

The perception of customers on Sustainable Tourism

Elena Hiere

Msc in Management

Supervisor:

Prof. Ana Margarida Madureira Simaens, Professora Auxiliar, ISCTE
Business School, Departamento de Marketing, Operações e Gestão Geral

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Elena HIERE

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Resumo

Nas últimas décadas, a indústria de viagens e turismo experienciou altos níveis de crescimento, bem como uma importante participação no PIB global. Nos últimos anos, o conceito de desenvolvimento sustentável e, mais especificamente, de turismo sustentável tem atraindo cada vez mais interesse das populações e clientes do sector, assim como de investigadores e economistas. O forte impacto da indústria do turismo na economia global torna ainda mais importante o seu envolvimento para alcançar a sustentabilidade no futuro.

A presente dissertação tem como objectivo analisar o conhecimento e percepção atual dos clientes sobre o desenvolvimento sustentável e do turismo, bem como avaliar a lacuna existente entre as suas intenções e o seu comportamento real quando se trata de práticas sustentáveis. Mais precisamente, a pesquisa também lida com o entendimento da opinião dos clientes sobre as empresas de turismo em relação à sua ação para o desenvolvimento sustentável. Graças a um questionário distribuído a 206 entrevistados escolhidos aleatoriamente e reunindo e analisando a literatura que trata desse tema, a presente dissertação tem como objectivo extrair conclusões sobre essas questões. Os resultados do estudo realizado, na sua maioria, mostram que embora os inquiridos mostrem altos níveis de consciencialização e um bom nível de compreensão dessas questões, o seu comportamento real demonstra diversas diferenças com as suas intenções. De fato, se os clientes tendem a valorizar o envolvimento das empresas em práticas sustentáveis ou amigas do meio ambiente, o seu comportamento real de compra não mostra um compromisso real em alcançar o desenvolvimento sustentável.

Palavras-chave: Setor do turismo; Desenvolvimento sustentável; Turismo ambiental; Percepção

JEL Classification numbers: Z32; Q0

Abstract

In the last decades, the travel and tourism industry has experienced high levels of growth as well as an important participation to the global GDP. In the past years, the concept of sustainable development and more specifically of sustainable tourism has been getting more and more interest from the populations and customers, as well as researchers and economists. The strong impact of the tourism industry on the global economy makes even more important its implication in order to reach sustainability in the future.

The present dissertation aims at analyzing the current awareness and perception of customers on sustainable development and tourism, as well as assessing the potential existing gap between their intentions and their actual behavior when it comes to sustainable practices. More precisely, the research also deals with understanding the opinion of customers on tourism businesses regarding their action towards sustainable development. Thanks to a questionnaire distributed to 206 respondents randomly chosen and gathering and analyzing the literature dealing with this topic, the present dissertation aims at drawing conclusions on these questions. The results of the study performed mostly show that although the respondents show high levels of awareness and a good level of understanding of these issues, their actual behavior shows differences with their intentions. Indeed, if customers tend to value businesses implications into sustainable or environmental-friendly practices, their actual purchase behavior does not show a real commitment into reaching sustainable development.

Keywords: Tourism industry; Sustainable development; Environmental Tourism; Perception

JEL Classification numbers: Z32; Q0

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1. Introduction

The present study consists in a dissertation in which the author addresses the matter of Sustainable Development in the tourism industry by focusing more specifically on the perception and behavior of the customers of this industry on the topic, as well as their propensity to consume sustainable products or services rather than ordinary ones. This work aims at developing and enriching the existing literature on the topic.

The research presents the results of a questionnaire which has been distributed to a sample of 206 randomly chosen respondents. The goal of the research is twofold: on the one hand, the main research question of the dissertation deals with understanding and analyzing the perception of some customers of the tourism industry regarding sustainable development, and more specifically, sustainable tourism. On the other hand, the research aims at assessing in what extent the customer are willing to consume sustainable products or services rather than other.

1.1. Context and research question

Some decades ago, the societies started to feel that there was an urgent need to adopt some policies which would act in favor of the environment. Hanss (2012) states Macnaghten *et al* (1995) and explains that sustainability implies passing from an unsatisfactory state to a satisfactory state. According to the authors, the societies started to feel the need to stop pursuing economic targets at the expense of environmental or social goals.

As a consequence of the evolution of general societies' perceptions and behaviors, the United Nations have designated 2017 as the International year of Sustainable Tourism for development. The Travel & tourism industry can be defined as an “*activity of travelers on trips outside their usual environment with a duration of less than one year for business, leisure and other purposes*”¹ (World Tourism Organization, 2017). Representing one of the largest industries in the world, the involvement of the travel and tourism industry is essential to the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development goals. With a worldwide economic

¹ World Travel & Tourism Council. 2017. Economic Impact 2017 World. Online <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2017/world2017.pdf> [accessed on 20/12/2017]

contribution of around 8,3 billion USD (2017), the travel and tourism industry shows a deep influence over the global GDP, accounting for 10,4% of the global GDP in 2017².

In an economic system where customers are increasingly involved and willing to act in favor of the environment (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2008), following a green strategy is essential for companies, including the diverse firms of the travel and tourism industry. Sheth and Sethia (2011) argue that the way businesses deal with sustainability issues will be extremely important for their success. Indeed, a study realized by Tandberg (2007) in the European Union, stated that 75% of the respondents would be more likely to purchase some products or services from environmental-friendly companies than other ones (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2008). However, the report also states that there often is a gap between what customers think and say about sustainability matters and how they actually behave.

This study aims at drawing some conclusions on this statement, as well as studying the awareness and perception of the customer on sustainable development and tourism. The research will also deal with the tendency of customers to rather turn to environmental friendly or sustainable companies/brands than others. These aspects are interesting to analyze: as we saw previously, the tourism sector is one of the largest in the global economy. Without its involvement into sustainable practices, sustainable development might be harder to achieve. Sustainable tourism needs to be initiated by the actors of the industry, which is why understanding their willingness to act in favor of the environment represents an essential aspect.

The first part of this dissertation is dedicated to analyze the evolution of the tourism industry in the recent years. The second part aims at gathering and analyzing the literature that deals with the topic and that enabled to draw conclusions linked to the research questions of this work. Then, the methodology that has been selected to proceed with the research part of the dissertation is explained and the results of the research are detailed and analyzed accordingly.

² World Travel & Tourism Council. 2018. Economic Impact 2018 World. Online <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2018/world2018.pdf> [accessed on 24/05/2017]

2. Evolution of tourism in recent years

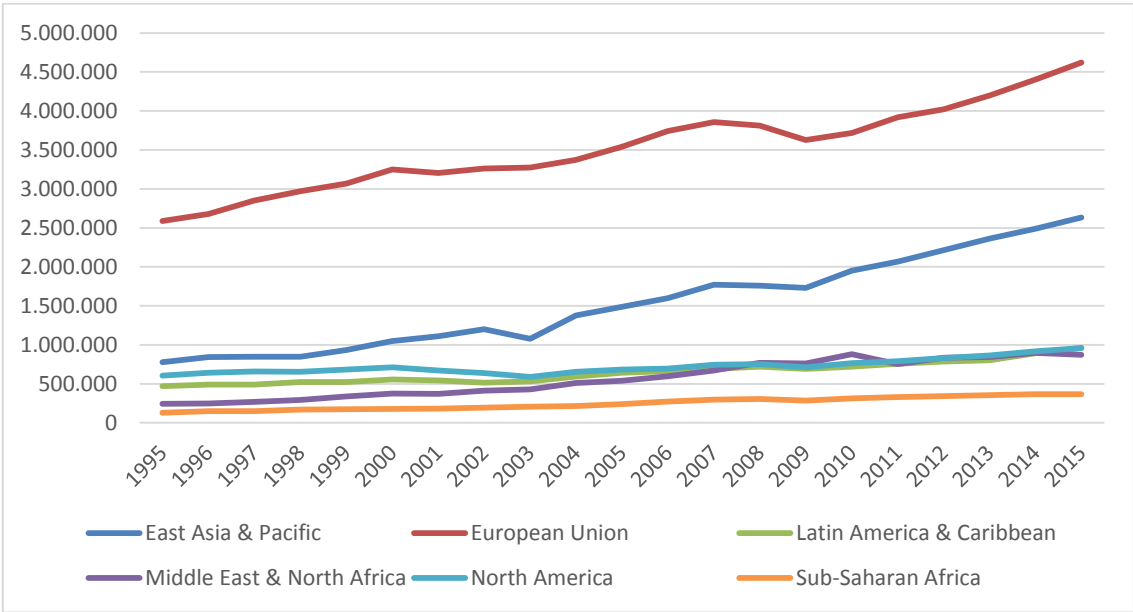
The concept of sustainable tourism has emerged in the past decades due to the evolution of the global tourism industry and its potential negative impacts on the world’s environment and social evolution. Therefore, to understand the need for tourism to evolve towards sustainability, it is important to assess the way it has been changing in the past decades and the impacts that it currently has on the global economic, social and environmental system.

2.1. Number of arrivals worldwide and per region

As it can be seen on the graph below (Graph 1), the members of the European Union are the countries which have always registered the highest number of tourist arrivals since 1995. The Sub-Saharan region has registered the lowest number of tourist arrivals in the same period. However, it can be noticed that all the regions presented on the graph have experienced some growth in the number of tourist arrivals.

The East Asia & Pacific region has registered the highest growth over the period (+239%) whereas North America only experienced a growth of 58% in the number of tourist arrivals. Regarding the Sub Saharan Africa, the region has experienced a growth of 182% although it represents the region with the lowest number of arrivals.

Graph 1: Number of arrivals per region of the world, 1995-2015



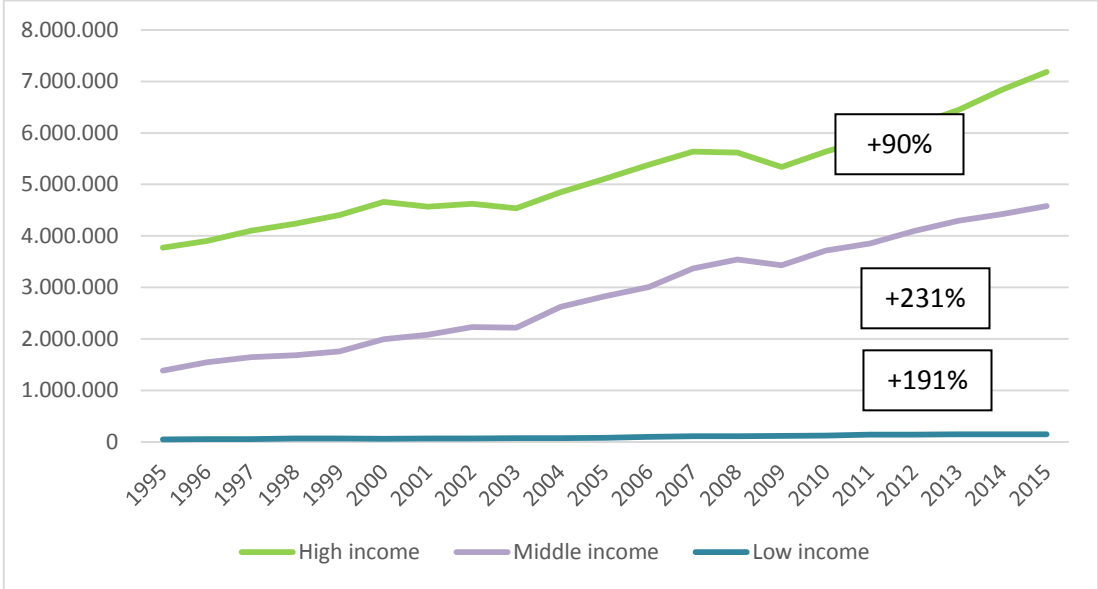
Source: own preparation based on The World Bank data³.

³ The World Bank. International Tourism, number of arrivals. Online <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL> [accessed on 21/12/2017]

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Moreover, it can be noticed that the High Income regions have registered the highest number of arrivals over the whole period analyzed whereas the low income countries represent the smallest number of arrivals (graph 2). However, it can be seen that the middle income and low income countries have experienced a higher growth rate than the high income countries (respectively +231% and +191% versus 90%).

Graph 2: number of arrivals, 1995-2015

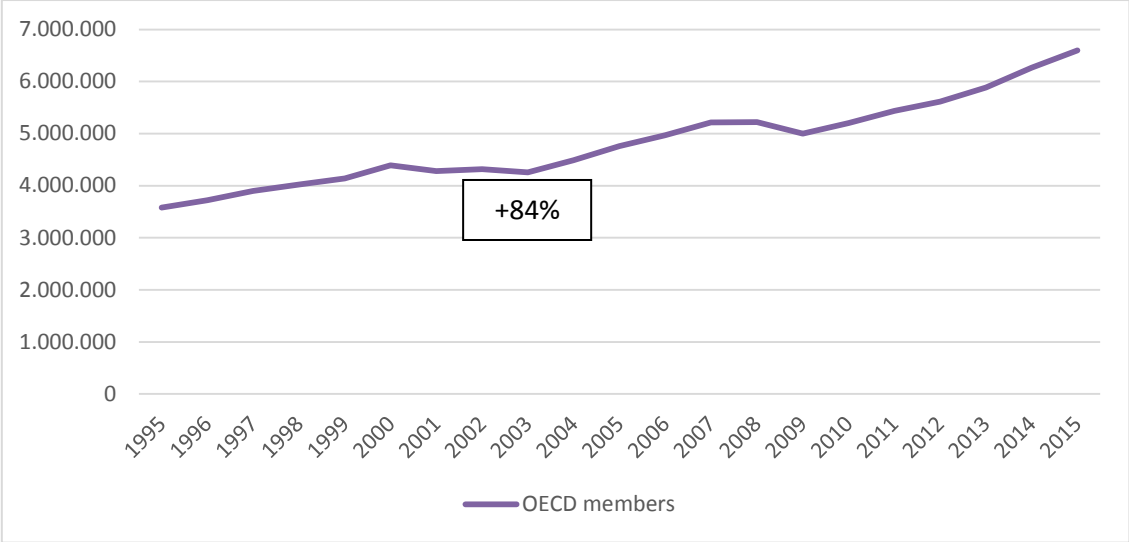


Source: own preparation based on The World Bank data⁴.

Comparing the number of arrivals evolution of the OECD members to the least developed countries (according to the United Nations classification), it is relevant to point out that the least developed countries have experienced an extremely high rate of growth in the number of tourist arrivals since 1995, reaching 593% over the period whereas the OECD members registered an increase of 84% over the same period (graph 3 and 4).

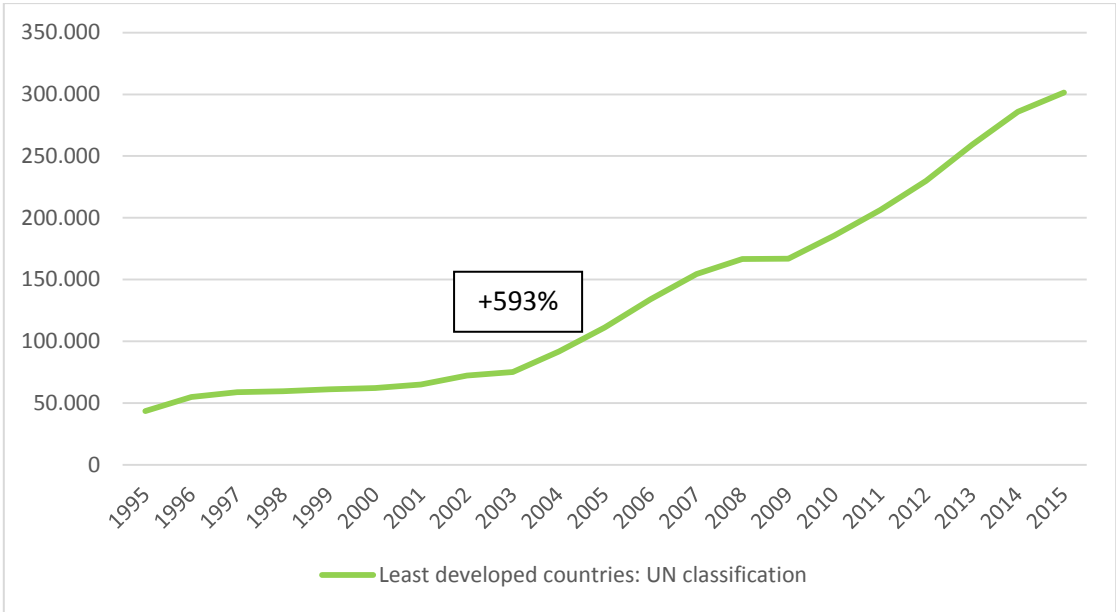
⁴ The World Bank. International Tourism, number of arrivals. Online <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL> [accessed on 21/12/2017]

Graph 3: number of arrivals, OECD members, 1995-2015



Source : own preparation based on The World Bank data⁵.

Graph 4: number of arrivals, least developed countries, 1995-2015



Source: own preparation based on The World Bank data⁶.

