Hotel Industry on the Spanish Market: Supply Chain Management a way of creating a competitive advantage?
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Declaration of ownership

I, Sophie Dubreuil, declare that the following work is my own work and that all information used issued from other studies has been properly referenced.

Sophie Dubreuil 14/08/2014
I would like to thank my family for the unconditional support they bring me, and more especially my parents Annie and Christian and my brother Simon for the opportunity they gave me to realize the studies I have been doing. I know that for them it is hard to bring me help when I am far, and I am very grateful they do.

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Abstract

Purpose: The goal of the research was to show how supply chain management can be used in the hotel industry on the Spanish market to create a competitive advantage. In order to do so the study examines some practices that can lead the hotels to reduce their costs in order to satisfy their customers but also to obtain quality and therefore a competitive advantage.

Design/ Methodology/ Approach: The study is done in a descripto-explanatory way in order to analyse data through a qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data are collected through interviews of professionals of the hotel industry in Spain and a participant observation on the supply chain of a hotel group in Spain whereas the quantitative data are collected through questionnaire distributes among customers of hotels in Spain.

Findings: Using the analysis of the data it can be deduced that it exist a positive correlation between supply chain management in hotels in Spain and performance of the hotels. Moreover, customers are willing cheap prices and therefore there are some supply chain practices that can be adapted to hotels in Spain in order to do so.

Practical implications: In order to obtain a real competitive advantage, the hotels have to put in place supply chain practices that allow and cheap costs (therefore cheap prices) and good quality if they want to gain and retain customers and be different from their competitors.

Originality/ value: The study brings a balance between academic research and practical implications about the supply chain management in hotels in Spain. On a longer term, more studies could be done in order to generalize those practices and apply them to hotels in more countries over the world and not only on the Spanish market.
Introduction

“Tourism is emerging as a vital driver of economic growth in both developed countries and developing countries” (WTO, 2010). Tourism is an very current topic as in some countries it is one of the main economic drivers. Here in that case, the study will be more especially conducted about Spain. This is a country where tourism is one the main economy’s engine (Sánchez-Fernández, Vargas-Sánchez and Remaldo, 2014). The present research will be conducted about the tourism industry, but more especially about the hotel industry in Spain.

The hotel industry in Spain is an area that interests me as the researcher specifically because I already worked in it. More especially the supply chain management within the hotel industry is a domain I would like to work in once I finish my studies.

Here the main objective is to prove that a competitive advantage can be obtain by a hotel in Spain through the well management of its supply chain.

This research has three main objectives. The first one is to prove that the supply chain management in hotels has an influence on their performance. The second objective of this study is to show that through different practices of the supply chain management hotels can attract certain new customers and satisfy their existing customers (in order to retain them). The third and last objective of the present research is to prove that thanks to the well management of their supply chain, hotels can obtain a competitive advantage.

The research questions are organized as followed:

- How does the supply chain participate to the performance of hotels in Spain?
- How do hotels in Spain manage their supply chain to satisfy their customers?
- How through the supply chain management can hotels in Spain obtain a competitive advantage?

The organization of the study will be as followed. The first research question will be answered through the secondary data collected in the literature. The literature will be reviewed thanks to six main points that are going to be: a review of the tourism in Spain, an analysis of the supply chain management, an explanation of the supply chain integration, and later of the e-procurement, a focus on customers’ satisfaction and a conclusion with the quality aspect in hotels in Spain.
The second research question will be divided in two parts. First of all it will be necessary to analyse the survey in order to find out what customers are looking for when they come to Spain. This will back-up the part “customers’ satisfaction” in the literature review. Then, the literature review and the interviews will examine the question to know how the hotels in Spain manage their supply chains in order to satisfy their customers.

Finally the third research question will be studied in the literature review and backed-up in the analysis of the participant observation in order to understand how the hotels in Spain can obtain a competitive advantage through the management of their supply chain.

There are some limitations to this thesis as it is hard in a determined short timeline to study all the aspects of the topic. Indeed, not all the supply chain practices can be studied. First of all because it is hard to study them all here for time purposes and second of all because the data are not all found about all the supply chains practices existing in the hotel industry in Spain.

The first chapter will be a review of the literature. The second chapter will be the explanation of the methodology used to realize the study. The third chapter will be the data analysis, the explanations of the findings. This will be done in three parts divided between: the quantitative research done through the questionnaire, the qualitative research made through the interviews and the other qualitative research made thanks to the participant observation. The fourth chapter will be a discussion in order to debate the findings exposed in the study. Finally the fifth chapter will be the statement of the conclusion and recommendations followed by a lessons-learnt report in order to analyse what has been learnt during the process of researching and writing the thesis.

The major contribution of the dissertation is to highlight some techniques and practices of supply chain management in hotels in Spain that are not very present (or not at all) in the literature in order to see how they can obtain competitive advantage facing their competition.
Chapter one: Collection of the secondary data

Literature review

The objective of this literature review is to define the role of the supply chain management with hotels and more especially in Spain at costs and quality levels; and then analyzing new practices of supply chain management, see how they could be applied to the hotel industry in Spain creating a competitive advantage.

The goal of this research on the literature is to first of all review the hotel industry in Spain in order to understand what its characteristics are, and the environment hotels are evolving in. Then, in a second part, the objective is to analyze the role of the supply chain management in general and then more specifically in the context of the Spanish leisure hotel industry. The conclusions of this review will be done on the new supply chain practices that could lead hotels in Spain to have a competitive advantage.

1. Tourism in Spain

The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide (Credo, 2013) describes tourism as “travel and visiting places for pleasure, often involving sightseeing and staying in overnight accommodation. Regarded as an industry, tourism can increase the wealth and job opportunities in an area”.

The hotel industry in Spain is suffering from a high competitive environment. Moreover, between 2007 and 2012 hotels’ sales in Spain decreased generally from 17,510.4 to 16,105.9 million of euros. This tendency is noticed for hotel chains and for independent hotels; while other types of travel accommodation’s sales increased from 8,148.3 million of euros in 2007 to 9,409.7 million of euros in 2012 (Euromonitor, 2013). Those other types of travel accommodations are mainly composed of chalets, self-catering apartments and mostly private accommodation. It needs to be underlined here that the number of rooms available increased for hotels and other types of accommodations, which shows a slight decrease of sales of
hotels (Euromonitor, 2013). By private accommodation it needs to be understood accommodations that do not refer to collective tourism establishments. It includes a limited number of places (beds) for rent or free of charge. This means that the accommodations are independent and occupied by tourists (for a certain number of nights, less than a year in a go) or by the owner as a second holiday property. (The ultimate business, 2010)

Since few years, Spain is also suffering from the economic recession. However, the industry of leisure tourism and more especially the leisure hotel industry has a lot of potential (MarketLine, 2014). Nevertheless even this promising sector did not escape the economic crisis. Indeed, people having less money to spend cut off on leisure which has a direct impact on the hotel industry in Spain. That’s why this industry decreased from a value of 9.3€ billion in 2009 to a value of 8.4€ billion in 2013 (Marketline, 2014).

