, non so se conosci magari Donato Sambuco… E' una catena che ha sede a Guardiagrele; la compagnia si chiama Xenia Spa…
Interviewee 2: Si, bene! E quindi come vanno le cose?
Researcher: Bene bene, abbiamo 7, al momento 7, ed il prossimo anno gestiremo 8 strutture in tutta Italia; io perlopiù mi occupo di Revenue Management e dal nostro lato le cose stanno andando bene, dopo il covid ci stiamo riprendendo…
Interviewee 2: Bene, complimenti!
Researcher: Grazie… ehm allora, ti dico subito le informazioni più importanti: prima di tutto, se per te non è un problema registrerò questa chiamata solo per poi andare a trascrivere il tutto e tradurlo in inglese, perché deve essere incluso nella tesi;
Researcher: Va benissimo! […] allora ti dirò: le informazioni che mi dai possono essere mantenute confidenziali.
Interviewee 2: Non c'è assolutamente problema!
Researcher: Se preferisci non condividere il tuo nome e il ruolo che hai nella compagnia o anche il nome della compagnia, posso nascondere queste informazioni…
Interviewee 2: No no assolutamente, anzi va bene, diffondiamo e promuoviamo il verbo in maniera positiva!
Researcher: Ottimo, è la stessa cosa che mi ha detto Antonio da WolfTour. In più, cercherò di mantenere questa intervista abbastanza breve, perché come ti dicevo poi ovviamente andrò a trascrivere il tutto quindi, per entrambi, penso sia meglio mantenerla breve. Allora se non vuoi dire qualcosa adesso, posso iniziare con le domande…
Interviewee 2: No, vai!
Researcher: Va benissimo. La prima è un pochino conoscitiva; vorrei chiederti un pochino di te, de "Il Bosso" e anche delle persone che scelgono Il Bosso.
Interviewee 2: Allora iniziamo, come dire, in maniera formale, presentandomi un po': io sono Paolo Setta, ho 42 anni (ahimè, aggiungerei) e dirigo le attività turistiche; quindi sono direttore delle attività turistiche del gruppo Il Bosso. Per attività turistiche parliamo di un portfolio di oltre 10 esperienze che vanno dal nostro cavallo di battaglia, da quell'esperienza da cui tutto ha avuto origine in qualche modo, che è l'escursione in canoa canadese sul Fiume Tirino - a Capestrano, quindi nel cuore della valle del Tirino, a ridosso delle tre sorgenti principali; questo è il tratto più suggestivo, dove le acque si confondono con il turchese del cielo […]; a volte ci sono delle giornate in cui veramente in alcuni punti, e questa cosa è fantastica, si ha

lo stesso colore delle acque e del cielo… qualcosa di incredibile; e le attività culturali sono diverse perché parliamo di escursioni in canoa canadese sul Fiume Tirino, escursione in Kayak sul Fiume Tirino, e poi abbiamo il trekking con le varie declinazioni: per trekking intendiamo tutte le esperienze con gli scarponi, nelle quattro stagioni. Ma anche Nordic Walking e i cammini anche che stiamo introducendo, oltre alle ciaspolate nel periodo invernale. E poi abbiamo il Centro Visita del Lupo, che è un'area faunistica e di proprietà del corpo forestale dello Stato, e dove sono ospitati una serie di animali selvatici molto importanti: e sono animali anche identitari dal punto di vista della biodiversità Abruzzese, perché c'è il lupo, chiaramente, c'è un'esemplare di lupo, ma ci sono pure cervi, caprioli daini; ci sono chiaramente, siccome è anche un'area didattica, dei cinghiali, ci sono i rapaci insomma… quindi un'area con all'interno anche un museo dedicato ad un target plurale, con una particolare attenzione alle scuole e alle famiglie.

Researcher: Ottimo!

Interviewee 2: Poi parliamo,tra le attività turistiche, di tutte quelle che sono le molteplici proposte cicloturistiche, che vanno dalle pedalate in E-Bike nella Valle del Tirino, alle proposte cicloturistiche sempre in E-Bike tra i borghi del Gran Sasso, con partenza da Castel del Monte toccando i borghi più belli della baronia, che sono appunto Calascio, Castelvecchio Calvisio e Santo Stefano di Sessanio. Poi c'è la proposta giovane - ma che ci sta dando anche questa delle belle soddisfazioni - con le pedalate in E-Bike nelle terre dello zafferano, quindi con partenza da Navelli e si vedrà su una parte l'altopiano di Navelli, e poi c'è questa visita bellissima nel borgo di Bominaco e con gli affreschi nell'oratorio San Pellegrino. Poi abbiamo tutto il progetto de "il Bosso a mare": il Bosso a Mare è un'attività, un progetto integrato partito nel 2022 (doveva partire prima poi ci sono stati gli anni della pandemia del covid quindi nel 2021… perdonami, è partito l'anno scorso). E il Bosso a Mare prevede diciamo un'esplosione, chiamiamola così, di quella che era l'esperienza consolidata, sia dal punto di vista delle attività a contatto con l'acqua, sia delle attività cicloturistiche e anche escursionistiche, sulla Costa dei Trabocchi. Quindi il Bosso a Mare è, come dire, un insieme all'interno del quale ci sono dei sottoinsiemi importanti, che sono escursioni in kayak sulla Costa dei Trabocchi con il progetto "Trabocchi e Mare in kayak", "Tra Bike e Mare", che sono le proposte cicloturistiche in E-Bike - che noi realizziamo, in questo caso, in partenariato con WolfTour -. Poi abbiamo la proposta mista, invece tutta nostra, che sono appunto le pedalate sulla Via Verde con aperitivo serale sul trabocco…

Researcher: Bellissimo!

Interviewee 2: …E poi abbiamo anche le esperienze di Nordic Walking sulla Costa dei Trabocchi.

Researcher: Molto bene.

Interviewee 2: A questo dobbiamo aggiungere, come proposta turistica, anche la ricettività con questo nostro "moderno ostello", che è un concetto… diciamo, è un ostello che strizza l'occhio al profilo europeo della ricettività, quindi non è un ostello vecchio e poco attento all'accoglienza, il comfort, la cortesia, la pulizia, anche l'arredamento. Invece la nostra struttura rispecchia perfettamente un po' quelli che sono gli standard che noi cerchiamo di praticare nelle attività. E poi c'è questa nostra sede, e questa nuova offerta da quando siamo arrivati nella nuova sede, enogastronomica con l'ecoristoro sulla terrazza panoramica che si affaccia sulla Valle del Tirino; queste sono, diciamo, le principali attività che poi, chiaramente, hanno

delle […] (?) con il turismo scolastico, con giornate dedicate alle aziende che ci chiedono, sempre più in maniera crescente, di fare teambuilding esperienziale. Nelle nostre proposte di teambuilding ci sono momenti dedicati alla formazione ma ci sono anche momenti, e sono sempre più ricercati a fianco dei momenti formativi, c'è anche la condivisione di qualche esperienza delle nostre, che in qualche modo vanno a completare la giornata, il soggiorno di quell'azienda o di quel gruppo di lavoro che vogliono sì informarsi, ma vogliono rafforzare anche il loro spirito di coesione aziendale, ecco.

Researcher: Ottimo, ottimo, grazie mille. Chi sceglie Il Bosso? Mi hai detto, hai già menzionato qualcuno come aziende, mi hai detto ovviamente dei cicloturisti/cicloamatori che penso vi scelgano tanto… Se dovessi farmi un profilo del tipico cliente de Il Bosso quale sarebbe?

Interviewee 2: Innanzitutto ti dico che è ormai consolidata la cifra, cioè superiamo da diversi anni la cifra di 50.000 presenze paganti ogni anno - cioè 50.000 persone che pagano un nostro servizio.

Researcher: Si…

Interviewee 2: Ora, è chiaro che questi sono i numeri diretti, cioè quelli che noi riusciamo a censire perché accedono, attraverso il pagamento di un'esperienza, alle nostre proposte. Ma non è un'eresia dire che noi interagiamo invece anche indirettamente… E questo è un dato molto importante perché ti faccio un esempio: pur non facendo un'attività direttamente con noi, ci sono tantissime persone che magari ricevono delle informazioni da noi o vanno a dormire e scelgono un luogo perché hanno visto nella nostra comunicazione, magari, quella roba lì; e questo te lo dico perché ci viene riferito, per esempio, dalle strutture ricettive e dicono "guarda, avete parlato della Rocca di Calascio", per dire, o "avete fatto un trekking sulla Rocca di Calascio"… Ci sono state delle persone che non hanno partecipato ma, vedendo la promozione, ci hanno scelto. Quindi, questo è un dato che a volte non viene regolarmente considerato anche dagli addetti ai lavori, però ha un significato! Perché promuovere un territorio significa non soltanto farlo attraverso le attività dirette… ma se tu segui la nostra comunicazione, la nostra comunicazione parla molto di territorio, avendo poi delle ricadute sulle nostre attività. Cioè, non è una comunicazione prettamente commerciale…

Researcher: Assolutamente.

Interviewee 2: Però noi spesso parliamo di territorio. Il profilo è un profilo abbastanza ampio perché noi lavoriamo con le scuole e quindi turismo scolastico - quindi ragazzi - significa 7.000/8.000 ragazzi ogni anno che fanno delle attività con noi. Quindi con il target partiamo dai bambini ai ragazzi… considerando anche che noi d'estate organizziamo i campi natura, quindi quel target per noi è importante. Perché? Perché quel target è, in qualche modo, un amplificatore rispetto alle loro famiglie; ma, allo stesso tempo, un altro target importante sono le famiglie, che prevedono adulti e bambini. Quindi questi sono i due target di riferimento: la scuola, quindi i bambini e i ragazzi, e le famiglie. Molto anche la fascia giovane, i Millennials, chiamiamoli così… cioè attraverso una serie di attività fresche e dinamiche come il kayak sul Tirino, il kayak sulla Costa dei Trabocchi, le stesse pedalate o gli stessi trekking fatti in un determinato modo, richiamano i millennials. Quindi anche il pubblico che va dai venti ai trent'anni è un pubblico che ha la sua fetta di rilievo nella torta, diciamo. E da non escludere anche gli stranieri; perché se è vero che negli ultimi anni si sono fermati ma noi lavoriamo, diciamo… è considerevole la presenza. E

questo perché? Mi permetto di fare un ragionamento ad ampio spettro, senza filtri, perché ritengo che la nostra realtà - che è nata nel 1998 - è la realtà che ha l'ambizione, non la presunzione, di considerarsi un vero player, qualificato e professionale, che non ha nulla da invidiare a proposte che avvengono nelle località e nelle destinazioni più famose (che possono essere Trentino, Toscana…). Cioè, noi abbiamo deciso di fare questo lavoro in maniera professionale e credo che un turista, che viaggia e che arriva su questo territorio, cerca sostanza, e anche la corretta forma di prodotto…

Researcher: …e anche una professionalità non indifferente, immagino!

Interviewee 2: Assolutamente! Aggiungo che noi investiamo molto sulla formazione del nostro personale, e questo in qualche modo ci permette di poter lavorare su standard di qualità medio/alti.

Researcher: Ottimo, grazie mille. Questa è stata una risposta molto completa, grazie. E mi ritrovo anche un po' con i dati che sono risultati dalla mia ricerca di mercato, quindi ottimo. Allora, la seconda domanda è: quali sono gli aspetti…

Interviewee 2: Stiamo ancora alla seconda domanda?

Researcher: Sì ma ne sono solo quattro, non ti preoccupare! Quali sono gli aspetti che più influenzano il vostro mercato? Quali pensi che siano gli aspetti che più possono convincere il vostro mercato a scegliervi o a non scegliervi?

Interviewee 2: Cosa intendiamo per aspetti? Aiutami su questa cosa…

Researcher: Qualsiasi aspetto: io ho fatto questa domanda anche in ambito della ricerca di mercato che ho condotto - e per questa ricerca ho ricevuto, più o meno, 260 risposte da tutto il mondo. Quindi, ho chiesto quali potrebbero essere gli aspetti… gli ho dato degli esempi: ad esempio, promozioni e scontistiche, oppure una forte presenza sui social, o anche l'aspetto della sicurezza… quindi in realtà qualsiasi aspetto che tu pensi sia rilevante va benissimo!

Interviewee 2: Allora, sicuramente un aspetto importante è la nostra reputazione.

Researcher: Ottimo!

Interviewee 2: A volte questa cosa non viene considerata o, molte volte, non può essere considerata da tutti, perché non tutti - tu mi perdonerai, io sono una persona molto diretta, cioè mi piace dire le cose come stanno –

Researcher: Fai bene, assolutamente…

Interviewee 2: Per me la reputazione che abbiamo, la reputazione è il risultato di una storia ultraventennale, ed è la qualità che mettiamo in campo, ed è la serietà che cerchiamo di garantire… Perché essere seri non è, come dire, un valore "triste"; è un valore pieno secondo me. La serietà è un valore… noi cerchiamo di essere seri, professionali, e cerchiamo anche di fare una comunicazione che sia attenta, come dire, che rispecchi il nostro profilo. Cioè, a noi ci piace spesso metterci la faccia, perché vogliamo che le persone possano vedere, attraverso i social o attraverso altre piattaforme, vedersi raccontare un'esperienza. Poi quando arrivano a farla, ritrovano quelle stesse persone, o comunque… perché è una forma anche di garanzia il metterci la faccia; quindi gli aspetti chiaramente sono molteplici.

Io partirei dall'aspetto della reputazione, che racchiude un po' tutti i valori […]. Poi chiaramente un lavoro attento, di una comunicazione e di una promozione che viene fatta, a priori, con una pianificazione. Quindi noi… non so se tu hai guardato un po' la nostra comunicazione…

Researcher: Certo!

Interviewee 2: Ti faccio un esempio: la produzione dei video. Noi investiamo, e sono dei video di qualità: non facciamo semplicemente degli short video usa e getta che chiaramente devono essere utilizzati per una comunicazione quotidiana. Ma ogni attività ha il suo - chiamiamolo così - video istituzionale o foto istituzionale, cioè incarichiamo dei professionisti che fanno questo lavoro e che ci permettono di poter esprimere anche autorevolezza, cioè di rafforzare quei messaggi, e dire "noi dal '98 possiamo dire che lo abbiamo un po' inventato il turismo esperienziale in Abruzzo". Perché quando abbiamo iniziato a parlare noi nel '98 di turismo esperienziale non c'erano tantissimi, insomma, io non ricordo tante altre realtà. Per fortuna poi sono arrivate, e aggiungo che alcune hanno quella missione di fare bene questo lavoro e sono forse operatori turistici. Poi sono arrivati anche gli operatori commerciali, che dicono di fare turismo, ma è un'altra cosa e un occhio attento riesce a riconoscere. Quindi, questi sono gli aspetti. Poi un altro aspetto è il passaparola, perché? Perché tantissime persone ancora oggi arrivano perché hanno sentito parlare, e perché in qualche modo sono stati spinti dai racconti di chi precedentemente ha usufruito dei nostri servizi. Ed aggiungo che non è trascurabile un altro aspetto, che è il ritorno di chi ha fatto l'attività con noi. Questo è un altro elemento, secondo me, di qualità. Perché tantissime, e dico tantissime persone, che magari sono state in bici con noi, poi vengono a fare la canoa… O persone che sono state a fare la canoa poi vanno a visitare il centro visite del lupo o fanno un trekking. Quindi questi aspetti rafforzano sempre quel concetto di reputazione, quel concetto di qualità, di serietà. Questi sono gli aspetti… e un'altra cosa che credo sia importante […] nessuno ha l'unanimità, quindi è chiaro che neanche noi possiamo godere dell'unanimità dei consensi… ma posso dire che un altro aspetto importante è la promozione che ci arriva da tantissimi altri operatori, soprattutto nel mondo della ricettività che, se devono dare un consiglio ai loro ospiti, consigliano di fare delle esperienze con noi; perché credo che al ritorno questi ospiti, da quello che sappiamo, ringraziano sempre per quel consiglio.

Researcher: Allora, su questo io penso che tu ti possa ritenere anche soddisfatto, perché i risultati della mia ricerca di mercato hanno detto esattamente che, tra gli aspetti più importanti, ci sono proprio: avere dei video, una qualità di comunicazione sui social importante, quindi video fatti bene che trasmettono davvero il messaggio; e anche specialmente recensioni positive, raccomandazioni da amici, parenti… Quindi su questi aspetti ti posso dire che davvero li hai elencati proprio come sono risultati a me, nella mia ricerca. Quindi ottimo!