⁵ The World Bank. International Tourism, number of arrivals. Online <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL> [accessed on 21/12/2017]

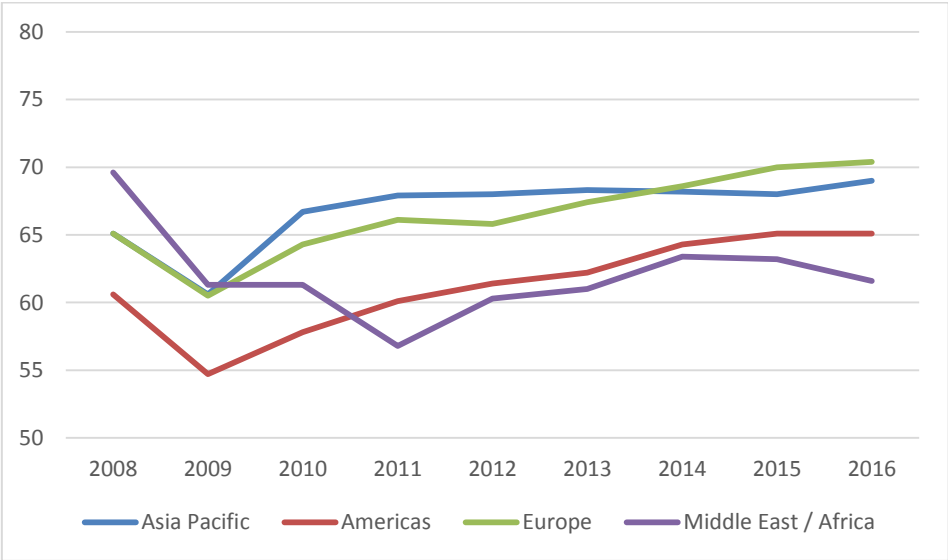
⁶ The World Bank. International Tourism, number of arrivals. Online <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL> [accessed on 21/12/2017]

2.2. Occupancy worldwide and per region

Another important indicator to analyze when trying to assess the evolution of the global tourism industry is the occupancy rate, which corresponds to the share of an establishment's available rooms that are occupied at a given time⁷. This kind of indicator can bring information about the use of hotel accommodation, and therefore the popularity of tourism. As it was explained before, the number of arrivals has grown in most of the regions in the recent years. Therefore, it is expected that the occupancy rate of the businesses in the world grows as well.

The graph below (Graph 5) shows the occupancy rate of the hotel industry by regions of the world between 2008 and 2016. It can be seen that the rates globally range between 55% and 70% which means that on an annual basis, the accommodation businesses manage to fill half of the rooms available. An important decrease can be noticed between 2008 and 2009, which could be explained by the global financial crisis that led to a decrease of most world's industries. However, this drop has been largely recovered in the following years as the occupancy levels reached higher values in 2016 than their 2008 values. An exception can be noticed for the Middle East and African regions which have not managed to recover the loss caused by the financial crisis and political conflicts.

Graph 5: occupancy rate of the hotel industry by region, 2008-2016



Source: own preparation based on STATISTA and Smith Travel Research (STR) Global

⁷ Statista. Online <https://es.statista.com/> [accessed on 15/01/2018]

3. Literature review

3.1. The need for sustainability

3.1.1. Sustainability

To begin, it is important to get a full understanding of the key concepts that come to mind when raising the issue of sustainability. Sustainable development is a recent concept and therefore, its definition remains quite vague and its interpretation varies from one stakeholder to another. Even more recently was created the concept of sustainable tourism: a crucial concept for sustainability seekers as tourism represents one of the biggest sectors in the global economy, representing 10,2% of the global GDP in 2016 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017:3)

Sustainable development was officially discussed for the first time in the Brundtland report in 1987. The Brundtland report emerged in a context of a growing awareness that resources were starting to run out, with the first oil crisis in 1973. Some other environmental crisis like Seveso, Olympic Bravery and Three Mile Island also contributed to raise awareness on the environmental problem.

According to the definition stated in the Brundtland report (1987:41), sustainable development is “*a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”⁸. This definition given by the Brundtland report is accepted globally and often stated when tackling the issue of sustainable development, even if many interpretations have emerged from this definition since 1987. According to Kuhlman and Farrington (2010) the Brundtland report not only introduced the environmental issue but also the concept of welfare. Here, the authors raise the fact that the main objective is to preserve environment for what it is and what it brings to populations and to ensure that the future generations will get the resources they need to live well. Kuhlman and Farrington (2010) also mention that sustainable development raises the fact that the concepts of development and environment will need to work together on the long run.

However, the Brundtland Report has had to face many criticisms for its vagueness, and for the possible different interpretations that enable its definition. Each stakeholder possibly involved in sustainable development has different objectives, and therefore, can interpret the concept in its own way (Kates, Parris and Leiserowitz. 2016).

⁸ United Nations. 1987. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. Online <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf> [accessed on 22/06/2018]

Later, another definition of sustainable development was adopted by the United Nations in its agenda for development in 1997 and states that “*development is a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development*”⁹. After this definition, and the World Summit on sustainable development in 2002, the three pillars of sustainable development emerged as:

- The economic sustainability: building a system which is economically viable, ensuring economic growth well distributed among its actors.
- The social sustainability: ensure that human rights are respected and that all human beings receive equal opportunities. This second pillar include the fact that poverty in the world should be eliminated if trying to reach sustainability.
- The environmental sustainability: the resources should be well managed in order not to waste them, with a particular focus on non-renewable resources or resources that are precious for life, as water for instance. This would include taking measures to lower the pollution of water, air and lands and ensure that the diversity of nature and cultural and historical heritage are preserved.

Finally, it is important to remind that these three pillars are equally essential to achieve sustainability and should be treated simultaneously.

When it comes to defining sustainability, an important question should be raised: what is to be sustainable? The Board on Sustainable development of the US National Academy of Science outlined in 1999 that nature, life support systems and communities are the main aspects to be included in management of sustainable development (Kates, Parris and Leiserowitz. 2016).The authors state that nature would include the concepts of earth, biodiversity and ecosystem whereas the life support category includes ecosystem services, resources and the environment. Finally, the community refers to cultures, groups and places.

The concept of sustainable development has been developed and interpreted on various occasions since 1987, however, most authors and organizations agree on the fact that sustainable development should include economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions in its application.

Some other authors tackle the issue of time when it comes to define sustainability (Costanza, Patten, 1995:193). Indeed, in its standard definition, sustainability refers to a system that

⁹ United Nations. 1997. Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Online <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/51/ares51-240.htm> [accessed on 22/06/2018]

subsists. They include in their research the biological definition of sustainability which means “*avoiding extinction and living to survive and reproduce*”. Economically, sustainability refers to “*avoiding major disruptions and collapses, hedging against instabilities and discontinuities*” sustainability (Costanza, Patten, 1995:194). It can be noticed that both definitions include the time dimension. Therefore, it should be asked: how long will or should development be sustainable? Some authors argue that sustainability would only be achieved if a system was sustainable forever. According to Costanza and Patten (1995), every system has an end, and therefore none of them can subsist forever. If sustainability refers to an infinite time scale, nothing would reach sustainability. Costanza and Patten argue that whatever sustainable system should have “*a life span that is consistent with the system’s time and space scale*”. For instance, human beings are said to reach sustainability when they achieve the regular human life period. Therefore, diseases such as cancer and AIDS or accidents are factors that reduce individual human beings sustainability. In conclusion, we can say that a system is considered to be sustainable if it exists as long as or longer than its expected natural existence time period.

The present thesis aims at understanding the application of sustainability in a particular field: the tourism industry. Therefore, it seems important to include a full explanation of what is understood when mentioning the term of sustainable tourism.

3.1.2. Sustainability and tourism

First of all, it has to be said that the concept of sustainable tourism naturally emerged recently in a context of global growth of tourism and of the apparition of a type of tourism called “mass tourism” (Carillo and Jorge, 2017).

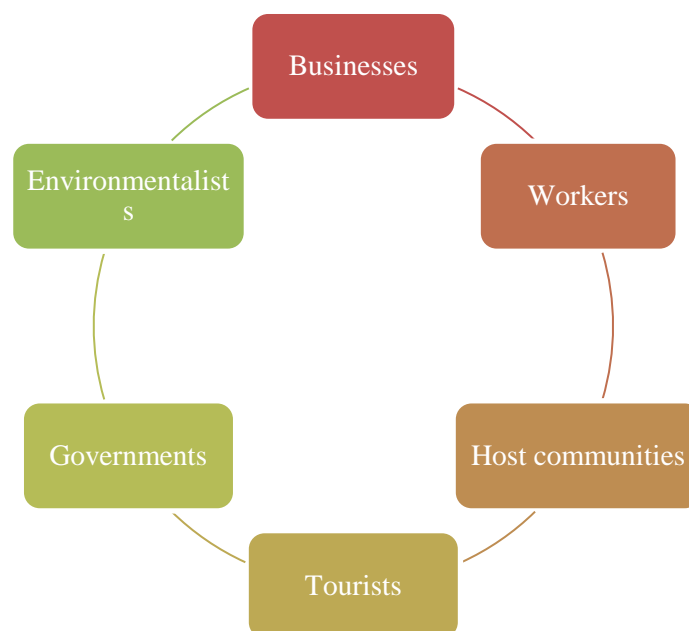
According to Carillo and Jorge (2017:89), the most commonly accepted definition of sustainable tourism refers to a “*tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic; social and environmental and host communities*”. Again, it can be noticed that the definition refers to a multidimensional concept which includes the three economic, social and environmental pillars that need be considered simultaneously in the search of sustainability. The definition given by the Commission of the European Communities (2003:5) also goes in the same direction: “*sustainable tourism is tourism that is economically and socially viable without detracting from the environment and local culture. It means business and economic success, environmental containment, preservation and development, and responsibility*

towards society and cultural values three facets that are interdependent”¹⁰. In conclusion, sustainable tourism clearly refers to the main principles of sustainable development.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO), in their guide *Making tourism more sustainable* (2005) argue that achieving to build a sustainable tourism does not only concern reducing the negative impacts of tourism, but also refers to maximizing the economic, social and environmental benefits. In their report, the two organizations also refer to the three main missions that sustainable tourism should follow. First of all, sustainable tourism should use the environmental resources available in an optimal way. Referring to host communities, sustainable tourism should also make sure that their cultural heritage and values are respected and preserved as well as understanding and tolerating them. Besides, sustainable tourism should ensure that tourists are always satisfied with their experience. Lastly, sustainable tourism should aim at making the economy viable: procuring benefits to all stakeholders in an equally distributed way, maximizing employment and contributing to the reduction of poverty.

In this way, it seems important to remind who are the key stakeholders taking part in the tourism industry, to understand how does sustainable tourism relates and affects them.

Figure 1: Key stakeholders of the tourism industry



Source: own elaboration based on information published by UNEP and WTO, 2005

¹⁰ Commission of the European Communities. 2003. Basic orientations for the sustainability of European Tourism. Online <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52003DC0716&from=EN> [accessed on 22/06/2018]

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In their guide stated previously, the UNEP and WTO mention companies, which activity is involved in the tourism industry. This category includes accommodation businesses (hotels, aparthotels, campings, apartments, etc.), touroperators, travel agents and online travel agents, tourist activities organizers, etc. The main objective of these stakeholders would include looking for long term profitability for their business and loyalty of their customers.

Another stakeholder of the tourism industry refers to all the people it employs. The employees of the tourism industry mainly look for good qualitative and quantitative working conditions. This aspect can be linked with the social pillar of sustainable development, as it refers to the human rights and equal opportunities, which can be applied to the labor field.

Regarding the host communities, they mainly expect an improvement of their life conditions, reduction of poverty depending on the country, respect of their traditions and their culture and of the resources present in the country.

Obviously, one of the tourism industry's key stakeholders should include the customers. The travelers mainly look for a high-quality and safe experience in attractive environments. Being able to offer the tourists an attractive environment is key to the rest of the stakeholders in order to make sure that tourism will keep growing in the future as consumers are the actors which directly contribute to the turnover of the business of the industry.

Governments should also be considered as key stakeholders of the tourism industry. The public institutions would generally expect from tourism to take part positively in the increase of economic indicators such as GDP, employment rate, etc.

Finally, the environmentalists are also an important player of the industry. These stakeholders are particularly linked to the concept of sustainable tourism as their mission is to make sure that local environments and resources are preserved and used in a sustainable way.

It is also essential to remind that applying sustainability to the tourism industry is of utmost importance due to various factors (UNEP and WTO. 2005). First of all, the level of interaction that occurs between tourists and local communities is an important aspect as it is directly linked with the social dimension of sustainable development. Also, tourism has a great impact on people's awareness: people who travel regularly become more and more conscious of the necessity of preserving natural resources and environments and understanding differences between countries and cultures. Finally, tourism is a really large industry in the global economy (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017), therefore its

durability is crucial. To ensure its continuity, it will be necessary to maintain clean environments, attractive natural areas, traditions and cultures as tourists will not travel to a place that lacks these aspects.

In conclusion, achieving sustainable tourism would mean that societies are able to build a tourism that “*takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts*” (UNEP and WTO, 2005:12)¹¹.

Fraj and Martinez (2003) define an ecological consumer as one who shows a high level of concern for nature, participates in its conservation and has ecological responsibility and tries to modify its habits. According to the authors, this consumer is willing to pay more for products that are less harmful for the environment. According to Calomarde (2003), a tourist is an ecological consumer if he shows interest for the environment during the purchase of the product or service, looking for products or services that have a low impact on the environment.

According to Hanss and Bohm (2012:678-687), a sustainable product is a “*product that is in line with a sustainable consumption that reduces the ecological and social problems associated with production and consumption, being economically viable too*”. A sustainable product must take into account the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Another important aspect to remind is that, when it comes to defining sustainable tourism, the concepts of sustainable tourism, of ecotourism are often misleadingly mixed up. Indeed, people often think that sustainable tourism represents a market segment that is particularly sensitive to environment protection and social impact of travelling¹² whereas this definition would rather fit with the concept of ecotourism. When sustainable tourism is an elemental goal based on the principles of sustainable development, ecotourism refers to a particular niche within the tourism industry.

In order to make sure that both concepts are correctly understood, it is convenient to provide a full explanation of what the concept of ecotourism would include.

According to Barkauskiene and Snieska (2013), ecotourism is one of the fastest growing segments within the global tourism industry, which can be regarded as a tool support to

¹¹ United Nations Environment Programme, World Tourism Organization. 2005. Making tourism more sustainable, a guide for policy makers. Online <http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/dtix0592xpa-tourismpolicyen.pdf> [accessed on 20/12/2017]

¹² *Ibid*

develop sustainable development and tourism. Therefore, it can be said that ecotourism is expected to provide certain kinds of benefits regarding the three main pillars of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental dimensions. The International Ecotourism Society (2015) defines ecotourism as a “*responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education*”¹³. The organization adds that the stakeholders that take part in ecotourism activities should adopt a list of principles that include aiming at improving the awareness of societies regarding the respect of the environment and cultures, minimizing the negative impacts of tourism, generating financial revenues that can be used for the conservation of touristic sites and designing low impact facilities, amongst other things¹⁴. Promoting ecotourism therefore requires a participation of all the organizations, entities, and societies in different aspects. Alternatively, the literature defines ecotourism as a tourism which is “*environmentally responsible, enlightening travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socioeconomic involvement of local populations*”¹⁵ (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996 quoted by Candrea and Herțanu, 2015). Both definitions stated include the environmental aspect of ecotourism as well as the social dimension that it could involve. Some authors add to the definition that ecotourism would also include some sustainable practices when traveling such as recycling, reasonable use of energy and water and creating economic opportunities for the societies (Ceylan and Güven, 2010).

3.1.3. The impacts of tourism

The impacts that the tourism industry has on a global scale are large and can be classified in different ways. First of all, it seems important to classify these impacts according to the positivity or negativity that they have and according to their nature, that is to say, assessing whether they have an impact on the economic, social or environmental dimensions. The differentiation of the impacts by nature is crucial as sustainable development is clearly defined according to these three pillars (economic, social and environmental dimensions).

¹³ International Ecotourism Society . What is Ecotourism ? Online <http://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism> [accessed on 20/12/2017]

¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵ Ceballos, H. 1996. Tourism, Ecotourism and Protected Areas: The State of Nature-Based Tourism around the world and Guidelines for its Development. Island Press.

3.1.3.1. Economic impacts

In the first place, the impact of tourism activity on sustainable development from an economic point of view has been analyzed.

The main indicator to assess the economic wealth of a country being the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it is important to understand how tourism does have an effect on it. The WTTC classifies the contribution of travel and tourism on the GDP or any other important metric (as, for instance, employment) in three different ways.

Firstly, the direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP represents the total spendings within a country on travel and tourism by residents and non-residents, including business and leisure purposes (accommodation, transportation, entertainment, attractions and food and beverage services). It also includes the individual spendings of governments on services directly linked to visitors such as government spendings in museums or national parks.

Secondly, the indirect contribution includes the investments made in the travel and tourism industry. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2017), this could represent the purchase of a new aircraft, or the construction of a touristic business. They also include the government collective spendings, such as investing in marketing and promotion campaigns of tourism, or setting up security and safety services for the travel and tourism industry. Additionally, they take into consideration the domestic purchase of goods and services by all the companies having a direct link with tourists, as for instance, the purchase of cleaning products by hotels, restaurants and airlines, or the purchase of fuel by transportation companies.

Finally, the induced contribution includes the spendings made by employees of the travel and tourism industry in food and beverages, clothing, housing and household goods.

The two last categories are considered as having wider impacts on the global economy than the direct contribution items.

On a quantitative level, the WTTC (2017) states that in 2016 the direct contribution of travel and tourism to the global GDP was estimated to be around 3,1% and is expected to reach 3,5% of the GDP in 2027. The graphs elaborated in the report show the continuous growth of the direct contribution of travel and tourism in the global GDP. As all of the metrics analyzed previously in the present dissertation, an important decrease can be noticed due to the financial global crisis between 2007 and 2010. Regarding the total contribution of travel and

tourism, including the direct, indirect and induced contributions, it was estimated to reach 10,2% of the global GDP in 2016 and is expected to reach 11,4% of the GDP in 2027.

Another important metric to consider when assessing the contribution of travel and tourism to the global economy is the level of employment of a region or of a country.

As per the WTTC (2017), the jobs that the travel and tourism industry has directly generated in 2016 represent 3,6% of total employment (including jobs created by the leisure industry, accommodation businesses, transportation companies, travel agencies, touroperators, etc). Over the last seven years, the contribution has been continuously growing, and is forecasted to reach 4,0% by 2027. When considering the total contribution of travel and tourism to employment, the numbers are larger and reached 9,6% of total employment in 2016. In 2027, the total contribution will reach 11,1% of total employment according to the WTTC. Being a service industry, and a people-oriented business, the tourism industry is expected to generate high levels of employment. However, it should be noticed that developing tourism in an area will not automatically create employment for the locals as these people might not possess the right skills and the created businesses might choose to employ people from other places. Therefore, according to Filiposki *et al* (2016) an effort needs to be put into training the employees of a region for their skills to match the needs of the businesses implanted in the region.

