The impact of online advertising on the Belgian, English & French tourism sector

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2 Introduction

2.1 Background

This thesis is going to discuss the impact of Internet in the tourism sector. In the first part of the introduction we will see the importance and the development of Internet advertising since the last 20 years. Furthermore, it is pointed out how the internet influences the marketing and especially the tourism sector.

The online holiday industry is a massive sector that generates few billion euros per year. It is said that there exist main companies and intermediates who provide to groups and travel agencies, special services, technology suppliers of reservations and public organisms (Bacchus & Molina, 2001). There are a few websites like TripAdvisor.com or Lastminute.com which intermediate and propose the best offers from travel agencies. These types of website are, in general, part of Internet travel groups, for example: TripAdvisor is part of the Expedia group, Opodo is part of the Amadeus group, Lastminute.com is part of the Sabre Holding group, and Holiday Check is from the Focus AG group. The company is not a direct supplier of the services or offers provided, but instead it will facilitate the provision of travel services by suppliers to the customers.

The Internet advertising is used to attract and deliver a marketing message from the company to the consumers. It has been introduced online around twenty years ago and companies have met a massive success with that system (Gao, Yan, Shen & Liu, 2013). Today, online advertising is very common and it is everywhere. In a short period, the Internet use became a massive advantage and strength in the tourism marketing. In 1996, there were only a few Web pages representing the tourism sector; however, today, tourism tour operators invest between “25% and 100% of their advertising budget” for the online advertising. There are around 520 million of Internet users in Europe, and most of them will use the Web to prepare their holiday trips (Desvignes, 2007 & Internet World Stats, 2012).

Based on a few analyses about consumer behaviour, communication, information and tourism sector, it is easy to imagine a conceptual model of how tourists search and plan their holidays (Elsvier, 2006). Tour operators have to understand how consumers, regarding the age or sex, will react in front of a destination promotion (MacKay & Smith, 2005). One analysis based on the Leisure Motivation Scale of Beard and Ragheb, was made on a sample “of 1,127 UK
holidaymakers” to understand which elements are important in the future holiday regarding the previous one. Then, they oriented the advertising (Ryan, 1998).

Internet is an untrusting tool for tour operators and changes not only the relationship between consumers and company, but also the marketing rules. There are a lot of advantages of online marketing but consumers have to face a masse of online information, which can affect the efficiency and the consumer’s perception of the advertising (Nihel & Ziadi, 2013).

Other analyses and studies were made to understand the effect of Internet advertisement and the perception of the users (Flores, Chen & Ross, 2013). Holiday packaging offers increased a lot the last few years and researches exist in order to know how the consumer will purchase and evaluate online holiday packaging (Tanford, Baloglu & Erdem, 2013). Internet is a major opportunity for communication and marketing tools in the tourism sector. Few discussions came up about the structural relationship “between tourism and Internet-based advertising” (Wu, Wei & Chen, 2008). Tour operators have to understand the effect of the consumer’s satisfaction with the information got through the Internet. They also have to understand the satisfaction with the selected holiday destinations regarding the information provided online (Castaneda, Frias & Rodriguez, 2007). Web 2.0 is a revolution and facilitates the exchange of information, the communication and the development of Web communities, “move to the Internet as a new platform”. There is a strong evolution of the relationship between producers and consumers (Desvignes & Salvan, 2008). An image of the destinations can be provided via Internet and it is a new information source for the consumers called “tourist’s pre-visit image”. It will generally influence the consumer’s choice (Frias, Rodriguez & Castaneda, 2007).

The ignorance of online advertising, consciously or not, is a problem for the marketers. The user’s memory will be influenced by the user’s goal orientation during the online navigation; it is linked by the “correspondence of the banner content and website content” (Heinz, Hug, Nugaeva & Opwis, 2013). Social networks and media are new platforms for young consumers in order to share videos, pictures, etc. This is an opportunity for hotels and tour operators when consumers share directly their travel information on Internet (Murphy, Gil & Schegg, 2010). The Internet is a valuable tool for tourism business and questions like “How do I get people to visit my Web site?” or “How do I attract them?” are crucial for the companies (Mills & Law, 2005).

Internet is a key marketing tool for tourist destinations. Few factors are important for a good advertising campaign (Nevarez & Hyman, 2012). Based on relevant analyses in tourism about
consumer behaviour, information science and communications, a conceptual model was made to understand the process of the consumers’ vacation planning on Internet (Elsevier, 2006). Today, reliable information are a key issue in marketing and many tourism agencies use actually a system created to record tourism data. With these data, they plan their advertising and marketing strategy (Wober, 1997). An attempt of behaviour profile on leisure tourism, based on Internet use has been made with 5,319 interrogated tourists (Bonn, Furr & Susskind, 1999).

Social networks and media channels have a strong influence on consumers and they are a new opportunity for tour operators (Murphy, Gil & Schegg, 2010). Internet and other technologic media have completely changed the marketing. It provides customers with much more choices of goods, services, prices and suppliers opportunities (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer & Johnston, 2009). The informatics progress increases the sales efforts where consumers are not efficient. To fully benefit from these developments, travel agencies have to follow that fast and innovative progress (Walle, 1996).

2.2 Problem

Nowadays, a successful marketing strategy of a travel agency cannot be without a good website and a good online advertising. This is essentially due to the increasing number of potential customers who may book their holidays online, but also due to the large availability of the Internet. Furthermore, a steadily improvement and presence is essential to not lose the market position (Volek, 2012). The travel agencies have to take into account that the customer’s perception to values changes with the time and that’s why the company’s attitude has to change as well. The skills and attitudes of the organisations should also change; a failure to follow such changes will clearly lead to unsatisfied customers (Bisht, Belwal & Pande, 2010).

Another point is: “Consumer demand is the fundamental determinant of all forms of businesses.” A travel agency needs therefore to differentiate itself from the competitors as good as possible. If the customer is not satisfied, he will switch to another travel agency. In addition to that, the customer’s privacy is very important; the customer wants to be sure that his private information, like his address and credit card numbers, are kept in secret. “Information abuse, web crime, payment security and non-delivery or late delivery, are often cited as the main inhibitor to online shopping.” The customer has to trust the company that he will get the product he ordered (Zhenhua, 2000).
2.3 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to understand how online marketing, especially advertising from travel agencies, will influence the tourism sector. To accomplish it, these seven needs have to be covered:

- The recent development of Internet advertising.
- The data collection of consumers’ interests from tour operators.
- The tolerance level of consumers regarding the advertising.
- The behaviour, perception and trust of consumers regarding advertising.
- Where do consumers find the advertising?
- How do travel agencies develop advertising tools and campaigns?
- How does Internet advertising differ from other types of Media?

2.4 Delimitation

This thesis will research why online advertising is today an obligation for travel agencies; how the companies manage it regarding the consumers and the competition; what is the process of a good marketing; and finally, why Internet. It will also talk about the advantages and disadvantages for travel agencies for having the opportunity of making online advertisement. The research will not only be based on theoretical data with scientific articles and books researches, but also on empirical data with a questionnaire made for a sample of the population from France, Belgium and the United Kingdom/ Ireland.

2.5 Research questions

The research will be oriented regarding business interrogations related to the impact of Internet on the tourism sector. Four questions will be the heart of the thesis:

- How does the Internet impact profits in the tourism sector? It is important to understand the advantages of tour operators with using Internet (one form of media) to develop their business.

- How does online advertising influence the consumer’s behaviour and the perception of the product? The analysis of the product’s perception or the consumer’s behaviour regarding the type of product and advertising is an analysis of the consumer’s opinion in front of a marketing message.
- How do the companies know the today’s consumer’s tolerance level of information/advertising? This research will be about the understanding of how companies will know the consumer’s degree of acceptance of advertising and how to touch them and not to bother them.

- How do touristic companies position their advertising on the internet? With that research question, the analysis is going to know where the advertising are placed by the tour operators and how to touch the targeted consumers.

3 Methodology

This part of the thesis will explain the type of method used to collect all necessary information. All the explained techniques and tools of the researches have been chosen because they provide the best analyses and responses to the purpose. The main goal of the thesis is to explain how Internet will impact the tourism sector. In that part it is explained the most suitable approach to reach responses for the chosen researches questions.

3.1 Method

3.1.1 Qualitative method used for the analysis

This part of the method will explain more precisely the qualitative method used for the discussion part.

There are a lot of different discussions around this method, and the most important one is the relation between analysis and interpretation (Evrard, Pras & Roux, 2003). Firstly, the traditional branch of the qualitative analysis will promote the rigor and very precise study of the data collected in order to extract the important content (Vernette, Gianelloni, 2001 & Pellemans, 1999). Secondly, there is the interpretation analysis which is attached to extract the results regarding the reflexion and subjectivity of the person who is making the research. Data also has the important role (Denzin, Lincoln, 2005 & Muchielli, 2003). The most important is finding the good responses for the problematic of the research, and get the closest conclusion to the reality (Andreani & Conchon, 2003).
Schema number 1: Analyse of the qualitative data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative data analyses</th>
<th>Results interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field data</td>
<td>Problematic research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content analysis</td>
<td>Interpretation method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the responses collected</td>
<td>Conclusion and information to collect elaborations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study of the data signification</td>
<td>Evaluation of trail and solutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content analysis technique

Content analysis technique is the one which tries to show up what the interrogated people said, with the best possible objectivity (Berelson, 1952). The procedure is in general the transformation of an oral talk to a text, then the instrument of the analysis building to understand the signification of the talk (Bardin, 1977).

Schema number 2: Step of the qualitative data analyse

- Transcribe again the data is the action of putting the pure data to an accessible format for the analysis (Auerbach & Silverstain, 2003).
- Coding of the information will be the action of exploring line by line and step by step the observations and data collected for the people interviewed (Berg, 2003).