Interviewee 2: Va bene!

[…]

Researcher: La terza domanda: parlando di turismo attivo, turismo anche di avventura - perché in realtà nel mondo del turismo si fa ancora poco questa distinzione, tra il turismo attivo e quello di avventura - io vorrei chiederti: uno degli aspetti che ho trovato, e che reputo anche io più importante di questo tipo di movimento turistico, è quello della sostenibilità; non solo sostenibilità ambientale, ma anche sostenibilità per quanto riguarda i territori che vengono toccati, le persone che sono coinvolte… quindi avere un impatto positivo, fare un turismo che non vada poi a rovinare un territorio. Voi de "Il Bosso" come affrontate questo tema?

Interviewee 2: guarda, noi non ci dimentichiamo mai di essere un centro di educazione ambientale e un organismo di formazione accreditato dalla Regione Abruzzo. Questo significa che, nelle nostre origini e nel nostro DNA, la

sensibilizzazione, l'educazione, la formazione alle tematiche ambientali non sono solo una priorità: fanno parte del nostro modus operandi e soprattutto, in ogni esperienza che noi andiamo a progettare e a proporre, non c'è mai… è chiaro che, come dire, purtroppo dal momento che noi compiamo un passo, impattiamo; semplicemente perché quello che indossiamo ha avuto una conseguenza, ahimè, ancora sulla sostenibilità ambientale. Però noi cerchiamo, noi non abbiamo mai scelto di fare - tu parlavi di turismo attivo e avventura – noi non abbiamo mai scelto di fare le attività in Jeep o con i Quad, perché pensiamo che quella roba lì non è turismo attivo, e soprattutto men che meno è sostenibile. Poi, tra l'altro, noi abbiamo un concetto più ampio di sostenibilità perché, ti faccio un esempio: nella nostra stagione turistica lavorano più di 150 persone. E questo è anche un dato importante: ora, per noi sostenibilità è un concetto diciamo appunto molto più ampio, non si limita alla sostenibilità ambientale… perché di queste 150 persone, più della metà sono dei ragazzi che studiano come te, sono quindi degli studenti universitari che vivono in questi piccoli borghi dell'entroterra e che tornerebbero molto probabilmente 10/15 giorni l'anno ad agosto; invece, lavorando con noi e facendo la stagione con noi, tornano magari da Maggio e ripartono adesso a fine Settembre e tornano nelle loro destinazioni (che possono essere le città abruzzesi ma molti anche tornano da fuori regione). Questo secondo noi è un elemento di sostenibilità sociale e demografica importantissimo, perché frena quel fenomeno dello spopolamento e dell'involuzione demografica delle nuove generazioni di cui i piccoli borghi, soprattutto, risentono. Cioè, è chiaro che le nuove generazioni tendono e tenderanno sempre ad andare, per fortuna, a vivere esperienze fuori dai confini; poi c'è chi torna, come me, non so se augurarlo anche a te, ma comunque è stato fuori e poi torna perché decide di lavorare e mettersi a disposizione per dare un contributo alla propria regione. C'è chi magari rimane fuori, sì, però il fatto che tutti quei ragazzi tornano nel loro paese, nei loro paesi, nei loro borghi, sul loro territorio, è un fenomeno di sostenibilità straordinario, perché? Perché là anzitutto andiamo a lavorare sulla conoscenza e sull'orgoglio identitario di questi ragazzi, che non sono ragazzi che magari se ne fregano delle loro origini […] ma io ti posso assicurare che i ragazzi che lavorano con noi sono dei ragazzi che maturano un po' prima rispetto ai loro coetanei, e maturano soprattutto in termini di saggezza, in termini di appartenenza… e quindi credo che questo sia un elemento di sostenibilità straordinario. A parte il fatto che per sostenibilità intendiamo anche la sostenibilità economica, perché questi ragazzi - adesso mi sto concentrando soprattutto sui più giovani che lavorano con noi - questi ragazzi con una stagione riescono ad essere anche autonomi nella loro vita universitaria. E quindi questo credo che sia anche un altro elemento…

Researcher: Certamente, si.

Interviewee 2: Dal punto di vista della sostenibilità, tornando alla sostenibilità ambientale: dove noi operiamo cerchiamo di impiegare sempre innanzitutto persone e figure che sono altamente qualificate, quindi biologi, laureati in scienze ambientali, scienze naturali, o comunque che hanno lauree equipollenti, che sono molto attenti alle tematiche naturalistiche, paesaggistiche, ambientali… Ma ti dico di più: molto spesso, e lo facciamo forse in maniera più silente e non eclatante, andiamo a intervenire e a ripulire da micro discariche, piuttosto che da offese che vengono fatte ancora oggi con l'abbandono dei rifiuti, quelle aree dove noi interveniamo. Perché è chiaro che non possiamo diventare noi paladini della giustizia ambientale, però cerchiamo di fare anche questo; se c'è bisogno organizziamo dei momenti, delle

giornate ecologiche, per salvaguardare questi angoli del nostro territorio che a volte si ritrovano con rifiuti, abbandonati con il fenomeno delle discariche diffuse… e su queste cose, insomma, cerchiamo anche di contribuire in questo modo.

Researcher: Va benissimo, grazie mille! […] Scusami per il tempo che ti ho rubato!

Interviewee 2: Non ti preoccupare, grazie a te!

Researcher: Buon lavoro e buona giornata.

Interviewee 2: Ciao!

9.5.2 Interviews Translations

Interview 1

Researcher: Good morning, hi!
Interviewee 1: Good morning to you, hi. Here we are!
Researcher: First of all, nice to meet you! I'm Lucia.
Interviewee 1: How are you doing? Wait, le me to move the phone in a way that is more comfortable for me.
Researcher: Alright, then I'll do the same too… ok here it is! So, at the moment, as I told you, I am writing my thesis; I went to university in Amsterdam, I studied Hospitality Management and I decided to write my thesis on active tourism in Abruzzo.
Interviewee 1: And where are you from?
Researcher: I'm from Chieti. Now I'm in Italy, I'm working for a hotel chain called Phi Hotels. I don't know if you know it, with Donato Sambuco... I'm just trying to graduate and I have to deliver my thesis in three weeks, more or less, so I'm trying to finish the last things.
Interviewee 1: Okay, I'm available to help!
Researcher: Thank you very much!
Interviewee 1: Actually, over the last 10 years, many have done theses or researches either on WolfTour or on one of the projects that WolfTour followed, and we have always given maximum availability.
Researcher: Great, thank you very much! Also I have seen that, in fact, experiential tourism, or anyways also active and sustainable tourism, is a trend that I have observed is growing a lot. And I think Abruzzo is a region with a lot of potential in this sense, since it is still - let's say – not very exploited, which is both a good thing but also something that could be changed in a positive way. So, first of all let me tell you: at the end of this call I will send you a document to be signed, just to give you the certainty that your data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. If sometimes I get a few words wrong it's because I am writing the whole thesis in English, so sometimes the translation is perhaps not exact, or I use the wrong word… I apologize for that. I can already tell you that your name will not be included in the thesis unless you say that I can do it. But to maintain confidentiality, as I said, I can also only include the job title or only the name of the company which, as I told you, I have already included as "best practice" in the thesis.
Interviewee 1: You can choose, if you include it and it is useful for you, it's fine for me.
Researcher: That's fine, thank you very much. So, as I told you, I won't ask you many questions; I will try to keep the whole interview or this whole process short and I will immediately start with the first question, that is if you do not want to add something...
Interviewee 1: No no, maybe ask me the questions first and then in the end, if I can, I will help you with some reflections, since I don't know the subject well yet.
Researcher: That's fine. So, I will give you a brief introduction: I have already conducted market research, I have obviously already conducted research on those who are the tourists who currently visit Abruzzo. I saw, more or less, the average

age: that they are very young or old tourists, and therefore there is an age gap that is not very "motivated" to visit our Region; and this is the gap that would actually be much more useful in the field of active tourism, because it is 30-40 years old: people who have spending power and who obviously still have enough energy and physical ability to engage in active experiences. So that's why I wanted to ask you: at the moment, which market is choosing WolfTour? What are the characteristics of this market? Plus, I wanted to ask you: what do you think the potential market is? Who do you think are the people who should be, let's say, "addressed" for active tourism projects in the future? (Also considering Covid and how all the habits of travelers have changed)…

Interviewee 1: So, let's say that the tourism market, as you photographed in this scenario of recent years (as a result of external factors of course, earthquakes, the Rigopiano avalanche, and the pandemic), has been completely upset several times. I'll give you an example that it is useful in the elaboration of the document you are making: last year, with the closure of the borders, of flights and therefore of tourism or recreational activities, Abruzzo was, as never before, "invaded" by people who love to travel but who had never been to Abruzzo, because they do not consider it - you said so in your passage - an attractive territory, for various reasons. The main reason is the absence of basic tourism services. I categorize tourism services into basic services and secondary services; we can take the example of bycicle touring, which is the trend that moves most people in Abuzzo at the moment, if we exclude the habitués of the sea - that is, those people who make up 75% of the presences in Abruzzo, people who have been coming here for thirty years and are therefore difficult both to study and to understand when talking about potential tourism, as you did. And so, many people came from Tuscany, which is a market that had never touched Abruzzo; the incoming flow from Lombardy, which is a historical market, has tripled; tourism coming from Veneto, which is a historical market that was exclusively linked to the sea, has increased fivefold in the inland areas. I am giving you some real data. Small towns that, last year or before the 2009 earthquakes, counted 15,000/20,000 visitors a year, saw 80,000 visitors this year. I'm not talking about presences intended as overnight stays, but attendances linked to tourist events etc. The market is "drugged" by everything that has happened, and the pandemic has created this situation; the consequence of this in the very short period has been that many have understood that tourism can be a way to make a territory economically sustainable; in reality, this is a consequence that will become like a "boomerang" in the coming years: that is, a situation has arisen in which many have improvised being tour operators, therefore providing a very low quality of services, etc. So, to answer your question, I'll take a step back: you asked me a question, "how can tourism be attracted?". For me, to attract tourism, you need local development, so there is no possibility to have real tourism, to attract potential customers in a strategic way, if you do not affect the three fundamental assets of a territory, which are: mobility, "how do I move within a territory?" For example, the Abruzzo Region participates in all the tourism fairs with a photo of *Campo Imperatore,* but there is no way to get there if you're not accompanied by someone local.

Researcher: Yes...

Interviewee 1: There is no public transport, the streets are absurd etc. Hence mobility: I have to be able to move around in a territory, otherwise it becomes an

adventure, no longer an active holiday or a cultural holiday; then I better go to Nepal, to Patagonia, I know I will not find anything there, so I go with that approach. But if I go to the Apennines, I think that I will find services, maybe somewhere more, somewhere less… but in Abruzzo they don't really exist.

Researcher: Yes, yes, yes.

Interviewee 1: Try to rent a car to get around in Abruzzo, it becomes an impossible task. But I'll tell you something even more important: if you go to the VisitTrentino website - since Trentino is often looked up to - but also Umbria or Marche, within a single platform I can, more or less, organize a vacation; I can find where to go sleep, where to eat, where to rent a bicycle, where to buy an excursion. This does not exist in Abruzzo, to organize a holiday in Abruzzo I must go to 10 different platforms.

Researcher: Yes...

Interviewee 1: On one site I can find the excursion, somewhere else I can rent the car, on another site I can find where to sleep, on yet another site I can book a dinner on the Trabocchi etc., and it's all very complex. And if people are unable to satisfy their vacation needs within 4/5 clicks, they go elsewhere. This is another reason why I am replying to your "potential customers" question this way: those who come here often get here almost by chance, because it is very difficult for someone in Paris or London to say "I'm going to Abruzzo and I'm going to do these things". So, mobility is the first asset on which to intervene.
Safety and health: there is no way to do tourism in a territory if it is not safe to do so, then it is useless for us to promote Abruzzo as a hiking region, a cycling network... it is my job eh, so I know exactly what I am saying… When, in case an elderly person visits and they feel sick when they're in the mountains, they have no way of calling for help, and the hospital closest to the touristic places is a two-hour drive away! Because then, when tourists of the age ranges you mentioned come, so the very young or very old, these are the things they look at, they look for nothing else. Because everyone knows that you eat well here; so, they look for security.
And finally (but for me it becomes the priority problem at this point, given what happened with the pandemic): education and training. That is, there is no way to do tourism if the people who work in those territories are not trained to do tourism. Starting from school, education, and continuous training. Note that these three assets are the same that were identified, not surprisingly, by the *strategia nazionale per le aree interne*. Because Abruzzo, despite boasting a coast, is in fact for 60% a hilly and mountainous territory. So, it is basically almost entirely inlands, where everything is more difficult: it is also difficult to heat hotels during winter because it's expensive. I don't know if you know that, this year, a lot of hotels that were open during last season probably won't open.

Researcher: Yes, absolutely.

Interviewee 1: But even oil mills will not open, for example, for the olive harvest period. Therefore WolfTour, which is a tour operator, is in fact a totally different tour operator from the others operating in the Apennines; because a large part of WolfTour's activities is linked to tourism planning, and we are not simply a creator of tourist packages or a package intermediary. We create the tourism product in the sense that we write plans for slow mobility, for training, and for safety.

Researcher: Absolutely.

Interviewee 1: And so that answers your question on how you can attract tourists - sorry, I have dwelt...

Researcher: No no no, absolutely.

Interviewee 1: …But I think it is important for you to have these reflections

Researcher: Sure!

Interviewee 1: How can new tourism be attracted? By working on these three assets, because otherwise all those who arrive, arrive by chance.

Researcher: Actually, during my market research, these are some of the points that came up... I asked what aspects could be important in convincing someone to buy an active tourism package in Abruzzo; having received many answers - more or less 264 answers from all over the world practically - many of the people who did not know the region mentioned these aspects: how easy it actually is to get to the place, to move within the region... Also being sure that the activities are regulated or in any case that there are adequate safety measures...

Interviewee 1: Look, I'm interrupting you to give you a piece of information: let's get into technicalities, because you should keep in mind that we, being a tour operator, are an antenna of what is happening in the world of tourism. The main problem in Abruzzo is unauthorized activities. That is, as you said: how things are regulated. There is a very rigid discipline in Italy - in other European countries it is not so - which basically tells you exactly who can do what and under what conditions: what the mountain guide can do, what the ski instructor can do, what the alpine guide can do, what the tour operator can do… and in Abruzzo there is now rampant illegality, therefore a lower quality level. The main problem is precisely this, which has generated a twisted and distorted mechanism within the market, which is often also pushed by the institutions, who pay little attention to the territory, to the expressed and unexpressed needs of the territory. So even when the Abruzzo region announces a call for bids to promote the competitiveness of tourism companies – I am still addressing the question "how can I attract potential customers" – the call for bids is not written on the basis of the territorial dimension and the tour operators' needs therefrom emerged, but rather on the basis of something that they believe is due or necessary for the territory. This, in fact, then creates monsters. This is what happens.

Researcher: Yes… and unfortunately this is a real problem that needs to be addressed in our region.

Interviewee 1: If you want a technical answer instead, I tell you that there is a choice you need to make on how to attract new customers. This is the answer of a tour operator's technical director: the question is "do you want to work on the destination or on the product?". Because that's what it is. When I offer a tourism product, I can choose whether to work on the destination or on the product. Salento is a touristic destination, Abruzzo is not a touristic destination.

Researcher: No, indeed.

Interviewee 1: Although the regional governance mentions DMCs and PMCs, i.e., product clubs and destination companies, in fact it is not… because, as we said before, basic services are lacking. So the only way to attract new customers is to work on the product. You are passionate about bikes? I'll work on that emotional part of you; because I will never be able to convince you, someone who lives in Paris, to spend your money to go to a place that you don't even know the location of on the map. But maybe I can convince you if I address your passion, that can be cycling, skiing, climbing - if we are talking about an active holiday – and something else if we are talking about a cultural holiday.