Moreover, the travel and tourism industry is understood to generate positive impacts on investments. Indeed, the industry has attracted around 806,5 billion USD of capital investment in 2016 and is expected to increase by 4,5% over the next ten years.

Besides bringing benefits in terms of GDP, employment and capital investment, the development of the tourism industry in a particular region brings other advantages. Such a process is called “The multiplier effect”. Indeed, the income generated by the tourism activity can be subsequently employed to develop local facilities and services, such as the development of the transport facilities, of leisure facilities and infrastructures or improving the current ones (Filiposki *et al*, 2016).

Even if the travel and tourism industry globally generates extremely positive effects on the global economy, some negative side effects need to be taken into account when managing tourism growth. According to Filiposki *et al* (2016), these negative side effects include, on the one hand, the fact that the tourism industry employs many of its workers on a seasonal basis and therefore, these workers are not totally committed to their job and are not loyal to the

company. This might have a bad effect on their service level which might bring disappointment for tourists who may not repeat their holiday in that destination. Besides that, the seasonality of the tourism industry labor market also brings instability for the workers that can feel uncertain about their next job during the low season.

In addition, the potential inflation of prices of goods and services can be considered as a negative side effect of tourism as it might bring difficulties for the host populations (Filiposki *et al.* 2016:137). This might especially be a problem in poorer countries in which the host communities have extremely reduced income in comparison to the tourists visiting the countries and who can totally afford to pay those goods and services.

Finally, the development of tourism requires investment to make sure that all stakeholders of the business (including tourists) are fully satisfied. When it comes to public investment in tourism facilities or infrastructures, these investments imply the fact that the money available for public investment in other fields like schools or hospitals will be reduced, which can represent a negative fact for host communities.

3.1.3.2. Socio-cultural effects

Besides the impact that tourism has on economy, a number of socio-cultural effects need to be assessed to understand the global impact of tourism on societies.

First of all, Filiposki *et al* (2016) argue that tourism enables communities and cultures to mix up, which can lead to an improvement of lifestyles as when exchanging, communities can learn from each other and adopt new practices that can improve their way of doing things. Similarly, Dorin (2012) explains that tourism generates interactions between tourists and host populations. These exchanges create and develop new values and ideas, leading to social progress in those communities.

Additionally, Dorin (2012) mentions an important other positive side-effect that tourism has on the social environment of the host communities. Indeed, the author states that the tourism industry can lead host populations to increase their responsiveness and education levels in order to improve the quality of the service that they offer to the visitors of their country or region (for instance, learning new languages in order to understand the tourists).

Filiposki *et al* (2016) add that another important positive impact could be the improvement of the host communities' general life, as tourism implies investment in local facilities and infrastructures, which will surely benefit the host communities as well as the tourists.

Tourism may also ensure communities that their culture and traditions will be saved and protected in order to maintain and develop tourism.

However, tourism might also impact the host communities in a negative way.

Indeed, Filiposki *et al* (2016) claim that mass tourism could lead the locals to feel intrusion in their lives, which could lead them to disapprove the tourism activity, even if it provides economic benefits to their region. Sometimes, tourists are not prepared to be in contact with the host communities, especially when the local populations live really differently from the tourists. In those cases, the tourists might not adapt their behavior to the local communities and may face problems or aggressive behaviors when being in contact with them.

In addition, tourism can also lead to the loss of local culture and customs as tourists usually bring with them their lifestyles and way of doing things when travelling (Filiposki *et al.* 2016; Dorin, 2012). To adapt the tourists' expectations, the local businesses and populations might change their customs and traditions, which could lead them to change progressively their way of life. For instance, to make themselves understood by the tourists, the local populations might stop using their own language to use another one instead.

Dorin (2012) also argues that the involvement of investors and tourists have had a negative effects on the values of populations. Tourism and the globalization can lead to consumerism, that the author defines as “*an increase in demand for consumption in an increasing variety of products and services*” (Dorin, 2012:502)¹⁶. According to the author, consumerism can have negative effects on culture and traditions of the communities as it modifies the initial way in which the populations used to live.

3.1.3.3. Environmental impacts

The environment refers to the “*physical setting in which tourism takes place*”¹⁷, and represents a crucial aspect of the tourism development. According to Goodall (1992), the environment should be considered as the core aspect of tourism. Indeed, tourism totally depends on the environment, the natural and cultural resources of a region. Therefore, it is essential to understand the impacts of tourism to assess the potential of tourism to keep growing in a sustainable way.

Thanks to the importance that tourism currently has among the economy, the industry generates some positive effects on the environment of the touristic destinations. Indeed,

¹⁶ Dorin, P. 2012. The impacts of tourism on society. Annals of Faculty of Economics, University of Oradea, Faculty of Economics, 1(1):500-506

¹⁷ Filiposki, O. *et al.* 2016. Socio-economic impacts of tourism. Economic Development. 1(2) :125-140

developing tourism in a region or country will lead this region to increase the investment in conserving the area and developing it so that it suits the expectation of the tourists (Filiposki *et al.* 2016). In that sense, the buildings, the wildlife, the historic sites and cultural sites are enjoying some investments and improvements to be sustained in some regions.

Unfortunately, the negative side that brings tourism on the environment currently exists and has a relatively high impact compared to the positive effects of tourism (Filiposki *et al.* 2016:138). Firstly, the authors mention that over-developing an area to match the tourists expectations in terms of facilities and infrastructures may lead to destroy the initial environment itself. Then, the massive constructions of accommodation businesses or leisure facilities in natural areas such as forests or coasts will lead to lose the beauty and interest of those areas and might also lead to the displacement of local populations from these places. Besides from that, the flora and fauna of a region might be damaged due to the massive constructions in the regions (Dorin, 2012). An increased air and noise pollution due to tourists traveling, especially when it comes to traveling by plane, can also represent a negative effect of the travel and tourism industry. The author also mentions traffic congestion as a potential negative impact of the industry. Lastly, the increased waste of resources such as water or paper, especially in hotels and restaurants, can have some negative effects on the environment.

In conclusion, tourism is a fast-growing industry and already produces some negative impacts on the environment. Moreover, these effects are expected to increase as well, therefore there is an urgent necessity to act quickly to cancel or at least decrease the negative effects of tourism.

3.2. Customers and citizens response to sustainable tourism

To achieve sustainable tourism one day, the participation of customers and particularly citizens is absolutely essential. Therefore, there is a need to understand the current state of its concern and its past concern over time for the environment in general, and the way he buys.

3.2.1. Growing awareness and current trends about environmental issues

In the last decades of the 20th century, most actors of the economic system, including governments and citizens, have started to feel the necessity for a change for the environment protection.

Environmental issues being quite a recent issue, the studies available to analyze attitudes and beliefs of citizens are not available in great numbers and therefore, the analysis must be centered on specific regions or countries to assess the level of awareness of citizens. The Eurobarometer is quite an interesting measure of the attitude of European citizens regarding environmental issues. It was established in 1974 and publishes report every year since then, dedicated to evaluate the citizens' perceptions of the environment, linked issues and how to solve them.

As a key finding, the most recent Eurobarometer report published in November 2017 shows that most European citizens find that the environment protection is important to them (94% of the interviewed citizens).

The report also outlines that there has been a slight increase in the proportion of citizens who find that protecting the environment is "very important" to them (from 53% in 2014 to 56% in 2017). However, it should be noted that this percentage was higher in 2007 (64%) and started declining to 58% in 2011.

As it has been seen, the environmental concern of European citizens has been slightly decreasing in the past years, which shows consistencies with A. Down's theory from 1972, who explains that environmental problems lifecycle evolve passing through five stages. According to Down (1972:39), the cycle starts when experts and groups of interest start to show interest for the problem, however the general public does not. This step is followed by stage of awareness, which is characterized by a succession of crisis, which transfers the problem to the interest of the public who starts to support it and tries to find solutions to solve it. Later comes a stage of awareness of the solving costs: the enthusiasm of the previous stage trying to solve the problem decreases as the public gets aware of the difficulties of solving the problem, understanding that the costs of implementing solutions are heavy. Finally, the "post problem state" begins and the original problem (in this particular case, the environment) is replaced in the public's mind by other arising issue of society, making it forgotten by most people without being solved. This would represent an extremely negative scenario in solving the environmental issues that we are currently facing and therefore, this eventuality should be considered when increasing awareness of populations.

In addition, the Eurobarometer 468 (2017)¹⁸ assesses the differences between countries of the European Union as there are some inconsistencies between the responses of the different

¹⁸ European Commission. 2017. Special Eurobarometer 468: Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment.

countries. Indeed, the countries in which protecting the environment is said to be “very important” and “fairly important” are Portugal, Sweden, and Cyprus (representing 99% of the responses). However, this same percentage represents 87% in Romania and Croatia and 85% in Austria. According to some different studies published by Hudson & Van Heerde-Hudson (2016), around 20% of citizens do not know at all the Sustainable Development Goals in France and Germany whereas this same percentage reaches over 40% in the United Kingdom (UK) and in the United States (US). Similarly, the percentages of citizens that poorly know and that know very well the Sustainable Development Goals are way higher in France and Germany than in the UK and the US. Although the results of this study should be considered with caution because of the desirability bias (people usually answer with difference compared to what they really know and do), it can be observed that some countries like France or Germany show higher levels of sustainability awareness than the UK and the US. An effort should probably be put in increasing the awareness of those countries that have lower levels of knowledge on the issue in order to improve the global environmental concern.

The Eurobarometer also states that the environmental issues that were given the highest importance among respondents are climate change, air pollution and the growing amount of waste, whereas the least important issues were assessed to be noise pollution, frequent drought or floods and shortage of drinkable water. In most surveys that have been performed around sustainable development, eradicating poverty, ending hunger and accessing drinkable water and access to quality education are usually the most valued priorities according to citizens.

According to MyWorld Survey results (2015)¹⁹, countries with lower Human Development Index (HDI) tend to place more importance on education, health and honest government whereas countries with higher HDI usually tend to value more environmental matters.

The Eurobarometer 2017 also shows that the main source of information about the environment are television news (with 58%), followed by social networks and the internet (42%) and films and documentaries (27%). It can be noticed that the proportion of using television news, films and documentaries to be informed about environmental issues has been decreasing from 72% in 2004 to 58% in 2017 for television news and from 35% in 2004 to 27% in 2017 for films and documentaries whereas the proportion of citizens using social networks and internet has been increasing from 11% in 2004 to 42% in 2017. This will be an

¹⁹ My World Analytics. 2015. Online <http://data.myworld2015.org/> [accessed on 11/01/2018]

important factor to take into account when trying to raise awareness and encourage environmental behaviors. The report states that the least used information sources are events (conferences, fairs, exhibitions, festivals, etc.), brochures, books and scientific publications.

Another important additional parameter to understand when trying to make sustainable development evolve in a positive way is the possible ways of tackling environmental problems. According to the European citizens, the most effective ways would be to invest in research and development to find technological solutions, introduce heavier fines for breaches of environmental legislation, ensure a better enforcement of legislation and introduce a stricter environmental legislation. It should be noted that three out of the four first most effective ways deal with legislation, and therefore this should be an important information to take into account to improve sustainable development in global economies. Most Europeans think that they can play a role individually in protecting the environment (87%), and this has not changed much in the past ten years according to the Eurobarometer 2017. From an individual point of view, the most common actions taken by European citizens are recycling, buying local products, cutting down the energy consumption and avoiding single-use plastic goods. On another hand, cutting down the water consumption, choosing a more environmental friendly transport mode, avoiding buying over-packaged products, buying products marked with an environmental label and avoiding unnecessary trips by car are practices that are slightly less common within the European community.

Additionally, most European citizens think that themselves are not doing enough to protect the environment (66% in 2017 vs. 69% in 2011). Most Europeans also believe that big companies and industries are not sufficiently involved to protect the environment (79% of the respondents in 2017) as well as national governments (67% of the respondents think that they are not doing enough in 2017) and the European Union (62%).

In addition, in 2017, 41% of citizens are aware of sustainable development goals, which represents 5 points more than in 2016. However, only 12% have practical knowledge regarding these goals (2017).

However, even if most figures show higher levels of interests, the actual behaviors of customers might remain low. Various authors tackle the issue of the intention-behavior gap. Ajzen (2015) explains that before performing a specific behavior comes the intention to perform it. The intention of the customer is said to be determined by three components. First of all, the “behavioral beliefs” refer to the positive and negative impacts that will have the behavior. The second component deals with “normative beliefs”, that is to say, the willingness

of the customer to comply with the expectations and behaviors of a specific group or individual considered as a reference for the customer. Finally, the “control beliefs” will also have importance in the intention of the customer. This component relates to the potential existence of factors which could influence the customer’s ability to perform an action. Once the intention is formed by the customer, the actual behavioral control, actually really hard to measure, will have an impact on the final behavior. Ajzen (2015) also states that demographic factors as the age or the gender can have an impact on the final behavior.

Zralek (2017) also tackles the issue of an attitude-behavior gap in the sustainable consumption of customers. The author adds that neutralization and rationalization can have a negative effect of the intention of the customer. This concept refers to a “*mental process that facilitates coping with the dissonance occurring when individuals’ behaviors either violates consumers’ norms or is inconsistent with their attitudes*” (Gruber and Schlegelmilch, 2014²⁰:43 quoted by Zralek, 2017). Besides explaining this process, the author shows that the intention-behavior gap is a possible impediment to fully reaching sustainable consumption, even if the intentions are formed in the individual’s mind.

In conclusion, a general growing interest has been noticed in the past five decades for solving environmental issues, even if this interest was slightly higher ten years ago. Additionally, most Europeans agree to say that they are not doing enough to solve these issues, as well as public entities and businesses, even if most citizens have already included in their way of life sustainable practices like recycling or cutting down their consumption. As it was explained previously in this dissertation, tourism is an extremely important industry in the global economy and therefore, it is crucial to understand how to apply this growing awareness to tourism and reduce the intention-behavior gap. In addition to the creation of an adapted legal framework and the participation of all stakeholders of the industry, various authors state that the participation of citizens is absolutely necessary to achieve sustainable goals, which makes essential getting knowledge about the typical sustainable tourist.

²⁰ Gruber, V., Schlegelmilch, B. 2013. How Techniques of Neutralization Legitimize Norm- and Attitude-Inconsistent Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*,121(1)

3.2.2. The sustainable tourist

3.2.2.1. Socio-demographic profile

Due to the lack of information available regarding the socio-demographic profile of the sustainable tourist, the data analyzed here has been based on the Eurobarometer 468 (2017)²¹, which means that the information is not based on sustainable tourism but more generally on sustainable development to understand who are the most interested and who possesses the best knowledge on sustainable development analyzing variables such as age, gender, education, professional category or nationality. As previously said in the present dissertation, the Eurobarometer 2017 is based on studies performed in Europe and therefore, the information that has been used is limited due to the lack of data for other countries of the world.

Regarding the age parameter, it can be noted that age does not have a particular clear impact on the level of concern for the environment. Indeed, 85% of the 15-24 year old category believe that they can play a role in protecting the environment whereas this same percentage reaches 89% for the 25-39 and 40-54 year olds, and decreases to 86% for the 55+ category. Concerning the environment-friendly habits of the respondents, it can be noticed that the 40-54 years old category has the highest proportion of respondents that have done environmental friendly practices in the past six months as recycling, buying local products, cutting down the energy or water consumption, etc., whereas the 15-24 years old category shows the lowest percentage.

From a gender point of view, very few data were collected by the Eurobarometer 2017 but some of the data can provide some idea of the general trend. The data collected show that the proportion of women worried about the impact of chemical products on their health is slightly higher than the proportion of men (87% vs. 82%). Similarly, 91% of women are worried about the impact of chemicals on the environment whereas this percentage reaches 89% for men. Some other data were collected regarding the use of single use plastic carrier bags. The results show that the proportion of women that have reduced their use of single use plastic bags in the past reaches 84% whereas the same percentage for men reaches 77%. These minor differences led the results of the Eurobarometer to conclude that men and women generally show similar attitudes and opinions.

²¹ European Commission. 2017. Special Eurobarometer 468: Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment.

Additionally, it can be noticed that the more educated, the more concerned will be the person regarding the protection of the environment. Indeed, the Eurobarometer 2017 shows that 51% of the respondents who ended the education period at 15 years old or less feel that protecting the environment is very important to them. This same percentage increases to 53% for those who kept studying until their 19 years old and to 63% for those who studied until 20 years old. This data shows a clear relationship between the opinion regarding the importance of protecting the environment and the level of education: the more education, the more concern for the environment.

The socio-professional category is another important parameter to take into account. According to the same report from the Eurobarometer 2017, “managers” is the category that shows the highest proportion of respondents that believe that protecting the environment is very important to them (representing 61% of the respondents) whereas “manual workers” show the lowest proportion with 49% of respondents who believe that protecting the environment is very important to them followed by “house persons” with 53%. On the other hand, “students” and “retired” present quite a high proportion of respondents that feel that protecting the environment is very important for them with 59% and 57% respectively.

Besides, the Eurobarometer 2017 included in its data collection an interesting variable, the difficulty of the respondents to pay their bills. The report shows that the categories of respondents that said to have difficulties to pay their bills most of the time and from time to time are less likely to have environmental friendly habits than the category of respondents that almost never or never faces difficulties paying bills. As an example, 56% of the respondents of the first two categories said that they separated most of their waste whereas this percentage reached 70% for the category that almost never or never has problems to pay bills. Similarly, 39% of the respondents that have difficulties to pay bills most of the time said that they buy local products whereas this proportion reaches 46% for the respondents that almost never, or never has problems to pay bills. Therefore, it can be concluded that the money available is probably a parameter to take into account when assessing the environmental-friendly behavior as the more money available, the more environmental-friendly.