Tourism in Spain represented 5.4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)\(^1\), among which 89.5% is generated from leisure spending and only 10.5% from business spending, that’s why the focus of this whole study will be done on the leisure tourism (World Tourism and Travel Council, 2013).

![Source: World Tourism and Travel Council, 2013](image)

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\(^1\) “gross domestic product: the total flow of services and goods produced by an economy over a quarter or a year, measured by the aggregate value of services and goods at market prices” (Credo Business, 2009).
The above graph shows that in term of contribution to GDP, foreign visitor spending are a little bit less important than the domestic spending, which means that in proportion Spanish people going on holiday in Spain represent a bit more that foreign tourists going on holiday to Spain in term of what it generates for the GDP.

Source: World Tourism and Travel Council, 2013

On the above graph, it is interesting to notice that there are different types of contribution to the GDP.

The direct contribution to GDP is the GDP that is generated by the industries which deal in a direct manner with tourists, such as hotels, airlines, travel agents and other transport services, as well as activities from restaurants and leisure industries dealing also directly with tourists. (WTTC, 2013)

In the other hand, the so-called indirect contribution is the contribution to GDP according to three factors: the capital investment, government collective spending and supply chain effects.
The capital investment is the spending made by all sectors involved in the travel and tourism industry. The government collective spending is the spending of the government (at local, regional and national levels) supporting the general tourism activity; it can be promotion of tourism in general or even some public services or tourists information. The supply chain effects are “purchases of domestic goods and services directly by different sectors of the travel and tourism industry as inputs to their final tourism output”. (WTTC, 2013)

As underlined by the World Tourism and Travel Council, the supply chain effects named for the purchased goods and services contributing to the industry are a quite important part of the GDP contribution. The importance of the supply chain management is indeed something not to neglect in the tourism industry, and here more especially for the purpose of this study, for the hotels industry.

Here it is essential to notice the importance of the supply chain and overall its effects on the tourism and more generally speaking on the GDP of Spain. Now the question is to understand exactly what is the supply chain, how to manage it, which role it plays in the hotels in Spain, and how new supply chain practices impact the performance of the hotels on the Spanish market.

2. Supply chain management

Initially supply chain was considered to only be an extension of operations, purchase and logistics (Cook, Heiser, Sengupta, 2010). In the past decade, the view and research on supply chain management considerably extended and many papers were published. (Tan et al., 1999, 2002; Croom et al., 2000; Tan, 2002; Chen and Paulraj, 2004a, b; Chen et al., 2004; Cigolini et al., 2004; Frohlich and Westbrook, 2001, 2002; Ho et al., 2002; Giannakis and Croom, 2004; Lejeune and Yakova, 2005; Li et al., 2005b; Kampstra et al., 2006; Sandberg, 2007; Narasimhan et al., 2008)

Chen and Paulraj (2004) extended it including between others, information systems and strategic management. Ho et al (2002) highlighted the need of supply chain management to be operationalized and modeled. (Cook, Heiser, Sengupta, 2010)
Retailers such as Amazon use supply chain management as a key instrument in their business strategies to create a competitive advantage in order to face their competition (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2011). Why couldn’t be the case in hotels?

In a hotel, supply chain management is very important in the way that most of the purchased goods are perishable, and therefore bought and delivered on a daily basis. Indeed, most of the supply chain in the hotel concerns the food and beverage suppliers. Of course there are other types of suppliers and the supply chains of hotels are not only composed of the food and beverage suppliers. However, for the purpose of the study and because it is a major part of the supply chain management in hotels in Spain, the research is going to be more focused on the supply of food and beverage in hotels in Spain.

A misplaced order can have very bad consequences on the business, as this would mean the hotel would not be able to offer in the menu the food that the customer is expecting for instance. As it will be more developed later, it is all about what the customer is expecting to receive, in order to get satisfied.

According to Chopra and Meindl (2003), “a supply chain consists of all stages involved, directly or indirectly, in fulfilling a customer request. The supply chain not only includes the manufacturer and suppliers, but also transporters, warehouses, retailers and customers themselves.” Therefore it is important to notice that understanding what customers are expecting and what are they tastes is not important only to commercial or marketing departments in hotel groups, it is also essential to supply chain management teams and buyers teams. Customers are fully part of the supply chain management.

Supply chain management is the coordination of production, inventory, location, and transportation among the participants in a supply chain to achieve the best mix of responsiveness and efficiency for the market being served” (Hugos, 2011).

During the last 25 years, supply chain management has been evolving but has kept the main goal of the organization working together as an entity to satisfy customers (Soni, Kodali, 2011). Supply chain management is often referred as a combination of advanced information technologies leading to quick and responsive logistics service, more effective management with suppliers and with customers (Fawcett and Magnan, 2002).
“Effective supply chain management can lead to processes, people and materials working more efficiently and so has a significant impact on costs” (Capstone encyclopedia of business, 2003). This is where it is interesting for a company such as a hotel.

Indeed, customers when travelling in hotels in Spain are first of all looking for cheap prices but also for the best quality possible. (Euromonitor, 2013) To perform well and increase revenue, hotels need to increase sales, that is to say attract more customers; and in order to attract customers who are looking for the cheapest prices possible, it is essential for the company to work on costs. Now will be seen how controlling costs and quality in a service industry can all be done thanks to the management of the supply chain.

However supply chain management is complex and there are a lot of practices that can be applied according to the type of business concerned. Some of them are going to be detailed here considering their relevancy to this research.

3. Supply chain integration

As seen previously technologies are important tools in the supply chain management, when they are carefully used.

The integration of the supply chain involves an essential place for communication in the supply chain. In other terms, integration means redesigning the supply chain connecting the parts of the process together. (Awad, Nassar, 2010) The so-called integration of the supply chain is often done thanks to, between others, ERP and customer relation management in order to establish cooperation and collaboration between the actors of the supply chain.

ERP is the “enterprise resource planning: a software system that coordinates every important aspect of an organization’s production into one seamless process so that maximum efficiency can be achieved” (Business: The ultimate resource, 2009). It will be developed more in details later in this literature review.
“A company’s integration considers suppliers, customers and organization cross-functional integration.” (Cook, Heiser, Sengupta, 2010) This means the goal of the supply chain integration is to make everyone part of the company’s operations. The suppliers are taken into account, as well as all the units of the organization and even the customers who play a very important role, as the main objective of the supply chain is to get customers’ satisfaction.

Companies are looking for a way to achieve competitive advantage. In the hotel industry in Spain the competition is very intense (Euromonitor, 2013), that’s why it is essential for the organizations to focus on a way of being better than their competitors, in other terms, to achieve a competitive advantage. That way a hotel can have something that make the difference in the eyes of the customers, something that will mean customers will choose first this hotel and not the competitor.