Researcher: Absolutely, thank you very much. It is very interesting to make these considerations, especially for someone like me who, let's say, is being introduced to this world only now… I wanted to ask you: <u>can you give me some information about the demographic of people who choose WolfTour? Can you maybe tell me, more or less, the age range, the origin...?</u>

Interviewee 1: I know this exactly, in the smallest details, of course, it is our job so...

Researcher: Of course, I ask you this type of question because I don't know what you can or what you cannot share so…

Interviewee 1: No oh well, I am happy to help, and I think this is also a reason to help the territory grow, right? By spreading the voice ...

Researcher: Absolutely, this interview will be shared in the Netherlands in front of many people…

Interviewee 1: So, let me ask you a question: is your question related to what happens today or before the pandemic, or before the 2016 and 2018 earthquake? Because the data has been distorted...

Researcher: Eh, I noticed that too. I think it is, at this moment, more interesting to focus on today, because I don't think we will go back with these trends. Things will change, but...

Interviewee 1: Ok, today the market is 70% a national market. Before it was the opposite on inland areas - I exclude from my speech 75% of the presences in Abruzzo that are counted on the coastal region where there are habitual families etc. You can find those data on the sites of the region. I'm talking about the remaining part: 70% national market, within this percentage the most represented regions are (I'm talking about WolfTour)… in order of importance: Lombardy, Lazio, Campania, Veneto.

Researcher: Ok.

Interviewee 1: A significant slice of this cake is represented by Lombardy; both as a return tourism, i.e., people who are third generation or fourth generation of Abruzzese origin; and also as people who, based on the idea that in Abruzzo there is an environment that is still intact with wilderness etc. come here with the idea of having an immersive experience, in the sense of truly living the territory. In fact, we speak of "*genialità dei luoghi*" - "genius logi", to give you another crew term that is used now. On the foreign market, the biggest share used to be tourism from France: very demanding tourists from a services point of view; today the main figures are tied to England and The Netherlands equally.

Researcher: Great!

Interviewee 1: And then everything else. The Netherlands because there are some Dutch families who have moved to Abruzzo; I will mention one, for example, in Roccafinadamo: they manage a campsite, and therefore there is a continuous flow of people who spend perhaps very little on some services (to eat, to sleep) and spend a lot on experiences

Researcher: Great, this is a market that I think has a lot of potential for the field of experiences because, having lived for four years in the Netherlands, I know of the attention that the Dutch put whenever they travel in what they do, to make their trip special and not a simple beach holiday.

Interviewee 1: Ok, talking about age... both the range from 29/30 years old to 45/46 years old - we have classified the targets every 15 years, unlike Istat, we have

narrowed down the age ranges a little bit – and the range from 50 to 65 years old are represented equally... this is for the active holiday, because you asked about active holidays, huh?

Researcher: Yes!

Interviewee 1: They often bring children who are also minors with them, this happens for example in canoeing experiences and cycling experiences, or even climbing experiences. Of course, I would also like to point out the presence, among the many experiences we had this summer, of Americans, many South Americans, Brazilians for example...

Researcher: Americans and South Americans, ok. This is great, thank you very much! At least so I also have an idea... I have also received many responses from America; many of the people who answered my questionnaire were from the United States. I also received many responses which, in fact, included the need to have activities that are also good for children; therefore, I find these data...

Interviewee 1: The two most successful products, let's put it this way, are: in the first position certainly the experience in canoe or kayak.

Researcher: Yes, I saw that you have in fact a separate section on your website for this.

Interviewee 1: The canoe on the Penne Lake specifically, even canoeing up of a river. Then we manage the kayaks on the Costa dei Trabocchi, both in Punta Aderci and in Torino di Sangro. On the Costa dei Trabocchi, you are from Chieti so... we go on electric mountain bike excursions. But the first two are definitely the canoe as the first position and the second position, in numerical terms, is called "a day with the shepherd".

Researcher: Ah ok, I've read of this, yes.

Interviewee 1: Just think that last year, Radio Rai Uno, in fact the news service of Radio Rai Uno, chose this experience as an experience to tell and therefore visited us to document live while we were taking a group to do this thing. It is something, for us Abruzzo inhabitants, that is almost banal...

Researcher: Absolutely!

Interviewee 1: But what is it: we bring these people to the farm at 10:00 - so not at 04:00 as the real shepherds do – and they take the flock for a walk. It is almost a symbolic thing, because the flock has actually already been out, so it is done specifically for them (the tourists)... but it is in a real farm, not a model that's designed for tourists. Then they make the cheese, then you make the "sdijuno" ... and when you explain to them what the "sdijuno" is, they all go crazy: that is the secret of the centenarians of Abruzzo. But this thing has become so viral that last year Radio Rai Uno came to document it live.

Researcher: Great, it seems very interesting, in fact I noticed...

Interviewee 1: Mostly foreigners participate.

Researcher: I guess! Because, as we said, Italians tend to consider this as something that's tied to tradition and unfortunately no longer interesting in a certain sense. So... may I ask you if you can give me an idea on which aspects, in your opinion, are most appreciated and least appreciated in this type of trip? I'll mention some aspects: maybe even having a lot of organization, because obviously in my research I also found people who told me "If I have to do active tourism, I don't want it to be already organized for me and I want to do it myself, I want to organize

everything by myself ". <u>In your opinion, what are the most appreciated and least appreciated aspects of this type of tourism?</u>

Interviewee 1: So, I'll answer to you as WolfTour right? Not generically… ok. I give you three factors that determine the small success of WolfTour: the first factor is that we make everything tailor-made, in this sense: it is true that we work with some scheduled products - I will give you the example of bicycle rides on the Costa dei Trabocchi – there, organization is something necessary for the success of the product…

Researcher: Yes.

Interviewee 1: But all the rest of our products are tailor-made, that is in this sense: we do it for two people, for six people, for eight people… with schedules that suit them. If we go for a bike ride and they want, for example… Let me tell you a joke: two days ago we had a girl who works for the Banca d'Italia in Frankfurt and a girl who works for the United Nations in Rome participate in a bicycle tour... this is to tell you that, the higher the cultural level, the more there is this search for an immersive experience. This is another important fact; naturally, often, at a high cultural level there is also a greater spending capacity…

Researcher: Absolutely

Interviewee 1: They don't even ask how much the experience costs: "Can this thing be done at this time with this need? Yes." and therefore making it tailor-made is important. If you go for a bike ride and you want to stop and take a picture or you want to bathe in the river because you're passing by, it is clear that you can only do it if you have a tailor-made experience. Because if you are with a group and one person has to stop to pee, another one wants to take a picture, and another one who wants to eat a sandwich... it becomes unmanageable! So we work a lot on "tailor-made"; this implies, at times, to work even below costs eh. But it is a strategic investment to have an almost niche market, which is what we are interested in: I am not interested in making large numbers, I am interested in making important numbers. Keep in mind that, as you told me that you do market research for the thesis... for me it is about doing market research; because when I write the project for the region or for the Park Authority, it is clear that if I sit at the table with my design competitors, and I have to deal with those who want to write a project about the canoe and have never been in a canoe - it is clear that there, differences emerge. So we write the projects about what we really do, because I put on shorts and go canoeing, I take the bicycle... and when it comes to training, I myself, but also the other guys who are inside WolfTour, are in structures of climbing, we are canoe guides… that is, we invested money and time to train ourselves. That's why when we write a project, that project is true. I really want to reiterate this thing. So I told you three things about how to attract…

Researcher: Yes.

Interviewee 1: I'll tell you two things instead… this is the first, I told you, the "tailor-made" which is the fundamental aspect. But I'll tell you two things that, at first glance, are things that tourists judge almost as a negative thing, but when they leave, they are so much inside the topics that they make them their own: The fact that we gesture a lot has become a way to, how to say, to create empathy with them. That is, at the beginning they are almost frightened by this fact, but we accentuate it a lot. And when they go away, after we have had lunch together etc., they are delighted and make fun of us, and it becomes almost a nice thing. But they

point it out to us a lot, especially foreigners, this fact that we gesticulate a lot - even as I am talking about it now, I'm doing it, almost to make you understand what I mean... and this therefore becomes an argument that almost creates distance, because as we go to explain this fact: why do we need to gesticulate? Because I want to be sure, especially if speaking a different language, that you understand what I have in mind […] so why are Italians inclined to gesticulate? Why do we always have this need to make ourselves understood and fully understood? So, how to say, the movement of the hands is related to this. And we try to explain it to them, and we get all kinds of laughter. The third aspect is food. They make fun of us because they say that we are - we generically - we are obsessed with food, in the sense that, in the morning, as soon as we meet "where are we going to eat?"; right after lunch "where are we going tonight?"... For them it is not like that, that is, food is simply fuel to go on.

Researcher: Yes...

Interviewee 1: When we do not explain to them that the concept of having a dinner is not simply eating, definitely eating well, but it is more the convivial moment of the day; because everyone has the opportunity to discuss, to talk about something beautiful, to share a problem with friends... They then understand this situation. We also explain the difference in concept between an inn - if we speak with English people for example - and a pub. That is, the concept of an inn in a town goes beyond eating: it is a place of aggregation, sharing, etc. "Tomorrow I have to pick the olives, who can come to help me?"… That is, they don't understand these things, the concept of "piazza" etc. So I repeat, "tailor-made", "food" and "gestures" are the three factors that make those who come fall a little in love with the visit.

Researcher: Great!

Interviewee 1: So we work a lot on this.

Researcher: Perfect.

Interviewee 1: This is actually storytelling, it has always been done, and now we tell it with innovative methods, but we still tell our stories which are these, right?

Researcher: Yes, absolutely. And instead, some aspect that you do not think is highly appreciated or some aspect that you think should still be improved to meet the customers' needs?

Interviewee 1: On the aspect to be improved, I refer to the three assets that I told you at the beginning, namely mobility, safety and health, and education and training. What is not appreciated - but this time, even proudly, I say that it is not the case with WolfTour, because we have done a lot - is that there is a lot of improvisation in tourism, so many times we find people who say " yesterday we went there, but man, this thing happened and we were very disappointed"… and so there is a lot of improvisation: that is, to accompany a person on a bicycle you don't just have to know how to ride a bicycle. Apart from the fact that there, too, you have to do a training...

Researcher: So too little quality?

Interviewee 1: Absolutely yes! Do you know how many companies really do tourism in Abruzzo? It is maybe 6/7. What does it mean to actually do services? That if you pick up the phone today and say "I want to come to the adventure park this afternoon" or go to "Il Bosso" for example - which I also invite you to interview...

Researcher: Yes, in fact I am also in contact with Paolo...

Interviewee 1: And you say "I want to come and canoe". If, on the other hand, you try to call other companies, it is difficult for you to have those experiences because they are not available, except for a very small period of the year. Unauthorized activity also translates into operators who work a lot on a promotional level, but who in fact do not have the requisites to do that job. You know that to be a tour operator, that is, to sell services that you do not manage directly, regulated by a national law and at the same time by a regional law, you should have a series of insurances, a series of technical skills, a series of certified equipment, etc… Tomorrow a guy from Chieti wakes up and says "no, I want to do this too, how cool is this thing" and sets up a totally abusive company. When people come from outside, they perceive that something is wrong.

Researcher: Absolutely, absolutely… Okay, thank you very much, this answer is very useful for me too, to avoid making the same mistakes that are made by many. Then, then I wanted to ask you what are the aspects - and now perhaps this question has already been answered when you mentioned the three aspects of mobility… - what are, in your opinion, the aspects that are necessary to develop an active tourism package? That is, what are the aspects that must absolutely be present in order to develop a package that is valid for active tourism, that is able to attract people and that can be considered a quality package?

Interviewee 1: In fact I have already answered you, but I'll add a reflection to this: we, as Italy, have a great tradition in the creation of tourist packages, and in my opinion we are the best - we are confronted with trans-national projects, we went to New York, we went to London, we also went to Amsterdam to do an event etc. I realize that the competence that exists in Italian tourism planning is very high; what I think is lacking is the awareness of having this competence, and therefore the tools are often lacking, the knowledge of the tools… I'll give you an example: the national law on mountain itineraries, implemented and published by a regional law, says a very simple thing: to call something a mountain itinerary, it must respect 11 requirements.

Researcher: Yes.

Interviewee 1: So this methodological approach, which is very banal… you asked me: "what are the factors, the requirements"… they are written! The laws, it would be enough to follow those things. So, I'll give you the example of the mountain itineraries, which are in fact a tourist product. You will have seen today that, between the boom of bicycles and the boom of walkers, that everyone is talking about itineraries…

Researcher: Yes.

Interviewee 1: Technically, I ask a question as a tour operator director: yes, but how do you call something "mountain itinerary"? There are 11 requirements… does it have them? It is a mountain itinerary; does it not have them? It is not a mountain itinerary, that is, it cannot be on the market because the product is not interesting. So, among these eleven I'll tell you 3 or 4, so I'll answer you.
First: it takes a management team for that product; if the product is not managed, it is not a tourism product, therefore it cannot be proposed on the market. I want to do the "salt itinerary" - who manages it? If there is a problem, if I have to say something, to whom do I ask? Is that thing identifiable? If it is not identifiable […]. Second thing: the physical requirements. To call something a mountain itinerary, the regional law says that it must have a maximum of 40% of the itinerary that develops

on the asphalt. So it is useless for someone to be puzzling – a generic "someone" of course - to call what's behind your house a mountain itinerary. It is not a mountain itinerary if it does not have that requirement! Why is there this law? It was not just invented by anyone; it is the result of years and years of discussions at national and community level to understand what an itinerary is and how it works.

Third requirement: the basic essential services, which would be where I sleep, where I eat, and where I can wash - these are the basic services - must be, at the most, within 5km of the itinerary; if you take me on an itinerary where I, if there is the problem of where to eat, where to sleep or where to wash myself, I cannot access these services… it is not interesting for the market.

So, I told you three characteristics, there are 11 of them, but only on these three, I tell you that 90% of those sold as itineraries should not exist on the market. Then people are surprised because nobody goes there; because the starting point is wrong: that is not an interesting tourist product for an active holiday; because those who take an active holiday need their primary needs, the ones I told you, to be satisfied… the secondary ones are more specialized: if I go by bicycle - you told me you work in a hotel - when I arrive in a hotel, I need to have:

1- A place to secure my bicycle, which may be worth € 10,000; you can't tell me, as often happens, "no, put it there, nobody takes it anyway"… because that's what happens in Abruzzo! No, if the guest comes from Germany, what you are saying to him, "put it there, nobody will take it anyway" means nothing. You have to give an alarmed room where nobody can enter.

Researcher: Yes.

Interviewee 1: 2- You must provide me with at least a small repair shop; I have to lubricate the chain, I have to wash the shirt I am wearing, I have to be able to swell a tire… These are the secondary needs, that are specific for each type of holiday.

Researcher: Absolutely, and that's another...

Interviewee 1: I just gave you some reflections ...

Researcher: No, no, but it's great!

Interviewee 1: If you want, I can give you the material!

Researcher: Absolutely, I would accept anything because it really helps me a lot. Then I wanted to ask you another question on a topic that I have not fully addressed in my market research but which, in my opinion, is very relevant; it is the topic of sustainability. Obviously, my idea, when I think I want to develop an active tourism package, is in any case to be positive both for the environment, in terms of environmental sustainability, but also on the people who live in the area itself... so to have a positive impact all round. Can you tell me something more about sustainability, in fact, not only environmental, but also about the human capital that is involved with WolfTour?

Interviewee 1: On this, yes, absolutely, environmental, financial, economic and procedural sustainability I would also say ...

Researcher: Absolutely.

Interviewee 1: We said earlier that the problem is illegality.

Researcher: Exactly yes

Interviewee 1: I would talk about eligible projects, what does that mean? That if I have in mind to build an information point or a kiosk on a river, I must be sure that it can also be done at an authorization and procedural level. But I'm talking to you about something that doesn't exist. And this always happens in calls for bids,

because many Abruzzo companies are "forced" to access public funds to buy, I don't know, bicycles, rather than equipment… but can what I have in mind be done? What kind of permissions do I need? Just so it can be built - in fact I would simply speak of the immediate buildability of the initiative that you want to implement. Wait, what was the question? I forgot.

Researcher: Sustainability, in general, how you approach it.

Interviewee 1: On sustainability, on the other hand, I can give you a working method, because sustainability cannot simply be a declaration of intent, it must be measurable.