Finally, nationality is an important parameter to consider as it seems that some countries are more likely to show environmental concern and behavior than others. For instance, 87% of the respondents from Sweden and 82% in the Netherlands have said to separate most of their waste in the past six months whereas this percentage falls to 44% in Croatia and 54% in

Hungary. Similarly, it was noticed that Sweden and Cyprus show the highest levels of concern regarding the protection of the environment in the UE with 87% of the respondents believing that protecting the environment is very important to them whereas this percentage only reaches 40% in Hungary and Poland and 41% in Austria. Moreover, in Austria, Hungary and Romania, 11% of the respondents said that protecting the environment is not very important to them whereas this proportion barely reaches 1% in Portugal, Sweden, Cyprus, Danmark and Malta.

3.2.2.2. Personality traits and values

The first parameter to take into account when trying to understand who is the sustainable tourist are its values. The values can be defined as “*principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgement of what is important in life*”²². The work of Inglehart (1997) shows that the values of a society are linked with its economic and political system. As Inglehart studies found a value change from materialist to post-materialist, there has been some effects on the value system of societies with a growing interest for the environment protection. According to Inglehart (1997) two hypotheses can explain this value change: first of all, the scarcity hypothesis explains that people tend to value the things that are rare. In conditions of an economic crisis for instance with material scarcity, the materialist values will triumph over the rest of values. Nevertheless, in contrary conditions, the post-materialist values will overcome the materialist values. Therefore, in the current conditions of scarcity and destruction of natural and environmental resources, we can observe non-materialist values increase in communities' value systems. According to Inglehart (1997), the economic growth only will not enable to improve the environment protection as evaluating the level of material scarcity depends on people opinion and therefore, other factors like social, political and economic background of individuals have an impact on the environment protection of a region. The second hypothesis formulated by Inglehart (1997) is the socialization hypothesis, which outlines that the link between the economic level of a region and the value system is not direct as the values of an individual are also linked to its pre-adult years.

On the other hand, various studies have shown how tourists usually look for and choose positions and experiences that match with their personality (Passafaro *et al*, 2015), which applies to sustainable tourism: depending on their personality, tourists will be likely or not to act for sustainable tourism or avoid such practices in their search for experiences.

²² Oxford dictionaries. Online <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/value> [accessed on 30/01/2018]

According to Plog (1987), the tourists can be classified in three different groups. The first category refers to the allocentric tourists who are curious and always looking for new experiences. The allocentric tourists like to meet people from different countries and cultures and seek out variety of activities while traveling. The second category of tourists explained by Plog (1987) is the psychocentric tourist, who usually is not fond of adventure, likes repeating experiences and destinations to relax. This kind of tourist likes to know what experiences to expect while he travels. Finally, Plog (1987) adds a third category that refers to midcentric tourists, who usually alternates between new experiences and familiar holidays. According to the author, tourists tend to select destinations and experiences depending on the category in which they belong.

According to Passafaro *et al* (2015), the most accepted theory is the one that distinguishes tourists depending on their “sensation seeking”, that is to say, their likeliness to look for exciting experiences or to avoid them. Holland’s typology of personality can be used to assess tourists’ preferences and behaviors. Holland’s typology is based on six personality types that include the realistic personality, who is a practical and manual person and tends to like being outdoors²³. The author also talks about the investigative personality referring to analytical and intellectual people. The artistic personality includes original, intuitive and creative people. The social personality refers to people who are concerned with the welfare of others and enjoy helping or developing others. The enterprising personality includes energetic and ambitious people who are looking for new adventures and try to avoid routine activities. Finally, conventional individuals tend to be organized and efficient people who like to perform systematic activities. This classification can indeed be used to imagine tourists’ sustainable behavior depending on their personality type. Indeed, tourists issued from the social personality are likely to travel aiming at helping populations and local communities and therefore, are willing to act for the social dimension of sustainable tourism. In addition, the realistic personality might be a good example of a personality which could fight for the environmental dimension of sustainable development as these people usually like being outdoors in contact with animals and plants and therefore could be a great asset for the protection of the environment.

Additionally, according to the study performed by Passafaro *et al* (2015), the tourists who usually prefer sustainable experiences were found to be more prosocial, protective with the

²³ Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Office of Faculty Development. Holland’s Occupational personality types. Online https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/fac_development/documents/lisa_heiser_faculty_development_handout.pdf [accessed on 16/01/2018]

environment and believe that tourists should take into account the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable tourism when planning to travel. It was also found that these people are more likely to enjoy diversity of social and environmental dimensions around them. The authors also found out that the people who usually prefer sustainable experiences show high levels of agreeableness within their personality as well as empathy, concern for others, cooperativeness and morality.

3.2.3. The buying process of the sustainable tourist

In spite of the efforts developed by governments and businesses to increase concern about sustainable tourism, the response and positive attitudes of customers regarding sustainable tourism is still relatively low. However, some tourists choose their holiday in an environmental friendly way, thanks to their values, personality and their socio-demographic predispositions. According to Fraj and Martinez (2003), an ecological consumer feels highly concerned for the environment, participates in its conservation and shows environmental responsibility. This consumer modifies its habits that are less environmental friendly and is willing to pay more for products that have lower impacts on the environment. Calomarde (2003) adds another dimension to this definition and states that a consumer is ecological if he purchases products or services that have a low impact on the environment: the intention of the tourist is evaluated as well as its final purchase decision.

According to Budeanu (2007), the consumption of a sustainable tourist should include the following practices. First of all, the transport mode should be chosen carefully, selected an efficient transport mode, respectful of the environment, or reducing the travel distance. Secondly, it is important to look for an ecologically efficient accommodation. Later, once at the destination, the tourist should aim at behaving in a sustainable way, that is to say including in its behavior sustainable practices like recycling, cutting down its water and energy consumption or reducing waste, without forgetting the social part of sustainable development which aims at respecting host communities, traditions and cultural heritages of the destinations.

Budeanu (2007) states that the first decision related to the holiday planning relates to choice of the destination. Indeed, some holiday destinations are considered as more sustainable than others.

Secondly, transportation is part of the three kind of consumptions that has the highest negative environmental impacts, after food and housing (Steen-Olsen *et al*, 2015²⁴, quoted by Thogersen *et al*, 2016). Therefore, the transport mode choice highly impacts positively or negatively the environmental effects of the holidays. In the UE in 2004, it was estimated that 68% of transportations were done by car whereas 39% by air (European Commission, 2004). A sustainable transport mode could be defined as a “*transport that minimizes the harmful effects on the environment and the depletion of natural resources, such as walking, cycling, and fuel-efficient public transport, and hence can be sustained in the long term*”²⁵. According to Mohan and Tiwary (1999), a sustainable transport system should enable an easy mobility in a safe and environmental friendly way. Therefore, a sustainable transport mode does not only have to be environmental friendly, but also should make sure that it is safe, accessible and affordable to populations (social dimension of sustainability). The most sustainable transport modes are walking, bicycle and electric vehicles (bikes, motorbikes or cars). However, these kinds of transportations are not always suitable to go on holidays to a relatively far destination. However, carsharing is an option to travel to a relatively far destination, to reduce the number of vehicles circulating and help to minimize the pollution emissions. Also, travelling by coach or trains is also a good option to minimize pollution and negative emissions. However, traveling by plane represents one of the most non environmental-friendly transportation and therefore, should be avoided as much as possible due to its important need of fuel. Another way to be greener when traveling is to reduce the travel distance when going on holidays.

The second choice that the tourist has to face when traveling in a sustainable way is choosing a proper and sustainable accommodation option (Dorin, 2014). Various accommodation options present a particularly environmental-friendly behavior. The most common practices include a good waste management, encouraging the clients to cut down their energy and water consumption, for instance when they offer clients to reuse towels or bed sheets various days in a row. The accommodation industry also involves food and beverage services most of the time, which also play an important role in the sustainable practices. The businesses that wish to provide a sustainable experience can take inspiration from the concept of slow food that emerged in response to the growing number of fast food businesses in the second part of the

²⁴ Steen-Olsen *et al*. 2015. Environmental Impact Assessment of Household Consumption. *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, 20(3)

²⁵ Oxford Dictionary. Online https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sustainable_transport [accessed on 18/01/2018]

20th century (Dorin, 2012). The Slow food movement emerged in the 1980's and promotes sustainability, respecting producers, nature, environment, traditions and consumers.

Once at the destinations, the tourists will face different options regarding the local transportation, which will contribute negatively or positively to protecting the environment depending on the option selected (car hire, bus, bicycle, etc.). The activities chosen by the tourists might also have a negative impact on the environment on the destination by disturbing biodiversity environments or overusing the natural resources and the ecosystem (Christ *et al*²⁶, 2003, quoted by Budeanu, 2007). The behavior of the tourists might also have a negative impact on the local communities, disturbing their culture and traditions. Therefore, the decision of tourists of traveling in a sustainable way does not only refer to the accommodation or transport mode they choose, but also their behavior once arrived at the destination. To behave in a sustainable way, the tourists will have to select a local transport mode that has a low impact on the environment and the communities (avoiding noise pollution, for instance), cut down their water and energy consumption, try to eat and buy local products or services and respect the societies, their values, traditions and lifestyles.

Due to the increasing awareness of the tourists and the society in general regarding the need for sustainability, the businesses of the hospitality industry have had to adapt to that new trend and focus on providing their customers proofs about their sustainable practices and strategies.

3.3. Businesses adaptation to sustainability

In a global framework in which customers become always more demanding regarding businesses' social and environmental involvement, companies have perceived the need to adapt rapidly to this new trend and perform well in that sense, to gain competitive advantages or, at least, to maintain their level or performance. Governments have also perceived the need to set up a legal framework to make sure that basic requirements to be socially and environmentally sustainable would be respected.

3.3.1. Legal framework

From the emergence of the concepts of sustainable development and sustainable tourism, there has been a necessity of creating an effective legal framework to make sure that businesses would act towards sustainability, or, at least, reduce their negative social and

²⁶ Christ C. *et al.* 2003. Tourism and Biodiversity: Mapping Tourism's Global Footprint. Conservation International and UNEP.

environmental impacts. According to UNEP and WTO, various tools are available for governments to ensure improvement of sustainability and include control instruments such as legislation, regulation and licensing.

On the one hand, legislation provides the authority to ensure that requirements are fulfilled. On the other hand, licensing aims at checking compliance with legislation, regulation or standards as well as getting permissions. In 2005, the UNEP and WTO in their guide *Making tourism more sustainable* stated the need to review and strengthen all the legislation already in place regarding sustainable tourism.

The same report also outlines the need to reflect sustainability in national laws for tourism but also the importance of harmonizing these national laws across countries, and especially across regions (for instance the UE).

Both organizations also argue that some countries might require to apply specific regulations in particular circumstances, for instance to protect an extremely sensitive environment, particularly vulnerable communities or particular types of activities which could harm the environment²⁷.

In the UE, the policy of sustainable development is currently ruled by the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) until 2020. The three main objectives of the programme are to “*protect, conserve and enhance the Union’s natural capital*”, “*turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low carbon economy*”, and “*safeguard the Union’s citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing*”²⁸. To make sure that the goals are achieved, the UE will ensure that the legislation is well implemented by the actors of the global economic system and improve their knowledge on sustainable development.

In the tourism industry, the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) emerged in 2007 and gathers 37 criteria, applicable to all the actors of the tourism industry including accommodation businesses, tour operators, certification bodies, travelers and entire destinations. These minimum requirements are organized around the three main dimensions of sustainable tourism: the economic, social and environmental dimensions. The GSTC is

²⁷ United Nations Environment Programme, World Tourism Organization. 2005. Making tourism more sustainable, a guide for policy makers. Online <http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/dtix0592xpa-tourismpolicyen.pdf> [accessed on 20/12/2017]

²⁸ European Commission. 2016. Environment Action Programme to 2020. Online <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/action-programme/> [accessed on 20/12/2017]

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presented as a way to get a global and common understanding of what sustainable tourism means²⁹ and what should be its basic goals. The 37 criteria are organized around four different themes, being the effective sustainability planning, maximizing social and economic benefits for local community, enhancing cultural heritage and reducing negative impacts to the environment³⁰. The main aims of the GSTC are to provide guidelines to businesses to act in a sustainable way and guide customers to choose sustainable tourism programs. Although it does not explain to businesses how they should act, the GSTC provides explanation on what has to be done in order to achieve sustainability.

The legal framework also includes some economic instruments which aim at improving the level of sustainability in global economic systems.

First of all, taxes and charges can be used to try to improve companies and customers' behavior, penalizing unsustainable practices³¹, but they can also be used to raise revenue and use it afterwards to regulate negative impacts of tourism on the environment and on communities or supporting sustainable projects. For instance, in the Balearic Islands, a tax (called "ecotasa") has been introduced for tourists in 2002 in order to raise funds that are invested in protecting and improving the environment. The aim of this tax is not to control the application of the law but to raise additional income to support environmental projects.

Secondly, the economic instruments include financial incentives and financial agreements which can lead businesses to perform sustainable practices. For instance in Catalonia (Spain), some grants are given to the companies that face the costs to implement eco certifications (for instance, employing consultants).

Currently, the legal obligations of businesses and tourists in the tourism industry are still at a low level. Increasing these obligations from a legal point of view could partly represent a solution to improve the sustainability of the industry. However, even if these obligations are

²⁹ Ministry of Slovenian Republic. Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. Online http://www.mgrt.gov.si/fileadmin/mgrt.gov.si/pageuploads/turizem/Global_sustainable_tourism_criteria.pdf [accessed on 14/01/2018]

³⁰ Ministry of Slovenian Republic. Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. Online http://www.mgrt.gov.si/fileadmin/mgrt.gov.si/pageuploads/turizem/Global_sustainable_tourism_criteria.pdf [accessed on 14/01/2018]

³¹ United Nations Environment Programme, World Tourism Organization. 2005. Making tourism more sustainable, a guide for policy makers. Online <http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/dtix0592xpa-tourismpolicyen.pdf> [accessed on 20/12/2017]

still rare for businesses, many entities providing voluntary guidelines and standards have emerged in the industry.

3.3.2. Certification labels and standards as a way to build confidence with customers

As required by many of the stakeholders of the tourism industry, diverse business actors are trying to prove that they are positioning towards sustainability by resorting to standards or labels (Hergli *et al.*, 2012). According to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), a standard is “*a document that provides requirements, specifications, guidelines or characteristics that can be used consistently to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose*”³². Studying some of these standards available for companies is important to assess their possibilities in terms of developing their environmental strategy. Within the specific field of sustainable development, two families of ISO standards are relevant to consider.

Regarding the environmental part of the standards that businesses can follow, the relevant family to consider is ISO 14000. This family of standards focuses on helping businesses or other kind of organizations by providing them with practical methods so that they can handle and conduct in the right way their environmental practices³³. This standard will therefore help the businesses to set up an environmental management system, including the organizational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures and resources to establish and maintain the environmental policy of the company. Precisely, the most used standard is ISO 14001 which is based on improving continuously the environmental performance of the organization by focusing on the impacts linked with the business activity. Besides lowering its ecological imprint, getting this certification would enable a company to ensure to its customers the quality of its environmental policy and therefore could increase its customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Regarding the social responsibility of businesses, the standard to be used is the ISO 26000 standard. This standard aims at giving directions to the companies in order to help them act in a socially responsible way: acting in an ethical and transparent way in order to ensure the

³² International Organization for Standardization. We're ISO: we develop and publish International Standards. Online <https://www.iso.org/standards.html> [accessed on 22/12/2018]

³³ International Organization for Standardization. ISO 14000 family - Environmental management. Online <https://www.iso.org/iso-14001-environmental-management.html> [accessed on 22/12/2017]

well-being and health of communities³⁴. Contrarily to many other ISO standards, the ISO 26000 only gives guidelines to companies and does not certify behaviors. ISO 26000 includes guidelines concerning the human rights, working conditions, environmental issues, loyalty, consumer practices and local development. According to the International Organization for Standardization, the benefits linked with the adoption of such standard will enable the company to improve its competitive position, its reputation, its employee and customers satisfaction, its employees motivation and productivity and its relationships with its stakeholders.

However, these standards do not relate to a specific industry and therefore do not fully integrate its specificities. That is why the certification labels have emerged to overstep this limit. The certification labels are actually a potential tool for customers to facilitate their identification of sustainable products and guide them in their purchase process. These tools are voluntary for businesses and the compliance of businesses to the standards listed by the certification tool are constantly checked. The recent interest of businesses in getting those labels is growing as businesses understand that labels represent a marketing tool that can be used to gain competitive advantages (Fruntes, 2014, quoted by Grigoras and Albu, 2015).

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), a certification label is “*a label or symbol indicating that compliance with standards has been verified*”³⁵. In Europe, the EU Label is an official label that was created in 2003 and aims at promoting the production and commercialization of products that have a low impact on the environment during the entire lifecycle of the product. Therefore, each company applying to the label must make sure that its products respond to specifications regarding the production, the raw materials used, the distribution of the product and finally its recycling. More specific for sustainable tourism, the EU label for sustainable tourism aims at making sure that the touristic businesses have a low energy consumption, low water consumption, produce low amounts of waste, use renewable energies and less harmful materials for the environment and communicate and educate around the issue of protecting the environment³⁶. Many touristic businesses can apply to this label such as hotels, motels, holiday cottages, guesthouses, resorts, rental houses, etc.

³⁴ International Organization for Standardization. ISO 26000 – Responsabilité sociétale. Online <https://www.iso.org/fr/iso-26000-social-responsibility.html> [accessed on 22/12/2017]

³⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The concepts of standards, certification and labelling. Online <http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/y5136e/y5136e07.htm#bm07.1> [Accessed on 12/01/2018]

³⁶ Ecolabels. L'Ecolabel Européen pour un tourisme responsable. Online <http://www.ecolabels.fr/fr/espace-consommateurs/l-ecolabel-europeen-pour-un-tourisme-responsable> [accessed on 12/01/2018]

Another important label to state is the Green Globe certification which aims at improving the environmental and social outcomes specifically for travel and tourism businesses, such as leisure businesses, cruise ships, business meetings and conferences facilities, accommodation businesses, food and beverage businesses, wellness centers, transportation companies and travel industry organizers such as touroperators³⁷. The Green Globe certification gives to its members a list of standards that need to be followed, adapted to each type of business and to their geographical localization. According to Green Globe and managers of the businesses following Green Globe certification, besides respecting the environment and people, getting this certification would clearly provide businesses with a competitive advantage as it enables them to fully meet their guests' expectations. Following the guidelines would also enable the companies to reduce costs by lowering their energy and water consumption, achieve a higher quality of service and reach a better operational efficiency³⁸. This certification is valid for a year, therefore businesses need to pay for this certification every year they want to have it.