The majority of studies have found a positive correlation between integration of the supply chain and the performance of the organization (Gimenez, Van Der Vaart and Van Donk, 2011). The more actors are included in the process of the supply chain; the highest performance will be obtained. If the customers’ willing in term of food for instance is not taken into account during the supply chain management process for instance, the performance (which means more sales) will not take place as the hotels will not necessarily order exactly what the customers were expected and therefore not get them satisfied.

Gimenez (2011) recognizes that only complex supply chain integration is positively related to performance. In other words, the integration of a complex supply chain impacts positively the performance of the business.

In order to define under which circumstances a supply chain can be considered as complex or not, some criteria have been defined.

“High supply complexity can be associated with factors such as a high variety in products, fluctuating demand, production in small batches, high expectations with regard to flexibility and quality, and/or a high level of innovation in products and processes” (Gimenez, Van Der Vaart and Van Donk, 2011).

In this research it would be later argued whether or not the hotel industry in Spain can be associated with high supply complexity and therefore if integration of the supply chain would
be necessary in order for the hotel to perform. In order to do so, interviews of supply chain managers in hotels in Spain and case studies will be analyzed in a third part of this study.

Indeed “integration in buyer-supplier relationships is only effective in relationships characterized by high supply complexity. In other words, […] if supply complexity is high, supply chain integration will be positively related to performance.” (Gimenez, Van Der Vaart and Van Donk, 2011) On the other hand, if the hotel industry is not characterized by high supply complexity, integration of the hotel supply chain will not lead especially to performance. However some other supply chain practices, even in case of not complex supply chains might be analyzed and leading to performance and even competitive advantage.

Studying the hotel industry is studying a service industry, which is different of a product industry in the sense that most of the purchases a hotel does is on the sector of food and beverage. Moreover, a hotel usually provides restaurant services (three meals a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner). Given that, it can be argued that the food and beverage bought daily by the hotel has to correspond to the customers present in the hotel at the moment. This corresponds to the definition of complexity given by Gimenez, Van Der Vaart and Van Donk (2011) as it represents a “high variety in products” (more nationalities means more tastes meaning the hotels will need to offer broader choice of food and beverage in their restaurants), “fluctuating demand” (all the seasons are not filled with the same number of customers, or the same types of customers, the demand varies) and “high expectations with regard to flexibility and quality” (customers expect a broad choice but also high quality in terms of food Euromonitor, 2013).

In Spain, half of the tourists in hotels are foreigners, which mean that the purchases need to be adapted to the tastes and needs of different customers from different nationalities. In the hotel industry, the responsiveness of the suppliers is highly important as most of them have to deliver products on a daily basis (e.g. bread, pastries, fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, etc).

However, even though in theory benefits of integration and mutual information sharing between supply chain partners, it has also been recognized a high complexity in practice to do so. (Wang (2008); Cook, Heiser, Sengupta, 2010)

Nevertheless many studies have conducted on the subject that the information sharing (even though it is a complex process) is worth it leading to organization’s performance. (Zhao et al.,
The information sharing explained in this study is about forecasting parameters which allow coordination at a replenishment of inventory level. (Cook, Heiser, Sengupta, 2010) It is interesting at the level of a hotel as the food and beverage orders need to arrive on time if the hotel doesn’t want to be in trouble of not offering the food that customers are expecting on a daily basis.

This information sharing is mainly possible thanks to the so-called Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) (as defined previously in the literature review).

Another demonstrated supply chain practice in order to improve the performance of a company is the development of long-term relationships between supply chain partners. Indeed, it has been proved since the 1990’s (Choi and Hartley, 1996) that they increase the coordination giving the opportunity of mutual benefit to the partners.

The advanced planning through mainly the ERP remains a core tool in the integration of the businesses’ supply chains, especially in order to remain competitive in a web-based environment where communication is essential (Akyuz and Rehan, 2009; Narasimhan et al., 2008; Auramo et al., 2005). However, the implementation of such advanced planning systems can encounter some difficulties in the sense that there will always be a resistance to change within a company and sometimes new technologies are hard to implement in companies where some people are still not used to it (Cook, Heiser, Sengupta, 2010).

Moreover, performance has also been linked to the distribution network structure, which in the context of the hotel industry mainly means the transportation optimization. Indeed, if some orders can be grouped in order to reduce transport costs it is always an advantage. However, even though in theory it seems to be working, it is complicated to apply it in practice. (Cook, Heiser, Sengupta, 2010)

### 4. E-procurement

The necessity of sharing information and performance led to what is called the e-procurement. It is a “system in an information-based purchase system which is at the input end of the supply chain” (Presutti, 2003; Chang, Tsai and Hsu, 2012), in other words it is an electronic procurement system.
Nowadays e-procurement is characterized as an innovative strategy action (Mishra and Agarwal, 2010).

As it has been discussed previously, long-term partner relationships as well as information sharing and supply chain integration clearly contribute to the supply chain performance and therefore to the company’s success (Chang, Tsai and Hsu, 2012).

In their research, Chang, Tsai and Hsu (2010) found that not only e-procurement push even further and develop long-term supply chain partners relationships, but it also enhance information sharing and supply chain integration; that is to say contributes to the supply chain performance. Developing and improving partners long-term relationships is very important to improve the performance of the supply chain, more over it makes the company benefits from costs reductions and time savings. Sharing information is facilitated by the e-procurement, and its benefits affect positively the effectiveness of the supply chain management, that is to say once again of the performance.

E-procurement could also potentially influence the supply chain integration as it helps to relate the activities to one another.

Not only e-procurement allows information sharing, so trust among partners and longer relationships because of the integration of the different activities of the supply chain; it also allows the company to achieve a certain level of quality. Indeed, this system allows tracing orders but also misplaced orders and give a feedback to the partners (to the suppliers for instance in the case of the hotel industry) which will improve the quality by trying to make disappear the errors. (Chang, Tsai and Hsu, 2010)

In practice it needs to be studied how hotels manage to develop long-term trustful relationship among their supply chain and if the set-up of an enterprise resource planning or an e-procurement system is enough to do so.
5. Customers' satisfaction

As it has been noted previously in order to increase sales, hotels need to be able to lower costs and improve quality.

As noted in the previous part of this literature review, integration of the supply chain and e-procurement can lead to a reduction of cost. If a hotel is accusing a reduction of costs it can then reduce the prices offered to customers. Moreover, as understood before, the e-procurement also allows a tracking of the orders so of the potential errors that can be corrected, which would increase the global quality.

Now the question is, concretely how does the supply chain management help to attract and satisfy customers?

A competitive advantage is according to Collins dictionary of business (2006) “the possession by a firm of various assets and attributes (low costs plants, innovative brands, ownership of raw material supplies, etc.) which give it a competitive edge over rival suppliers”.