Schema number 3: Coding table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open coding</th>
<th>Closed coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read line by line the data to get a general idea (abstraction process).</td>
<td>Read line by line the data and coding regarding the research hypothesis (translating process).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for similar set, rate and compare.</td>
<td>Explanatory variable and variable to explain will be established.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coding of the main dimension and select coding of the main and repetitive ideas.

Coding of the research indicator.

Schema number 4: Coding units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic analysis</th>
<th>Semantic analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of criteria of the analysis unit.</td>
<td>Sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content unit</td>
<td>Establishment of the integral text to a series of words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishment of the main ideas and topic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Processing of the data can be semantic or statistic (Andreani & Conchon, 2001). For the semantic processing, the analysis will be conducted by analysing the contents made physically by the researcher. It is a successive approximation of the main ideas and words (Morrison, Haley, Seehan & Taylor, 2002). This semantic method is going to be chosen for the discussion part of the thesis.

Semantic processing of the data

The semantic processing of qualitative data will be an analysis of the respondent ideas (empirical analysis), the words used (lexical analysis), and the way they want to use these words (enunciation analysis). For this scientific paper, only the empirical analysis will be used because of the survey design where respondent doesn’t have to write.

The empirical analysis will follow a procedure made with 4 steps: The analytical step (very deep study of the subcategories), synthetically step (showing up the main ideas and their categories), explanatory step (research of the explanatory factor and criteria between category and subcategory) and then an evolution step.

Schema number 5: Rules of the Empirical analysis

1. Read few times the responses.
2. Do your best to understand what guarantors say or want to say.
3. Think like a guarantor like “we have the same idea”.
4. Be the as close as possible with the sentences used by the guarantor in order to
translate it on his own language.

5. Be completely neutral to the responses even if it is against our own opinion.
6. Show up the facts and contradictions to try to understand why.
7. Step back regarding the information and give a constructive critic.

The factual interpretation

The factual interpretation is a type of interpretation in the middle of few other techniques. It is composed by logical following contents (Wolcott, 1994). It will determine the understanding from the data and what the data wants to signify (this is the point of view of the people interviewed) regarding the questions asked during the survey. A diagnosis of the information will be processed with an analysis and identification of strengthens and weaknesses, and valuable or not valuable hypotheses (Buber, Gadner & Richards, 2004). When the results have been interpreted, solutions will come up with their limits and possibilities. Few different scenarios are possible. Firstly the situation can be clear and all point of view can be the same: study choice (ex: what the respondent will say) and the survey orientation (ex: the objectives). The conclusion in that context will be simple because everybody is agreeing about the fact. Secondly, sometimes the data collected will be in contradiction with the research’s hypothesis. The research can, in that case, disprove or adapted the hypothesis with another fact of the reality (Andreani & Conchon, 2003).

3.2 Research design

3.2.1 Exploratory – Descriptive – Explanatory

There exist three kinds of research designs. The first one, exploratory research, is a good way to find out “what is happening?” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009) – An unplanned change in the marketplace has occurred (Monroe College, 2011). It’s an initial research into a hypothetical or theoretical idea; most of the time it’s the initial groundwork for future researches. So it is not designed to come up with final answers or decisions. This research can come in two ways: a new topic or a new angle. The first one is often unexpected and astonishing in its findings; the second one can appear from new ways of looking at things, either from a theoretical perspective or a new way of measuring things (Kowalczyk).
The second design is called descriptive research which “portrays an accurate profile of persons, events or situations” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). It’s an attempt to explore and explain a topic while providing additional information and filling the missing parts (Kowalczyk).

The last design is the explanatory research where the priority is to study a specific problem or situation in order to explain ideas (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). It’s an attempt to connect ideas and to understand and explain the cause and effect. This kind of research never really ends because there are constantly new ideas, techniques and information; it’s like “the more you know, the more you realise you need to know”. Exploratory researches are often made with a quantitative approach so that statistical tests can be conducted (Kowalczyk).

An example will explain the three designs better: Imagine someone who is blindfolded or placed into a room without any light. He’s not told if there is something in the room; however, he has a suspicion that there might be something. He creeps slowly through the room and explores slowly with his fingers until he has found something. This part describes the exploratory research. The descriptive research examines the thing he has found in the dark and creates a better picture of it. He is still not completely sure what he has found but he is starting to get a notion. Finally, he has explored the thing and understands what it looks like; then, the questions about ‘How did it get here’ and ‘Where is it going next’ should be answered. This requires imaginative studies and guesses and this is called the explanatory research (Kowalczyk).

Concerning our research about the impact of internet in the tourism sector in the United Kingdom, France and Belgium, the most suitable research seems to be the exploratory research as there has been no clear hypothesis formulated yet. Exploratory research is used to increase the researcher’s familiarity with a problem, especially when he does not know much about the problem to be studied (Monroe College, 2011). Descriptive research suits also to our situation; describing the situation is a good way to fill the lack of information and this might be used for further researches.

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 Population and sample size

In the EU nearly 60% of the population use Internet to buy online. Clothes, travels and travel accommodations are the main online purchases. Between 2011 and 2012, Sweden was the
European country with the most important rate for online travelling purchases (60% of the population). The general percentage of the online travel shopping in the 28 countries of Europe for 2012 is 32%. This statistic is based on a population sample from 16 to 74 years old people (Urhausen & Seybert, 2013). Regarding the country, people will use or not use Internet. More than 50% of the population will use Internet for countries like Europe or America, 25% to 50% for countries in South America or China, and minus than 25% for Sub-Saharan African countries. The reason of Internet use is also linked to the access regarding the country (Bouchard, Charroin & Thomassey, 2013). Most of the online shopping users are between 25 and 34 years old and in 2012, 69% of them bought online services or goods in Canada and 58% was exclusively for traveling (Cansim, 2013). Travel arrangements represent 57% of the online activity from consumers in 2008 and another study shows that “the most searched activity conducted online was ‘making travel plans’ (84%) (Bihalis & Hyun Jun, 2011). The age, profession and social level will be an important data to analyse Internet buyers; the older consumers are, the less often they buy. In 2012, around 76% of the 15 to 29 years old people bought goods or services online, and 34% for the 60 to 74 years old people (statistic in France) (INSEE, 2007). It is showed that nowadays, all generations are using Internet for all kind of shopping or information. However, most of the buyers are the young generation (16-35 years old) due to the presence on online blogs or social networks; they collect information about the products before the purchasing. Internet shopping is also considered because consumers will save a lot of time to buy the product online and regarding an active life with a job it is probably a good way (Urhausen & Seybert, 2013 & INSEE, 2007).

A sample is a “group of units selected from a larger group (the population). By studying the sample it is hoped to draw valid conclusion about the larger group.” The sample will have to represent the population (age, sex, and job).

The most important of choosing the sample will be obtaining a desirable accuracy as well as a desirable confidence level for a minimum cost. There are plenty of formulas to determine the simple size needed for a questionnaire or test; the simplest one is: \( n = \frac{2(Z_a+Z_b)^2s^2}{D^2} \) (Arsham, 1996). Around 205 persons will be needed to reply a questionnaire so that we can get a confidence level of 99% with one level of 9% for the trust regarding the responses (Macorr, 2013). For this questionnaire between 200 and 250 people will be interrogated. The age will be between 18 and 80 years old, women and men from France, Belgium, and the
United Kingdom. More than 250 persons are too ambitious and data can be too complicated to manage in the frame of our study.

3.3.2 Type of sample: Probability and non-probability

Sampling the population saves time and it is an important consideration when you have a tight deadline. The analysis of the data is more manageable and more quickly as there are fewer people involved (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). There are different kinds of samples; however, they can be classified into two main categories: probability and non-probability samples or also called random and non-random selection (Columbia Centre for New Media Teaching and Learning, 2002-2003).

Random samples mean that “all members of a group have an equal and independent chance of being selected” (Business Dictionary, consulted on the 25/02/2014). It is often associated with survey-based research strategies where you need to make conclusions from your sample about a population to answer the research questions or to meet the objectives. The sampling frame (population) for any random sample is a complete list of all cases in the population from which the sample will be drawn. It is important that this list is complete; an incomplete or imprecise list means that some cases will not have been involved and thus, it will be impossible for these cases to be selected. As a consequent, the sample will not be representative of the total population. There are four categories of random samples: simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, systematic sampling and cluster sampling (Columbia Centre for New Media Teaching and Learning, 2002-2003):

- Simple random sampling (SRS) is the most widely known type of probability. It is a method where n cases are drawn from a population of size N and every possible case has an equal chance of being chosen (Columbia Centre for New Media Teaching and Learning, 2002-2003). Once a case is selected, it is not put back into the sample frame; this is called *sampling without replacement*. SRS is best used when you have a complete and accessible sampling frame that contains the entire population (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

- In stratified random sampling, the population is first divided into two or more relevant and significant segments based on one or more attributes, and then a random sample is drawn within each subgroup. These subgroups, called strata, are not overlapping and together they form the whole population (Columbia Centre for New Media Teaching and Learning, 2002-2003).
Systematic sampling involves the selection of the sample at regular intervals from the sample frame. For example, a sample frames of 10,000 people with a sample of 1,000. First, number each of the cases in the sampling frame with a unique number. Then you select the first case randomly; the next cases are then every 10\(^{th}\) number as 10,000 divided by 1,000 is 10 (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007, and Columbia Centre for New Media Teaching and Learning, 2002-2003).

Cluster sampling is on the surface similar to stratified sampling because the population is divided into clusters prior to sampling. So the sampling frame is a complete list of clusters and not a complete list of every individual within the population. Then, a few clusters are selected randomly and the data is collected from every case within the chosen clusters (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

On the other side, there are non-random samples which mean that “it is not known which of the units will be picked to be sampled, and some of the units have a zero probability of being chosen” (Business Dictionary, consulted on the 25/02/2014). There are five main categories of non-random samples: availability sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling and self-selection sampling (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007):

- Availability sampling is a method of selecting individuals who are available or easy to find. It is sometimes related as aimless, accidental, or convenience sampling (Columbia Centre for New Media Teaching and Learning, 2002-2003). The cases selected are for example those interviewed randomly in a shopping centre or on the street.