Some certification labels such as Rainforest Alliance or EarthCheck might have more weight in providing customers with confidence as these certification bodies are accredited by the Global Sustainable Travel Council which certifies that the product or service complies with the best standards available regarding social or environmental dimensions.

However, labels can be quite confusing at some time for customers as it exists an important number of labels that indicate sustainable attributes, for instance on European markets. Moreover, according to Pedersen and Neergaard (2006) most customers do not know these labels and therefore it might not help to take a decision regarding the purchasing process. For businesses, the main drawback of certifications is its cost and its complex administrative scheme, which is why a limited number of businesses choose to get certified. Most of the time, the small businesses do not see the advantages of getting certified.

3.3.3. The corporate social responsibility

3.3.3.1. What is the Corporate Social Responsibility

In the past decade, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been getting a growing interest on goods and services markets and especially in the mind of customers.

³⁷ Eco Label Index. Green Globe Certification. Online <http://www.ecolabelindex.com/ecolabel/green-globe> [accessed on 12/01/2018]

³⁸ Green Globe. Online <https://greenglobe.com/benefits/> [accessed on 12/01/2018]

In 2001, the European Commission defines the CSR as “*concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis*”³⁹. Kotler and Lee (2005:91) define the CSR as “*a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources*”⁴⁰. The important point in these first two definitions is to outline that the CSR represents a voluntary commitment that businesses can choose to do or not. In 2008, Basu and Palazzo (2008:124) define the CSR as “*a process by which managers within an organization discuss relationships with stakeholders as well as their roles in relation to the common good*”. This definition shows a particular focus on the responsibility of managers, whereas the other two definitions do not. Basu and Palazzo (2008) also outline the consideration of stakeholders whereas the other definitions do not. Later, the European commission (2011) simplifies its definition of the CSR as the “*responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society*”⁴¹. This more recent definition points out the fact that the CSR is a responsibility and therefore, the voluntary aspect of the CSR is less important in this definition.

Stanisavljević (2017) argues that until the 1960s, businesses tended to consider that making profit was the only objective of an organization. In the following decades, pressures from society and stakeholders started to increase to make businesses taking into consideration the well-being of society and environment when doing business. Therefore, companies started to show more and more interest in being socially responsible.

These changes led Carroll (1991), to create the pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility. Carroll argues that CSR is composed of four different dimensions which include the economic responsibilities, the legal responsibilities, the ethical responsibilities and the philanthropic responsibilities. The first dimension, the economic responsibility of the enterprise, is placed at the base of the pyramid as its foundation and refers to the necessity of a company of being profitable for its survival but also for the survival of the global economy. A company’s stakeholders expect this business to be profitable. Then comes the legal responsibility, which requires a business to be profitable within the legal framework, obeying the law. Not doing so would have a negative impact on its reputation. The third part of the

³⁹ European Commission. Definition of the Corporate Social Responsibility. Online http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-730_en.htm [accessed on 13/01/2018]

⁴⁰ Kotler, P., Lee, N. 2004. Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the Most Good for Your Company and Your Cause. New Jersey: Hoboken.

⁴¹ European Commission. Definition of the Corporate Social Responsibility. Online https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/corporate-social-responsibility_fr [accessed on 13/01/2018]

pyramid refers to the ethical responsibility of a business, that is to say, its “*obligation to do what is right, just, and fair*”⁴² (Carroll, 1991:41). This dimension is not mandatory for businesses but important from the point of view of the company’s stakeholders who expect the company to go beyond the legal framework. Finally, the philanthropic responsibility deals with the willingness of the company to be a “good corporate citizen” that engages in projects that advertise human or environmental well-being or that participates financially in arts, education, etc. The difference between ethical responsibilities and philanthropic responsibilities is important to note as the first one is totally expected by stakeholders whereas the second one is not that much. Indeed, if a company does not practice its philanthropic responsibility at the right level, the firm will not be considered as unethical.

According to Carroll (2015:92), the CSR works along with various other concepts. First of all, the author outlines the importance of business ethics, referring to the “*rightness or fairness of business, manager and employee actions, behaviors and policies taking place in a commercial context*”⁴³. Stakeholder management is also an important element to take into account. When managing the relationships with stakeholders, a difference should be applied whether the company is dealing with primary or secondary stakeholders. The primary stakeholders are those who have an official link with the company (investors, employees, consumers, local communities) whereas the secondary stakeholders only have a general interest in the business (government, competitors, pressure groups, etc.). In the recent years, the challenges of businesses regarding stakeholders have been to understand who they were, what were their expectations and what responsibilities has the business regarding its stakeholders (Carroll, 2015). Carroll (2015) also deals with the sustainability issue. Nowadays, many companies publish reports regarding their economical, social and environmental activities, referring to the three dimensions of sustainability. Finally, Carroll (2015), refers to the Corporate Citizenship which is one of the most recent terms used by companies to refer to their CSR. The Corporate Citizenship refers to the fact that companies, just like people, have responsibilities and duties that they should achieve if they want to be accepted within the community.

⁴² Carroll, A. 1991. The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders. *Business Horizons*, 34(4):39-48

⁴³ Carroll, A. 2015. Corporate Social Responsibility: The centerpiece of competing and complementary frameworks. *Organizational Dynamics*, 44:87-96.

Carroll (2015) argues that these concepts – CSR, business ethics, stakeholder management, sustainability and corporate citizenship – have a lot in common. Carroll also outlines that these concepts are more and more used by businesses, which can lead one to think that following one or various of these concepts would lead a company to receive certain kind of benefits regarding its performance.

3.3.3.2. Links between CSR activities and company performance

With the emergence of the concept of CSR in the last decades, companies have started to show interest in understanding the link between the development of CSR and the customer responses through their spendings, their loyalty or satisfaction.

First of all, it has to be said that the company performance is a complex and multidimensional concept. Currently, two kinds of approaches are performed regarding the company's performance. The first ones focus on the financial performance of an entity which refers to the profits, the sales revenue, the return on investment or return on assets, etc.

The second approach focuses on the non-financial performance of the company (for instance, innovation, customer or employee satisfaction, market share). According to Clarck (1999, quoted by Mayabubur Rahman, Rodriguez-Serrano and Lambkin in 2017), the market share is one of the most used indicator of non-financial performance of a company as it is a good predictor of a business' profitability. Being a multidimensional concept, the performance of a company is difficult to assess and according to Mayabubur Rahman, Rodriguez-Serrano and Lambkin (2017), the studies that have been performed in the past usually focus on one single item of the financial performance instead of considering the full range of financial indicators. Therefore, the results of most studies need to be considered with caution.

Stanisavljević (2017) focuses on the non-financial approach and analyzes the link between customer loyalty and CSR. The author argues that customer loyalty is one of the most important objectives of a business which is vital to its survival and to obtain a sustainable competitive advantage. Sirdeshmukh, Japdig & Berry (2002) define customer loyalty as “*the intention to apply a set of behavioral forms that signal the motivation to keep the relationship with a company including increasing its spendings, positive word of mouth and repeated purchases*”⁴⁴. Therefore, it should be said that if CSR contributes positively to increasing customer loyalty, improving the CSR should represent an important goal for businesses. Some studies performed in 2009 by Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulos, & Avramidis show that

⁴⁴ Sirdeshmukh, D., Singh, J., Sabol, B. 2002. Consumer Trust, Value, and Loyalty in Relational Exchanges. *Journal of Marketing*, 66(1):15-37.

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consumers would rather select goods or services and purchase more if the products come from businesses who are socially responsible.

According to Mayabubur Rahman, Rodriguez-Serrano and Lambkin (2017), various studies have shown in the past that CSR activities can lead companies to receive other positive effects such as an increasing number of customers, employee retention, improved marketing results, or less price sensitivity from the customers. The authors argue that the positive relationship between CSR activities and performance can be verified if the customer is aware of the CSR activities in which the company is engaging. Therefore, the authors outline that if the company advertises on its own product and services, the brand awareness will increase and the customers will become more and more curious about the company, looking for information about it. Mayabubur Rahman, Rodriguez-Serrano and Lambkin (2017) argue that these customers will include in their search information about the CSR of the company and if they find it satisfying compared to their expectations, they will be more willing to buy the company's products or services.

In conclusion, the literature shows that the involvement of companies towards sustainable practices through their Corporate Social Responsibility has proven to be efficient in regards to the positive impacts that it brings to companies.

In order to deepen and validate the aspects analyzed in the present section, a research was performed thanks to a questionnaire distributed to 206 individuals.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research approach and methodology

4.1.1. Main objective of the research

The research part of this dissertation is centered on three aspects in order to answer to the dissertation main research question.

First of all, the research aims at understanding and analyzing how the customers and non-customers of the tourism industry perceive sustainable development and sustainable tourism. The perception that people have on the concept of sustainability has surely evolved in the past thirty years and it seems interesting to understand how people characterize these concepts to assess their awareness and the potential future evolution of sustainability.

Besides, the research aims at determining and evaluating the intentions of customers and non-customers of tourism towards sustainability. The objective is to understand whether people are willing or not to act for sustainable development and sustainable tourism.

Finally, it seemed interesting to include a third dimension to the objectives of the research: understanding people's actual behavior towards sustainability. Indeed, people's actual behavior is susceptible to differ from their intentions, which is why the two concepts should be distinguished.

Understanding how sustainability is perceived by customers and how important it is for customers to buy sustainable products and services may lead businesses to implement sustainable practices if they want to increase their profit in the long run. If businesses start to gradually implement sustainable practices, reaching sustainable development will be conceivable.

4.1.2. Research type

Firstly, it is important to take into account that the research fully analyzes the problem from the customer's point of view, meaning that the respondents targeted were customers instead of businesses.

The research methodology implemented in this dissertation combines both descriptive quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve its objectives. On the one hand, the descriptive quantitative analysis consisted in the calculation of percentages on the data collected. On the other hand, the qualitative conclusions were based on the open-questions asked to the respondents.

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The data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to a sample of 206 respondents randomly selected in a targeted population of people residing in France. Due to the interest for the research of getting answers from respondents coming from different backgrounds, ages, socio-professional categories and nationalities, the questionnaire was distributed randomly through diverse social media platforms, including LinkedIn and Facebook, and through word-to-mouth.

The choice of building a questionnaire instead of scheduling face to face interviews came out for various reasons.

First of all, the questionnaire brings the advantage of being able to reach a much larger sample. Indeed, it would have been quite complex to schedule face to face interviews for 206 people for this research. Besides that, the questionnaire enables diversity among the respondents. It makes much easier the possibility to get answers from diverse socio-professional categories, ages, etc. To enlarge its target, the questionnaire was distributed in French, English and Spanish to people residing in France.

The questionnaire option has also been selected to make sure to get the most sincere answers as possible. A face to face interview might have dissuaded respondents to be totally objective in their answers. Indeed, sustainability being a controversial topic, it seemed important to try to preserve the most neutrality as possible, avoiding the social desirability bias.

Finally, the methodology adopted is inspired from different papers' researches with similar goals to the main problematic of this dissertation. Bagociute *et al* (2014) make use of a questionnaire in order to analyze tourists' behavior traits when selecting tourism services. Similarly, Marinescu and Ispas (2012) analyze the customer satisfaction in sustainable tourism industry using a questionnaire that aims at understanding the dimensions taken into account by customers to assess a service quality. Astuti *et al* (2017) also influenced the choices made for the methodology of this dissertation. Through a questionnaire made of 33 questions, the researchers aim at analyzing the links between brand attitude and customer loyalty and between customer loyalty and Corporate Social Responsibility of a business. Stanisavljevic (2017) analyses similar questions in her research, making use of a questionnaire distributed to a sample of 200 respondents. Her research aims at understanding the perception about Corporate Sustainable Sustainability of customers and its link with their loyalty to brands. Lastly, Deng and Xu (2015) analyze customer responses to Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives via a questionnaire.

The analysis of these papers as well as their similarity with the purposes of the present research led the author of this dissertation to choose the questionnaire option in order to answer the main research questions.

4.1.3. The questionnaire

The questionnaire distributed is a mixed questionnaire, meaning that it is composed of 19 questions which include a combination of open-ended and close-ended questions. While the first ones enable to get some qualitative results, empowering the respondent to express freely its feelings and beliefs, the second will help us to draw some descriptive quantitative analysis on the problem. The open-ended questions are not based on pre-determined answers and give the respondents the opportunity to express what they really think. The close-ended questions enable us to draw descriptive statistical conclusions on the problem and link these with the conclusions drawn from the literature review. The questionnaire includes different types of close-ended questions: likert questions, dichotomous questions and rating scale questions.

The questions can be grouped in four different categories, following the objectives of this dissertation research (see Annex 1).

The first category of questions refers to the knowledge, understanding and awareness of respondents on sustainability (questions 1 and 2). The second category of questions aims at understanding people's perception on sustainability (questions 3 to 6). The third group gathers questions referring to the respondent's touristic habits and preferences (questions 7 to 10). The fourth category aims at evaluating the respondents' willingness to act in a sustainable way (questions 11 to 14). The fifth group of questions refers to the respondent's actual reported behavior towards sustainability (questions 15 to 19). Finally, the last category includes questions aiming at getting socio-demographic information on the respondents.

4.2. Analysis of the data collected

After reaching the objective size of the sample (in total, 206 respondents), the data collected was analyzed according to their type.

4.2.1. Close-ended questions

First of all, the data coming from close-ended questions were analyzed through the use of percentages and comparisons. In most cases, Excel was used in order to build graphs and diagraphs which simplified the analysis of the data obtained through the research in order to draw some descriptive statistical conclusions on the problem.

4.2.2. Open-ended questions

Regarding the most qualitative part of the data collected (coming from open-ended questions 3 and 5), a specific methodology was applied to the analysis of the data. Each one of the answers was analyzed separately. An Excel sheet was used in order to count and classify the concepts or words that came out in each one of the answers (see Annex 2). The most similar concepts stated by the respondents were grouped into the same category when they referred to the same aspect, even if the wording differed slightly. This methodology enables to draw statistical conclusions on qualitative data, as well as bringing some richness to our research by enabling the respondents to answer freely to the questions, avoiding pre-prepared answers which could lead the respondents to select answers they had not thought about before.

4.3. Issues of research quality

It is important to take into account that the data collected might be biased due to various factors. Therefore, it is essential to remind that conclusions should be considered carefully keeping in mind the factors which might prevent from having a total objectivity in the results. First of all, it is important to consider that the sample might not be totally representative of the population. Indeed, its size might prevent the sample from being totally representative from the population. Secondly, the youth of the respondents (around 50% of the sample belongs to the 18-25 years old age group) might also have an effect on the final results of the research. Finally, it has to be said that the research has been centered on Western Europe, as most of the respondents come from this part of the world. If the same research was conducted in another part of the world, the results could be expected to be different.

Another important issue to raise is the sincerity of the respondents. Indeed, some respondents might be tempted to answer what they think is right for their conscience, and not what they actually think or do. According to Fisher (1993), humans tend to present themselves in the best way, to make it correspond to what is socially acceptable. This phenomenon can lead to misled results and incorrect research conclusions. To reduce the impact of the social desirability, the questionnaire was distributed anonymously to the respondents.

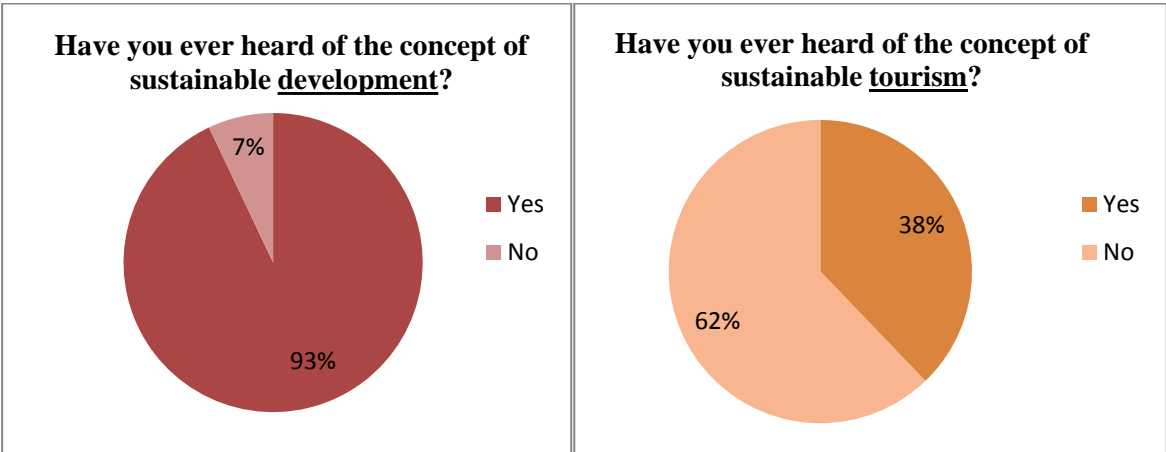
5. Findings and discussion

5.1. Perception on sustainable development and sustainable tourism

The first aspects analyzed in the questionnaire distributed deal with the perception of the respondents on sustainable development and sustainable tourism. Precisely, the study aimed at understanding the awareness of the respondents regarding sustainable development and sustainable tourism. As it can be seen on the graphs below, for a sample of 206 respondents, around 93% of them were aware of the concept of sustainable development. However, this figure only reaches 62% when it comes to sustainable tourism, which means that the awareness of the respondents on sustainable development is higher than for sustainable tourism as less than half of the sample have never heard of sustainable tourism.