In tourism, the supply chain performance can be measured thanks to the customer satisfaction (Tigu and Calaretu, 2013). In order to measure performance of a hotel there are key performance indicators. There are financial ones such as the return on investment, the profit and non-financial ones such as the customer satisfaction or even the employee satisfaction (Ramsden, 2010).

The literature shows that quality improvements benefiting from quality deployment function can allow an organization to exceed customers’ expectations and therefore help creating a brand identity (Masoudi, Cudney and Paryani, 2013). The competitive advantage is something one hotel has that is not easily replicable by its competitors. “Hotels have long known that the difference between success and failure depends upon customer satisfaction, provided by high quality services”. (Masoudi, Cudney and Paryani, 2013)

Nowadays a lot of companies decide to put in place the Total Quality Management, help by the so-called tool quality deployment function. This particularly helps the company to have a continuous improvement and statistical process control. This tool enables the company to captivate what customers’ requirements are and translate them into requirements the supply chain must meet (Xie et al., 2003).
“Oke et al. (2008) discuss the combined application of quality deployment function and Pareto analysis to hotel services, and enhance the current quality management practices in a case study hotel” (Masoudi, Cudney and Paryani, 2013).

Basically thanks to the quality deployment function the voice of the customer is taken into account at all stages of the supply chain process so that the quality can be considered as defined by the customers.

The internationalization and the increasing competitive market represent challenges for the hotel industry in Spain, where hotels need to understand the specific needs and requirements of very different customers that come at the same time.

The hotels in Spain need to be able to satisfy for instance Russian and French customers at the same time, but also people suffering of allergies for instance, which is not always easy.

6. Quality

Quality is something important to customers as most of the hotels in Spain are looking to reduce costs as seen previously in order to be able to offer lower prices.

In Spain apart from the common ISO 9001 international standard, there is a specific “Q” standard that is proper to the Spanish tourism market. (Alonso-Almeida, Marimon and Bernardo, 2011)

Customer satisfaction is positively correlated to sales offering quality. (Ramsay, Wagner and Kelly, 2013) The question is then to know how hotels can improve the quality of the service they offer, or of the food they serve at their restaurants. Some previous studies even stated that quality is the only variable driving to customer satisfaction in hotels (Yu, 2005).

Lately with the development of new technologies, Guillet and Law (2010) were concerned about the rapid enhancing of the electronic word-to-mouth where hotels are rated by consumers. A third of the internet users would have already rated products and services online (Zang, Ye and Law, 2011). However studies show that the online travellers’ opinions are not a hundred percent representative of the tourists’ opinion about hotels. (Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009).
Nowadays, hotels industry has noticed an intensification of the competition especially through the quality and customer’s satisfaction. (Parayani, 2010)

Crick and Spencer (2011) highlight the fact that it is hard for hotels to understand what their customers expect as quality, because there are very heteroclite in term of nationalities, tastes, definitions of quality, etc. Moreover, they underlined the importance of the employees’ satisfaction at work and its relationship with the customers’ satisfaction. Indeed, it has been shown that the most the employees are satisfied in their work, the best quality of service will provide the hotel, and the more satisfied will be the customers (Crick and Spencer, 2011). Therefore, the management function within the hotels is crucial. Through leaders’ management, employees’ satisfaction can be controlled.

Customer relationship management is a “management philosophy that calls for the reconfiguration of the firm's activities around the customer” (Crick and Spencer, 2011). They argued that it was more than just the use of a technology but that it was in reality the creation of a relationship between customers and the organization. It allows the hotel to develop a highly personalised service for each customer.

According to Parayani (2010) the best way to increase quality in the hotels is to put in place a so called quality deployment process which allows the company to take into account what customers are willing and expecting at each stage of the process of delivering the services.

Quality plays an important role as coupled with its quality signals (hotel class, hotel stars, etc.) is the most determinant factor for room pricing.

Some alternatives in hotels finding a way to be different from their competitors in term of quality can be a way to create a competitive advantage. Developing green supply chain is attracting green customers who are looking for green accommodation for instance. It seems to be a way to distinguish itself from the other hotels at the moment. (Chan, 2013) Moreover, hotel green customers are willing to pay higher prices to access to green facilities.
7. Conclusion

Concluding this literature review has to be retained that the research objectives have been partly completed. Of course they will be backed-up by the rest of the research and the data findings.

First of all, has been seen that the supply chain management of hotels has an influence on their performance and that through different practices of the supply chain management, hotels can attract and satisfy customers. This answers to the two first research objectives that were fixed at the beginning of this study. Indeed, the improvement of communication among the supply chain permits the performance of the hotels in general. Moreover this relationship between supply chain management and performance corresponds to the type of supply chain of hotels generally speaking. In terms of new technologies, it has been seen that the use of some technologies such as e-procurement help the supply chain integration and therefore the information sharing between parties along the supply chain, which leads to customers’ satisfaction, that is to say performance for the hotel.

Finally quality has been associated to competitive advantage by some authors. However the term “quality” in the hotels industry does not only refer to the food quality hotels serve in their restaurants, but to the service quality in general. Some studies have shown that the supplier value leads to a customer value in hotels (Ramsay and Wagner, 2009). Nevertheless some more factors have to be taken into consideration in order to obtain quality of service in hotels; for instance employees’ satisfaction that is positively correlated to the leaders’ management. This means that the different functions of the hotel need to be related to each other if they want to succeed. Indeed, human resource and leading management play a major role in employees’ satisfaction, which is directly linked to service quality. Together with supply chain practices in order to obtain quality too, it plays a determinant role in customers’ satisfaction and therefore in hotel performance; the goal being the creation of a competitive advantage to attract more customers and having a company as profitable as possible.
Methodology

1. Research Philosophy

Positivism is about “collecting data about an observable reality and search for regularities and causal relationships in your data to create law-like regularities like those produced by scientists” (Gill and Johnson, 2010; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)).

This research philosophy would have been used if the research would have been conducted with a mono method quantitative (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012), however for the purpose of this research, the chosen strategy is mix methodologies of both quantitative and qualitative strategies, as it will be explained later.

Realism is a “philosophical position which relates to scientific enquiry” where “objects have an existence independent of a human mind” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). This philosophy cannot be used for the whole research of this dissertation because it will not be compatible with the qualitative part. Moreover, in the case of this dissertation, even the quantitative strategy (customers’ survey) will show results dependent of human minds, indeed, we are looking for customers’ behaviours. That’s the reason why, the realism philosophy does generally speaking not reflect the way this research is being undertaken.