- Quota sampling means that quotas are set to ensure that the sample represents certain characteristics in proportion to their prevalence in the population (Columbia Centre for New Media Teaching and Learning, 2002-2003). It is a type of stratified sample in which the cases are selected non-randomly (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

- With the purposive sampling, elements are selected based on purpose of the study. It enables the researcher to use his judgment to choose cases that will answer best the questions and meet the objectives (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

- Snowball sampling is a method in which the interviewer determines a member of a population of interest interviews him and then asks for other people in the population that the researcher might talk to, and so on. This method is good when members of a special
population are difficult to find (Columbia Centre for New Media Teaching and Learning, 2002-2003).

-Self-selection sampling is a method in which the researcher allows each individual to identify their desire to take part in the research. The researcher publicises the survey and collects the data from those who responded (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

Due to the fact that we don’t have the complete population list, the non-randomly method, the self-selection sampling to be precise, seems to be the most suitable one.

3.4 Instrument to collect the data: Questionnaire

3.4.1 Advantages and disadvantages of online research

Over the past years, due to the development of the technology, the use of online researches has increased. However, are there any drawbacks compared to traditional methods (such as mail, telephone and personal interviewing)?

The first advantage is that online researches cost less than the traditional methods. By using an electronic medium, the researchers don’t need to pay for the telephone or he doesn’t need to waste paper for the questionnaires. In addition to that, it’s also better for the environment.

Secondly, online researches take less time. The researcher can reach more people with common characteristics at the same time, even if all the people are separated by great geographic distances. Moreover, while the researchers is waiting for all the answers, he can work on other tasks or conduct preliminary analyses on already collected data.

Another point is that the respondents are more convenient. They can answer to the questions whenever they want and due to the fact that they are anonymous, they are more willing to share personal information.

However, on the other hand, it is also easy for the respondents to lie about any information they report; they is no guarantee of accuracy. Nowadays, internet users are constantly bombarded my messages and advertising and they can easily delete the researcher’s request.

If the recipient accepts to answer the questions, there is a lack of a trained interviewer to clarify and examine the questions. That can possibly lead to less reliable data.
Finally, there are still certain populations without internet access so that these people are difficult to reach.

(B. Wright, 2006 & Gingery, 2011)

### 3.4.2 Reason for choosing a questionnaire

Researches in management have to be based on data from real facts (B. Flynn, Sakakribara, Schroeder, Bates & E. Flynn, 1990). With the fast development of Internet, the access to research opportunities in psychology is very important. The data collection provided by Internet methods, with “a focus on self-report questionnaires from self-selected samples” will be evaluated and then compared with the traditional methods, which is the paper questionnaire. The samples provided by Internet are relatively diverse and respect demographic, social, age and status data (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava & John, 2004). The data collection with Internet provides a wider sample size with more results to analyse. An internet questionnaire is also the most objective way to collect data (Couper, Tourangeau & Conrad, 2004). The reason of more objectives responses will be linked to the fact that people will be more tempted to lie in face-to-face or telephone interviews, online questionnaire is anonymous (Couper M.P, 2000). Online questionnaire is a quick and easy way to get the responses needed, to analyse and process (Popper, 2004).

In scientific researches, the empirical data has to be proved properly. To know the level of consumer acceptability regarding a product, it is often controlled by asking the consumer how much he will rate a product; otherwise the technique of “nine-point hedonic scale” can be used (Peryam & Girardot, 1952). Companies, which develop products, need to know the degree of overall liking but in the same time what people like and don’t like in the product. In addition to that, they need to know in which way “these attributes might be changed to increase acceptability” (Meilgaard, Civille & Carr, 1991).

The questionnaire will have to be thought properly because, regarding the presentation of the questions, variable responses can be observed. Visibility of questions will initiate the responses. For example, when the choices of answers are “No” and “Don’t know”, it shows that the respondents will have difficulties to visually make a difference; they will use more the “visual rather than the conceptual midpoint of the scale as a reference point for responding”. The space between indirect or the direct line (from larger to deeper questions) will also
influence to perception of the questionnaire as well as how the respondents will respond (Tourangeau, Couper).

3.4.3 Data collection

The data collection will be made with the help of a questionnaire asked to the population from France, Belgium and United Kingdom. The questionnaire will be composed by few questions which cover four categories (questions about vacation habits, about advertising, about offers/companies perception from the population and about population identity). These four categories and their questions will cover the researches questions of the thesis.

The content of the questions will be regarding

- The opinions: with a subjective character (it describes the judgement of the topic), it will influence and prepare the consumer’s behaviour type.
- The intentions: questions will be about the future behaviour, so very subjective.
- The motivations of the consumers: this is scientifically very difficult to analyse because of the psychology human complexity. Only specific researches can reach proper responses (about rational motivation).

Few responses type will be possible for the questions:

- Close response: (“I choose”) few responses will be proposed and one or more will have to be chosen.
- Dichotomous: with “Yes” or “No” as a response’s choice.
- Scale of attitude: The consumers will be invited to rate how much he agrees or not with the question.
  
  ➔ **Quantitative scale**: for example he can choose a graduation from “absolutely not agree” to “completely agree”.
  
  ➔ **Numeric scale**: for example he will have to rate from 1 to 5.

The identity questions about the consumers will be asked at the end. The consumers can feel uncomfortable to start with “private” questions. It is important for valuable responses to have a confident response and consumer. These questions will help to reach a socio-demographic analysis.

(Moureau, 2012)
As it is shown in the introduction, most of the population in France, the United Kingdom and Belgium use Internet for shopping, surfing, social networking, etc. This means that the best and more efficient way to get the responses needed for the questionnaire, quickly and efficiently, is the use of Internet.

To collect the data, few possibilities will be used. Internet will be the main way to collect the responses for the questionnaire through:

- **E-mail:** Because the research topic is linked to internet, the sample of interest will use Internet and E-mail addresses to order the holidays or ticket flights, to book a hotel, etc. The questionnaire will be sent by E-mail to different sample types (regarding the age, localisation, job, hobbies, gender). Relatives will also be asked to share the questionnaire with their own contacts.

- **Facebook:** According to the fact that 48,40% of the worldwide population using Internet have a Facebook account, putting the questionnaire on that social network is an promising option (*Internetworldstats, 2012*). The creation of a “Facebook event” will be achieved because it provides the opportunity to invite as many people as we want and gives all the information and explanation about the questionnaire on the event’s page.

- **Travel Website and blogs:** It is also good because consumers will want to get advises about the trip of interest and he will find information on online blogs, websites or communities. This is the reason of putting the questionnaire on that type of communities, it can reach pertinent responses.

All of these opportunities should provide a wide range of responses and should touch all kind of online consumer profiles to get the most intrusting data.

The questionnaire is made via Google Drive. The advantages of that software are the fast survey diffusion; the responses are saved on Excel and can be exported on all format choices (xcl, csv, etc) so that the analysis of the responses is easier. Few question types are available, it is free, easy to use, and the privacy is guaranteed and it can be adapted to all kinds of computers/software. This programme provides fast, sure and easy to analyse responses.
The data is built through four different categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Information contained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions about vacation habits</td>
<td>How consumers planned their holidays (use of Internet, use of agency, favourite agency), type of holidays (winter holidays, Summer holidays, excursions, city trips, cruises), Favourite period for holiday (Summer, Winter, during school holidays, all year long).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions about advertising</td>
<td>Sensibility regarding advertising (influence of advertising to planned holidays), Consumer’s advertising interest, How advertising will influence consumer’s behaviour, The perception of the offer regarding the advertising level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions about offer’s/companies perception</td>
<td>Where consumers find the advertising, what type of advertising generally received, which advertising format (mail, social network advertising, pop up, etc), The company’s image regarding the offer (price, destination, the type of offers, the web site design, the advertising design).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions about consumers identities</td>
<td>Age, gender, location, situation (couple, single, family), employment status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.4 Validity and reliability of the data

Validity:

Validity answers the question whether the results obtained meet all the requirements of a scientific work (*Shuttleworth, 2008*).

Validity has two main parts: internal and external. Internal validity covers if the results of the research are justifiable due to the way the sample were selected, data was recorded or analysis
performed. For instance, a study might have low internal validity if the testing was not executed the same way in treatment and control groups.

External validity, often called “generalizability”, contains the question if the results of the research are transferable to other populations. A study executed entirely in a particular gender, racial, age, or geographic sub-group, may not be applicable to another sub-group.

It is through an appropriate study design and a strict protocol execution that high levels of validity, internal and external, can be achieved. An important point to consider when discussing about validity is that without internal validity, you cannot have external validity. Results of a poorly designed or executed study are not applicable to any population, in that particular study sample or otherwise (Handley).

Reliability:

Reliability means that significant results must be more than just a one-time finding; they must be repeatable. The results should be the same if other researches do the same experiment under the same conditions. Reliability is a necessary ingredient for determining the overall validity of a scientific experiment and enhancing the strength of the results (Shuttleworth, 2008).

4 Theoretical framework

In this part the key words of the investigation will be explained. It is crucial to understand the theoretical meaning of the words which compose the problem, to conduct correctly the analysis. The important concepts that have to be defined are the concepts of “Internet”, “Information and communication technologies” and “e-tourism”. The definition of “Information and communication technologies” is important to understand the definition of “e-tourism”. When those concepts have been understood, a definition mixing these keys words will be made.

Then the importance of online advertising will be showed up with explanation about what is online advertising, what it provides to companies, which goals it reaches. The definition of online advertising will provide responses or help to understand why tour operators use Internet to reach consumers, selling products, deliver marketing messages and information (via advertising). The analysis of online advertising is the heart of this scientific research because it will provide help to infer how tour operators develop and use online advertising in
order to develop their business, create offers and competitiveness, and create the online tourism market.