As compared to the literature analyzed previously, the results collected match with most conclusions drawn from other researches. Indeed, the levels of awareness on sustainable development reach over 90%. However, we need to point out that the levels of awareness regarding sustainable tourism remain lower, as it does not represent a well-known concept.

Graph 6: Awareness of the respondents on sustainable development and tourism



Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

However, these two questions only enabled to verify whether the respondents did know these concepts and did not enable to understand the actual understanding of the respondents on these two concepts, which is why a different question was asked to the respondents to analyze their understanding of the sustainable tourism concept, as it is usually a less known concept. As explained before in the methodology part of the present dissertation, this aspect was

evaluated making use of open-questions. Therefore, each one of the responses has been analyzed individually, identifying the concept(s) stated in the response. For instance, the following answer: “Doing tourism thinking about my impact on environment and on the people who live in the destinations that I visit” was classified in two categories: “respecting the environment” and “respecting local communities”. For an easier analysis, the results of this work are summarized in the table 1. As it can be seen, “respecting the environment” is the concept that has been stated the most by the respondents. Therefore, it can be concluded that the environmental pillar of sustainable tourism is well identified by the respondents. The second concept, stated 45 times by the respondents, refers to respecting local communities and populations. This second concept rather refers to the social dimension of sustainable tourism. Besides, consuming and using resources carefully ranks third, stated 14 times. However, it can be noticed that the economic development only ranks fifth (stated 6 times). In conclusion, it can be said that respondents do not automatically think of the three pillars of sustainable tourism when trying to define the concept as the economic pillar seems less valued than the two other ones.

Table 1: Understanding of the respondents on sustainable tourism

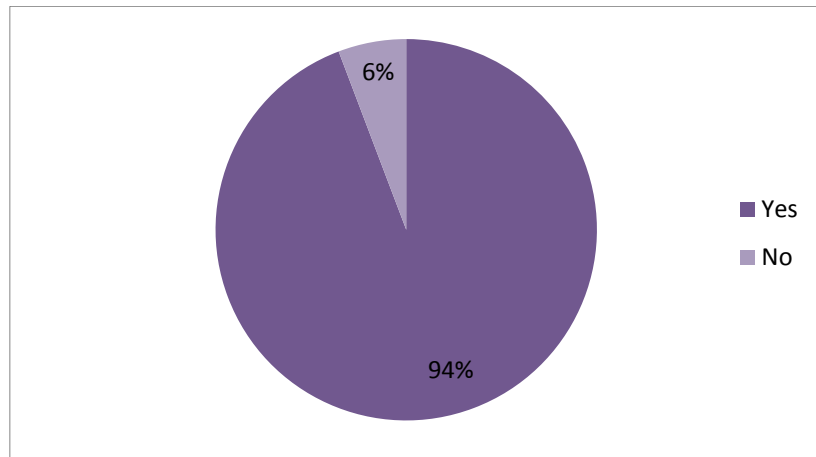
Concept	Number of times stated ⁴⁵
Respecting the environment	85
Respecting local communities	45
Responsible consumption/use of resources	14
Avoiding mass tourism	9
Economic development	6
Green transportation	6
Thinking about future consequences	4
Local and fresh products	4
Ecological activities	4
Biodiversity	3

Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

⁴⁵ (*) Please note that the total number of concepts stated does not correspond to the size of the sample due to the fact that some of the respondents did not respond to this question and some of the respondents chose to state various concepts in their answer.

Besides, the respondents have been asked about the importance that reaching sustainability holds to them. As it can be seen on graph 7, most of the respondents stated that sustainable development is important to them (94% of the respondents). Although this figure seems quite high, it is important to remember that this kind of topic may raise the concept of social desirability and therefore this high percentage should be analyzed with caution in our conclusions.

Graph 7: Importance of sustainable development for the respondents



Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

When asking to the respondents the reasons for which reaching sustainability is important to them, the same analysis process was applied as the previous qualitative question: the concepts stated by the respondents were classified into categories in order to facilitate its analysis. For instance, the following answer: “I grant importance to preserving the planet and to equality between people and I also think that considering future consequences for future generations is key” was classified into three different categories: “preserving the environment”, “thinking about future generations” and “respecting people”. The results show that the concept of preserving the environment ranks first (table 2). The second most stated answer refers to thinking about future consequences and generations. The fact that most respondents chose to state this answer could be linked to the fact that this concept is specifically included in the definition of the Brundtland report of 1987. It is probable that most respondents have heard about sustainable development through the Brundtland report definition. Additionally, the results show that the concept linked with the economic pillar of sustainable development “Improve economic growth” is part of the least stated answers. Once again, it seems that the respondents grant more importance to the social and environmental pillars rather than the economic one when it comes to sustainable tourism.

Table 2: Reasons for which reaching sustainability is important to the respondents

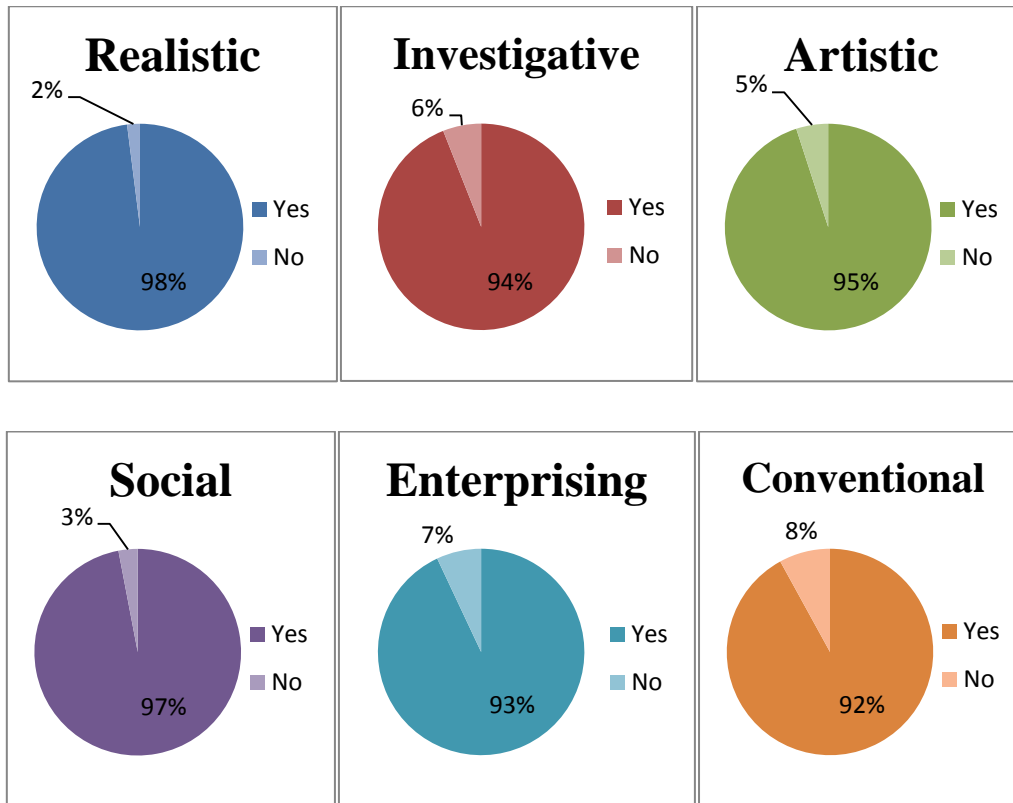
Concept	Number of times stated ⁴⁶
Preserving the environment	47
Thinking about future consequences and generations	36
Respecting people	20
Enabling Social development	15
Improving life conditions	11
Preserving resources	10
Improve Economic growth	8
Reducing inequalities	4
Feels responsible	1

Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

This question of the questionnaire was also considered differentiating the responses according to the personality type selected by the respondents (graph 8). As it can be observed on the graphs below, in the six cases the proportion of respondents who answered that sustainable development is important to them is quite high. Some really slight differences can be noticed between the diverse personality types. The personality types which show the highest proportion of respondents considering that sustainable development is important to them are the Realistic and the Social personality types (respectively 98% and 97%). On the contrary, the Conventional and the Enterprising types are the ones which show the lowest proportions (respectively 92% and 93% of the respondents state that sustainable development is important to them). However, the differences between the data collected are too minor to be able to assess some differences regarding sustainable development between personality types. Therefore, our conclusions can't validate nor invalidate with the work of Holland (1962) and Plog (1987) stated previously in the literature review.

⁴⁶ (*) *The total number of concepts stated does not correspond to the size of the sample due to the fact that some of the respondents did not respond to this question and some of the respondents chose to state various concepts in their answer.*

Graph 8: Importance of sustainable development to the respondents depending on their personality types.



Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

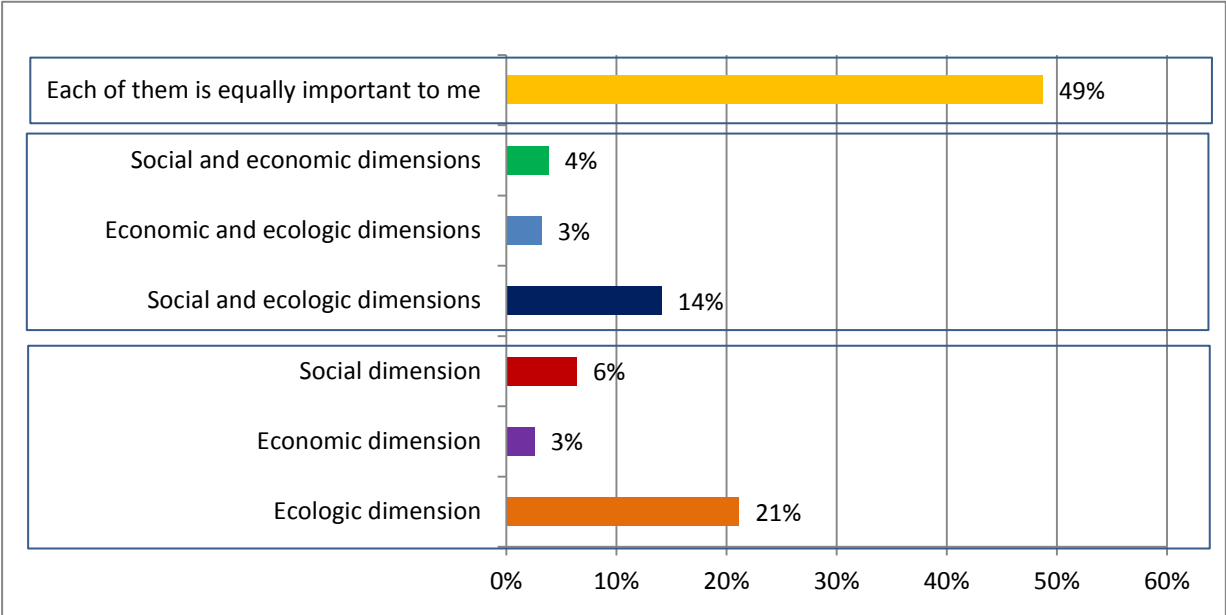
Besides understanding why sustainable development was important to the respondents, the questionnaire aimed at understanding which aspect of sustainable development held more importance than the others. As it was explained previously, sustainable development is composed of three main pillars: the economic dimension, the social dimension and the ecological dimension. On this aspect, the respondents had the option to select as many options as they wanted, that is to say, selecting one of the three pillars, two of the three pillars or the three of them. The results of this question can be found in the graph below (graph 9). Almost half of the respondents stated that each of the three pillars held the same importance to them (49% of the respondents). The second highest chosen option by the respondents is the ecological pillar (21% of the respondents). Then, 14% of the respondents stated that the social and ecological dimensions are equally important to them. The least chosen options are on the one hand the economic dimension, and on the other hand both the economic and ecologic dimensions. As it can be seen, the respondents tend to believe that the ecological and social dimensions are more important than the economic dimension, although it should be noted that

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almost 50% of the respondents think that the three dimensions are equally important. As many reports and authors have stated throughout the years (Kuhlman and Farrington, 2010, World Summit on sustainable development, 2002, Kates, Parris and Leiserowitz, 2016), it is important to understand that the three pillars should be interconnected and equally considered in order to reach sustainability.

Graph 9: Importance of the three dimensions of sustainable development to the respondents

(Do you feel that one of the three dimensions of sustainable development is and should be considered as more important than the others?)

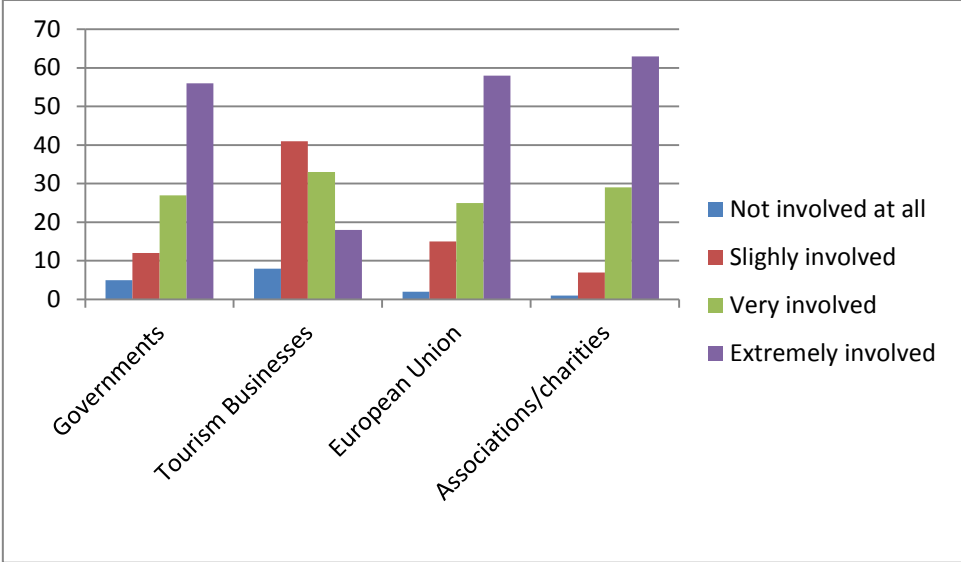


Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

Additionally, some information was gathered on the opinion of the respondents regarding the involvement that should have or not diverse entities in sustainable development. The respondents were asked to value the involvement that governments, tourism businesses, the European Union and associations or charities should have in sustainable development. The data gathered are summarized in the graph below (graph 10). As it can be seen, more than half of the respondents believe that governments, the European Union and specialized associations or charities should be “extremely involved” in those matters. However, this figure only reaches 19% for tourism businesses, even if more than 40% of them think that these businesses should be “very involved”. It can also be noticed that a very small proportion of

the respondents believe that these institutions should not be involved at all in implementing sustainable development practices.

Graph 10: Opinion of the respondents regarding involvement of diverse entities in sustainable development practices



Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

5.2. Willingness of the respondents to act in a sustainable way

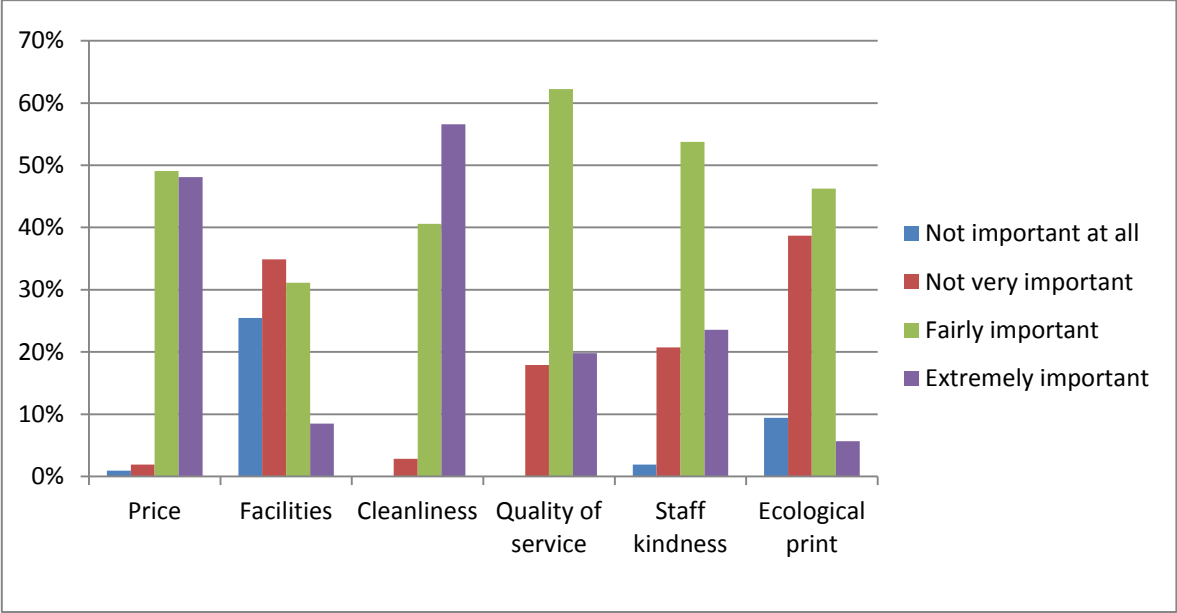
5.2.1. Relative importance of sustainability in the tourism industry

To assess the relative importance of sustainability of the relevant services in tourism (accommodation, transportation, destinations), the respondents were asked to value the importance of various elements when selecting the service (graph 11).

First of all, the respondents had to value the importance of the following elements when selecting an accommodation service: the price, the facilities, the cleanliness, the quality of the service, the staff kindness and the ecological print. The results show that comparing the elements that were valued by the respondents, the price and the cleanliness are two elements which are considered as “extremely important” by the respondents (representing respectively 48% and 56% of the answers). On the contrary, the facilities and the ecological print are only considered as “extremely important” for less than 10% of the respondents. As a conclusion, it can be said that

Graph 11: Selecting accommodation: importance of diverse elements in the choice

(What do you usually value the most when SELECTING ACCOMMODATION?)