“Interpretivism advocates that it is necessary for the research to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors.” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012) This is the philosophy that corresponds to the research that has been undertaken here. Indeed, research is conducted “among people and not objects” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012), which is the case here because the research will be conducted mainly through interviews of professionals which will give an understanding not only of the concept in a theoretical and academic framework, but also in a practical way considering also “the role of social actors”. Moreover, the customers’ insight is also going to be considered through a survey. This means this research will be undertaken with a mixed method, to which corresponds interpretivism. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)
The interpretive philosophy of research allows the researcher to be subjective and have a point of view that might change. This corresponds mostly to “small samples, in-depth investigations and qualitative research” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

Pragmatism “asserts that concepts are only relevant where they support action” (Kelemen and Rumen 2008; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). “For pragmatists, the importance of the meaning of an idea (or a research finding) are its practical consequences” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Here can be argued that the pragmatism philosophy also correspond to the research as it allows a certain flexibility of mixing qualitative and quantitative research, giving the dissertation a company’s insight (through interviews and participant observation) and a customers’ view (through questionnaires). Moreover this concept of the importance of the idea only demonstrated by its consequences in practice could match with this research arguing about the fact that some conclusions could have been drawn on the concepts through they proved usefulness in companies (thanks to the participant observation and interviews of professionals).
2. Research Approach

“If the research starts with theory, often developed from the reading of the academic literature, and it is designed a research strategy to test the theory, a deductive approach is used. Conversely, if the research starts by collecting data to explore a phenomenon and it generates or builds theory (often in the form of a conceptual framework), then an inductive approach is used”. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

The deductive approach “owes much to what we would think of as scientific research. It involves the development of a theory that is then subjected to a rigorous test through a series of propositions”. “It is the dominant research approach in the natural sciences.” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

The induction approach is more appropriate to the qualitative part of this dissertation. The approach used to analyse the results of the interviews in the research is much more of a critical review of the “cause-effect link to be made between particular variables understanding the way in which humans interpret their social world” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

“An abductive approach moves back and forth, in effect combining deduction and induction” (Suddaby, 2006). This approach seems to correspond to the dissertation that I will undertake here. Indeed, the starts with a surprising fact that customers want low prices and high quality at the same time, and that this might be controllable through the supply chain management; from there are going to be collected data in order to check this fact and develop it forward.

In order to realize this research, mainly has been used an inductive approach. Indeed, the research has been mainly qualitative. It has been started with collection of data “in order to establish different views of phenomena” (Easterby-Smith, 2008).

Here the goal of the study is to “understand better the nature of a problem” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Indeed, the Spanish hotel industry arrived to a point where the competitive intensity is so high that hotels need to find a way to differentiate themselves from the others by creating a competitive advantage.
In the context of this research theory will follow data. We don’t have hypotheses or a number of possible propositions to begin the study with. In this research, data have first been collected and then a theory has been concluded from the data analysis.
3. Research Design

The research design has to be representative of how will the research question be answered. This is where the objectives of the research will be presented. In order to be able to identify the procedures and techniques that will be used to collect the data, the strategies used in the research need to be clearly determined as well as the research objectives that aim to be achieved.

Here the research has three main objectives:

1. To prove that the supply chain management in hotels has an influence on their performance,
2. To show that through different practices of the supply chain management hotels can attract certain new customers and satisfy their existing customers (in order to retain them),
3. To prove that thanks to the well management of their supply chain, hotels can obtain a competitive advantage.

Most of the studies about hotels are done thanks to exploratory studies (Choi and Kim, 2010) which allow the research to discover what is happening about a topic of interest by gaining insight. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

Descriptive studies are used to complete the exploratory studies as they enable the researcher to have a clear picture of the situation. However the researcher has to be careful with the descriptive studies as can lead to descriptions without ending and to no conclusions.

That is the reason why this study will be done as a “descripto-exploratory” study; which will be a mix of descriptive and exploratory research. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

Explanatory studies do not here correspond to the research as they establish causal relationships between phenomena which is not the case in this dissertation. The only part that can be considered as an explanatory study is the establishment of a positive correlation between supply chain management and performance in the literature review.
4. Research Strategy

The dissertation has been done thanks to a mixed methods research, which means that both quantitative (through survey) and qualitative (through interviews and participant observation analysis) back-up the review of the literature.

As seen before there are three main objectives to the thesis that are the followings:

1. To prove that the supply chain management in hotels has an influence on their performance,
2. To show that through different practices of the supply chain management hotels can attract certain new customers and satisfy their existing customers (in order to retain them),
3. To prove that thanks to the well management of their supply chain, hotels can obtain a competitive advantage.

In order to achieve the first objective, secondary data are been collected through literature review and primary data collected through interviews realized with professionals in supply chain management of hotels in Spain will be backing-up the literature review.

To achieve the second objective, secondary data are been collected through the literature and primary data are collected through questionnaires distributed to customers of hotels in Spain in order to show what customers are really expecting. Then in order to show which supply chain practices can be put in place in order to attract and retain customers, secondary data are used through the literature, and the analysis is helped by primary data collected mainly through the participant observation.

The third objective is achieved thanks to secondary data collected in the literature review backed-up with the collection of primary data through interviews of hotel supply chain professionals and participant observation in order to determine how the management of the supply chain can help hotels obtaining a competitive advantage.

With the participant observation, it can be argued here that the study is taken under the strategy of action research. The goal is to try finding solutions to real organizational problems. “Action research focuses on addressing worthwhile practical supposes” (Reason,
2006). Action research is a good way to address studies about supply chain management because it is a very practical topic (Choi and Kim, 2011).

Grounded Theory “is used to develop theoretical explanations of social interactions and processes in a wide range of contexts including business and management”. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

This corresponds to the present dissertation as the use of questionnaires and interviews allows the researcher to grasp the business and management context of the supply chain practices in hotels in Spain.

The experiment strategy corresponds better to laboratory-based research, which is not the case of this study, therefore it will not be used.

The survey strategy “is a popular and common strategy in business and management research” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). It corresponds to studies that are made with exploratory and descriptive research, which matches perfectly what has been said before about this dissertation that is done with a descripto-exploratory research.

An archival research strategy “makes use of administrative records and documents as the principal source of data”. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012) The data are products of day-to-day activities, which does not correspond to this research (Hakim, 2000).

Narrative inquiry is story told by a personal who interprets an event. This is what happens when the interviews are interpreted. There are stories told by the interviewees; it can be dangerous in the way to interpret them. Indeed, it is always someone’s point of view. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)
4. Selecting Respondents

This research is cross-sectional; it is a snapshot of today’s situation. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

In order to do the questionnaire, the method of the probability sampling has been put in place. The questionnaires have been distributed to people making sure before asking them to answer that they were understanding English (as the questionnaires were written in English) and that they were customers of hotels in Spain on a touristic frame (as here the people on business trip are not the target of the study). Doing the distribution this way and in person enable a certain confidence in the data, that is to say a “level of certainty that the characteristics of the data collected will represent the characteristics of the total population” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

One hundred questionnaires have been distributed to customers of hotels in Spain. The response has been partial as sixty-two people out of the one hundred completed the questionnaires and gave it back. Indeed, 50 per cent to 80 percent is considered as partial response to the survey. The response rate of the survey has been of 62%.