Researcher: Absolutely.

Interviewee 1: Indeed, everything I want to do in theory should be measured, it should be measurable. That is, how many people can I bring in a canoe in a season? If I predict 3000 and host 4000 I have done well, if I host 1000 I have messed up. Then the reasons can be my fault, external factors, it might have rained every day… and that's okay. On the sustainability of human capital, that is, sustainability of the value of human capital, we have made many interventions. Keep in mind that we are a godmother company in the university environment; for example with the University of Pescara we host training internships where not only the students come to us and stay with us for a while and see everything that happens within a company that operates in tourism, but we, also managing a naturalistic hiking school - because WolfTour, maybe you only know WolfTour, but let's say that it is a whole world where there are many other situations around: there is a business network, the first made in Abruzzo for example, there is a naturalistic hiking school recognized by the region, there are a series of projects - so not only do we work with these students, but at the end of our journey they receive - and we always talk about active holidays - three certificates of attendance at curriculum level that attest their competences. And they are: Canadian canoe guide, local MTB (mountain bike) guide and adventure park attendant. So they are also professionalizing, being that many of them, then begin to work with us.

Researcher: Great!

Interviewee 1: So not only do we measure the number of people we are able to train, but I also tell you that 30% of these, that is, those who basically reside in the territories where we operate, start working with us. Of course, those who come to take the course from Basilicata then return home, but those who live nearby start working, so it's very interesting. Not only that: in the projects we carry out, for example with the LAG (Local Action Groups) or for example with the DMC (Destination Management Companies) etc., we always insert territorial animation and continuous training activities. Right now, I can tell you today that on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th September I'll go to Sextantio, which is the hotel in Santo Stefano…

Researcher: The *albergo diffuso*…

Interviewee 1: We train Sextantio employees, it is a continuous training project. On the 27th September we train at the Abruzzo Marina Hotel in Silvi Marina, the largest hotel in Silvi. This is to say that we invest a lot in our training and we ourselves are trainers of the operators who collaborate with us.

Researcher: Great.

Interviewee 1: I'll give you another one: this training, which naturally has a cost… we finance it with the projects of Fondimpresa, which is the inter-professional fund, so for these hotels that I told you, Sextantio and Abruzzo Marina (but there are

many, now let's see what happens this week) the cost of training is zero. In the sense that we do not only train these people, but we also find the financing channel to do it at no cost for them. Because the real problem of sustainability is the economic one: it is true that everyone would like to do a training but it is also true that it costs to train, both money and time. Because if I am doing a training, I am not doing something else in the meantime.
Researcher: Yes, absolutely… and instead, in a much more practical sense, what can you tell be about environmental sustainability? Because obviously in recent years it has become a very very important topic, and it is prevalent in any area.
Interviewee 1: I'll give you two examples on the more practical aspect...
Researcher: Go on!
Interviewee 1: The first is that we, always in the Penne Lake, dedicate two days a year to clean the lake from waste; and this is not only a concrete fact, in the sense that we then weigh how much waste (which reaches the lake from the river) we have collected, but we also involve schools! So, all school kids know that this is a sustainable activity for the environment. We do re-planting projects in some situations, and within the relationships we have with schools or with summer camps - because we also do summer camps - we do environmental workshops; therefore both in the field of wildlife, for example we are called WolfTour, Wolf as in the animal in fact, so both with wolves – close to our offices there is a wolves study area, managed by the university, and there are six wolves. So people come from Berlin, Milan, Rome to study these wolves and the behavior of wolves; and so we work with that a lot. There is a botanical garden with which we work a lot etc. We have a relationship with a zoologist called Osvaldo Locasciulli who, in the most important moments of the year, comes with us to meet the children.
Researcher: Great, thank you very much. The questions regarding, in fact, the topics I wanted to address, and the information I needed are over.
[…]
Interviewee 1: That's great.
Researcher: Thank you very much.
Interviewee 1: See you, bye!
Researcher: Bye!

Interview 2

Interviewee 2: …I'm sorry, I was on another phone call!
Researcher: Don't worry!
Interviewee 2: Let's put it this way, that I can defend myself… How are you?
Researcher: Don't worry at all. I am fine and you?
Interviewee 2: I'm good, thanks, where are you?
Researcher: I'm in Chieti.
Interviewee 2: Ah, perfect, because you're from Abruzzo right?

Researcher: Yes yes, I'm from Chieti, that's right. I went to university in Amsterdam but I was born in Chieti and I went to school, let's say, up to high school in Chieti.

Interviewee 2: Ok well well, then are you going back to the Netherlands or staying in Abruzzo?

Researcher: I'll be back in the Netherlands in about a month to graduate, and now I'm working in Abruzzo - I'm working for the *Phi Hotels* chain, you might know Donato Sambuco... It's a chain based in Guardiagrele; the company is called Xenia Spa...

Interviewee 2: Yes, nice! So how are things going?

Researcher: Well, well, we have 7, at the moment 7, and next year we will manage 8 structures throughout Italy; I mostly deal with Revenue Management and on our side, things are going well, after covid we are now recovering...

Interviewee 2: Well, congratulations!

Researcher: Thank you… Then, I'll tell you the most important information right away: first of all, if it's not a problem for you, I will record this call only to then go and transcribe everything and translate it into English, because it must be included in the thesis;

Interviewee 2: There's absolutely no problem.

Researcher: That's great! […] Then I'll tell you: the information you give me can be kept confidential. If you'd rather not share your name and your role in the company or even the company name, I can hide this information...

Interviewee 2: No absolutely not, in fact it's okay, let's spread and promote the word in a positive way!

Researcher: Great, that's the same thing Antonio from WolfTour told me. In addition, I will try to keep this interview quite short, because as I told you then obviously, I will go and transcribe everything so, for both of us, I think it is better to keep it short. So if you don't want to say something now, I can start with the questions...

Interviewee 2: No, go on!

Researcher: That's fine. The first question is sort of introductory: <u>I would like to ask you a little about you, about "Il Bosso" and also about the people who choose Il Bosso.</u>

Interviewee 2: So let's start, how to say, in a formal way, introducing myself a little: I'm Paolo Setta, I'm 42 years old (alas, I would add) and I manage the tourist activities; therefore I director of tourist activities for the Il Bosso group. With tourist activities we are talking about a portfolio of over 10 experiences ranging from our best seller, the experience everything originated from in some way, which is the Canadian canoe excursion on the Tirino River - in Capestrano, therefore in the heart of the Tirino valley, close to the three main springs; this is the most suggestive stretch, where the crystalline waters blend with the turquoise of the sky […]; there are some days when really in some places, and this thing is fantastic, the water and the sky have the same colour… something incredible; and cultural activities are different because we are talking about Canadian canoe excursions on the Tirino River, Kayak excursion on the Tirino River, and then we have trekking with various declinations: by trekking we mean all the experiences with boots, over the four seasons. But also Nordic Walking and the paths that we are introducing, in addition to snowshoeing in the winter. And then we have the Wolf Visitor Center, which is a

wildlife area owned by the State Forestry Corps, and where a series of very important wild animals are housed: and they are also identifying animals in terms of Abruzzese biodiversity, because there is the wolf, of course, there is one specimen of a wolf, but there are also deer, roe deer; clearly, as it is also an educational area, there are wild boars, there are birds of prey… therefore an area with an inside museum dedicated to different market, with particular attention to schools and families.

Researcher: Great!

Interviewee 2: Then we can, among the tourist activities, talk about all those that are the many cycling offers, ranging from E-Bike rides in the Tirino Valley, to cycle tourism options, always in E-Bike, among the villages of Gran Sasso, with departure from Castel del Monte and touching the most beautiful villages of the barony, which are Calascio, Castelvecchio Calvisio and Santo Stefano di Sessanio. Then there is the newest release - which is also giving us great satisfaction - of E-Bike rides in the land of saffron, therefore starting from Navelli so one will see the Navelli plateau on one side, and then there is this beautiful visit in the village of Bominaco and a visit to the frescoes in the San Pellegrino oratory. Then we have the whole project of "Il Bosso a Mare": Bosso a Mare is an activity, an integrated project that started in 2022 (it should have started earlier but then there were the years of the Covid pandemic so in 2021... forgive me, it started last year). And the Bosso a Mare introduces an explosion, let's call it that, of those that are the already consolidated experiences, both in terms of water activities, and of cycling and hiking activities, on the Costa dei Trabocchi. So the Bosso a Mare is, how to say, a whole package within which there are some sub-products, which are kayak excursions on the Costa dei Trabocchi with the project "Trabocchi and Mare in kayak", "Between Bike and Sea", which is the cycling tourism proposal in E-Bike - which we carry out, in this case, in partnership with WolfTour. Then we have mixed packages, which is instead entirely ours, which are namely the rides on the Via Verde with an evening aperitif on the Trabocco...

Researcher: Beautiful!

Interviewee 2: …And then we also have the Nordic Walking experiences on the Costa dei Trabocchi.

Researcher: Very good.

Interviewee 2: To this we must add, as a tourist proposal, also the accommodation with our "Ostello Moderno", which is a concept... let's say, it is a hostel that hints at the "European profile of hospitality", so it is not an old hostel which might be not very attentive to hospitality, comfort, courtesy, cleanliness, even the furnishings. Instead, our structure perfectly reflects the standards that we try to practice in our activities too. And then there is our headquarters, and this new offer since we arrived in the new location, food and wine with the eco-snack on the panoramic terrace overlooking the Tirino Valley; these are, let's say, the main activities that then, clearly, have […] (?) with school tourism, with days dedicated to companies, which increasingly ask us to do experiential teambuilding. In our teambuilding proposals there are moments dedicated to training but there are also moments, and they are increasingly sought after, alongside the training moments, there is also the sharing of some experiences of ours, which in some way completes the day, the stay of that company or that work group, because they want to get informed, but also want to strengthen their spirit of corporate cohesion, that's it.

Researcher: Great, great, thank you very much. Who chooses Il Bosso? You told me, you have already mentioned someone as companies, you obviously told me about the cyclists/cycling amateurs who I believe must choose you a lot... If you had to describe to me the profile of the typical Il Bosso customer, what would it be?

Interviewee 2: First of all, I tell you that the figure is now consolidated, that is, for several years we have exceeded the figure of 50,000 paying admissions every year - that is, 50,000 people who pay for our service.

Researcher: Yes...

Interviewee 2: Now, it is clear that these are the direct numbers, that is, those that we manage to register because they access our proposals through the payment of an experience. But it is not a heresy to say that we interact also indirectly... And this is a very important fact because I will give you an example: despite not doing an activity directly with us, there are many people who may receive information from us or choose a place to sleep because they have seen in our communication, perhaps, that place there; and I tell you this because it was reported to us, for example, by the accommodation facilities as they say "look, you talked about the Rocca di Calascio" or "you did a trekking on the Rocca di Calascio"... There have been people who did not participate but, seeing the promotion, chose us. So, this is a fact that is sometimes not regularly considered even by insiders, but it is meaningful! Because promoting a territory means not only doing it through direct activities… but if you follow our communication, our communication mentions our territory a lot, and this is reflected onto our activities. That is, it is not a purely commercial communication...

Researcher: Absolutely.

Interviewee 2: But we often talk about territory. The profile is a fairly broad profile because we work with schools and therefore school tourism - therefore youngsters – that means 7,000/8,000 children every year who do activities with us. So our target starts from children to teens... also considering that we organize nature camps during summer, so that target is important to us. Why? Because that target is, in some ways, a platform to address the families too; but, at the same time, another important target is exactly families, which include adults and children. So these are the two target audiences: the school, therefore the children and teens, and the families. There is also a lot of young adults, the Millennials, let's call them that... that is, through a series of fresh and dynamic activities such as kayaking on the Tirino, kayaking on the Costa dei Trabocchi, the same rides or the same treks, done in a certain way, attract millennials. So even the public ranging from twenty to thirty years old is an audience that represents an important slice of the cake, let's say. And foreigners are also not to be excluded; because although it is true that in recent years their influx has stopped, but we are working, let's say… their presence is still considerable. Why is this? Please allow me to give you a broad-spectrum reasoning, without filters, because I believe that our company - which was founded in 1998 - is the one reality in Abruzzo that holds the ambition, not the presumption, to consider itself a true "player", qualified and professional, which has nothing to envy to establishments in the most famous Italian touristic locations and destinations (which can be Trentino, Tuscany...). That is, we have decided to do this job professionally and I believe that a tourist, who travels and arrives into our territory, is always looking for something substantial, and also a good execution of products...

Researcher:… and also a not little professionalism, I guess!

Interviewee 2: Absolutely! I would add that we invest a lot in training our staff, and this somehow allows us to work on medium/high quality standards.

Researcher: Great, thank you very much. This was a very complete answer, thank you. And I also find confirmation in the data that has resulted from my market research, so that's excellent. So, the second question is: what are the aspects...

Interviewee 2: Are we still on the second question?

Researcher: Yes, but there are only four, don't worry! What are the aspects that most influence your market? What do you think are the aspects that could potentially convince your market to choose you or not to choose you?

Interviewee 2: What do we mean by aspects? Help me out with this one...

Researcher: Anything: I also asked this question in the context of the market research I conducted - and for this research I received, more or less, 260 responses from all over the world. I asked what the aspects could be... I gave the respondents examples: for instance, promotions and discounts, or a strong presence on social networks, or even the safety and security aspect... so in reality any aspect that you believe is relevant will be useful!

Interviewee 2: Well, surely an important aspect is our reputation.

Researcher: Great!

Interviewee 2: Sometimes this thing is not considered or, many times, it cannot be considered by everyone, because not everyone – I hope you will forgive me, I am a very direct person, that is, I like to say things as they are -

Researcher: You do you, absolutely ...

Interviewee 2: To me the reputation we have, the reputation is the result of over twenty years of history, and it is the quality that we put into the field, and it is the seriousness that we try to guarantee... Because being serious is not, how to say, a "sad" value; it's a great value in my opinion. Seriousness is a value… we try to be serious, professional, and we also try to make a communication that is careful, as to say, that reflects our profile. That is, we often like to include our faces, because we want people to be able to see, through social media or other platforms, to be told an experience. Then when they get to actually do it (the experience), they find those same people, or in any case... because it is also a form of guarantee to put one's face on it; so the aspects are clearly manifold.
I would start from the aspect of reputation, which encompasses all the values [...]. Then clearly careful work, communication and promotion that is done, a priori, with planning. So we... I don't know if you've looked at our communication a bit...

Researcher: Sure!

Interviewee 2: I'll give you an example: video production. We invest, and they are quality videos: we don't just make disposable short videos, which of course have to be used for daily communication. But each activity has its own - let's call it - institutional video or institutional photo, that is, we appoint professionals who do this work and who allow us to also express authority, that is to reinforce our messages, to say "since 1998 we are proud to say that we invented experiential tourism in Abruzzo". Because when we started talking about experiential tourism in 1998, there weren't many… I don't remember many other realities. Luckily then they arrived, and I would add that some do have the mission to do this job well and they can be considered tour operators. Then the commercial operators also arrived, who say they do tourism, but it is not it, and a careful eye can recognize the difference. So, these are the aspects. Then another aspect is word of mouth; why? Because so many

people still join us today because they have heard about us, and because in some way they have been convinced by the stories of those who previously used our services. And I'll add another aspect that is not negligible, which is the return of those who have already done an experience with us. This is another element, in my opinion, of quality. Because many, and I mean many people, who may have been on a bike tour with us, then come to try the canoe... Or people who have been on to canoe then go to visit the wolf visitor center or go hiking. So these aspects always reinforce that concept of reputation, that concept of quality, of seriousness. These are the aspects... and another thing that I think is important [...] no one has unanimity, so it is clear that we cannot enjoy the unanimity of consensus either... but I can say that another important aspect is the promotion that we receive from many other operators, especially in the hospitality field, who, if they have to give an advice to their guests, advise them to have experiences with us; because I believe that when they return, these guests, from what we know, always thank them for the advice.

Researcher: Well, on this aspect I think that you can feel satisfied, because the results of my market research have said exactly that, among the most important aspects, there are precisely: having videos, a good quality of communication on social media, so well-made videos that really get the message across; and also especially positive reviews, recommendations from friends, relatives… So on these aspects I can tell you that you really listed them just as they resulted in my research. So great!