4.1 Internet and tourism

4.1.1 Definition of Internet

“The network of all networks”, Internet is considered like a network that is going to link a lot of other networks with end users around the world. This network cannot be completely owned by anyone (Nyheim, McFadden & Connolly, 2005). The name of the Internet and Web has often be changed for others terms; despite that, the Web is a communication tool which is part of Internet (Nyheim et al, 2005). The name of Internet, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) will often be used in a similar situation; however, literally speaking, the Internet is a part of the ICTs. (Buhalis & Hyun Jun, 2011)

4.1.2 Definition of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

ICT is a groupware with hardware, software, Netware and the intellectual capacity named Humanware, in order to maintain equipment and develop programme (Buhalis, 2003). The combined power emerging from the utilisation of these tools means that information will be widely accessible and available through a panel of locations and media. Users can also use mobile devises such as laptops and smartphones as a digital TV and “self-serviced terminals/kiosks” to think and carry out several functions. “The convergence of” ICTs integrates with efficiency the entire range of groupware, hardware, software, netware and humanware, and smudges the limits between software and equipment (Werthner & Klein, 1999).

According to Buhalis (2003), ICT will have as components “the entire range of electronic tools, which facilitate the operational and strategic management of organisations by enabling them to manage their information, functions and processes as well as to communicate interactively with their stakeholders for achieving their mission and objectives”. ICTs come from “an integrate system of networked equipment and software, which enables effective data processing and communication for organisational benefit towards transforming organisations to e-business”. (Buhalis & Hyun Jun, 2011)
4.1.3 Electronic tourism (e-tourism)

According to Buhalis (2003), electronic tourism is the application of ICTs on the tourism industry. The authors also suggest “that e-tourism reflects the digitalisation of all processes and value chains in the tourism, travel, hospitality and catering industries”. Strategically, e-business will include e-commerce and will involve ICT to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of tourism sector. The competitiveness of e-tourism will be determined by the ability of taking advantage of: intranets to reorganise the internal process, extranet to develop transactions with the strategic partners, and Internet for the interaction with consumers and stakeholders. All business functions are included in the e-tourism concept (e-commerce, e-marketing, i.e., e-HRM, e-finance, e-accounting, e-procurement, e-R&D and e-production); for the e-strategy, there is e-planning, e-management for all area of the tourism not excepting transport, travel, hospitality, leisure, intermediaries sector and public sector organisations and principals. There are three different disciplines in e-tourism: tourism, business management and information systems and management. (Buhalis & Hyun Jun, 2011)

4.1.4 Definition of advertising

Advertising is a few elements which will make a difference between the expertise area and others types of area, like functional one. Every communication innovation is useful for advertising and it is also considered that they probably made changes in the advertising process (Richards & Curran, 2002). Advertising is a communication technique with a goal to change the consumer’s behaviour regarding the product or service. We can say that advertising wants to “attract” consumers to the offer (Lehu, 2004).

4.1.5 Definition of online advertising

Online advertising is few advertising communications made on the Web. There are in general two big families of actions: “Display” advertising which is the insertion of messages, banners, buttons, or advertising communication which is video on the Web site; and the “search” advertising which is a few hyperlinks towards the advertiser, and which will be proposed to the internet user during requests on a search site. Online advertising is also Internet advertising with a goal to conduct the customers to the company’s Website or location, or to make a request regarding the company’s offer (Lehu, 2004).
4.2 Development and of online advertising

“Advertising may be described as the science of arresting the human intelligence long enough to get money from it” (Stephen Butler Leacock, 1982).

4.2.1 Definition of online advertising over time

Online advertising is very recent; this concept exists since less than two decades. The first advertising was realised by Modem Media agency and was set the 27th of October 1994 for the AT&T campaign; it was published on the Web site HotWired.com. Since that day, every year there is new software thrown on the market to increase the online advertising efficiency and popularity (IAB.France, La publicité en ligne: une histoire récente, 2010). Today, the question is not anymore if Internet is a media, but how companies manage to integrate it in their communication plans/campaign. In November 2006 (one month), the time spent on Internet by users at home or at work was more than 24 hours. “In a period where the multiplication of points of contact scans the boundaries between strategies media and non-media, the Internet has become indispensable French advertising landscape medium.” (IAB.France, La publicité Intéractive, 2010). Recently, some researches about media showed that today’s marketers find it really difficult to deliver messages through common, traditional media. They also underline the need for the marketing industry to innovate often a quick strategy, when the older one is not “in” anymore (Karniouchina, Uslay & Erenburg, 2011).

Today, it is very important for companies’ persons to attract their target across valuable communications and promotions. The use of the World Wide Web has completely changed the business sector rules. Customer’s preferences and customized products and services have increased the importance of Internet advertising. Internet advertising is supposed to survive and grow if it is focused on future valuable values. If Internet advertising is strongly attractive, informative and valuable, the company’s objectives will be achieved properly. The basic problem of Valuable Internet Advertising and Customer Satisfaction Cycle is to understand and inform the client about the product which helps to keep in mind the business image, there is client’s satisfaction and coming after, the loyalty (Awais, Samin & Bilal, 2012).

4.2.2 Online advertising - development and promises

These last few years are a certification that Internet development is an important factor in people’s lifestyle. Internet advertising also has the same strong development, especially since online marketer’s advertising budgets are strongly growing (Tavor, 2011). The very fast
growth of Internet and the massive flow of information through the Internet have completely changed the business of advertising. It is actually difficult to be on the Web without having online advertising, they are often present via visual display ads on Web sites (it includes pop-downs and pop-ups) plus textual ads via search sites. Companies are using online advertising to reach one or more of their several goals: persuade, inform or remind the consumer, build brand awareness or brand loyalty. If online advertising is successful, it can lead to the growing up of the sales and/or the decreasing of the consumers’ demand price elasticity for the “advertised product”. Surely, it will also increase the profits and revenues (Ratliff & Rubinfeld, 2010). “Online advertising” is a significant source of money for “web-based business” since its creation ($34 billion of turnover), it increased significantly e-commerce economy (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2008). Companies will use online advertising to attract consumers to their Web site where they can have a look for services/goods and purchase just with one click. Online advertising is a “gale of creative destruction” (regarding Schumpeter words, 1942) affecting many advertising and media fields (especially newspapers) (Evans, 2009). Online advertising has to be different regarding the targeted country (Brettel & Spilker-Attig, 2010). Digital tools like online videos and banners are actually much more cost-efficient than other traditional media, with sometimes by a factor of five. To be competitive, a lot of companies will need to perform a wide range of new behaviours and skills. On the long run, advertisers will have to learn how to use efficiently the new digital formats (Grosso, Shenkan & Sichel, 2006). “There is still a lot more to learn, but there truly is enough of a track record and research available to posit certain rules of thumb for Web advertising strategies, including: 1. keeping it fresh, 2. hitting the target, and 3. creative sponsorships” (Gotham, 2002). “The online advertising sector is making processes at such a rate that there is no time to sit on their laurels. They need to push forward with new formats that tie in with how users want to experience content” (Booth, 2006). During the 60’s and 70’s, around twenty different theoretical models of how to build the best advertising regarding the consumers’ behaviour (hierarchy effect) were in competitiveness (Barry & Howard, 1990). The Elaboration Likelihood Model, which is based on empirical researches and analyses, shows that the role of personality will be the main factor of advertising effectiveness. Companies have to understand their target and behave perfectly to be as efficient as possible (Georget, 2004).

4.2.3 Main factors influencing online advertising and development

Mix of marketing is really influenced by the new way of advertising for all kind of companies. “Netvertising”, the new term for online advertising, will really influence the marketing
strategies of the entity. Traditional media (TV, newspapers, etc) are still used by the marketers, but online advertising is used more and more to promote goods or services, the company, or the company’s image. The target is not only the young segment (young Internet users) (Boitor, Bratucu, Boscor & Talpau, 2011). Online advertising is a new form of communication and provides a high level of interactivity between the marketers or advertisers and consumers. Some researches provide the proof that a good management of advertising will strongly increase and improve the conative, cognitive and affective degree of consumer’s behaviour (Liu & Ma, 2010). Researches show that the credibility of online advertising will be highly linked to the rate given by the consumers regarding the offer confidence (Greer, 2009).

Online advertising will be strongly influenced by the format and the way it delivers the products’ or services’ information to the consumers (Evans, 2009). The online advertising keeps on increasing, especially regarding the advertising market. The consumers’ confidence regarding online advertising is an important factor of marketing strategies in particular for companies which are using it. Some research findings show up that most of consumers agree with the fact that companies which use online advertising are more oriented towards a young, innovative, high tech, competitive and trendy market; these companies are also more “customer oriented compared to companies which are not using it”. There is a significant importance of online ads clicking frequencies numbers by consumers, regarding beliefs about companies using online advertising (Meltem, V Aslihan & Selcuk, 2011). Online advertising and market outcomes are strongly influenced by the fact that if consumers have access to “advertising-avoidance tools” or not. Companies usually try to target the consumers as good as they can, but literally, consumers do not need advertising. There is also the fact that consumers will avoid advertising because they are too present on Internet. This is one reason of why companies should target consumers regarding their needs, or find a “niche advertising” in the mass-market advertising (Johnson, 2013)

4.2.4 Why online advertising is needed

Thousands of commercials try to attract every day the costumer’s attention. In addition to that, there are also lots of posters, magazines and radio advertising. This long-lasting and pushing targeting has a reason: it is getting more and more difficult to reach costumers (Bolten, 2012).

If a company is not present on the internet, it is certain that it will lose clients and that it will not develop. Even if the classical and trusted methods have proofed value, they only reach a limited number of people. These classical methods are also more cost-efficient and lots of
companies, especially small ones, do not always have enough budget to spend (Web Wide). Besides, when nowadays a potential customer is looking for something, for example an address for the next shop, opening times, prices or offers, he is going on the internet to search through a search engine. Therefore is online advertising very efficient and not comparable to other methods (Web Wide).