The goal was to realize as many interviews as possible. Here three interviews have been reached: one with a supplier chain manager, one with a purchasing director and one with a hotel director; all of them coming from different hotel groups and all wishing to stay anonymous.

The participant observation has been realized about the company Grupo Reside were the researcher worked during six months. This gave an overview of the functioning of the company. The researcher worked there from 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2013 as a purchasing assistant. This year in order to write the thesis, the researcher spent one more week there to check that the data that were going to be transcribed in the thesis were still up-to-date.
5. Research Ethics

When doing such a project, the researcher needs to be very careful with the ethics, making sure the willing of everyone is respected. The ethical issues raised were the anonymity of the people interviewed. For some reason they might prefer staying anonymous and especially not say for which company they are working. Indeed, it is essential to be clear and show competences on the research topic, but more essentially integrity. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012) Having a gatekeeper helps to speak to the person that would be able to help best on a specific theme. Hotels groups are companies which are difficult to approach because of the confidentiality of the documents. Themselves have to be very careful not to unveil data about customers for instance also for ethical issues. Moreover approaching them in the summer period is hard, taking into account that it is the highest season for most of them on the Spanish market.

Then, ethically speaking, it is essential to make sure that the integrity and the objectivity is respected.

The conversations during the interviews were not allowed to be recorded with none of the three interviewees. The consent of the persons is vital in order to record them. In the case of this study I only was allowed to take notes down while we were going through the interview.

I agreed not to unveil the name of the interviewees and the companies there are working for.

As the interviews were conducted in Spain with native Spanish people, they were conducted at the demand of the interviewees in Spanish. Of course, as the analysis was being realized the translation was very carefully done by the researcher.

On the survey’s questionnaire, a preamble note was written in order to explain the goal of the survey. This was also the occasion to explain to the respondents that their answers would remain strictly confidential and that therefore none of their personal data was been asked (address, name, etc.).
In order to realize the participant observation the company has been consulted and authorized the use of the experience there. For the purpose of ethical issues and confidentiality, the numbers have been changed in the documents presented in this study (costs analysis).

The secondary data have been collected through the online databases accessed through the library’s website of the Dublin Business School. The main databases used for the study were Emerald, Ebsco, Credo and Euromonitor. For ethical reasons, all authors’ works used in the research have been referenced in the text and in the bibliography. All citations have been done according to Harvard referencing system.
6. Data Analysis Procedures

The interviews realized need to be transcribed, which means “reproduced as a written account using the actual words”. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012) That is the reason why it would have been easier to be authorized to record the interviews.

The two generic approaches of qualitative research’s analysis are categorising data and unitising data.

The first one consists in “identifying categories, to which you will subsequently attach meaningful ‘bits’ or ‘chunks’ of your original data”; then “the next activity of the analytical process will be to attach relevant ‘bits’ or ‘chunks’ of your data, which we refer to as ‘units’ of data, to the appropriate category or categories that you have devised”. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

“Initial coding or open coding is similar to unitisation and categorisation procedures”. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

To summarize, once the data will be collected they will need to be split into categories and units so that they can be correctly analysed.

The qualitative data collected through this research is a balance of an analytic induction and a narrative analysis. Indeed, an analytic induction is described by Johnson (2004) as “the intensive examination of a strategically selected number of cases so as to empirically establish the causes of a specific phenomenon”. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012) This is the analysis that has been realized on the secondary data, the academic articles and the case studies.

The narrative analysis includes “research contexts where the experiences of your participants can best be understood by collecting and analysing these as complete stories or narratives, rather than as fragmented data”. (Mello, 2002; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012) This is the data analysis that needs to be used for interpreting the interviews, in order to keep their consistency.

Participant observation and interviews are both qualitative researches so when it comes to the analysis, relationships were recognized and categories developed. Doing so is already engaging in the analysis process (Yin, 2009). For instance data were separated in categories to
know which research question they were answering and which research objective was achieved.

“It is important to test the propositions that emerge inductively from the data by seeking alternative explanations and negative examples that do not conform the pattern or relationship being tested” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). For each pattern that seemed to be drawn out of the analysis of the qualitative data, the researcher tried to look for cases where it could not work.

Along the data analysis of the qualitative research, a reflective diary was held together with a research notebook. Indeed, the research notebook enabled the researcher to record ideas. The reflective diary was held in order to keep a track of the lessons learnt of each stage of the thesis. This is something useful for the future, to know what went well, what went wrong and learn from the eventual mistakes.

The quantitative data were analysed through excel and presented in graphs. The software Sphinx could have been used to facilitate the statistical data analysis. However as the questionnaires have been manually distributed, the coding was not as simple as if it would have been directly done on electronic devices.

The data have been presented on pie chart as it is the best way to show proportions. Bar charts could also have been used but the researcher liked more the visual clarity of the pie charts. If it would have been wished to compare the proportions between variables it could have been used percentage component bar charts; but in this study pie charts were used, to be more precise comparative proportional pie charts were used.
7. Limitations of Methodology

Here need to be analysed the limitations of the methodology. Indeed, the researcher chose to do the research one way with a methodology, but it does not mean that it was the only possibility.

Indeed, interpretivism can “be perceived in different ways by different people” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). It is a risk that is taken, the risk to give too much importance to the researcher’s point of view. The data analysis needs to be as impartial as possible.

In the qualitative research, the research obtained only three interviews of professionals. There could have been more which would have given even more insight to the topic, and it would have brought more explanations about the supply chain in the hotels in Spain.

The participant observation was a good way to see the practices of the supply chain in a group of hotels in Spain. However, the conclusions have been drawn about the practices of one company; it needs to be nuanced as doing the exact same participant observation with another company could have led to totally different conclusions.

To the concern of the quantitative data, there were different possible ways to analyse it. The researcher chose to analyse it question by question using pie charts, however it could have been analysed by nationalities if the study would have needed to get insight about what each nationality was expecting from the hotels in Spain. Each question could have then been analysed according to the nationality: e.g. x% of the Russian expect very high quality from food restaurant whereas y% of French expect average quality. In this study, it has been considered the whole interrogated sample as the hotels in Spain receive all nationalities and have to deal with the whole population in a go, with the same operations and supply chain.
Quantitative Research: Questionnaires

First of all are considered the gender, age and nationalities questions.

1. **What gender are you?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Gender distribution](image)

2. **How old are you?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between 18 and 25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 25 and 35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 35 and 55</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Which nationality are you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doing questionnaires allow us to consider the customers’ point of view, which is essential in an industry such as the hotel industry.
Out of the questionnaires distributed, 62 people responded. Among the respondents 45% are males and 55% are females and the age is quite equal: 27% of people between 18 and 27 years old, 24% between 25 and 35 years old, 34% between 35 and 55 years old and only 15% of respondents who are more than 55 years old.