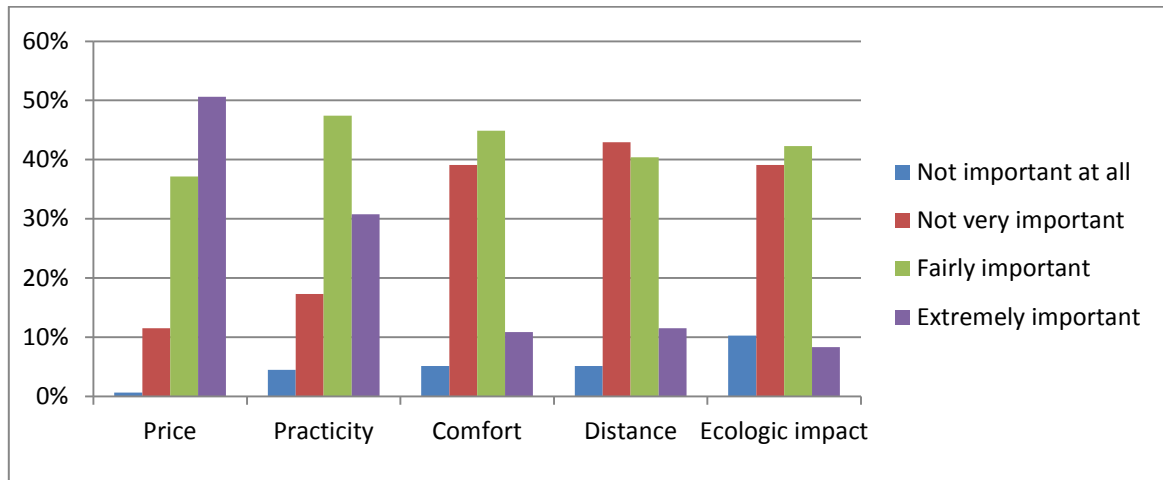


Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

Besides, the respondents were asked to value diverse elements when selecting a transport mode when travelling. The following items were valued: price, practicality, comfort, distance and ecological impact. The graph 12 shows that over 50% of the respondents consider the price as “extremely important” in their decision. Almost none of the respondents consider the price as “not important at all”. On the contrary, fewer than 10% consider the ecological impact as extremely important. It can be noticed that the respondents would rather consider the ecological impact as “fairly important” (42%) or “not very important” (38%). Moreover, the ecological impact is the only element considered as “not important at all” by more than 10% of the respondents. The results show that compared to the price or the practicality of a transportation service, the ecological print does not represent a valued feature by the respondents. This might mean that when facing a choice between two transportation options, the respondents might select the option which offers the best price or practicality, instead of turning to the more ecological option.

Graph 12: Selecting transport mode: importance of diverse elements in the choice

(What do you usually value the most when SELECTING TRANSPORT MODE?)

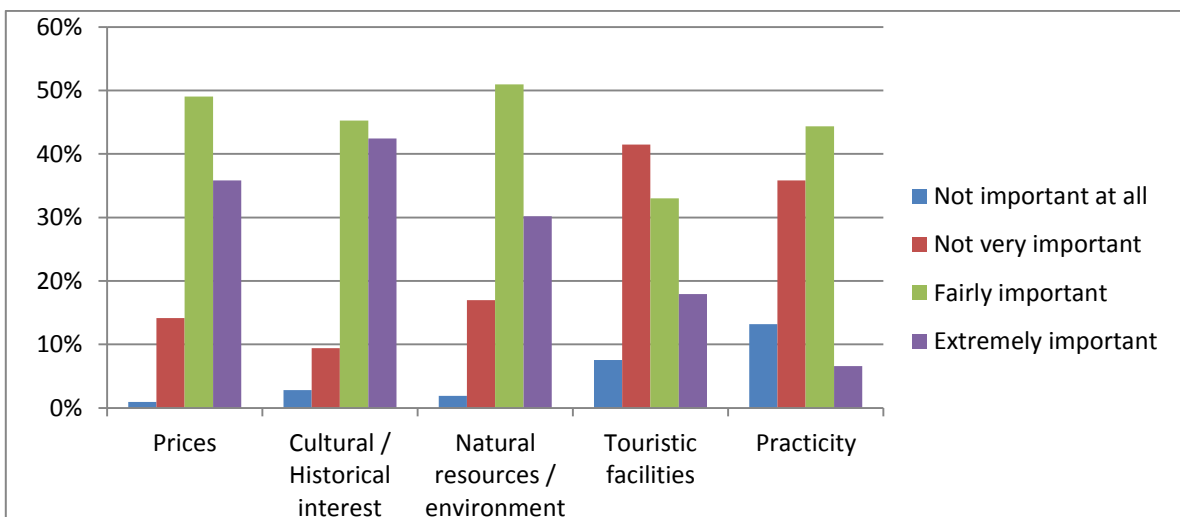


Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

In addition to the transport mode, some information was collected on the choice of destinations to the respondents. The respondents were asked to value items such as the general level of prices of the destination, its cultural and historical interest, its natural resources and environment, its touristic facilities and the practicality to travel to the place. The graph below (graph 13) shows that the cultural and historical interest of a destination is considered as an extremely important aspect by more than half of the respondents. The prices level and the environmental resources are considered as extremely important aspects by over 30% of the respondents. On the contrary, the practicity to travel to the destination and the touristic facilities represent less valued items, as less than 20% of the respondents consider these aspects as extremely important.

Graph 13: Selecting destinations: importance of diverse elements in the choice

(What do you usually value the most when SELECTING DESTINATIONS?)



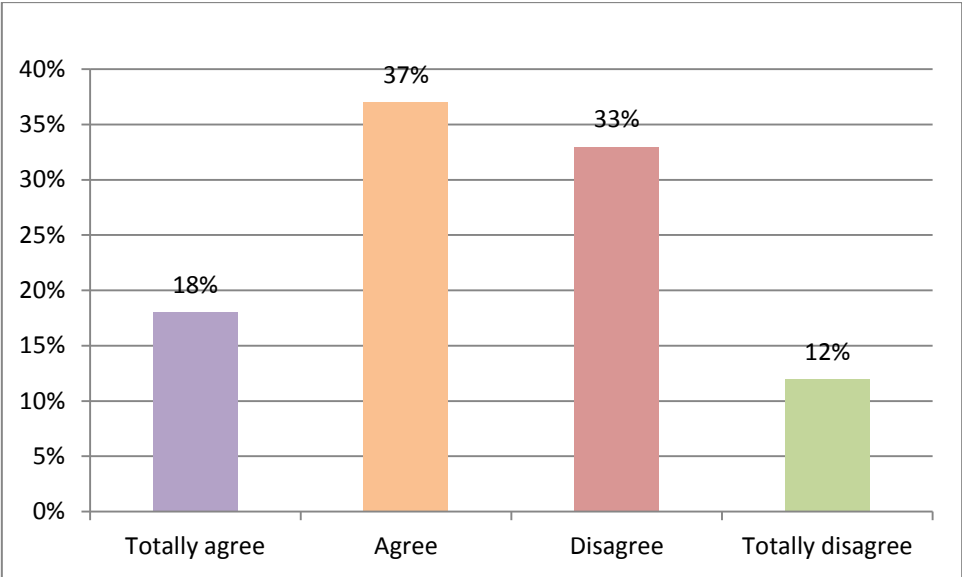
Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

5.2.2. Willingness to pay supplements for sustainable services

Additionally, the willingness of the respondents to pay more for an environmental-friendly or sustainable touristic product or service was valued. The graph 14 shows the results collected in this aspect. The respondents tend to show rather heterogeneous opinions on this issue. Indeed, the figure show that 37% of the respondents would rather agree with the statement, compared to 33% of the respondents who disagree with the statement. However, it can be noticed that the aggregated proportion of respondents who agree and totally agree with the statement is slightly higher than the aggregated proportion of respondents who disagree and totally disagree with the statement (respectively 55% versus 45%). The results gathered tend to show that most respondents have opted for the “middle” categories: “agree” or “disagree” to the statement. As it was seen in the literature review of this dissertation, even if the levels of intentions regarding the willingness of the respondents to pay more for a sustainable service are high, the actual behavior of the respondents might defer from their intentions due to the intention-behavior gap (Ajzen, 2015; Zralek, 2017).

Graph 14: Willingness to pay more for a sustainable product or service

(Would you agree to pay more for a sustainable/environmental-friendly touristic product or service?)



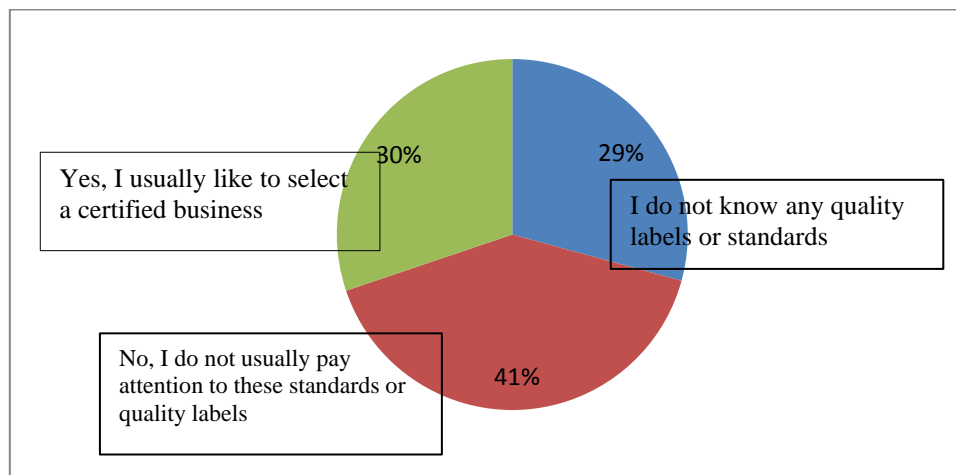
Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

5.2.3. Perception of quality labels or standards in the tourism industry

Finally, the research aimed at assessing the perception of the respondents on quality labels or standards in the tourism industry (graph 15). The results show quite heterogeneous results.

Indeed, 29% of the respondents do not know any quality labels or standards, whereas 30% of them usually tend to choose certified brands. 41% of the respondents do not usually pay attention to these standards or quality labels. As it can be seen, almost a third of the respondents do not know any quality labels or standards, which matches the arguments stated by Pedersen and Neergaard (2006).

Graph 15: Perception of quality labels or standards



Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

5.3. Reported behavior of the respondents when facing sustainable options in tourism

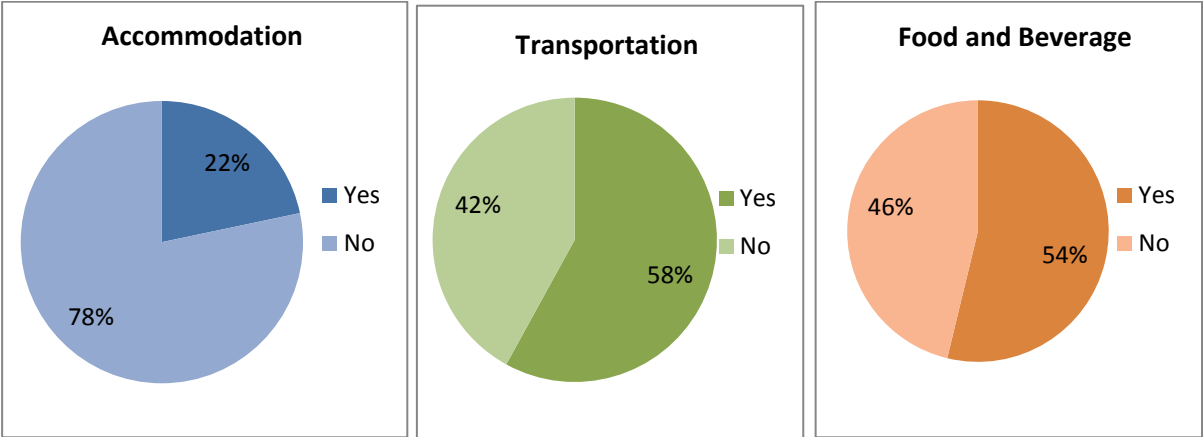
To get an idea of the actual behavior of the respondents regarding their choice of sustainable services, the respondents were asked if they had actually ever selected a service for its positive environmental or social impact. The graph 16 shows that the transportation and food and beverage services show similar results. Indeed, 42% of the respondents claim that they have ever selected a transportation service for its positive environmental and social impact. This same figure reaches 46% for food and beverage services. However, only 22% of the respondents claim that they have ever selected an accommodation service for its positive environmental and social impact.

However, in the three cases it can be noticed that the proportion of people having ever experienced selecting a service for its positive impact is lower than the proportion of people who have never. These results can be linked, once again, with the intention-behavior gap. Indeed, even if the intentions of the customers are positive towards sustainability, their reported behavior shows that the proportion of people who have never selected a sustainable service is higher than the rest. As these figures relate to the reported behavior of the

respondents, and not to their actual behavior, it is possible that the proportion of people who have actually selected a sustainable service is even lower.

Graph 16: Reported behavior of the respondents regarding sustainable services

(Have you ever selected the service for its positive environmental and social impact)?

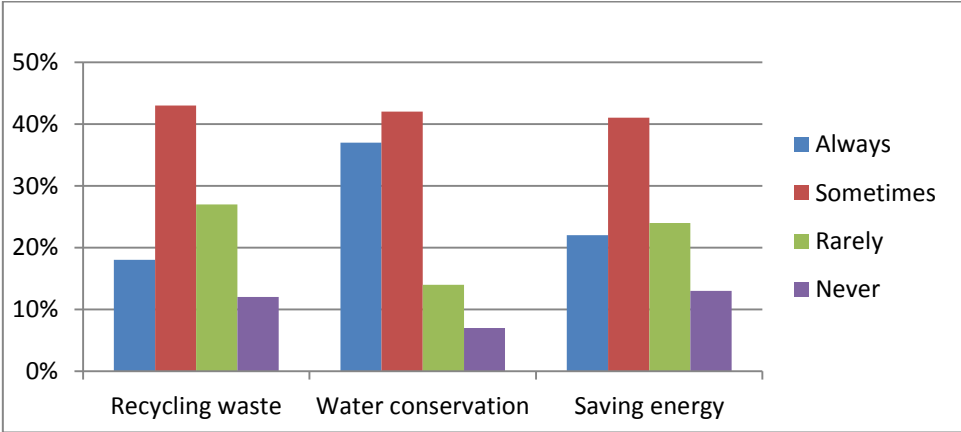


Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

Understanding the actual reported behavior of the respondents regarding sustainability matters also included getting information on their sustainable practices when traveling (graph 17). The data collected show that water conservation seems to be the most practised item: over 35% of the respondents claimed that they “always” practice water conservation when traveling. This percentage is lower in regards to recycling waste or saving energy (respectively 18% and 22% of the respondents). For the three items, most respondents claimed that they “sometimes” practice these environmental friendly habits (more than 40% of the respondents in the three cases).

Graph 17: Reported behavior of the respondents regarding sustainable services

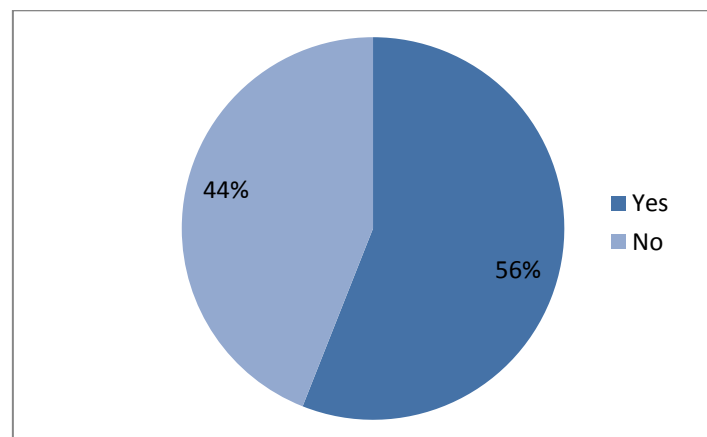
Do you practice the following sustainable practices when you travel?



Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

Finally, the graph 18 aimed at assessing the loyalty of the respondents to a brand which includes sustainable or environmental-friendly practices in its activity. The results show that 56% of the respondents feel more loyal to a brand if it includes in its activity environmental-friendly or sustainable practices. Even if the results show some kind of heterogeneity, a slightly higher proportion can be noticed for the respondents who feel more loyal to a brand which includes sustainable or environmental-friendly practices in its activity. These results show consistencies with the theory of Vlachos *et al* (2009), who explain that customers usually are more likely to purchase goods or services that come from a sustainable business.

Graph 18: Loyalty of the respondents to a brand which includes sustainable or environmental-friendly practices in its activity



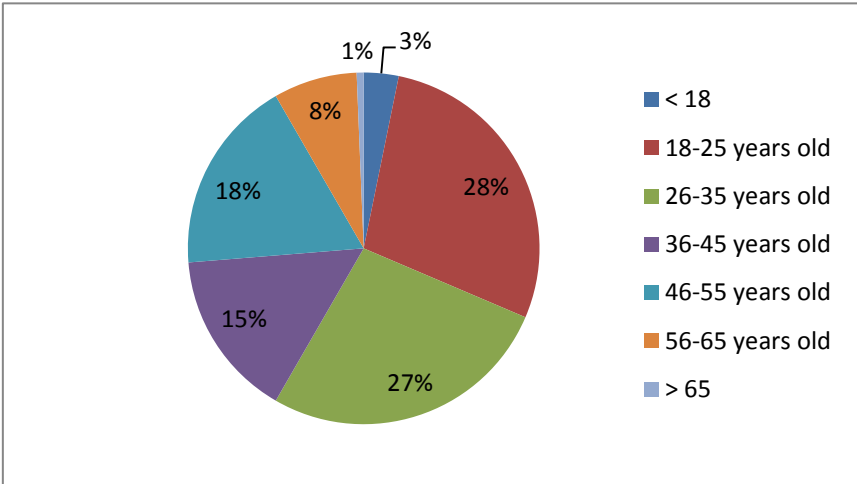
Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

5.4. Socio-demographic information of the sample

5.4.1. Age

As it was previously explained in the methodology chapter of this work, the sample is mostly composed of respondents aged 18 to 35 years old, as this age range represents 55% of the sample. The 35-45 and 45-55 age groups both represent similar proportions of the sample, respectively reaching 15% and 18%. Finally, the under 18 years old and over 65 years old both represent quite low proportions of the sample, reaching 3% and 1% respectively.