In 2012, according to the Internet World Stats, more than 2 billion people worldwide used the internet; this means 34.3% of the whole population. In Europe there are more than 5 Million people which represent 63.2% of the population. This thesis focuses on three countries: In France, 79.6% of the population used internet in 2012; in the United Kingdom it was 83.6% of the population and finally, in Belgium the percentage of the population using internet was 81.3% (Internet World Stats, 2012).

4.2.5 Opportunities for companies

Online-marketing is a good strategy for companies due to the fact that with online-advertising, the company can reach lots of people or specified groups (Kleindl & Theobald, 2000). Moreover, this kind of advertising is flexible; it can easily be adapted and updated regarding the customers’ demand (Bender, 2008).

Online-advertising is also a good way to measure the company’s clients; each costumer which clicks on the advertising will be counted. With this, the company gets an immediate feedback which shows how efficient the advertising is. With so-called “targeting criteria”, the company can decide where and to whom the advertising shall be showed. For instance, a company can determine if only women or men, or a specific age class should be attracted (Spion-media).

The customer’s purchase behaviour is occasionally impulsive. In the past, when a customer noticed an advertising in magazines, newspapers or television, he/she had to go physically to the next travel agency in order to book the holidays. So before making the effort to go there, the customer thought it through and probably decided not to go anymore. Nowadays, with online-advertising, the customer can immediately go to the company’s website and the chance of an impulsive purchase is bigger (Wu, Wei & Chen, 2008).

Another point is that putting advertising online is less expensive than all other methods (Spion-media). Advertising on paper media are seen by lots of people but there are also lots of people who throw them away the next moment. Moreover, some of these people do not belong to the company’s target group but the company pays its advertising also for them; this
means high wastages because the company pays for the advertisement even if it is not noticed. For online-advertising it is not the same: the company pays only when the customer clicks on it, when the message drew the customer’s interest. In addition to that, compared to other forms of advertising, online-advertising has a long-lasting effect. For instance, a company pays once for an advertising in the newspaper which will appear during one day; and on the other hand, an online-advertising can be placed flexible over a long period and like this, the company achieves a continuous demand (*Web Wide*).

However, internet has still a bad image towards lots of people because most of the time, only the negative aspects are part of the headlines (*Spion-media*). Security issues, a lack of confidence in technology use are also some factors that made the consumer avoiding to book online (*Mayr & Zins, 2012*).

### 4.2.6 Opportunities for consumers

When customers search online for holiday offers, they have a rich destination of information and a wider range of choices. Moreover, it is more convenient, there are lower prices, and the customer has more control and access 24/7 to the information. The internet enables the costumer to compare himself different offers and prices, and thus, he can choose the one who suits the best to its demand. In addition to that, booking online avoids that the customer is influenced by the traditional travel agent (*Mayr & Zins, 2012*) and he can also communicate directly with the travel agency or even with other customers at any time and any place (*Law, Leun & Wong, 2004*).

Travel agencies use individual marketing which means that they target the individual consumer with its individual needs and wishes. With these “targeting-criteria”, where specific offers are sent to one consumer, the companies can build long-lasting relationships with its customers. Thus, the customer sees that its demands are considered and may feel pleased (*Hildebrand, 2000*).

### 4.2.7 How companies develop online advertising

The content of advertising is a key success factor in online-advertising. If the content is relevant to the customer’s beliefs, attitudes and values, the effect of the advertising will increase. The content of these advertising includes web interface, background colours, pictures, text, dynamic techniques and sometimes even sound effects. Consumer recall advertising more often if these advertising display images as well as text. If the designs are
too complicated, it has negative effects on the consumer’s perception of the advertising or
brand and a consequence, it decreases the purchasing results generated by the online travel
agency. So advertisements which produce a positive emotional effect are more likely to
provide a positive of the consumer’s perception of the brand and the offered product. Online
travel-agencies should therefore pay attention to the content of their advertising because it
contributes highly to the results. The advertising should engage and entertain the customers so
that they are more likely to be clicked.

Travellers form values and may change their destination habits based on the message sent;
messages which can help them influence positively the willingness of the consumer to make a
purchase (Wu, Wei & Chen, 2008).

To be successful in online-marketing, it is also essential to establish a good web presentation
as well as to control and analyse the website traffic and then to improve continuously based
on regular monitoring. Due to the fact that the World Wide Web is a huge space and that there
are various websites of travel agencies, the search engines such as Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.
have taken the key role in the use of Internet as they are based on typing keywords to find a
suitable and relevant websites. The search engines are also the most common starting point
when working with the web; so it is important for travel agencies to be placed in the first
positions in the search engines. However, the exact method of arranging sites in the search
engine is not officially known, but there exists “important factors which enhance the position:

1. The presence of keywords in the external links to web page;
2. Quality vs. quantity of external links;
3. Diversity of external links;
4. The presence of keywords in the title page;
5. The credibility of the domain based on the calculation of the range from the most trusted
domains (eg, Wikipedia.org, CNN.com, Facebook.com, etc.).”

Another method of online-advertising is the social networks such as Facebook, MySpace, etc.
Social networks are built around people and relationships between them; hence, creating a
travel agency page on Facebook, Twitter, etc. and posting promotions is mostly not enough. It
is important to “act as a real person” and to be involved in conversations in the same was as
normal people do. Such simple interaction has a positive effect on the perception of the travel
agency. A correct approach to the conversation will make other parties having a positive
attitude towards the travel agency. If the travel agency needs to share some new information about them, the people on the social media will help to spread the information (Volek, 2011).

4.2.8 Influence of online advertising on the tourism market

The travel industry is probably one of the industries which have seen the most dramatic changes through the internet. In June 2010, according to the Global Trends in Online Shopping report, one out of four internet users worldwide intended to book holidays online. Indeed, according to another study released by PricewaterhouseCoopers, the World Wide Web is a primary source of information for 65% of European internet users in order to prepare their travel (Labbé, 2011).

Modern travellers demand nowadays more high quality travel services, products, information, and value for their money. The internet serves as a new communication and distribution channel for online buyers and travel agencies. It also enables the companies to improve their competitiveness and performance. However, as a consequence of the development, the competition has increased and the online travel agencies are more independent of physical travel agencies (Law, Leung & Wong, 2004).

However, travellers still rely on traditional travel agents. The main reasons for their loyalty are the high value of face-to-face contact, personal and competent advices, and avoiding time spent for searching. Travel agencies must therefore try to understand better which factors affect a traveller’s preference of online and traditional travel agents in order to improve their service standards (Mayr & Zins, 2012).

5 Empirical Study

In the framework of this thesis, we carried out a case study in order to understand better the consumers’ behaviour regarding online advertising and their holiday habits. This research were carried out via internet, especially through the social network Facebook, and we also sent e-mails and put the questionnaire on forums; this method allowed us to reach as much people as possible.

In this part the results from this survey are going to be shown and explained.
5.1 Questions about the consumer’s identity:

To begin the analysis, we first look at the last questions concerning the consumers’ identity in order to show the different characteristic of the interviewees. In our survey we put these questions at the end due to the fact that consumers might feel uncomfortable if the questions start with private questions.

19. Your age

From the 252 people interrogated, 72% are between 18 and 25 years old, 15% between 25 and 35 years old, 11% between 35 and 60 years old, and 2% are 60 and +.

20. Your gender

On this graph we can see that 63% of the respondents are women and 37% are men.
From the people who replied the survey, 33% are from France, 32% ware from Belgium, 14% are from the United Kingdom/ Ireland, and 21% are from other countries.

It can clearly be seen that the most people who answered the questions live in a city, i.e. 56%. The people from the countryside represent here 44%.

This graph shows that from the 252 people who have been interrogated, 59% of them are single and 41% in couple.
24. Do you have children?

With 85%, the majority of the respondents has no children. 8% of the sample have children still living at home, and 7% of these people have children who don’t live at home anymore.

25. Your employment status

Most of the responses collected for this survey are from students, i.e. 67%; then, with 28% on the second position are employees; 2% are non-employees or others, and 1% are retired people.

5.2 Questions about vacation habits:

This part of the survey was dedicated to find out the consumers’ vacation habits and how they organise their holidays. With these questions we can for example suggest at which time of the year an online agency should especially focus its target.
From the 252 people interviewed, we can observe that most of them are going on holidays around twice a year. This graph also shows that 32% of the people interviewed are going away only once a year, followed by people who are going 4 times and more per year (19%), and 3 times (11%) per year.

**2. How far do you go on holiday?**

The majority of the 252 people we asked, i.e. 49%, stays for their holidays on the continent but leaves their own country. 27% of these people stay in their home country, and 24% of them leave the continent to travel further.
Most of the people will spend between 500€ and 1000€ for their holidays (41%); then, the graph shows that 27% of the 252 people interviewed will spend between 250€ and 500€; 21% will allow between 1000€ and 2000€, and at the last position stays the bigger budget (between 2000€ and plus) which represents 11%.

On this graph we can clearly see that with 41%, the majority goes on holiday during the summer time. During the winter time, there are only 10% who go on holiday. 26% of the respondents go on holiday during school holidays and only 5% go during bank holidays. Finally, 17% of the people we asked go on holiday whenever they want.
5. In which kind of holidays do you usually

At the first position, the graph shows that most of the people we interviewed are going on summer holidays (43%). At the second position, 24% are going on city trips (weekend in London or Paris for example) followed by city excursion (= visiting the country) with 12%. Winter holidays (skiing holidays) are at the same position as city excursion with 12%. With only 4% of the 252 people interviewed, cruise holidays don’t really have success. The rest of these people, i.e. 4%, are going on “other” types of holidays.