Interviewee 2: Okay!

[...]

Researcher: The third question: speaking of active tourism, or also adventure tourism – because actually in the world of tourism there is this distinction a little, between active and adventure tourism - I would like to ask you: one of the aspects I found, and which I also consider most important within this type of tourism movement, is that of sustainability; not only environmental sustainability, but also sustainability with regards to the territories that are touched, the people who are involved… so having a positive impact, making a tourism that does not ruin the territory. How does "Il Bosso" deal with this theme?

Interviewee 2: look, we never forget that we are an environmental education center and a training body accredited by the Abruzzo Region. This means that, in our origins and in our DNA, raising awareness, education, training on environmental issues are not just a priority: they are part of our modus operandi; and above all, in every experience that we plan and propose, there is never... it is clear that, how to say, unfortunately as soon as we take a step, we have an impact; simply because whatever we do has, alas, always a consequence on environmental sustainability. But we try, we have never chosen to do - you were talking about active tourism and adventure - we have never chosen to do the activities in a Jeep or with Quads, because we think that this kind of stuff is not active tourism, and it is certainly not sustainable. Then, among other things, we have a broader concept of sustainability because, I'll give you an example: more than 150 people work with us during the touristic season. And this is also an important fact: now, for us sustainability is a much broader concept, it is not limited to environmental sustainability...
Because out of these 150 people, more than half are students who study like you, they are therefore university students who live in these small inland villages and who

would most likely only return for 10/15 days a year in August; instead, working with us and spending the season with us, they may come back from May and leave again at the end of September to return to their destinations (which may be the cities of Abruzzo but many also return to outside the region). In our opinion, this is a very important element of social and demographic sustainability, because it slows down that phenomenon of depopulation and demographic involution of the new generations which small villages, above all, are affected by. That is, it is clear that the new generations tend and will always tend to go, fortunately, to live experiences outside the borders; then there are those who come back, like me - I don't know whether to wish this to you too - but in any case they have been out and then come back because they decide to work and make themselves available to make a contribution to their region. There are those who may stay out, yes, but the fact that all those kids return to their cities, to their towns, to their villages, to their territory, is an extraordinary phenomenon of sustainability. Why? Because there first of all we go to work on the knowledge and pride of identity of these guys, who are not people who maybe don't care about their origins [...] but I can assure you that the guys who work with us are guys who mature a little earlier than their peers, and they mature above all in terms of wisdom, in terms of belonging… and therefore I believe that this is an extraordinary element of sustainability. Apart from the fact that by sustainability we also mean economic sustainability, because these people - now I'm focusing above all on the younger ones who work with us - these guys thanks to a season also manage to be financially independent in their university life. And so I think this is also another element...

Researcher: Of course, yes.

Interviewee 2: From the point of view of sustainability, returning to environmental sustainability: where we operate, we always try to employ people and figures who are highly qualified, i.e. biologists, graduates in environmental sciences, natural sciences, or in any case who have equivalent degrees, who are very attentive to naturalistic, landscape, environmental issues... But I'll tell you more: very often, and we do it perhaps in a more silent and not apparent way, we intervene and clean up small illegal dumps, or even damages that are still made today with the abandonment of waste, in those areas where we intervene. Because it is clear that we are not able to become enforcers of environmental justice, but we try to do this too; if there is a need we organize moments, ecological days, to safeguard these corners of our territory that sometimes find themselves filled with waste, abandoned with the phenomenon of widespread landfills... and on these things, in short, we also try to contribute in this way.

Researcher: That's fine, thank you very much! […] Sorry for the time I stole from you!

Interviewee 2: Don't worry, thanks to you!

Researcher: Good luck with work and have a good day.

Interviewee 2: Bye!

9.6 Interviews Thematic Analysis

9.6.1 Interview Questions

All the interview questions were formulated after looking at and analyzing the data gathered from the survey, cross-checking it with the literature review and consequently addressing relevant topics where an expert opinion was necessary, or topics which had not been given enough relevance in the surveys. Here is an overview of the interview questions:

5. What are the demographics of people that choose *name of company*?
   Who is your current market?
   Who is your potential market?
6. What are, from your market's point of view, the most and least appreciated aspects of active tourism?
7. What are, in your opinion, the aspects that are necessary in order to develop a valid, high-quality active tourism offer, that is able to attract people?
8. How do you deal with the aspect of sustainability?

9.6.2 Interview Participants

As planned, the participants were industry experts who work within the field of active tourism in Abruzzo.

In order to protect data confidentiality, the researcher mentioned to the interviewees the possibility to avoid including personal information in the interviews' transcriptions; the participants, however, decided not to remain anonymous.

9.6.3 Interviews Data Analysis

a. Familiarization with the Data

Firstly, the interviews were transcribed and translated from Italian to English; then, after carefully reading through them, the analysis – on the English version – began by highlighting relevant data.

b. Generating Initial Codes

In this step, by pointing out the most relevant keywords, phrases and sentences, the following initial codes were generated:

- Ease of Access
- Activities
- Other projects
- Current Market
- Abruzzo Visitors
- Competitors

- Quality
- Knowledge and Training
- Threats
- Safety and Security
- Strengths
- Rewievs and Recognition
- Social Media and Communication
- Economic/Financial Sustainability
- Environmental Sustainability
- Sustainability of Human Capital
- Managerial Sustainability

c. Searching for themes

The codes previously generated were collided multiple codes across the interviews into themes that say something about the data.

CODES	THEMES
Activities	*Current (Abruzzo Active Tourism) Products/Activities*
Other projects	
Current Market	*(Potential) Target Market*
Abruzzo Visitors	
Quality	*Success Factors*
Knowledge and Training	
Strengths	
Threats	*The Industry*
Competitors	
Safety and Security	*Accessibility*
Ease of Access	
Reviews and Recognition	*Marketing and Reputation*
Social Media and Communication	
Economic/Financial Sustainability	*Sustainability*
Environmental Sustainability	
Sustainability of Human Capital	
Managerial Sustainability	

d. Reviewing themes

The themes were reviewed to avoid any overlapping or contradictions: The researcher re-read the interviews and focused on the text highlighted under each code, to determine if these support the themes. In this phase, the existing themes were refined until they represented a relevant pattern of meaning, grouped under the same concept or idea (The University of Auckland, 2020).

e. Defining and naming themes

As Braun and Clarke (2006) mention, in this phase it is necessary to "identify the essence of what each theme is about". The final themes that were identified within the interviews were:

→ *Current (Abruzzo Active Tourism) Products/Activities*: This theme embraces all information relative to the active tourism products, services, and activities that are currently sold to Abruzzo visitors by the companies interviewed, together with the additional projects they are carrying out momentarily.

→ *(Potential) Target Market:* Within this theme it is possible to discover who is the market that currently engages in active tourism activities in Abruzzo, their demographic information, their needs and preferences. In addition, this theme also includes data about those tourists who do visit Abruzzo, but do not take part into active tourism experiences. However difficult to address, is important to consider this segment too, since it represents a huge percentage of the people who come to Abruzzo each year.

→ *Success Factors:* This theme encompasses all aspects that, according to the interviewees, contribute to the success of their active tourism businesses; some topics that had emerged from the survey responses, such as "quality" or a "tailor-made experience", were incorporated under success factors.

→ *The Industry:* This theme is a depiction, by means of the interviewees' responses, of the active tourism industry in Abruzzo; examples of sub-topics grouped into this theme are: competitors, regulations, external threats and challenges.

→ *Accessibility:* All information regarding the accessibility of the region Abruzzo and the local active tourism activities, both in terms of safety and security and of the facility of access to these activities was clustered under this theme.

→ *Marketing and Reputation:* As found from the survey results, good use of marketing tools, an effective communication and a positive reputation are very important elements for travellers who decide to engage in active tourism. As these concepts were mentioned in the interviews too, a theme was created to include them all.

→ *Sustainability:* This section groups together all the definitions of sustainability that were addressed and/or mentioned by the interviewees: As previously seen, the GSTC identifies different aspects of sustainable tourism practices: sustainable management, socio-economic impacts, cultural impacts, and environmental impacts – any consideration made by the interviewees regarding one or more of these aspects is a part of this theme.

9.7 Summary Interviews Results

WolfTour and Il Bosso are tour operators which strive to promote the Abruzzo Region within the Active Tourism Industry.

WolfTour is a tour operator based in Penne, Abruzzo and specialized in active and sustainable tourism; they provide three main services:
- Organizing experiential and educational tours and activities in Abruzzo.
- Managing transportation and accommodation services (such as hotel booking, flight reservations and local transfers) and providing, on their website, up to 800 accommodation solutions in several Italian regions, namely Abruzzo, Lazio, Molise, Sardinia, Veneto and Trentino Alto Adige.
- Selling typical Abruzzo products such as craft beer, cheese, olive oil etc. on their *Wolf* (online) *Store* (WolfTour, 2022).

Il Bosso is a company that has been operating in the field of environment and ecotourism and promoting research programs on responsible tourism for 20 years (Il Bosso, 2022a). The company aims to promote Abruzzo by organizing experiential activities such as canoe and kayak guided tours, trekking and hiking tours, guided tours and visits to the Wolf Visit Center, E-Bike tours in the mountains and along the coastline, and Km0 holidays (ibid).

In 2020 and 2021 Il Bosso was awarded by Touring Club Italiano for working for several decades in the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park, favoring the development and environmental protection of the territory, through engaging and groundbreaking experiences, such as canoeing on the Tirino river" (Il Bosso, 2022a).

The interviews were conducted with representatives from these two companies; for this reason, some of the following themes might refer specifically to the company.

→ Current (Abruzzo Active Tourism) Products/Activities

At the moment, the most common active tourism products in Abruzzo are especially water-based experiences such as excursion on canoes or kayaks along the lakes, on rivers and along the coast, together with the numerous different kinds of excursions on electric mountain bikes or e-bikes throughout the Abruzzo inlands and along the green-path (a cycling path along the seaside).

In addition, other activities are offered such as trekking, Nordic walking and snowshoeing excursions, visits to the Wolf Center, teambuilding activities for companies, eco-aperitifs etc. Another experience which is also among the most successful products of WolfTour is "a day with the shepard", where travellers get to walk a flock, make cheese, and eat a typical abruzzese shepard meal.

→ (Potential) Target Market

Over the last years, due to numerous adverse events such as earthquakes, an avalanche, and even Covid, the influx of tourists in Abruzzo has completely shifted in size and characteristics.

75% of tourists visiting Abruzzo are mostly descendants of Italian expats who have been visiting the region for many years already, and who spend their vacation at the seaside; as seen in the literature already, they are difficult to study and understand.

It is interesting to highlight the difference in the market before and after the outbreak of Covid-19: the already strong inflow of tourists from Lombardy tripled, tourism coming from Veneto (which was previously exclusive to the seaside) increased fivefold in the inland areas, many people came from the previously untouched Tuscany market.

When it comes to current data about active tourism in Abruzzo, it can be said that:

- 70% of travellers are Italian and they come from Lombardy, Lazio, Campania and Veneto; as previously mentioned, many of these tourists have Abruzzese origins and return. Many, on the other hand, come to the region almost by chance, or based on the idea of living an immersive experience in a pristine environment.
- Despite the interruption in influx from abroad, internationals still make up for an important slice of the cake. France used to be the main foreign market; the lead has now been taken by tourists from the UK and The Netherlands; in 2021 there was a notable participation of Americans and South Americans.
- The age ranges of active tourism participants that are most represented in Abruzzo are millennials, i.e., 20/30 years old, together with the 30/45- and 50/65-year-old segments.
- A big share of the active tourism experiences audience is schools and therefore children; in addition, many participants bring their children with them on the experiences.
- Some of the participants have a higher cultural level, higher spending potential and look for a more immersive experience.

→ Success Factors

According to the interviewees, the elements that define the success of active tourism tour operators in Abruzzo are:

1. A tailor-made service: Despite having to schedule and standardize certain products, most of the experiences offered can be adjusted to the travellers' needs, with schedules that suit them and with the assurance to live a unique experience that has been first-hand designed by the operator himself.
2. Knowledge and training: people who come to Abruzzo need and want to have a complete, professional service that's planned and offered by knowledgeable people. For this reason, one of the success factors mentioned is knowledge: the interviewees highlight multiple times the time and money they invest into making

sure that all experiences are carried out by internal team members who have received a specific training; often, even external stakeholders such as hospitality providers are trained.

3. An authentic experience: Practical, typically Italian (but also Abruzzese) aspects such as gesturing a lot and a strong culture of food are most definitely a hit among active travellers.
4. Professionality and seriousness: in an industry that has been sadly filled with incapable competitors whose only aim is to exploit the momentum (see next topic), what makes the interviewees' companies outshine the rest is a strong passion and dedication to doing the job well; this results in a strong sense of professionality and competence, that is noticed and highly appreciated by travellers.

→ The Industry

Abruzzo is still an underdog when it comes to active tourism; in fact, the northern region of Trentino, or even central regions such as Marche and Umbria, are strong competitors due to similar environmental characteristics and a generally better-organized, more effectively marketed tourism sector.

The Abruzzo territory, being still unexploited from a touristic point of view, was recently "noticed" by numerous entrepreneurs who sadly only looked at the economic potential of the region; therefore, in the Abruzzo active tourism industry, long-established tour operators now have to face the competition of "commercial operators", improvised tour operators who sell unregulated touristic products.

In addition, players in the active tourism industry have to face the threats of illegality, institutions that are inattentive to the territory's needs, and the lack of basic services such as decent mobility within the region, accessibility and safety measures (see next topic) and education and training (see previous topic).

→ Accessibility

As highlighted by the interviewees, developing active tourism packages in Abruzzo is not as easy as deciding "what" and "where"; in fact, the region lacks decent mobility and accessibility.

Public transport in Abruzzo is underdeveloped; due to the condition of the streets, mountainous areas are not always reachable; basic services are not widely available; even the online platforms are not user-friendly, and the entire process of looking for and booking accommodation, activities or other services is confusing and time-consuming. In addition, the security aspect is not properly addressed, since there are countless remote areas which are very far from hospitals or emergency services.

→ Marketing and Reputation

A strong online and offline communication is a very important aspect for the interviewees. Il Bosso, for example, mentions that they like to be directly involved in the communication they carry out: they often include their own faces and stories in their communication, and they take pride in knowing that, whenever a traveller sees one of their Instagram posts, they might be looking at the same operator who will conduct their excursion. They invest in quality video production and content creation, and they see communication as an opportunity to not only talk about their products, but also to promote the region.

Positive reviews and a strong reputation are considered to be among the factors behind the companies' success: many travellers return after experiencing one of the services, and many join one of WolfTour Il Bosso's experiences because they have heard about them, and they have been convinced by stories of previous customers.

But reputation is also an opportunity to expand one's target market: by offering an amazing experience, both companies have received "free advertisement", both from national radio broadcasters and from local hospitality operators who are certain about the quality of the company they are recommending.

→ Sustainability

Four different kinds of sustainability were mentioned during the interviews:

a. Economic/Financial Sustainability: the Abruzzo active tourism tour operators that were interviewed mentioned the importance for their activity to be financially sustainable, and to have a positive aspect on the region's economic situation too. Some of the measures that are taken to ensure economic and financial sustainability are, for example: finding ways (such as regional funds or projects) to finance the training of internal and external stakeholders and give them the opportunity to gain knowledge at no cost; hiring local young people who are able, thanks to their seasonal job as active tour operators, to finance their university studies.

b. Environmental Sustainability: the interviewees are aware that tourism services will always have an impact on the environment; nevertheless, they conduct numerous initiatives to improve their environmental sustainability. For example, they periodically clean the lakes, rivers and other areas where they operate from waste; they participate into re-planting projects; they conduct environmental workshops and raise awareness regarding the local heritage of flora and fauna; they collaborate with zoologists, biologists and other highly qualified figures in order to learn and teach children about the territory; they try to avoid blatantly polluting or unsustainable activities.

c. Sustainability of Human Capital: Many initiatives are in place to ensure a positive impact on the people involved in active tourism activities. Some examples are: a collaboration with the local university in order to host training internships;

managing a naturalistic hiking school, certificating the students' competences in the activities of Canadian canoe guide, local mountain bike guide and adventure park attendant, and hiring them; employing university students who come from Abruzzo inland villages and who would most likely only return for 10/15 days a year in August for the entire touristic season (from May until September), in order to slow down the extremely relevant phenomenon of depopulation and demographic involution.

d. Managerial Sustainability: one of the main differentiating factors between the interviewees and many Abruzzo active tour operators is managerial sustainability. The interviewees always make sure to follow all the indications, directions and regulations given by the European, Italian and local authorities. In addition, they make sure to nominate a management team when developing new products to be made available to travellers.