Among the respondents, it is important to notice that local people are not the nationality the most represented. Indeed, almost a third of the respondents (29%) are Russian. Then come the French with 22% and the Germans with 19%, whereas Spanish respondents only represent 18% of the interrogated population. It is also to notice that those for nationalities are not the only represented, and some other nationalities are represented such as Dutch, Indian, Georgian and Belgium. The topic of the different nationalities is essential to the hotel industry because the tastes are not the same according to the countries, which means that the expectations and needs might differ totally from a customer to another, and that the hotels need to find a way to satisfy “everybody”.

4. **Do you often go on holiday in Spain?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Do you go often on holiday in Spain?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- yes: 89%
- no: 11%
To the question “Do you often go on holiday in Spain?” 89% of the population responded yes, this is important to notice because it means the study is done with people who are used to go to Spain, and therefore know the country quite well.

5. How often do you go?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you go?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>each 2 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>each year</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twice a year</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The precedent question is confirmed by this one, with 58% of the respondents asked how often do they go to Spain on holiday answering each year. This is interesting for the study because it means that for some reasons not explained yet, those people go back on holiday to Spain each year. This also allow the interrogation to try to understand why only 15% of the people go twice a year or and 3% more.
6. How long do you usually stay there?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long do you usually stay there?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>few days (less than a week)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a week</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 2 weeks</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question “How long do you usually stay there” is useful to the research because it helps understanding which kind of customers we are dealing with. The absolute majority of the respondents declare staying a week or more. This can be considered as a good sign for the tourism industry in Spain, having people staying for more than a week. It could be interesting to also understand why the rest of the people stay less: is that because they come on a business trip only, or because they are not satisfied?
7. In which context do you usually come to Spain?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business trip</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family holiday</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday with friends</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip on my own</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question “In which context do you usually come to Spain?” helps to analyze the “type” of customers the tourism industry in dealing with in Spain.

Here can be observed that the majority of the respondents declare coming on family holiday in Spain, whereas 35% say coming on holiday with friends. This connivance between people coming for family holiday and people coming with friends can be complicated to deal with as they don’t necessarily come to Spain looking for the same kind of “activities” as it will be detailed a bit further.
8. Where do you usually stay?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where do you usually stay?</th>
<th>54</th>
<th>87%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hotel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camping</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private accomodation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the question “Where do you usually stay”, 87% of the respondents answered by hotels, versus only 10% for private accommodation and 3% for camping. Here has to be taken into account that the survey has been realized on the Spanish (Catalan) cost essentially, which is the most touristic area but where the dominant touristic accommodation is hotel. Moreover, the weather needs to be considered, as the survey has been conducted in summer, while having very hot weather which encourages people to go to hotels and not camping for instance for commodity issues such as the air conditioning.
9. Why do you choose Spain?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>it's the cheapest</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it's the closest</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it's the best quality</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the question “Why do you choose Spain?”, 68% of the respondents answered that it is the cheapest destination. This shows the main reason why people decide to go on holiday in Spain. Few people (mainly French and German) underlined the fact that it is close and therefore a very attractive and practical destination, whereas only 8% highlighted the quality.

Among the 9% who answered “other”, the people who really named the reason where “party” and “we love Spain”.
10. How would you characterize holiday in Spain?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you characterized holiday in Spain?</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>16%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of partys</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality of food and services</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family time/visits/beach</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When people are asked “how would you characterize holiday in Spain?” most of them answered “family time/visits/beach” and the second most popular answer has been “partys”. Here the correlation can be done with the question showing that the two biggest “types” of respondents, showing that among the 26 respondents who answered “family time/visits/beach”, 23 answered “family holiday” to the question “In which context do you come on holiday in Spain?” (which means 88%). On the other hand, among the 15 people who answered “partys” to the present question, 14 answered “holiday with friends” to the question “In which context do you come on holiday in Spain?” (which means 93%).

This clearly shows the rift between those two categories of customers, which comes back to the fact that their definition of holiday in Spain might not be the same and therefore their expectations and needs neither.
What do you prefer the most:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11. What is the best aspect of the hotels in Spain?</th>
<th>53</th>
<th>85%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>they are cheap</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the food is very good</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the service is of very high quality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the location is perfect (beach, etc)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the question “What do you prefer the most between when the hotel adapts its menu (etc) to my taste, nationality specialties for instance or when the hotel is the occasion to taste new local food?” 39% chose the first option whereas the majority of the respondents (61%) chose the second one. In other terms, the majority of people prefer the hotel to offer local food, but there are still a quite high number of people who prefer eating what they are used to. This means that the hotels need to find a balance between the clients who are looking for their usual food and the clients who want local products.

X% of the customers that are looking for their usual food is from … this means that in order to adapt itself to the customers, the hotel needs to have a very flexible supply chain allowing the total adaptation of the purchases in order to propose the “right” food to the “right” customers at the “right” moment.
12. How do you evaluate the service quality in hotels in Spain in general?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12.</th>
<th>What do you prefer the most</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>when the hotel adapts its menu (etc) to my taste, nationality specialities for instance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>when the hotel is the occasion to taste new local food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the question “How do you evaluate the service quality in hotels in Spain in general?” most of the people (40% of the respondents) answered by average and 36% by good. Only 7% of the respondents answered very low but in total 18% of the people answered lower than average.

These answers are not satisfying for the hotels in Spain. Indeed, this shows a clear problem of how is the quality of the service perceived by the customers in the hotels in Spain. On a longer term, this could lead to a decrease of the number of clients.
13. How do you more especially evaluate the food quality in hotels in Spain?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very low</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very good</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the question “How do you more especially evaluate the food quality in hotels in Spain?” 53% answered good and 13% very good, this means there is a 66% of the respondents declared satisfied by the food in the hotels in Spain. However, in total 34% of the interrogated people declare the quality of the food in hotels in Spain average, low or very low, that is to say less than good.

This is on a general manner positive for the hotels in Spain; however the percentage of respondents not answering to the question by good or very good shows that there is space for improvement. What needs to be determined is how the number of people finding the quality of the food in the hotels in Spain good and very good.
14. Do you have a favorite hotel in Spain (where you usually go for instance?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If yes, please go to question n° 15; if no, please go to question n°16.

The question “Do you have a favorite hotel in Spain (where you usually go for instance)?” doesn’t show a real trend. Indeed, 53% of the respondents answered no and 47% answered yes, so more people answered no, but it could easily have been the opposite way round with other people asked or more people asked. That’s the reason why this question on its own is not very representative. However, studying the reasons why people answered what they did will be useful to the research and therefore come the two following questions.
15. If yes, why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If yes, why</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the location is perfect</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the food quality is very high</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it's the cheapest hotel I found</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the service quality in general is very good</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once this question answered, you can please go directly to question n°18.