Graph 19: Age of the respondents

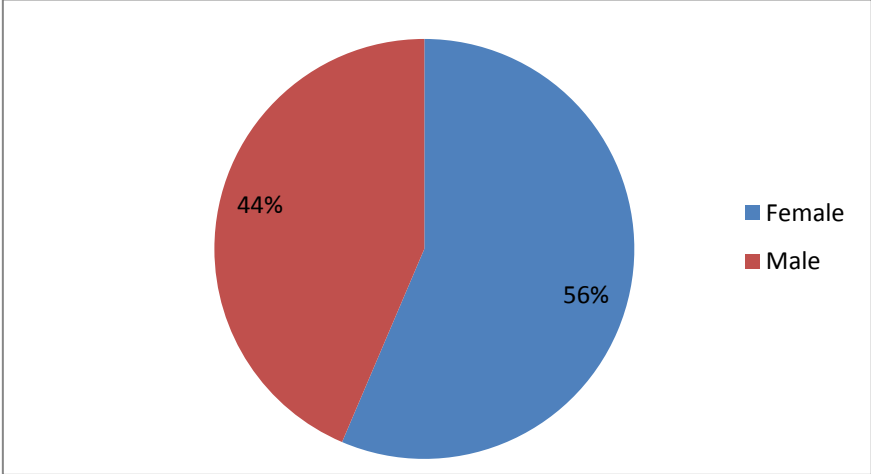


Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

5.4.2. Gender

The gender of the sample is quite well distributed between females and male. However, the females represent a slightly superior proportion than males (56% of females for 44% of males).

Graph 20: Gender of the respondents

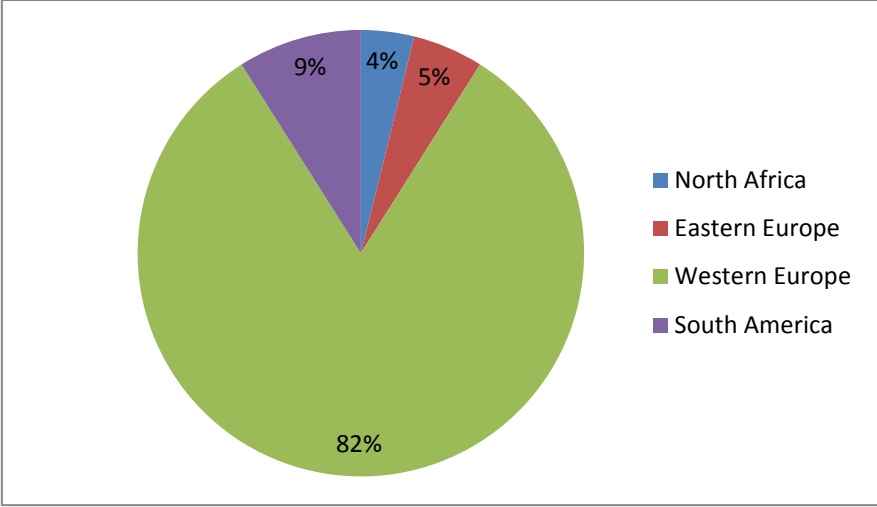


Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

5.4.3. Nationality

To make statistical purposes data more easily analyzed, the nationalities were grouped into regions. The majority of the respondents come from Western Europe (82% of the sample). The rest of the sample are either from Africa or Eastern Europe.

Graph 21: Nationality of the respondents

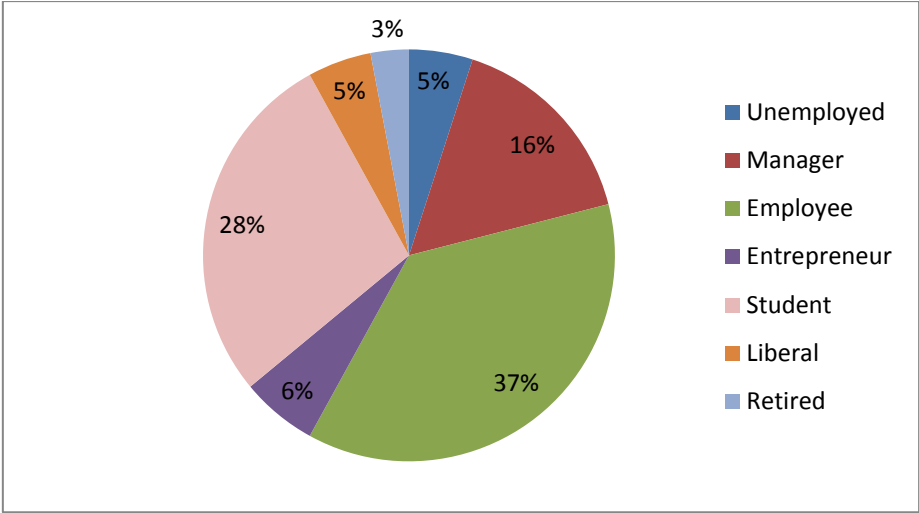


Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

5.4.4. Socio-professional category

Finally, the socio-demographic information to the respondents dealt with their socio-professional category. As it can be seen on the graph 25, the majority of the respondents

Graph 22: Socio-professional category of the respondents



Source: own elaboration based on the questionnaires

6. Contribution to theory and practice

To conclude this dissertation, it is important to remind the importance that sustainable tourism currently holds in the quest for sustainable development. Indeed, the travel and tourism sector accounted for 10,4% of the global GDP in 2017 and this proportion is forecasted to keep growing in the next years and decades. Besides its relative importance in the global GDP, the travel and tourism industry itself has been growing in the past years, and especially in the least developed countries of the world (according to the United Nations classifications). This makes of tourism industry a sector of influence, which can have a high impact on sustainable development in the future.

The most known definition of sustainable development, stated in the Brundtland report (1987:41), refers to a “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”⁴⁷. Although globally accepted, this definition has been completed and improved by many authors throughout the years and is usually linked with three main dimensions: the economic, social and environmental pillars. When linking sustainable development to tourism, the literature states that sustainable tourism is a “*tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental and host communities*” (Carillo and Jorge, 2017:89). Sustainable tourism is a crucial concept to take into account, as the current effects of the tourism industry on the three pillars mentioned previously include both positive and negative impacts.

Reaching sustainable tourism requires understanding its actors, being the main stakeholders of the tourism industry: tourists, businesses, public entities, etc. The analyzed literature states that in the last decades, most of these actors have started to feel the necessity to change, and started thinking more about the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and sustainable tourism, rather than the economic dimension. However, some authors claim that the personality traits and values would have an effect on the sustainable behavior of an individual, which means that even if the awareness of the tourists regarding sustainable tourism has been increasing, we need to keep in mind that it is not applicable to every single individual. To these changes in consumer trends, businesses have had to respond and adapt in order to maintain their performance. The businesses and more specifically the businesses of the tourism industry have started involving in environmental-friendly and

⁴⁷ United Nations. 1987. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. Online <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf> [accessed on 22/06/2018]

sustainable practices, through their Corporate Social Responsibility, amongst others. Besides, the governments have had to adapt the legal frameworks to guide these businesses into these changes.

The present dissertation brings its own contribution to the existing literature and research works on the issue, by focusing specifically on the topic of sustainable tourism and bringing more information on the following aspects. The research has shown that despite high levels of awareness regarding sustainable development, the awareness of sustainable tourism remains lower and not as well-known to the respondents as sustainable development. The research also evidences the fact that most respondents link sustainable development and tourism to two of the three pillars of sustainable development: the ecologic and social pillars. Indeed, the economic pillar often remains forgotten and might be taken for granted with no need to include it in the concept. However, most reports and authors are clear on the issue: the three dimensions need to be considered equally and interconnected to reach sustainable development. The present research also enables to draw conclusion between the intentions of the respondents and their final reported behavior. The results have shown that despite showing high levels of awareness and intentions, the actual reported behavior when it comes to sustainable tourism (transportation, accommodation and food and beverage) remains quite low. The results also evidence the fact that the respondents would rather value features such as price or practicality rather than ecological print when selecting a touristic service.

In conclusion, most of the aspects analyzed in the literature review have been validated through the research part of this dissertation. Indeed, the results seem to show that sustainable development is rather important to the respondents and that the levels of awareness regarding the issue are quite high. However, even if the proportion of people who are willing to act for the environment and for sustainable development is relatively high, the proportion of those who actually act for it is lower, producing a gap between people intentions and behavior.

Nevertheless, this research met a number of limitations which makes important considering carefully its conclusions. First of all, the study field of research is limited to a single country, which makes its conclusions limited to France, and might not be applied in other countries or regions of the world as customs and beliefs might have an effect on the answers on this specific topic, as seen previously on the literature review. Additionally, the sample is over represented by the youngest age categories, which could have an effect on the final results.

An important limitation to take into account is also the social desirability bias that might be present in this study, which could be partially eradicated in a further study, making use of the

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“third person” face to face questioning, that is to say, asking questions to the respondents referring to a third person and not to themselves.

Moreover, the impossibility of the research to get real information on the actual behavior of the respondents will limit its conclusions. Indeed, the study is supported by data gathered on the reported behavior of the respondents, which might differ from their actual behavior and partially modify the results of the research.

Finally, it is important to take into account that the size of the sample might limit the results of the study. Performing the study on a larger sample might benefit and enrich the results and data gathered.

For further analysis and research, it would be interesting to dig further into the causes of the gap existing between intentions and actual behavior of customers. Even if some authors already have looked into the topic, it would be interesting to gather more information on the specific issue of the sustainable consumption in the tourism industry. Indeed, this aspect currently represents an impediment to reach sustainable development, and more specifically, sustainable tourism.

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Annexes

Annex 1: link between questionnaire, literature and research questions

Question	Literature references	Link to the research question
Section 1: awareness of the respondents on sustainability		
1) Have you ever heard of the concept of sustainable development? a. Yes b. No	Down, 1972 Eurobarometer 2017 World Summit on sustainable development, 2002	Understanding if the respondents know these two concepts is a first step into analyzing later their perception of these concepts, and their willingness to be convinced or not by companies of the tourism industries involved in sustainable practices.
2) Have you ever heard of the concept of sustainable tourism? a. Yes b. No		
Section 2: respondents' perception and opinion on sustainability		
3) If yes, what does sustainable tourism represent to you? (give a small definition of what you think sustainable tourism is) a. Open answer [text]	Down, 1972 Eurobarometer 2017 Carillo and Jorge, 2017	This open question helps analyzing the actual perception of the respondents on sustainable tourism, without guiding them through pre-selected options.
4) Do you personally feel that sustainability in general is important to you, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and ecological dimensions)? a. Yes b. No	Down, 1972 Eurobarometer 2017	Understanding the importance of sustainable development to the respondents is a first step to verify whether they are willing to act in a sustainable way, specifically regarding their touristic behavior.
5) Please, explain your answer: why do you feel that sustainable development is/is not important to	Down, 1972 Eurobarometer 2017	

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you? a. Open answer [text]		
6) Do you feel that one of the three dimensions of sustainable development is and should be considered as more important than the others? If yes, which one? (multiple answers are possible) a. Economical dimension b. Social dimension c. Ecological dimension d. Each of them is equally important to me	Down, 1972 Eurobarometer 2017 Brundtland report, 1987 Carillo and Jorge, 2017	This question aims at getting more information on the perception of the respondents on the three pillars of sustainable development, and their respective relevance to them.
Section 3: respondent's touristic habits and preferences		
7) How would you characterize your personality according to Holland's six types of personality? (*) a. Realistic b. Investigative c. Artistic d. Social e. Enterprising f. Conventional	Holland, 1962 Plog, 1987 and 1991 Holland, 1962	Getting information on the personality type of each respondents can help the present research finding out if there actually is a link between the personality type of the respondent and its perception of sustainable tourism.
8) What do you value the most when selecting accommodation ? (please value each of the items listed) [Scale: not important at all, not very important, fairly important, extremely important] a. Price b. Facilities (gym, spa, pool, food and beverage services, etc.) c. Cleanliness d. Quality of the service e. Staff kindness f. Ecological print / Environmental awareness	Budeanu, 2007	These three questions helps understanding the relative importance of ecological matters in each of the services usually involved in the travelers' choice when traveling (accommodation, transport mode and destinations). It would be interesting to know if some of these services are more likely than others to be selected using ecological criteria. Comparing the ecological criteria to other criteria usually involved in the choice of a service might help identifying the relevance of the ecological criteria.

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<p>9) What do you usually value the most when selecting transportation mode? (please value each of the items listed) [Scale: not important at all, not very important, fairly important, extremely important]</p> <p>a. Price b. Practicality (for instance, closeness of the airport from home or possibility to bring more luggage, etc.) c. Comfort d. Distance travelled e. Ecological impact</p>	<p>Budeanu, 2007</p>	
<p>10) What do you usually value the most when selecting destinations ? (please value each of the items listed) [Scale: not important at all, not very important, fairly important, extremely important]</p> <p>a. General prices of the city/region/country b. Cultural/historical heritage c. Natural resources / environmental interest d. Touristic attractions e. Practicality (distance from home city/country, easiness to travel to destination, etc.)</p>	<p>Budeanu, 2007</p>	
<p>Section 4: willingness to act in a sustainable way</p>		
<p>11) Do you feel sensible to tourism businesses implication towards sustainability through their Corporate Social Responsibility?</p> <p>a. Yes b. No c. Other</p>	<p>Vlachos et al, 2009 Stanislavljevic, 2017 Mayabubur Rahman et al, 2017 Ford, 2017</p>	<p>The Corporate Social Responsibility being an important tool for companies to communicate with their stakeholders about their actions, it seemed important to understand how consumers perceive it to check its effectiveness.</p>

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<p>12) To what extent do you think that the following institutions should be involved in acting in a sustainable way?</p> <p>a. Governments b. Tourism businesses c. European Union d. Associations/charities</p>	<p>Eurobarometer 2017</p>	<p>This aspect contributes to answering to the research question as it enables us to understand the relative importance of tourism businesses acting towards sustainability in comparison to other institutions.</p>
<p>13) Do you agree with the following statement: would you pay more for an environmental-friendly touristic product or service?</p> <p>a. Totally agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Totally disagree</p>	<p>World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2008</p>	<p>This question aims at understanding if customers would be willing to pay more for sustainable services. This question puts the respondents in a specific situation and can give information on how they would behave in case they have to choose between two products or services: one being sustainable and the other not.</p>
<p>14) Have you ever paid attention to certification labels or standards when selecting accommodation when travelling?</p> <p>a. Yes, I usually value more a service when certified b. No, I do not really pay attention to these certification labels c. I do not know any certification labels or standards d. Other</p>	<p>Pedersen and Neergaard, 2006 Daniel Hanss and Gisela Bohm, 2012</p>	<p>The authors mentioned argue that customers usually do not know and do not pay attention to certification labels or standards in the tourism industry, which is why this question aims at verifying this aspect, in order to get more information on the tourism consumers' behavior.</p>
<p>Section 5: actual behavior towards sustainability</p>		
<p>15) Have you ever selected an accommodation service for its (positive) social or environmental impact? (for instance, choosing a hotel committed in reducing its environmental impact)</p> <p>a. Yes b. No</p>	<p>Budeanu, 2007</p>	<p>These three questions were selected to be able to compare the willingness of the respondents to act in a sustainable way and their actual sustainable behavior.</p>

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c. Other		
16) Have you ever selected a transport mode for its (positive) social or environmental impact? (for instance, taking the train instead of the plane or using car sharing instead of driving alone) a. Yes b. No c. Other	Budeanu, 2007	
17) Have you ever selected a food/beverage service (ex: bar, restaurant) for its (positive) social or environmental impact? a. Yes b. No c. Other	Budeanu, 2007	
18) Do you practice the following when travelling? Scale (Always, Sometimes, Rarely, Never). Value each item. a. Recycling waste b. Water conservation (for instance, using towels or bedsheets in hotels various days) c. Saving energy	Barkauskiene K., Vytautas S. , 2013 Ceylan, Güven, 2010	Giving the respondents the opportunity to express themselves on what they actually do when travelling, using specific examples of possible sustainable practices, can help us understand if their actual behavior goes toward a sustainable attitude and if their good intentions are actually put into practice.
19) Do you feel more loyal to a brand which includes sustainable or environmental-friendly practices in its activity (tourism)? a. Yes b. No	Vlachos et al, 2009 Stanislavljevic, 2017 Mayabubur Rahman et al, 2017 Ford, 2017 World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2008	Various authors argue that acting in a sustainable way would bring a number of benefits for companies, amongst others, increasing the loyalty of the customers. This question aims at verifying whether this statement can be approved or not in the case of the respondents of this study.

(*) For question 7, the respondents to the questionnaire were explained Holland's six personality types in order for them to be able to identify themselves in one of them.

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Annex 2: extract of classification of open-ended questions

What does sustainable tourism represent to you?											
Language	Respondent n°	Respecting the environment	Thinking about future consequences	Responsible consumption/use of resources	Economic development	Green transportation	Local and fresh products	Avoiding mass tourism	Biodiversity	Respecting local communities	Ecological activities
French	1	1		1							
French	2	1									
French	3	1									
French	4					1	1				
French	5	1									
French	6	1								1	
French	7	1									
French	8	1									
French	9	1									
French	10	1						1			
French	11								1	1	
French	12	1			1					1	
French	13	1								1	
French	14	1		1							
French	15	1			1						
French	16	1								1	
French	17										1
French	18	1								1	
French	19	1									
French	20	1									
French	21	1									