9.8 Answer to RQs

RQ1: What is the potential market of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier and what are the characteristics of this market?

This question was answered by means of existing literature, survey results and interview responses.

Currently, 70% of the active tourism market is Italian travellers, who usually come from Lombardy, Lazio, Campania and Veneto; several of these tourists have Abruzzese origins and return periodically. Many, on the other hand, come to the region almost by chance, or based on the idea of living an immersive experience in a pristine environment. Internationals make up for an important slice of the Abruzzo active tourism cake; the lead is now in the hands of tourists from the UK and The Netherlands, and there is a remarkable presence of American and South-American travellers. The age ranges of active tourism participants that are most represented in Abruzzo are millennials, i.e., 20/30 years old, together with the 30/45- and 50/65-year-old segments. There are many families with children, even underage, who participate into the experiences. Only some of the participants have a higher cultural level, higher spending potential and look for a more immersive experience.

To be able to define the potential market of an Abruzzo-Based active tourism supplier, it is necessary to point out that this potential could be found in two different, yet partially overlapping segments:

1. **The Abruzzo habitués**
Each year, 75% of tourists who visit Abruzzo are traceable to a specific market: they are mostly descendants of Italian expats who have been visiting the region for many years already, and who spend their vacation at the seaside; they are usually polarized between young and old, and rely predominantly on a low-middle income with a modest share of wealthy tourism. Tourists who choose Abruzzo have multiple intentions (gastronomy, sport, shopping, culture, events), but only sometimes engage in a few activities such as excursions, some light sports and some shopping or events; their main activity is of course the sea. These tourists prefer a known and experienced dimension, do not look for attractions or exclusive places or novelties. They are very attached to the experiences already made and would like to relive them every time, without particular expectations. Although this could be considered a potential market since these travellers are already present in Abruzzo, this segment has been proven to be difficult to understand, to address and to convince.

2. **Young, active travellers**
The market holding the most potential for Active Tourism in Abruzzo consists of all those people who are very likely to organize an active/adventure trip, would enjoy participating in one or more active/adventure experiences when on vacation, and would consider travelling to Abruzzo in order to live an exclusive, unique active tourism experience. As observed from existing literature regarding active tourism and as resulted from the survey, this market mostly consists of younger to middle-aged tourists, such as 18-25 or 26-35 years old, who usually travel in couples and

are motivated by several factors: they want to live a unique cultural experience, which has the potential to educate them and introduce them to the destination's heritage, even when it comes to food; anyways, they also like engaging in sport activities. When planning for their trip, most of them are attentive to price and look for the best deal. They need flexibility, so that they can make changes to their plans if necessary and would like to be relatively independent when organizing their trip. This is a potential market for Abruzzo active/adventure tour operators to attract due to their interest in the activities offered and their intention to explore new territories, which is a great match with the still widely unknown region of Abruzzo.

RQ2: What are the key factors influencing market demand for an active tourism supplier?

As observed from the survey and interviews results, several factors can influence market demand in the active tourism industry:

Marketing and Reputation
Among the factors that has the most potential to drive demand there is certainly reputation. From the booking phase already, travellers discover and find additional information about most of their travel destinations through their friends and family. In many cases, they engage into active/adventure experiences because of the positive reviews and the recommendations received locally, or they might become return guests whenever they have had a great experience. Another aspect that might improve the perceived reputation is an effective online communication, with endorsements from previous customers, and a strong social media presence with captivating photo and video material.

Price
As the market is strongly focused on the presence of discounts and promotions, an effective way to influence market demand for an active tourism supplier seems to be providing packages and solutions that are suitable for travellers with different spending potentials. Although this aspect might not be as relevant for return travellers, it seems to be extremely important when trying to drive demand from new markets.

Uniqueness and Quality
It is clear that, before being chosen by travellers, Abruzzo active tourism suppliers need to face strong external competition from Italian regions, such as Trentino, Umbria or Marche, and must find a way to differentiate their products from numerous "improvised" local tour operators. A way to do so is through the aspects of uniqueness and quality. To influence travellers' decisions, it is crucial to offer a unique experience that can't be found anywhere else, that is made for a small number of people and can connect travellers with the true Abruzzo culture. In addition, a significant tool to stand out from all other regional players is knowledge, continuous investments in training which can create true expertise and, in return, generate quality that is visible to the travellers' eyes.

RQ3: What characteristics are necessary for an active/adventure tourism product/service to drive demand?

Before demand can be influenced to buy products and services from an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier, there are several requirements which must be present in any active/adventure tourism product or service: Chapin's theory (1974), which states that the perceived opportunity to engage in an activity plays a crucial role in the decisional process, proves true. Travellers' demand can be influenced by increasing the activities' accessibility under many aspects.

Firstly, it is extremely important to ensure that information about the activities (in English or other languages), and even the possibility to book them, are easily available online: after discovering a new destination, foreign travellers look for information on the internet and on social media; they must be able to get in touch with the products/services even before departing.

In addition, in order to increase the perceived availability and accessibility of active/adventure tourism products and activities in Abruzzo, these need to be available for people of different ages, especially families with children, but also people in different physical conditions etc. Strict safety and security measures must be included and highlighted in the communication with the guests.

As Abruzzo is not very conveniently connected, a further step to actually drive demand to this region is providing mobility solutions or even recommendations, which can ensure that the region is not seen as a remote, unknown and unreachable place.

Lastly, considering the role that the concept of sustainability plays in all fields of society and especially in the active and adventure tourism field, it becomes extremely important that any active/adventure experience, service or product that is made available is environmentally, financially, and socially sustainable: any product/service which does not respect these maxims cannot be considered active/adventure activity, and it will not be able to generate demand.

9.9 Research Findings

9.9.1 Survey

The survey focused on understanding the (potential) target market of an active/adventure tourism supplier based in Abruzzo.

Among the respondents it was observed that, on average, two to four trips per year are taken. Although many of the respondents have indeed already visited Italy for leisure, a very tiny fraction of them has been to Abruzzo. This is in line with the Istat (2022) and Regione Abruzzo (2021) findings.

Those who are most likely to either engage in an active/adventure trip over the next year or include an active/adventure element in their next vacation, are respondents between 18 and 35 years of age. For most of them, including an active element when planning for their next trip is not necessarily a priority, however they are willing to consider this option and sometimes do include active/adventure activities in their vacation.

Travellers' preference in terms of type of tourism is set on *culture tourism, educational tourism* and *food tourism*; these are followed by *adventure tourism, active tourism, sports tourism, ecotourism,* and *nature tourism* activities. Unsurprisingly, in terms of tourists' holiday activity preference, experiences such as *attending fairs, cultural activities/getting to know locals* and *visiting historical sites*, are preferred to more active hobbies such as *hiking/trekking, backpacking/orienteering/walking tours, canoeing/kayaking/rafting.* Preferring softer, less demanding activities can be linked to a higher perceived accessibility of these experiences to all sorts of travellers: giving the possibility to people of all ages and all physical conditions to access the activities was in fact a recurring theme, probably influenced by the many respondents who have young children. In case of harder experiences, strict safety and security measure play a crucial role in influencing the market.

Travellers are very independent when it comes to the planning and organization of their travels; they usually rely heavily on friend and family's opinions and reviews about past experiences (thus making the activity provider's reputation extremely relevant), but once they are set on a destination, they must be able to find all necessary information online. This aspect does not refer to practical information as much as it refers to captivating, well-made social media material: most of them will likely not book the activity online, but regardless of this, they need to be inspired by the active tourism provider's communication in order to consider including these experiences in their trip.

Possibly impacted by the currently unstable financial situation, travellers are very sensible to price and a deal or promotion might be the one factors that convinces them to buy an active/adventure experience. This aspect does not however include all-inclusive packages: flexibility is extremely important and, despite appreciating a unique, tailor-made experience, travellers want to be able to choose freely.

9.9.2 Interviews

The interviews aimed to gain a deeper insight into the Abruzzo active tourism industry and market from an expert point of view.

Tour operators currently operating in Abruzzo need to address several situations and face many challenges, which are related to both the market and the industry.

Abruzzo has always been a difficult territory for innovative tourism operators, due to the fact that 75% of people who visit the region are difficult-to-influence travellers who spend their vacation by the sea. Over the last few years, the target market this already low-performing region in terms of incoming tourism, has been repeatedly upset by several adverse natural events and the consequences of Covid-19. Today, Abruzzo active/adventure tour operators can rely on a few very specific markets: tourists from Italian regions such as Lombardy, Lazio, Campania and Veneto who end up in Abruzzo almost by chance and look for an authentic experience; local schools and children who include these activities in their educational journey; some travellers from countries such as the UK and The Netherlands, and fewer from North and South America; a share of Millennials and young adults.

There are several aspects that are mostly appreciated by these travellers: firstly, the possibility to book an experience that's tailor-made to meet their needs and preferences is seen as a very important factor, especially by a small share of the market which boasts higher educational level, better jobs, a higher purchasing power and is therefore more demanding than most. An authentic experience which truly reflects the region's heritage, managed by knowledgeable operators who invest in training and educating all stakeholders, is also noticed and appreciated by tourists. This is also visible on the offline and online communication, which is the result of the tour operator's story and a team of social media experts who know how to tell it. An inevitable consequence of all this, namely a good reputation and positive reviews by previous customers or local hospitality providers, have been shown to be very important success factors.

Furthermore, successful Abruzzo active/adventure tour operators are able to make up for the lack of basic services, mobility solutions, safety measures and accessibility within the region, and can outshine "improvised tour operators" by means of a strong sense of professionality and competence. These factors are visible in every aspect of the businesses' activities and result in perceived reliability.

Economic, managerial, social, and environmental sustainability are at the very core of active/adventure tourism operators: being able to rely on different ways to finance projects and continuous training, on a team that is able to adjust the company's activity to meet all necessary requirements and regulations, on the availability of a young, local labour, and on a community of people who know the environment and are dedicated to its preservation, are all key aspects determining their success.

9.10 Research Report and Concept Proposal

Abruzzo

RESEARCH ON ACTIVE TOURISM
LUCIA DEL ROSARIO – SEP '22

RESEARCH TOPIC

This research revolves around the topic of Active and Adventure Tourism in Abruzzo, Italy; it focuses specifically on the aspects that are most influential on the target market's behaviour, which must be addressed in order to drive demand.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

This research is based on a solid foundation of existing knowledge regarding the topics of active/adventure tourism and consumer behaviour and demand.
The theory provided by Chapin et al (1974), which shows that travellers' behaviour is strictly linked to their propensity to engage in active tourism experiences and their perception of actually having the opportunity to do so, is the starting point for this study. This theory was furthermore integrated with results of the study conducted by Orden-Mejía et al (2022) regarding tourists' expectations for post-Covid destinations, and with the determinants of local tourism demand provided by Zamparini et al (2016) and Dwyer et al (2010). Information regarding active/adventure tourism was mostly taken from CBI (2021) and UNWTO (2014), while Istat (2022) and Regione Abruzzo (2021) were the source of historical tourism market data for the Abruzzo region.

RESEARCH GOALS

The goal of this research is to:
1. Identify the Abruzzo active tourism target market (RQ1)
2. Define which are the key factors influencing market demand (RQ2)
3. State which characteristics are necessary for an active tourism product to drive demand (RQ3)

The Main Research Question that will be answered is:

What are the key factors influencing the travel behaviour of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier's potential market?

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted with a mixed method, in which both quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed; namely, the research took place as follows:

1. Firstly, the opinion of international travellers was gathered in the form of quantitative data was collected with a survey;
2. Then, the opinions of experts from the industry were collected by means of semi-structured interviews.

RESEARCH IMPORTANCE

This research can generate value as it adds valuable, specific insights to the relatively small and vague pool of knowledge that is currently available regarding tourism in Abruzzo, and specifically active and adventure tourism practices.

FRAMEWORK
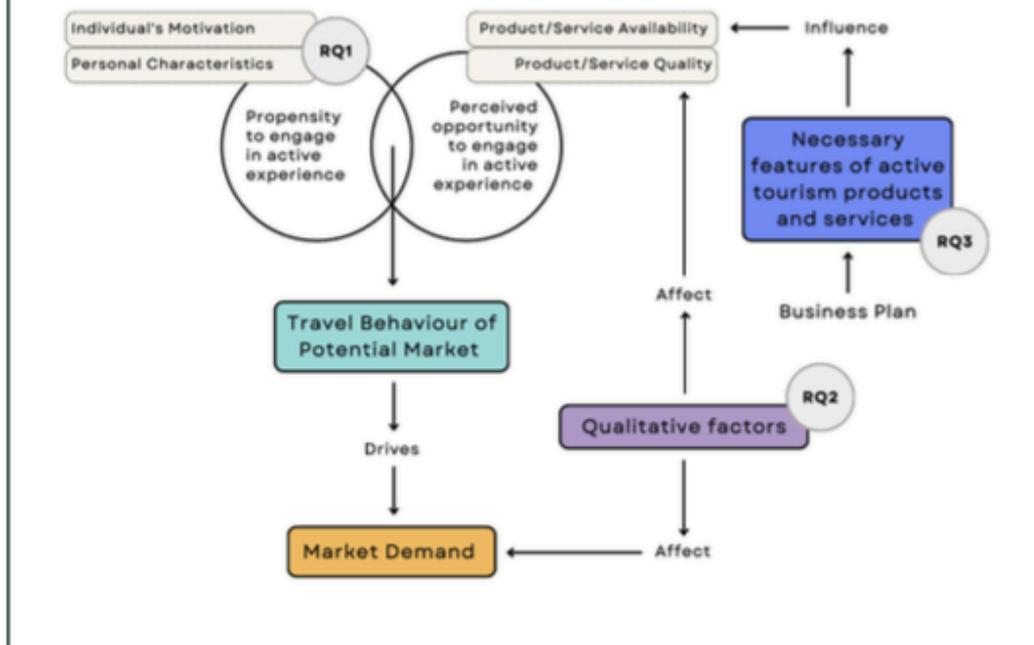
Abruzzo

RESEARCH ON ACTIVE TOURISM
LUCIA DEL ROSARIO - SEP '22

FINDINGS

73% Travellers aged 18-35 who are likely or very likely to engage in active/adventure trips in next year

This tendency is even stronger (82%) among travellers within the 18-25 age group

62% Travellers aged 18-35 who are (very) likely to include an active/adventure element in next trip

Travellers usually **discover new destinations** via:

1. Friends and Family
114/182

2. Social Media
111/182

3. Online Advertisement
70/182
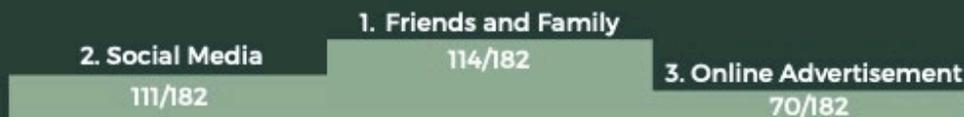
And look for additional info by means of online search, social media and friends/family

Booking

97% Prefers to organize the trip themselves or delegate friends or family members

93% Books their trip on the internet

69% Books their trip more than a month in advance, and 24% Books their trip between 2 weeks and a month in advance

Favorite type of travel

- Culture tourism, educational tourism, food tourism
- Adventure tourism, active tourism, sports tourism
- Ecotourism, nature tourism   Other

Most Popular HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

1. Attending local festival/fairs
2. Cultural activities/getting to know locals
3. Visiting historical sites
4. Hiking/trekking
5. Backpacking/orienteering/walking tours

FINDINGS

The No.1 Priority >> *Finding the best deal and saving money on flight, accommodation and activities*
WHEN PLANNING A TRIP

The presence of **strict safety/security measures** is considered...