6. How do you plan your holidays?

73% of the people going on holidays prepare them by themselves. Physical agencies and online agencies have the same percentage with 13% of the responses. Only 1% of the people prepares their holidays in a different way then proposed.
Most of the interviewed people are going on holidays with their friends (51%), then with their family (21%), with their partner (17% only). The lowest percentages are for people going on holidays with “Other” for 6%, or Alone for 5% of the 252 person interviews. This question is difficult to analyse as people can go on holidays with friends and also with the family.

5.3 Questions about advertising:

This part was dedicated to figure out the consumer’s view regarding online advertising. These questions as well as the ones in the next part are the most important as they are directly related to this thesis’ subject.

8. Do you like online advertising?

On this graph you can clearly see that the most people don’t like online advertising. However, with 33%, the most people are neutral, and only 3% to 18% like and appreciate them.
This graph shows clearly that from the 252 responses of the survey, 48% of the persons receive advertising to help them to organise their holidays, and 52% doesn’t receive advertising to help them to organise their holidays.

### 10. Do you usually look at online advertising?

From 252 answers, we can say that 41% look at online advertising and 59% don’t look at them. Even if the majority doesn’t like online advertising, almost half of these people look at it, whether just for curiosity or to seriously book holidays.
11. Do you plan your holidays because of

This graph shows that most of the 252 people interrogated don’t organize their holidays because of online advertising (46%) and only 1% to 5% will.

12. Are you confident with the holidays online advertising?

Here we can see that most of the people are not confident with the holiday’s online advertising, i.e. 52%. Only 11% are confident with them, and 37% are neutral concerning this topic. Compared to the question number 8, we can see that the numbers are similar; the people who don’t like online advertising are usually at the same time not confident with them.
13. Does the online advertising have influence on your holidays plans?

This graph shows on a scale from 1 (Absolutely not) to 5 (Absolutely yes) how much the people we interrogated will be influenced by advertising in order to organize their holidays. On the first position, 34% will absolutely not be influenced, and only 1% will absolutely be influenced.

14. Do you think that the proposed online advertising of holidays is adapted to your holiday type?

From 252 answers, 49% don’t think that the proposed online advertising matches with their holiday type. 16% think that it it like this, and 35% are neutral.
5.4 Questions about companies offer perceptions

The last part of this survey was made to examine the consumers’ perception regarding offers of companies.

15. Where do you usually see online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social network</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailbox</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel agency…</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop-ups</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clearly shown from this graph that most of the online advertising are found on Social network with 32%, then at the same position people can find it on the Travel agency website when they want to book something, or in their Mailbox with 24% of them. 18% get online advertising through Pop-ups and only 2% with “Other” methods.

16. Do you pay attention to the design of holiday's online advertising?

At this question, 52% answered with yes, i.e. that these people pay attention to the design of the holiday’s online advertising. 48% of the respondents said no. Here, the opinions are almost 50:50.
30% of the people interrogated will rate “3” to the influence of the holidays advertising on their interest, 28% will rate with a “4”, 19% with a “2”, 15% with only “1”, and 8% with a “5”.

On this graph we can clearly see that the majority, i.e. 68%, doesn’t trust online advertising, and 32% of the interviewees do.

6 Discussion of the empirical data

What is the impact of online advertising in tourism sector?

This part is going to discuss the role of online advertising in the tourism sector and the hypothesis related to it.
6.1 Why online advertising is needed?

6.1.1 The democratisation of Internet used

In September 2011, Internet had around 373.4 million of unique visits for around 26.4 hours per person. 30% of Internet end user in Europe looks for online information related to their job with Russia at the first position followed by Germany (ComScore, Azevedo, 2011). Around 50% of European people will look online for web newspapers which is around 379.4 millions of end users connected for around 27.8 hours per person in November 2011 (ComScore, Azevedo, 2011).

In France in 2011, two household out of three disposed of Internet at home. In 10 years of time, the percentage of household with access to Internet increased from 12% to 64% (INSEE, Raymond, 2011). In France the use of Internet will be different regarding the age, for example the generation Y (the people born between 1981 and 1995) will use Internet more for Social Network use (83%), Online Video (80%), Instant messages (66%), Online listening music (65%), and the generation X (the baby-boomer) will be interested by government websites, financial information, and both generation will use Internet for Email, health researches, actuality, online shopping, online holiday bookings, etc (Pouget, 2010).

In 2012, around 80% of the United Kingdom had access to Internet compared to 77% in 2011. In 2012, 67% of the population in the United Kingdom used a computer every day (Office For National Statistics, 2012).

Schema number 1: Internet access in UK, 2012.
The access of Internet at home will be different regarding two criteria: the age and the socio-economic group. The 15 to 54 years old people will be the main users of Internet with a peak of 85% for the 35-54 years old. There are 69% of the 55 to 64 years old people who has access to Internet, the 65 to 74 years old are 51% and 75+ only 23%. 75% of the men have access at home against 72% for women (Communication Market Reports, 2010).

In 2011, 77% of householders in Belgium had access to Internet. Most of the Belgian end users will use Internet every day (79%), minimum one time per week (95%) and to look for information (88%). The population between 16 and 74 years old, in 2011, 95% used Internet for communication (e-mail, social network, etc), 88% for online information researches, 67% for online banking services and 31% to order goods or services through Internet.

All the information shown up before are a proof that nearly everybody is using Internet, for leisure, work, etc, and now with the smartphone there are more and more people connected around the world.

Schema number 2: Person who use Internet on average around once a week, by group, gender and level of formal education in Europe, 2011.

6.1.2 The presence of companies on Internet

“Not long time ago, I read a comment of a well-known industry observer, where he stated that companies that are not selling through Internet by 2007 will probably become extinct. As dramatic as it might feel, although exaggerated, but there are some truths in it.” (Salem & Oregon, 2009)

As it is shown in the previous part, it is important today that companies are present on Internet because of a high presence of end users on the network. Internet has opened a new economy,
which is growing up every day and already changed the perception of traditional organization of doing business. There is some entity like Amazon.com or Ebay.com which has a worldwide recognition just through Internet. Internet is not only for big businesses but also for smaller companies because of an easy access everywhere. As already mentioned, being on Internet is important because consumers have access to it from everywhere with just one click. It is also important for a brand image, because today all companies are on Internet; so not being on the network can look like it is “old- fashioned”. Companies who are on Internet can provide a better customer support or after sales; it is faster for consumers to make contact and explain their problem in order to get solutions through Internet than going in a shop for example. It is the same situation if the customer want information about the product; he just has to go online and get what he needs to know, and it is much faster. Better customer satisfaction mean customer loyalty and increases of the profitability. Being on Internet provides to companies the fact of being present all around the world and making business 24/7; this increases the potential customers, the turnover and the internationalization possibility of the entity (Salem & Oregon, 2009).

*Schema number 3: 8 reasons of why companies need to be online.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Most of the traffic and customers are now online (as it is shown in the previous part).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The business marketing costs go way down online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This gives your business needed credibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Better customer service can be delivered on the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It can dramatically increase the affiliate income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The business can easily use automation and technology online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It became free to work from anywhere in the virtual world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. It is easier to make money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today most of the people go first online before doing their business and in some case they don’t open any shop at all; Internet will provide enough possibilities (Hamilton, 2012).

It actually becomes more difficult for the traditional travel agencies to be competitive with the web sites who provide online booking possibilities. One of the most important reasons is because of the people who are booking online. This reason is linked to the online experience with the 3D which provides the opportunity of a high quality visualisation of the travel
destinations. Customers, or potential customers, have the opportunity to get an interactive tour or interactive on-demand video, to visualise perfectly their destinations and this without interference from others customers present in a shop, it is personal (Daugherty, 2005). “The broad availability of broadband Internet access supports this trend” (Bogdanovych & Berger, 2006).

6.1.3 «Can we have a look of the hotel’s price online?»

In the survey conducted, with the question “How do you plan your holidays” it is shown that people use Internet to do it.

Schema number 4: “How do you plan your holidays”

![Pie chart showing distribution of holiday planning methods]

It is considered that people who said “we organize our holidays alone” will use Internet to look at the prices of hotels, flights or train tickets, etc (Bogdanovych & Berger, 2006). So at least the hypothesis seems to be true as around 80% of the 252 person we interviewed are using Internet to organize their holidays themselves.

As it is said previously, the fact of having the perfect visualisation of the destinations and products through Internet, will strongly increase the potential of online booking or just looking for information (Bogdanovych & Berger, 2006). Customer has the appreciation of saying that the composition of deals of physical agencies is now not satisfactory enough and can be better online (Klein, 1999).

87% of 132 people from 25 different countries interviewed think that online booking are more convenient (Bogdanovych & Berger, 2006). 91% of French people will have a look online before booking their holidays (Office national du tourism de Madagascar, 2013).
6.2 The main players in Online travel booking

6.2.1 Who runs the online travel organization on Internet?

*Most of the turnover of TripAdvisor comes from the advertising, but the website stored $32.7 million for professional advertising and transactions. (ARTIREF, WebMarketing Hôtelier, 2013).*
The online booking industry is a sector which generates every year some billions of euros. Few companies and intermediates will provide to groups and travel agencies the opportunity of technology suppliers of reservations and public organism and special services (Bacchus & Molina, 2011). Few websites are making the role of intermediate and will propose the best offer from travel agencies as Lastminute.com or Opodo. The agency or retailer wholesalers are in general part of Internet travel groups, Opodo is part of Amadeus Group, TripAdvisor is part of the Expedia group, Holiday Check is part of the focus AG Group, and Lastminute.com is part of Sabre Holding Group. The entity will not be a direct supplier of goods, services or offers, but will instead facilitate the provision of travel services from suppliers to customers. The online booking for online travel agents, airlines, car rental services and hotel services shows 51.5 billion of visits in 2013 (Gaffney, 2013). There are different categories of analysis regarding online bookings, such as car rental, travel agencies, hotels, airlines. As it is shown, travel agencies are one proper category which means there is two different ways of booking holidays: travel agencies like Thomas Cook, TUI Travel, etc; or retailers who propose different options related to holiday organizations like Opodo, TripAdvisor etc. Retailers or wholesalers also provide offers from travel agencies. “In a general point of view, high street travel agents become extinct because of people choosing to book their holidays online because of research suggestions. Figures show that seven people out of ten who took a holiday in the last year, booked entirely online. The study by analyst Mintel found that less than one customer out of ten now believes that travel agents are better informed about holiday destinations than professional bloggers or review websites, such as TripAdvisor.” (Stevens, 2012).