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
by 33% of respondents

IMPORTANT
by 34% of respondents

CAPTIVATING MARKETING & **A STRONG REPUTATION**

were the most mentioned themes when travellers were asked about the **aspects that could convince them to buy an active yourism product/service**

"Good reviews"   "Genuine testimonials"

"Pictures/Videos from other people's experiences"

"A cool website"   "Captivating presentation videos"

Another strong convincing factor is the certainty to be engaging in a

Unique, high-quality experience

"Meeting locals, discover new places, unusual activities that I can't do anywhere else, VIP treatment, unique activity"

Abruzzo

RESEARCH ON ACTIVE TOURISM
LUCIA DEL ROSARIO - SEP '22

FINDINGS

INFORMATION

The internet is the...

NO.1 Most used mean of researching information about a travel destination

ACCESSIBILITY

...has the potential to **convince travellers** to buy an active product/service

ABRUZZO

is seen as not conveniently located or easily reachable

Travellers want to know that their vacation has a positive

SOCIAL
ECONOMIC
ENVIRONMENTAL **IMPACT**

CONCLUSIONS

What are the key factors influencing the travel behaviour of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier's potential market?

1: The market demographics and motivations

- Young-, to middle-aged tourists: 18-35 years old
- Usually travel in couples or with children
- Strong will to live a unique cultural experience
- Attentive and sensitive to price
- Need for flexibility and independence

2: A proven good value for money

- Captivating, inspiring marketing
- Positive reviews and a strong reputation
- Sensitive to discounts/promotions
- Unique, authentic local experience

3: Inclusive, accessible solutions

- Strong on/offline presence and visibility
- Accessibility and inclusivity
- Mobility solutions
- Sustainability

....

SO WHAT ???
Abruzzo active tourism should target young, motivated travellers by developing unique, high-quality price-friendly products and services and making the products/services accessible, convenient and sustainable.

CONCEPT PROPOSAL

"Goldsmith for a day"
"Orafo per un giorno"

Prepared for il Bosso
by Lucia Del Rosario

THE STORY

The story told by this experience is that of an old Abruzzese traditional charm, the <u>Presentosa</u>, a skillfully crafted pendant made of woven threads of white or yellow gold which is typically given from a man to his soon-to-be wife. But it is also the story of a traveller, who will discover and become a witness of the majestic Abruzzo craftsmanship.

"Goldsmith for a day"

The design proposal will be built upon the Creative Supply Hospitality Concept Framework elements which, for the scope of this project, will be adapted to the Active Tourism field (Yoong, 2022).

THE EXPERIENCE

This experience will consist of an exciting 4/5hrs workshop during which tourists will learn about the ancient technique of Abruzzo jewellery making by means of a hands-on experience, where they will create their own jewel to keep or share, guided by the expertise of the *Scuola Orafa Sulmonese*.

THE LOCATION

The experience will take place in Sulmona, a small city in the very heart of Abruzzo where the *Scuola Orafa Sulmonese* is based.

THE PEOPLE

This experience will involve *Il Bosso*, the researcher *Lucia Del Rosario*, and the *Scuola Orafa Sulmonese*.

IDENTITY

The name of this experience, "Goldsmith for a day", was specifically chosen to convey the essence of this experience: travellers will not only learn about the history of the Presentosa jewel, but they will become actual goldsmiths and honour the Abruzzo traditions.

ONLINE PRESENCE & VISIBILITY

Information about this experience will be made available in all online and offline channels:

- A landing page will be created for the website with all important information in Italian and English, with photos and videos

> Why? Most travellers look forinformation online, and want to be inspired by photos/videos

- Flyers will be distributed to the hotels and other hospitality facilities which currently serve as a touchpoint between the tour operator and its customers

> Why? Travellers prefer booking their experiences and actvities locally, and trust recommendations

ACCESSIBILITY

- The experience will be available to travellers of all ages and physical conditions: families with children will be given the opportunity to participate in children workshops, where jewels can be made with simpler materials and child-friendly procedures

> Why? The possibility to do activities that are accessible to anyone is considered very relevant by many travellers

- The workshop will be conducted in Italian and English

> Why? This aspect will make the experience accessible to foreign travellers

MOBILITY SOLUTIONS

- Featured on the experience landing page, there will need to be a detailed, updated description of all means of travelling to Sulmona
- A cooperation with a local provider of sustainable mobility solutions to arrange tourists' transportation to Sulmona could be considered

> Why? Many travellers don't know Abruzzo, and effective communication will be extremely important in making travellers feel like the location is accessible

SUSTAINABILITY

This experience will be beneficial to all stakeholders involved:

- This experience will be a cooperation between *Il Bosso, Scuola Orafa Sulmonese* and more local businesses: local prosperity will be maximized
- The development process of this experience will create local jobs
- Visitor fulfillment will be reached by providing a safe, satisfying experience which is available to all, without discriminations etc.
- Whenever transportation will be required by travellers, this service will be outsourced to a company which makes use of electric vehicles

> Why? One of the pillars of active tourism is sustainability, and travellers want to know that their vacation has a positive impact on all stakeholders involved

MARKETING & REPUTATION

- The launch of this experience will be announced, via email, to all previous customers and, during the pilot testing, some of the most loyal customers will be invited to participate at no cost

> Why? Previous customers are the most likely to recommend the experience, and the market is responsive to word-of-mouth

- During the pilot testing, a content creator will be present to take photos and make videos that will be used on the web landing page, on social media platforms (such as Instagram and TikTok) and on advertisement material

> Why? Inspiring social media content is extremely important for the market, just like authenticity and genuine referrals

PRICE

- Penetration pricing will be employed and the experience will be sold at a "discounted price" initially

> Why? Saving money is travellers' no.1 priority when booking a trip; moreover, a strong initial interest will be built

- Referral discounts might be implemented

> Why? The market that relies heavily on opinions and recommendations from friends and family: this strategy could address price-sensitivity, while incentivizing word-of-mouth marketing

UNIQUENESS & QUALITY

- The experience will be suitable for couples or small groups of people, up to 8 participants

> Why? Smaller groups will ensure that the experience is able to connect like-minded travellers without giving the impression of a tourist attraction; it will ensure the feasibility and dedicated attention to each participant

- A limited-edition, exclusive versions of this experience will be created and sold: for instance, during the Easter week, travellers will have the opportunity to combine this experience with the Madonna Che Scappa (Runaway Madonna) ceremony, an Easter ritual which has been taking place on each Easter Sunday for more than 800 years

> Why? Limited editions and the strategy of scarcity will increase the perceived uniqueness of this experience

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9.11 Client Evaluation Form

Evaluation Form Deliverable

Name of student:	Lucia Del Rosario	Student number:	662559
Name of company/organisation:	Il Bosso	Department:	Tourism Products
Name of company tutor/research commissioner:	Paolo Setta	Position of company tutor/commissioner (if applicable):	Tourism Area Manager
Project and/or Deliverable: (please specify)	Presentation of results market research on Active Tourism in Abruzzo and Proposed Experience Design + Infographics		

For this final evaluation the project has been delivered by the student and is thus evaluated. This is taken into consideration for the final assessment of the student.

CATEGORY 1: EXPERTISE/KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIELD

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
Excellent	In-depth use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows excellent thinking capacity of the student (considering all significant factors and looking from all different perspectives).	Use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows mostly intellectual depth (considering significant factors and looking from different perspectives).	No or incorrect use of literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable lacks intellectual depth.	The theory used by Lucia is relevant

CATEGORY 2: KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION/SOLVING PROBLEMS

| Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
Good	The theories and models are skillfully applied and the student can translate this in a unique solution and implementation. The student can relate situations to concepts that results into a solution that adds great value to the company's overall strategy. The creative solution is/can be implemented and evaluated and is solving the problem.	The student uses theory, models, and shows understanding of the issues at hand. The solution is realistic and implementable for the company. The solution is/can be implemented and evaluated.	Mentioning theory and models, but not using them in the correct way. The student cannot convince of the possibilities to implement and evaluate. It is not solving the problem.	The models are adapted well to the topic and the solution can be implemented with some minor adjustments

CATEGORY 3: INFORMED JUDGEMENTS

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
Excellent	The research process is done and explained in an excellent way. All statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the students and/or referencing. The analysis is very substantial.	The research process is done and explained well. Most statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the student and/or referencing. The analysis is substantial.	Weak problem analysis, research question not clear enough. Data collection and/or methodology is insufficient. Weak analysis, use of data from one dimension and not backed up.	Lucia presented the research process and findings very well, and conducted a substantial analysis.

CATEGORY 4: COMMUNICATION AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
Excellent	Excellent ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to all stakeholders involved. The deliverable adds great value to the main stakeholders. Initial and creative channels have been actively used to share outputs and knowledge.	Good ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to stakeholders. The deliverable adds value to the company. Existing channels have been used to share knowledge	The deliverable could have been better delivered to the stakeholders. The deliverable could have added more value, if better delivered. No active communication of outputs and knowledge.	Lucia did a good job. She was very precise and punctual in the dissemination of the results she achieved and very attentive to their implementation for our reality.

CATEGORY 5: INTERCULTURAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
Excellent	Student can lead the project by themselves. Student is self-critical towards improvement and takes feedback to heart. Student deals with a diversity of stakeholders in an intercultural competent way. Hospitality mindset is seen in project or work in a very distinct way.	Student can lead the project with little help. Student is critical towards improvement and listens to feedback. Student deals with different stakeholders. Hospitality mindset can be seen.	Tasks performed are described and not critically analyzed. Student is not too critical towards own learning and can listen better to feedback. Student does not know how to deal with differences in stakeholders. Hospitality can be improved.	Lucia was able to answer our questions critically and has a strong hospitality mindset.

OVERALL COMMENTS:		
Thank you Lucia for this project. Good luck with your graduation and we look forward to developing your project together!		

STUDENTS' COMMENTS:		
Comments on evaluation:		

DATE & STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:	COMPANY SUPERVISOR'S/RESEARCH COMMISSIONER'S SIGNATURE:
29/09/2022	
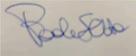
THE COMPLETED FORMS (ON ALL DELIVERABLES AND PERFORMANCE) NEED TO BE EMAILED TO THE LYCAR COACH AND PUT IN THE APPENDICES OF THE COMPANY PROJECT

9.12 HTH PLOs

	PLO	An HTH bachelor graduate is able to...	HTH PEP
Marketing, Sales & Distribution	1	Critically analyse customer data and consumer behaviour and use findings to formulate and execute marketing, communication, sales and revenue management plans.	2
	2	Design feasible hospitality concepts based on trend analysis and contribute to the continuous development of the industry	2
Finance, Accounting & Law	3	Critically analyse and interpret financial business fundamentals to optimise the financial performance of a hospitality business through the application of financial planning & control mechanisms.	2
	4	Take legal implications of hospitality management into account when making management decisions.	1
Operations Management	5	Manage, critically analyse and contribute to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of hospitality operations processes at operational, tactical and strategic level using available (information) technology.	2
Strategic Hospitality Management & Change	6	Identify and analyse trends inside and outside the hospitality industry and to translate these into a strategy and related policies in line with the vision of the organization.	3
	7	Is able to prepare, motivate and lead employees for continuous change, by applying agile working methods.	2
Leadership & People	8	Execute and evaluate the HRM policy in line with the organisational strategic goals to improve individual, team and organisational performance using feasible interventions.	2
	9	Interact with others constructively and effectively in realising common goals, respecting diversity and in dealing with continuous change.	2
Business Improvement	10	Improve hospitality industry by analysing a hospitality business related question with use of reliable sources, **data analytics** and an adequate research design **cycle**, resulting in an evidence based feasible solution or advice.	3
Management of Information	11	Interpret, **critically analyse** and produce management information from various data sources in an international hospitality business environment, **with emphasis on data analytics**	3

9.13 CLP Executive Summary

Upon completion of all mandatory courses at Hotelschool The Hague, phase-3 students are ready to kickstart their professional career by enrolling in the Launching Your Career (LYCar) course. The Career Launching Plan (CLP) is the first component, and the first deliverable of this course; students are herewith required to reflect on themselves and their future, to develop the best plan of action accordingly.

After looking at myself from the Birkman, the 16-Personalities and the Wheel-of-Life perspective, I can describe my personality as an interesting mix of numerous, somewhat contradictory traits. On the one hand I am a very ambitious person, constantly busy multitasking and overthinking; I enjoy competition, and I am always looking for a new challenge. On the other hand I am a selectively sociable person and if I am not alone, I prefer spending time with my family and partner rather than friends; I need a structure to avoid getting lost in too many ideas, I need time to take a decision and I should always be able to withdraw when everything becomes too much.

Being both an idealist and an analytical thinker, I find myself planning the next years of my life but also assessing and reviewing my future projects from time to time. I am curious and I want to be surrounded by a competitive, motivated people; the sports and events industry would therefore be a perfect fit for me. In the near future I want to explore this new industry, while exploiting my hospitality knowledge and my international background to have a competitive advantage in this increasingly globalized world. I am aware that succeeding in the sports and events industry might require skills that I do not have yet but I am motivated for a new challenge. A dream of mine has always been to teach other people; in fact, according to Birkman, the second most suitable career option for me is Education. For this reason, I want to keep studying until I will be knowledgeable enough to coach and inspire others. When thinking about the long-term future, I see myself in an international, dynamic yet flexible work environment, where everyone feels responsible and is respectful towards others, and where people's needs are taken into consideration.

Reflecting on my strengths and weaknesses and observing relevant industry trends, I have developed three career goals to motivate me to reach my objectives:

1. By the end of my internship, I will have gained the knowledge and ability to individually develop and direct a hospitality-, and sports-related project […].
2. By the end of my placement, I will be able to address business challenges from a managerial perspective and develop the most effective and suitable solution to ensure the best possible outcome for all stakeholders […].
3. By the time I graduate from HTH, I will have perfected the skills to be able to work with and adapt to different international stakeholders […].

These goals are aligned with my PDCs choice, namely focusing on **PDC2** supporting it with **PDC3** and **7**. Furthermore, these goals and PDCs are the basis for my future final deliverables: **Product Plan, Strategic Plan/Advice** or **Account Management Plan**. These deliverables will ensure that I add value to my designated placement company, which will likely be Holland Destination Management or another events-related company. In addition, by developing relevant and professional deliverables, I will have the certainty that by the end of my HTH study program, I will be ready to start a career within the

sports and events industry. To make sure that I will meet my deadlines and track and evaluate my development, during my placement I will keep a learning journal: I will use Rolfe's reflective model.

Concluding, I am positive that this Career Launching Plan is a promising stepping-stone towards the completion of my studies at HTH, and I look forward to attending the Graduation Ceremony on January 22nd, 2021.

9.14 LYCar Proposal Executive Summary

This LYCar Proposal is aiming to investigate the main topic area of active/adventure tourism, and more specifically the factors influencing the travel behavior of an Abruzzo-based active hospitality supplier's potential market.

After the halt of international travels due to Covid-19, it is safe to say that the expectations, needs and wants of leisure travelers have changed: the new generation of tourists is looking to experience meaningful and unique travel adventures, whereby they can participate into open-air sport and cultural activities, while generating a positive impact on the hosting cultures and environment. Active tourism meets these wishes by providing responsible travel solutions requiring physical and mental participation from the tourist, and following the maxims of sustainability, protection of biodiversity and conservation of culture. It is therefore no surprise that this is a booming category within the travel industry.

Abruzzo is a wonderful Italian region whose golden beaches, rocky mountains and authentic, undiscovered cultural heritage show incredible tourism potential that is yet to be discovered. Thanks to the region's geography and history, Abruzzo could be the perfect destination for an active trip; however, due to the relatively low influx of young international tourists, there are only very few small businesses currently operating in this sector, thus leaving plenty of room for the development of new investments idea.

At the moment, the little existing literature on active tourism in Abruzzo does not provide a clear picture of the current/potential target market for this sort of business. Research shows however that market research is invaluable in determining a business' potential, getting in touch with prospective customers and understanding both their behavior and the factors that influence it. Understanding the travel behavior of an Abruzzo active tourism provider's potential market is a critical pre-condition for developing a new business idea in this area or improving the existing products/services.

Following this analysis, the following Main Research Question was formulated:

"What are the key factors influencing the travel behavior of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier's potential market?"

After conducting a thorough literature review, the following supporting questions were defined:

RQ1: What is the potential market of an Abruzzo-based active tourism supplier and what are the characteristics of this market?

RQ2: What are the key factors influencing market demand for an active tourism supplier?

RQ3: What characteristics are necessary for an active/adventure tourism product/service to drive demand?

To answer these questions, **design-based research** will be conducted: quantitative and qualitative research will be done in the form of surveys, interviews and desk research. To ensure that as much relevant data as possible will be gathered, the population will be a mix of leisure travelers, and industry experts in the field of (active/adventure) travel. The chosen sampling design for the surveys is non-probability sampling, while purposive sampling will be used for the interviews. The philosophy of critical realism will be applied throughout the research cycle, following the onion research model.

After setting the context, understanding the problem, and gathering primary and secondary data thus answering the research questions, the knowledge generated will be extremely valuable for either a **business plan**, which will serve as the foundation for the creation of a business, or a **guideline** for the existing active tourism providers in Abruzzo. Based on the solution, dissemination will take place with the relevant stakeholders, followed by an intervention plan and a final evaluation.

In accordance with the solutions, two Program Learning Outcomes will be addressed: **PLO2** and **PLO6.** These, together with a cultural self-analysis, and an examination of the researcher's Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Adaptability Quotient (AQ), social and technical competencies, will show the researcher's growth as an **International Hospitality Leader** (IHL).

9.15 LYCar Proposal Assessment and Feedback Form

LYCar Proposal Grading Rubric
v.1.1 (Version LYCar 2020; 16 February, 2021)

Student Name:	Lucia Del Rosario	**LYCar Coach:**	Dr. Lim
Student Number:	662559	**Primary PLO:**	PLO2
Date Submitted:	02/05/2022	**Secondary PLO(s):**	PLO6

Note: All boxes with red border to be filled by student

Preconditions (required for assessment)	Yes	No	Comments
Checks content and completeness			
Executive Summary is present, concise, can be read independently, contains information about process and content, focuses on results and outcomes	✔	☐	
LYCar Proposal meets formal reporting criteria (according to e.g., LYCar Reading & Writing Guide)			
LYCar Proposal is written in English and is professional, including common basic components such as Intro, ToC, Conclusion etc.- see Reading & Writing Guide	✔	☐	
LYCar Proposal is max. **5.000 words** (counting after Table of Content, incl. text in tables) **-** visual proof of wordcount is included in Appendices.	✔	☐	
Harvard Referencing Style is used consistently, referencing to primary sources only, List of References is well presented	✔	☐	
Check (technical) formalities and submissions			
Ephorus upload	✔	☐	
LYCar Proposal incl. Appendices are uploaded in Osiris	✔	☐	
Ethics and data management			
Ethical, integrity and data management requirements	✔	☐	
Entitled to assessment? (All yes above required):	✔		

DD1: The student has demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that is supported by advanced textbooks

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
1.1 Use of literature and knowledge of the field	Student uses in-depth literature and knowledge of the field throughout the report. The report contains no mistakes and factual incorrectness.	Student uses in most cases literature and knowledge of the field in the report. The report contains some mistakes and factual incorrectness in a limited part of the report.	No sufficient or correct use of literature and knowledge of the field in the report. The report contains mistakes and factual incorrectness.
1.2 Intellectual depth and abstract thinking	Student takes all significant factors into account and looks from different perspectives, sees patterns, relates situations to concepts in order to solve larger problems. The reports show excellent thinking capacity of the student. New unique insights presented in the topic and depth of understanding displayed. Excellent linking between the elements and the underlying issues within the case situation.	Student takes different perspectives into account. The report shows intellectual depth (taking into account all significant factors and looking from different perspectives) in most parts of the report. Some patterns are clear. Some links have been made.	The report lacks intellectual depth (superficial and merely descriptive) in some parts of the report. Patterns are not sufficiently made clear.

Student Feedback:	Pass ☑ / Not Yet ☐	The problem analysis shows a good use of literature and current reliable sources, whic are combined with relevant information from the internship company. The context is well explained and it is linked to the goal of the research. A comprehensive literature review allows for relevant research questions, which act as a stepping stone towards gaining deeper knowledge of the topic chosen. A critical look into the topic is visible. Literature used and cited is very extensive.
Assessor Feedback:	Pass ☑ / Not Yet ☐	

DD2: The student can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and has competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining feedback and solving problems within their field of study

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
2.1 Application of theories/models to situations at hand	Student uses a range of theories/models appropriate to the problems in the case skilfully and able to add their own unique perspective and insight. They own the model(s).	Student mentions a range of theories/models appropriate to the problems in the case and applying some of them in the correct way.	Mentioning models and theories but not using them in a correct way.
2.2 Possible impact and meaning of own work - dissemination of research	Student plans evaluation of impact and meaning of own work in relation to business and industry with sound underpinning. Identification of all stakeholders and acts of dissemination. Plan on how to effectively disseminate knowledge through different channels fitted for a variety of audiences is also presented.	Student formulates criteria for evaluation. Student describes possible impact and meaning of own work. Identification of stakeholders and planning of dissemination through at least one valuable channel with an audience is presented.	Student fails to describe criteria how to evaluate impact. No identification of stakeholders or realistic plan on dissemination of knowledge through at least one valuable channel with an audience.

Student Feedback:	Pass ☑ / Not Yet ☐	The student is aware of possible limitations and setbacks that might occur during the LYCar process and developed products/ solutions that address this concern. Models are used effectively and there is a very clear overview of stakeholders and methods of dissemination, together with a detailed description of how the evaluation will take place.
Assessor Feedback:	Pass ☑ / Not Yet ☐	

DD3: the student has the ability to devise data gathering events, gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
3.1 The Design Based Research Process	Student sets the research process up in a systematic and well organised way. Student makes sense of a problem mess, analyses a (complex) problem and formulates feasible solutions by using a design-based research approach. Logical flow from Problem definition to Analysis to Solutions Design/methods are well chosen and motivated,	Student analyses the problem, and formulates possible solutions underpinned by literature using a design-based research approach. Methods motivated and mostly logically chosen	Insufficient problem analysis and methodology, research cycle not used.
3.2 Analysis and evaluation of data	Student plans analysis and evaluation of data/information well using appropriate (digital) tools and makes data-driven decisions. All statements are underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing. The appropriate tools are used in all steps. Analysis is sufficiently complex with use of information from more than 2 different dimensions (practioners, scientific literature, the organization and stakeholders).	Student plans analysis and evaluation of solutions clearly, with some flaws or unclarities. Some statements are underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing, some lacking underpinning. Analysis is sufficiently complex using data from at least one dimension and sufficiently backed up with literature.	Plan of analysis and evaluation of solutions is not clear. Statements are mostly not underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing; some are contradicting. No tools are used. Lacking or no analysis and not backed up with literature.

Student Feedback:	Pass ✔ Not Yet ☐	The approach to design-based research is explained in detail by means of the Onion research model. The methodology, population, sampling and strategy of data collection is motivated, well described and rigorous; it is in line with the research philosophy chosen, and it is applicable and relevant with the data that needs to be gathered. Data analysis is described in detail and explained.
Assessor Feedback:	Pass ✔ Not Yet ☐	

DD4: the student can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
4.1 Communication to audience making use of professional (business) English	Student divides information effectively in paragraphs/chapters. No noticeable errors in English usage and mechanics. Use of language enhances the argument and avoids abbreviations. Sentence structures are well varied, and voice and tone are highly suitable for the specific audience/s. Style and content complement each other into an appealing, high quality story. Highly skilful organisational strategy. The logical sequence of ideas increases the effectiveness of the argument and transitions between paragraphs strengthen the relationship between ideas. Sub-headings are employed effectively and the links between different sections are reinforced through linking expressions. Shows attention to detail in all parts of the report.	Student divides information in paragraphs/chapters. Errors in English usage and mechanics are present, but they rarely impede understanding. Use of language supports the argument. Sentence structures are varied, and voice and tone are generally appropriate for the intended audience/s. Generally, a clear organisational strategy. The sequence of ideas in most cases supports the argument and transitions between paragraphs clarify the relationship between ideas. The report is mainly comprehensively written and lacks some attention to detail in some parts of the report.	Distracting errors in English usage are present and they impede understanding. Use of language is basic, only somewhat clear and does not support the argument. Word choice is general and imprecise. Voice and tone are not always appropriate for the intended audience/s. Basic organisational strategy, with most ideas logically grouped. Transitions between paragraphs sometimes clarify the relationship among ideas. The report is not comprehensively written and lacks attention to detail in most parts of the report.

Student Feedback:	Pass ✔ Not Yet ☐	The language used is clear, free from mistakes and it enhances the arguments that are being presented. There is a silver lining and logical sequence between the different chapters and attention to details is visible in all parts of the report.
Assessor Feedback:	Pass ✔ Not Yet ☐	

DD5: the student has developed those learning skills necessary to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
5.1 Plan on IQ development in PLO: Reflection on product(s)	Student has clear plans on what will be delivered and uses different relevant theory to underpin own work and reflect on it.	Student has a plan on what will be delivered and uses theory to underpin planned own work and reflect on it.	No clear deliverables mentioned and almost no theory to underpin own work and reflection.
5.2 Plan on AQ & EQ Self development	Student devises excellent ability to critically reflect on own developmental goals and demonstrates real growth mindset for life-long learning. Student proposes a demonstration of being able to self-direct, taking initiative in unpredictable situations. Student shows different metrics that can demonstrate development in terms of their EQ/AQ.	Student shows developmental goals and demonstrates growth mindset. There is a plan on how to reflect on values, attitudes and behaviour. Starting levels and desired end levels are described and measurements are provided.	Developmental goals are not concrete, there is no demonstration of growth mindset. Plan on how to reflect is vague and does not give enough substantiation to show growth.
5.3 Plan on EQ Social development	Student provides a plan on how to construct a multitude of proof that shows development as an Intercultural Hospitality Leader. Excellent ability to contribute to the global society/local community as a responsible citizen. Excellent analysis of diversity of people the student will deal with. Possible effective collaboration with all stakeholders in different cultural settings. Hospitality is key to the project or work the student does.	Student provides a plan on how to prove development as an Intercultural Hospitality Leader. Plan on how to contribute to the global society/local community as a responsible citizen. Proposing ideas on how to collaborate with different stakeholders in different cultural settings. Hospitality is a differentiator in the students' project or work.	No clear plan on development as an Intercultural Hospitality Leader. Plan on how to contribute to global society/local community is missing. Ideas proposed on collaboration or hospitality are not sufficient.

Student Feedback:	Pass ✔ Not Yet ☐	There is a clear, detailed analysis of the current EQ/AQ profile, with a depicted excellent ability to critically reflect on the student's strengths and weaknesses. The self and social development are described as a plan and will be further developed in the final thesis.

Assessor Feedback:	Excellent ☐ Pass ✔ Not Yet ☐	

Overall Assessor Feedback

LYCar Proposal Outcome

Pass	✔	All qualitative criteria awarded a "Pass". "P" registered in Osiris. Student can continue with LYCar execution.
No Go	☐	One or more qualitative criteria graded as "Not Yet". "F" registered in Osiris. Student re-writes LYCar Proposal with incorporated feedback.
Pre-Condition NY	☐	Pre-conditions not met. Student resubmits LYCar Proposal. No grade or feedback provided to the student.

9.16   Proof of Data Management upload

Hospitality Business School

Dear Students,

As part of your LYCar research, you are required to upload all your data files for data storage.

For information concerning data management and your research number, please refer to "Data Management" on the LYCar 2020 myhotelschool worksite.

Uploading your data files is a pre-condition for the assessment of your LYCar Company Project Report.

Name(required)	Lucia Del Rosario
Student Number(required)	662559
Email(required)	662559@hotelschool.nl
LYCar Coach(required)	Dr. Lim
Research Number(required)	2022-557

Upload file (one per upload, click 'Select File' - 'Upload File' for every file until you done)

[   ]   Select File   Upload File

File Interview-Transcript-Il-Bosso.docx uploaded successfully

👍 38

Focused | Other

Today

noreply
File Upload Notification   19:41
Dear Lucia Del Rosario, This is an...

noreply
File Upload Notification   19:40

Lucia Del Rosario
Good evening Dr. Lim, I a...   Sent

noreply
Dear Lucia Del Rosario, Thi...   19:40

noreply
File Upload Notification   19:39
Dear Lucia Del Rosario, This is an...

This Week

LYCar
[LYCar - Announce...   30/09/22
An announcement has been upda...

filomena spagnoli, Pao...   📎
Documenti Tesi di Lau...   30/09/22
Ciao Lucia ti rimandiamo la sched...

Unverified **Paolo Setta**
Incontro Giovedì   27/09/22
Grazie Lucia, confermo per giove...

Last Week

FW: File Upload Notification

☀️ ↰ ↰ ↱

⊙ **Lucia Del Rosario <662559@hotelschool.nl>**   Today at 19:47
To: ⊙ Lim, A, Dr.

Good evening Dr. Lim,

I am forwarding you this email as evidence that the second of my data files has been uploaded securely.

Have a lovely evening.
Kind regards,

Lucia

From: noreply <noreply@hotelschool.nl>
Date: Sunday, 2 October 2022 at 19:40
To: Lucia Del Rosario <662559@hotelschool.nl>
Subject: File Upload Notification

Dear Lucia Del Rosario,

This is an automatic delivery message to notify you that a new file has been uploaded.

Name : Lucia Del Rosario
Student Number : 662559
Email : 662559@hotelschool.nl
LYCar Coach : Dr. Lim
Research Number : 2022-557

We kindly request you to forward this email to your LYCar coach as evidence that your data files have been uploaded securely.
Thank You.

Home   Student Support ⌄   Departments ⌄   Committees & councils ⌄   Information ⌄   Forms ⌄   Applications ⌄   Links ⌄   Shop ⌄

🏠 > Forms > Student Research Data Upload

Dear Students,

As part of your LYCar research, you are required to upload all your data files for data storage.

For information concerning data management and your research number, please refer to "Data Management" on the LYCar 2020 myhotelschool worksite.

Uploading your data files is a pre-condition for the assessment of your LYCar Company Project Report.

Name(required)	Lucia Del Rosario
Student Number(required)	662559
Email(required)	662559@hotelschool.nl
LYCar Coach(required)	Dr. Lim
Research Number(required)	2022-557

Upload file (one per upload, click 'Select File' - 'Upload File' for every file until you done)

[   ]   Select File   Upload File

File Interview-Transcript-WolfTour.docx uploaded successfully

👍 38

Focused   Other   ≡

Today

N noreply   ↗
   File Upload Notification   19:41
   Dear Lucia Del Rosario, This is an...

N noreply   ↗
   File Upload Notification   19:40
   Dear Lucia Del Rosario, This is an...

N noreply   ⌄
   File Upload Notification   19:39

   Lucia Del Rosario
   Good evening Dr. Lim, I a...   Sent

   noreply   ↗
   Dear Lucia Del Rosario, Thi... 19:39

This Week

L LYCar
   [LYCar - Announce...   30/09/22
   An announcement has been upda...

FS filomena spagnoli, Pao...   🖉
   Documenti Tesi di Lau...   30/09/22
   Ciao Lucia ti rimandiamo la sched...

? Unverified Paolo Setta
   Incontro Giovedì   27/09/22
   Grazie Lucia, confermo per giove...

Last Week

FW: File Upload Notification   ☼ ↩ ↩ ↪

🖼 ⊗ **Lucia Del Rosario <662559@hotelschool.nl>**   Today at 19:48
     To: ⊗ Lim, A, Dr.

Good evening Dr. Lim,

I am forwarding you this email as evidence that the third of my data files has been uploaded securely.

Have a lovely evening.
Kind regards,

Lucia

From: noreply <noreply@hotelschool.nl>
Date: Sunday, 2 October 2022 at 19:41
To: Lucia Del Rosario <662559@hotelschool.nl>
Subject: File Upload Notification

Dear Lucia Del Rosario,

This is an automatic delivery message to notify you that a new file has been uploaded.

Name : Lucia Del Rosario
Student Number : 662559
Email : 662559@hotelschool.nl
LYCar Coach : Dr. Lim
Research Number : 2022-557

We kindly request you to forward this email to your LYCar coach as evidence that your data files have been uploaded securely.
Thank You.

10.References

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