In our survey, most of the responses to the question about through which website the people are booking their holidays were retailers: Voyage privé, Eurolines, Ryanair, Premier Inn, Voyageprive.com, Booking.com, Holidaycheck, Lastminute, Odeon tours, TripAdvisor.

6.2.2 How do tour operators work?

There is an International Federation of tour operator IFTO (UNEP, 2002) which takes an inventory of traveling companies. There are 5,000 tour operators in Europe and 4,995 of them are small and middle-size entreprises (SME), which means that they employ between 5 and 100 persons permanently. There are only 5 important, large companies which are integrated. Among others, tour operators which are integrated will own hotel chains, travel agencies, airlines, cruise ships and ground operators (Granier, 2004).
Schema number 8: The tour operator’s position.

(UNEP-TIE; The tour operators’ supplement to the GRI 2002 sustainability report guideline, Brussels, 22 September 2003).

- **The package tour:**

  The package tour will be designed by Tour operators; it is an arrangement and a combination of minimum two of the following components: the transport, the accommodation, others tourist services (sports, spa, etc). Packaging proposed by tour operators are under very specific law for consumer’s right and safety “The British Statutory Instrument N° 3288 is backed on the European Council Directive 90/314/EEC of 13 June 1990 (EU, 1990)”.

- **The Wholesalers:**

  The wholesalers are companies which have the capacity to sum components of holidays in order of purchasable packaging offers. The advantages of wholesalers are: they have the capacity to buy a massive amount of rooms or beds in a hotel, house, etc, but also aircraft sear who provide an economy of scale which hold the attention, and the opportunity to make very interesting offers with low prices. These packaging are generally present for all type of holidays and destinations. The offers are generally variable during the seasons and usually correspond to two periods of the year (autumn) – winter and (spring) – summer (Holloway, 2002). Regarding political, safety and geography situations, sometimes wholesalers or travel
agencies have to propose their offers through “an intermediarization” and distribution channels, because the package are not sold directly to customers (Holloway, 2002).

- Wholesalers/ retailers.

There are tour operators who are also retailers of their own goods, services. This opportunity is linked to the fact that they have the capacity of selling their own products in “high street outlets” or directly on the Internet, for instance. Some tour operators also own their own network of travel agencies and will sell only their packaging. With the democratisation of Internet, few tour operators try to get online reservation opportunities added of their high street retail agencies, or they also can be exclusively on Internet (Shaw & Williams, 2002). This type of channel distribution deals with important groups. They are able to manage and integrate their own distribution channels (Granier, 2004).

6.3 The consumer perception of online offers

6.3.1 The perception of online offers

The perception of online offers from customers is not really good. According to the survey conducted, from 252 persons interviewed, 12% will organise their holidays through an online agency against 13% through a physical agency. This shows up that people keep on appreciating a physical agency. According to Bogdanovych & Berger (2005), most of the customers prefer booking their holidays with a physical agency when it is an international one and online when it is a domestic one. The human expertise is an important factor and convenience for customers, which it is not online (Stewart, 2005). The key for a good customer experience also comes from a social interaction with a travel agent (Prasarnphanich & Gillenson, 2003). The travel agent will satisfy faster and better the impulsive buyer (Armata, 1996). The collaboration during a booking experience is an important criteria (Brown & Chalmers, 2003). The security, safety and trust will be higher through a human than online (Stewart, 2005). The detailed information about the trip will be very important to the customers (Chu, 2001); but also the way package deals are now can be better online (Klein, 1999).

According the fact that consumers are not completely confident with online advertising, it sounds logical to think that they will not be confident with online offers. This is shown with the survey question “Are you confident with holidays online advertising”; on a scale from 1(absolutely not) to 5 (absolutely yes) 36% of the 252 responses rated with a 3, 28% with a 2
and 26% with a 1 against 0% for 5. Generally, when a customer book holidays online, he will first look at the opinion of previous customer experiences. In France, people are less and less confident with online bookings; they think that it is in the tourism sector where consumer opinions are the least secure according the Testntrust 2013. On 1048 French people interrogated, 25% of them think that the online opinion comes from hotels, restaurants, etc. In 2010, 89% was thinking that online opinion was reliable, against 76% in 2013 (RelaxNews, 2013). Consumers cannot specially be confident but booking online holidays also has some advantages

**Schema number 8: The reasons of online booking.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More simple</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy comparison of offers</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel organisation</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct purchasing if interest</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheaper</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More choice</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Office National du Tourism Madagascar, 2013)

The reason of online offers from travel agencies or tour operators also comes from the evolution of the technologies and as it is shown in a previous chapter, companies have to be online and have to propose online services to face the competitiveness. Internet is like a new operator which changes the classic way of doing and provides new product conceptions (packages à la carte, product coproduction) and economic models (price, promotion role) (Bauer, Canivet & Behnke, 2010). The proliferation of offers scares the consumers.

6.3.2 The perception of online advertising

In the survey conducted during this research thesis, few questions were related to the perception of online advertising. Firstly, there is: “Do you like online advertising?”; on a scale from 1 (I strongly dislike it) to 5 (I strongly like it), most of the respondents are quiet neutral and will rate with a 3 for 31% of the 252 persons interrogated. Then there is the question “Do you usually look at online advertising?” and 61% said “no” against 39% who said “yes”. The question “Do you plan your holidays because of online advertising?” can help to understand if
consumers are receptive or not regarding the advertising; on a scale from 1 (absolutely not) to 5 (absolutely yes), 48% of the 252 persons interrogated rate with a 1, 29% with a 2 against only 1% with a 5. Another similar question can letting us know if consumers are receptive or not to holiday’s online advertising: “Does the online advertising influence on your holiday plans?” On a scale from 1 (absolutely not) to 5 (absolutely yes), 37% rate with a 1, but also 27% with a 3, which means that they are neutral. The reason of this neutrality or disinterest about holiday online advertising can be partly explained with the following question: “Are you confident with the holiday’s online advertising?”. On a scale from 1 (absolutely not) to 5 (absolutely yes), 36% rate with a 3 (which show the suspicion), and 0% with a 5 which shows that nobody is absolutely confident with online advertising. 70% explain clearly that they don’t trust online advertising against 30% who said yes. The disinterest regarding online advertising about holidays, according to the survey, can also be linked to the fact that on a scale from 1 to 5, 34% of the 252 people we interrogated think that the online advertising received are not adapted to their interest.

**Schema number 9: How much do you trust the next advertising forms?**

---

In 2011, Internet was the second place of investment for advertising with around €1,882 million *(Advertising Expenditure Forecasts, 2009)*. The online advertising is present everywhere on the Internet. According to the survey, 31% of the 252 people interrogated will firstly find the advertising on Social Networks, then 26% in their Mailbox, 24% on the Travel agency website and only 17% through pop-ups. Consumers find advertising in those places where he is surfing the most which can explain the fact of not being really interested in it. Even the survey’s question which asked: “Do you pay attention to the design of holiday’s online advertising?”; 51% said “no” and 49% said “yes”. Another question is “The design of holiday’s advertising influences the interest?”; on a scale from 1 (absolutely not) to 5 (absolutely yes), 48% of the 252 persons interrogated rate with a 1, 29% with a 2 against only 1% with a 5. Another similar question can letting us know if consumers are receptive or not to holiday’s online advertising: “Does the online advertising influence on your holiday plans?” On a scale from 1 (absolutely not) to 5 (absolutely yes), 37% rate with a 1, but also 27% with a 3, which means that they are neutral. The reason of this neutrality or disinterest about holiday online advertising can be partly explained with the following question: “Are you confident with the holiday’s online advertising?”. On a scale from 1 (absolutely not) to 5 (absolutely yes), 36% rate with a 3 (which show the suspicion), and 0% with a 5 which shows that nobody is absolutely confident with online advertising. 70% explain clearly that they don’t trust online advertising against 30% who said yes. The disinterest regarding online advertising about holidays, according to the survey, can also be linked to the fact that on a scale from 1 to 5, 34% of the 252 people we interrogated think that the online advertising received are not adapted to their interest.
(absolutely yes), 29% rated with a 3 and 27% with a 4. The fact is that the consumer is exposing to a lot of online advertising or advertising in general, so the impact is that he doesn’t really care and doesn’t feel confident, because of the “too much”. As the last survey’s question shows, nice advertising can influence the interest.

Schema number 10: How do you appreciate online advertising in France?

6.3.3 Consumers’ trust in online advertising and offers
As it is explained previously, consumers don’t feel safe regarding holiday online offers or advertising. This is why it shown up in the survey that consumers still appreciate physical travel agencies. Consumers think about the fact that booking online is generally not secure. They doesn’t trust online vendors neither. The trust issue comes just from booking with a computer for some persons, and others because they think that online travel agents will push them toward more expensive deals. Analyses showed up that trust and safety will be higher towards human to human than human to computers. However, it also takes in consideration that the security systems through computers keeps on increasing (Bogdanovych & Berger, 2005). As it is shown in the previous schema number 9, the trust in advertising will be related to where it is found, also on Internet. “The British Statutory Instrument N° 3288 is backed on the European Council Directive 90/314/EEC of 13 June 1990 (EU, 1990). Every European country has formulated a law that adopts the regulations made at European level to harmonize the use of terminology and enhance consumers’ rights and protection” (Granier, 2004).

6.3.4 Some ideas for a better interest
One of the main issues regarding the tourism industry is the environmental question. The fact of building hotels on preserved sites doesn’t show a very good image from the tour operator. Some researches showed that, to get a better interest from the consumer, tour operators and travel agencies have to play an “anti-consumption game”. Actually, it is very famous to eat
organic, buy organic and look after the environment, and proliferations of online advertising or just advertising give an image of “Consumption society and unhealthy”. So tour operators will have to anticipate the demand on ecology, health, money, etc and propose online advertising more based on the actual “thinking of the society”. They have to think ecological and social. Tour operators also have to propose more holidays with “thematic” like environmental ones, spa, sports etc, and not just the classic family, couple, honey moon. It will be easier for consumers to know what he is interested in and faster to choose. The experimental marketing also has to be developed, more videos and 3D in order to give a better idea of the product and destinations (Bauer, Canivet & Behnke, 2010).

6.4 The consumer perception of online companies

6.4.1 The design

The design of a website is one of the key successes for online travel agencies or tour operators. The atmosphere created through the online advertising of offers or websites will put the consumers in the mood to continue or to leave it. According to Kotler (1973), the development of a virtual environment with a goal to create positive effects, on the cognitive or emotional criteria, on the internet end user consumer, in order to create at least a good response regarding the website (come back or spend time on the website). Recreate the shop atmosphere towards a website in order to increases online purchasing is also a challenge for the tour operators. The consumer has to be able to position himself on the website, it should be easy to use the website (Gonzalez, 2005). Then comes the colour criteria; it can be the text, the home page, the animations etc.; all the present colours are very important regarding the consumer’s confidence. The third main standards will be images, photos, illustrations, videos, etc, present on the websites. To go deeper about the atmosphere analysis, having a virtual agent can increase the potential sales, the offer accessibilities (if it is easy to find or not), the discussion forums and other services, the writing type and sound factor like music, etc (Lemoine, 2008). As it is shown in the survey, 49% of the people asked will pay attention to the design of the online advertising and 27% rated with a 4 (5 absolutely yes); the design of online advertising can influence their choice. Researches showed that the design of stores will impact strangely the emotion and attitude toward a website, and can influence positively the purchase intention (Lee, Fu & Wang, 2013)
6.4.2 Price importance

With the actual economic crises, people are more careful with their budget and one of the first things deleted for economic reasons is the holidays. Consumers have to adapt their budget to the actual economic situation; so habits will change: more holidays in the family, shorter time away, less people are going, less purchases of annexes things, development of all inclusive packages, development on “low-cost” products, a lot off last minute reservations, price comparisons, development of online purchasing, intermediate use (ex: TripAdvisor) (Bauer, Canivet & Behnke, 2010). Consumers are looking for cheap or not expensive offers with good quality. This summer only 60% of French people are going on holidays (LeParisien.fr, 2014). The price will also be a sign of trust and quality; very low prices can be suspicious and can hide a swindling. “Price also has a more significant impact on perceived quality for higher-star, luxury hotels than lower-star, economy establishments. Additionally, it has a significant influence on perceived quality for business travelers but the equivalent value for leisure travelers is not significant.” (Ye, Li & Wang, 2012). The notion of price ending will be the earth of price perception from consumers.

(Kleinsasser & Wagner, 2010).
6.4.3 Companies’ recognition importance

Numerous authors have sorted out the fact of an influence of tourism image on consumer behaviour. The tourism image will exercise an influence on the quality perceived by tourists plus the satisfaction got from holidays experiences (Bigné, M. Sanchez, J. Sanchez, 2001). As it is shown in some previous parts, consumers have trust issues regarding online offers and advertising; this is why the recognition of a brand added with good reviews will be important to their purchasing decision. In the survey, the question about which online booking website the people prefer, most of them are known and with controlled offers. In France 75% of the population is more confident and use websites with reviews to book their holidays. Around 3 travelers out of 4 will look “every time” or “often” at the reviews from previous customers experiences in order to book their holidays. There is also 57% of the population which favours booking websites where they can have a look to previous customer’s experiences. The customer’s services will be judge “important” to “very important” for 77% of the population and it can make the differences between e-tourism actors (TourMag.com, 2012). Some other main factors have been listed to make brand recognition as research assistance in the product, offers, goods and services, reviews at it is shown previously, “specific consumer challenges” find the best offer which matches need and budget, the booking process and recommendations, providing sufficient information (Moss, 2013). According to what it is said, it is shown that consumers already had trust issues regarding online offers and advertising for holidays, so choosing a tour operator with good reviews services etc, will minimize strongly the “bad surprises”. The next schema will show properly the influence of social media on brand recognition, and the influence on consumers.
The purpose of this paper has been to understand the impact of the internet on the tourism sector. In this final section of this thesis the most important findings related to this topic are going to be presented.

It has been found that the internet has an enormous impact on the tourism sector. However, this evolution is still going on. People are still not very confident with the online marketing; thus, the online travel agencies should work on attracting their targets but in a non-offensive way. Internet users don’t like to be bombarded with advertising, so these companies should better target the customers via “targeting-criteria”. As seen in our research, 49% of the persons we interrogated didn’t think that the proposed offers were adapted to their holiday type.

Thanks to the internet, online advertising is having a great influence on the tourism sector. With 13% for booking holidays via a physical travel agency against 12% for booking holidays via an online agency, we can conclude that people still prefer physical agencies as it is more secure and trustful. However, we can also say that this opinion is changing. The young generation which is the most present on the internet, is getting more and more confident with all the new technologies and new methods of advertising. In our survey, the majority of these people book their holidays by themselves which means that online agencies should keep on working together with intermediaries such as Booking.com, TripAdvisor.com, etc.
Even if online advertising is currently not very reputable, it is important for travel agencies to be present on the internet. As already mentioned, almost everyone is connected with the internet in some ways. With only a few clicks, the customer is able to have a look on so many offers at the same time. Another reason is the tough competition; with not being on the internet will enable the competitors to outperform a physical agency.

7.1 Limitations

This thesis is aimed for the Belgian, English and French tourism sector. Therefore, it is not necessary valid for the tourism in other countries, especially beyond Europe. This project applies to the tourism sector in general and we are also aware that this thesis may not be valid in a few years as the technology is constantly changing as well as the customers’ values.
8 References


Web:


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http://web.a.ebscohost.com/abstract?direct=true&profile=ehost&scope=site&authtype=crawler&jrn=1918719X&AN=87080562&h=fB%2fu8V2gdd63NqMk%2fFoftfyK9mdiHIKUjDbH9s7HQwOJubV5YXufALwAtnAv0MVX9AQwbiK4Y%2bZEDO3TQD1ZBw%3d%3d&crl=e.
9 Appendix

The behaviour of consumers regarding their holiday habits

This research is carried out by Léa Ladsous and Morgane Nelles, exchange students of the University of Halmstad in the form of a thesis. This questionnaire will help us to understand the behaviour of consumers regarding their holiday habits, but more specifically regarding their holiday habits towards Internet (e-tourism). It will also provide some information concerning the reaction from consumers regarding the holidays' online advertising. This will help us to conclude how online travel agencies use online advertising to reach their customers. Thanks a lot for taking your time regarding this market analysis. It is important that you answer the questions personally and as honest, to have the best analyses possible.

Holiday is for us all kind of travel away from home, so it will include weekend!

*Required

1. How many times a year do you go on holidays? *
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4 and +

2. How far do you go on holidays? *
   Multiple choice questions
   - Stay in the home country
   - Stay on the continents
   - Go on another continent

3. What is your annual budget per person? *
   - 250€-500€
   - 500€-1000€
4. When do you usually go on holidays? *
   Multiple choice questions
   - During winter time
   - During summer time
   - During school holidays
   - During bank holidays
   - Whenever you want

5. In which kind of holidays do you usually go? *
   Multiple choice questions
   - Winter holidays
   - Cruise
   - Summer holidays
   - City excursion (= visiting the whole country)
   - City trip
   - Other: ____________________

6. How do you plan your holidays? *
   - Physical agency
   - Online agency
   - By yourself
   - Other: ____________________

7. Which online agency do you use/prefer?*
   Replay only if your previous response was "Online agency"
8. How do you spend your holidays? *
   - [ ] With family
   - [ ] With your partner
   - [ ] With friends
   - [ ] Alone
   - [ ] Other: 

9. Do you like online advertising? *
   
   1  2  3  4  5

   I really dislike it [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] I really appreciate it

10. Do you receive advertising to help you to plan your holidays? *
    
    - [ ] Yes
    - [ ] No

11. Do you usually look at online advertising? *
    
    - [ ] Yes
    - [ ] No

12. Do you plan your holidays because of online advertising? *
    
    1  2  3  4  5

    Absolutely not [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] Absolutely yes

13. Are you confident with holidays online advertising? *
    
    1  2  3  4  5
14. Does the online advertising have influence on your holiday plans? *

1  2  3  4  5

Absolutely not  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  Absolutely yes

15. Do you think that the proposed online advertising of holidays is adapted to your holiday type? *

1  2  3  4  5

Absolutely not  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  Absolutely yes

16. Where do you usually see online advertising? *

Multiple choice questions

☐ Social network
☐ Pop-ups
☐ Mailbox
☐ Travel agency website
☐ Others: _______________________________________

17. Do you pay attention to the design of holidays’ online advertising? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

18. The design of holidays’ online advertising influences the interest? *

1  2  3  4  5
19. Do you usually trust online advertising? *
   - Yes
   - No

20. Your age: *
   - 18-25
   - 25-35
   - 35-60
   - 60+

21. Your gender: *
   - Female
   - Male

22. Your country: *
   - France
   - Belgium
   - United Kingdom/ Ireland

23. Do you live in: *
   - A city
   - The countryside

24. Your situation: *
   - Single
   - Couple

25. Do you have children? *
o ☐ Yes – still living at home
o ☐ Yes – not living at home anymore
o ☐ No

26. Your employment status: *

o ☐ Student
o ☐ Employee
o ☐ Non-employee
o ☐ Retired
o ☐ Others: [ ]