Among the respondents who answered yes to the question “Do you have a favorite hotel in Spain (where you usually go for instance)?” 41% answered that they had a favorite hotel in Spain because it was the cheapest hotel they found. 24% declared that the hotel is their favorite because the service quality in general is very good, 21% give as a reason that the location is perfect, and 14% underline the fact that the food quality is very high.

Here again the cheapness factor is showed with importance by the customers of hotels in Spain.
16. If no, why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If no, why?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last time I was disappointed of the one I booked</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to test new places</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you answered “last time I was disappointed of the one I booked”, to this question, please also answer the question n° 17. If you answered “I like to test new places”, please go directly to question n° 18.

Among the respondents who answered no to the question “Do you have a favorite hotel in Spain (where you usually go for instance)?” 58% declared having been disappointed by the last hotel they booked and 42% like to test new places.

It is interesting for the purpose of the research to try understanding the reasons of the disappointment of the 58% people who declared they were disappointed by their previous booking.
17. What have you been disappointed about?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17.</th>
<th>Disappointed, what about?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>noise</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>food quality</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>too expensive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nobody spoke our language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What have you been disappointed about?

This question has been asked as an open question to the 19 respondents concerned. It came out that 37% of them were disturbed by the noise of the hotel, 32% by the bad quality of the food, 26% by the too expensive price and 5% by the fact that nobody within the personal of the hotel was able to speak their language.
18. When you go to the restaurant of the hotel you expect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very bad quality</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad quality</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average quality</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good quality</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very high quality</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question “when you go to the restaurant of the hotel you expect:” asked to all the 62 respondents shows that only 2% of the interrogated people answered by one of the extreme: very bad quality or very good quality. The rest of the people answered as following: 8% with bad quality, 53% with average quality and 35% with good quality.

This shows that more than half of the people think the quality of the restaurant of hotels in Spain is average. It is not bad, but it is not good either. This means that the factor quality appears again here so it has to be taken into account.
When you eat at the hotel restaurant you expect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>82%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fresh food</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frozen food</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the question “When you eat at the hotel restaurant you expect:” 82% answered fresh food and 18% frozen food. It seems here logical that the customers expect the best quality as possible and therefore fresh food. The question now is to know if hotels respect those expectations or not.
20. When you go on holiday in a hotel in Spain, do you book full-board offers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>When you go on holiday in a hotel in Spain do you book full-board offers?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, to the question “When you go on holiday in a hotel in Spain, do you book full-board offers?” the clear trend observed is that 85% of the respondents said yes. It shows the absolute preference of customers for taking all meals included formulas when they reserve their stay. Then the goal in order to continue this study is to understand why people take all included formulas when they go to hotels in Spain in order to identify better what customers are looking for.
21. No, why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>it is too expensive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the quality is not good enough</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you prefer taste local food in other places than the hotel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After having answered this question, please go directly to question n°23.

When the respondents are asked to justify why they answered no to the precedent question, there is not a general clear trend. The answers of the respondents are divided almost equally among the three possibilities: “you prefer taste local food in other places than the hotel”, “the quality is not good enough” and “it is too expensive”.

This doesn’t show a specific reason, however here needs to be reminded that this question has been asked only to people who answered no to “When you go on holiday in a hotel in Spain, do you take all meals included?” which concerned only 9 respondents out of the 62.

That is the reason why, even though the answer that seems to have more weight is “the quality is not good enough”, it is not as easy because there are only 4 respondents who answered that
against 3 who declared they wanted to taste local food in other places and 2 who said it was too expensive.

The answer needs to be taken into consideration, and the quality has to be closer examined, but it cannot be given more importance than it really has: there are only 4 people out of 62 who spoke badly in this question about the quality.

22. Yes, why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>22. Yes, why?</th>
<th>60%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>it is cheaper than eating in other restaurants</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it is more practical</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the quality is very good</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the food is adapted to my tastes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the food choice is very broad</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yes, why?

- it is cheaper than eating in other restaurants: 60%
- it is more practical: 21%
- the quality is very good: 9%
- the food is adapted to my tastes: 6%
- the food choice is very broad: 4%


diagram
Among the people who answered yes to the question “When you go on holiday in a hotel in Spain, do you take all meals included?”, 60% recognized that the main reason is because it is cheaper than eating in other restaurants and 21% declared that it is more practical. 9% said the quality is very good, 6% admitted that they did so because the food was adapted to their tastes and 4% because of the very broad choice.

This question shows that as it has been seen in precedent questions, people going on holiday in Spain are mainly looking for cheap prices.
Conclusion

The questionnaire, of which the results are presented above, had been distributed and collected to the respondents. The respondents were customers of hotels in Spain during the holiday. It has to be noted that the questionnaire has been addressed in June-July 2014 to people who were on holiday in hotels in Spain. As the researcher I knew already that the people who answered were going to have an opinion on hotels in Spain as they were staying there. Moreover, it is also important to take into account that the customers interrogated can be answering the questions “together” so the results might be a bit contaminated by the discussion between respondents or with others.

To the concern of the language, even though it has been distributed in Spain, as it has been distributed to tourists (most of them from other nationality than Spanish) the questionnaire has been left in English.

The main objective of this survey was to grasp more what customers really look for when they come to hotels in Spain, by interrogating them about prices, quality, etc.

Most of the respondents were families or friends coming on holiday in Spain and staying at hotels. More than half of them declare choosing Spain as a holiday destination for the cheapness. Even though a bit more than half of the respondents declare preferring to taste new food when they eat at the hotel restaurant, just a bit less than 40% of them admit appreciating the hotel to adapt the food to their taste. This is something difficult to deal with for a hotel as it means that at the hotel restaurant they need to have a wide range of food to offer. The service quality in general as well as the food quality more specifically are considered as oscillating between “average” and “good” by the interrogated customers. Here the little drawback is that this is very personal and subjective; not everyone has the same definition of good and average. Something that can seem good quality to one customer can seem low quality to another.

However, what comes out first from the analysis of those questionnaires is that customers coming to hotels in Spain chose to do so because they are looking for the cheapest price, however they declare not neglecting quality. For instance people admit choosing the full board offers so that the food comes out cheaper than eating in other restaurants that have no links to the hotel where they are staying, however they declare expecting average or good
quality and fresh products with the low prices. It would be interesting to know how in reality in operations hotels deal with their suppliers in order to obtain low prices and high quality at the same time.

This questionnaire allow conclusions about the fact that the quality is not predominantly considered as very good in Spain as much food quality as service quality in general. The study is going to continue in that direction in order to determine whether or not the quality and the low prices as wished by the customers are the priorities of the supply chain managers in hotels in Spain, and whether or not the management of the supply chain on a certain way in the hotels in Spain would constitute a competitive advantage towards others, maybe by improving the quality of food and services.
Qualitative Research: Interviews

Here the idea is to focus on different way of managing the supply chain of hotels in order to attract customers.

Even though there are in-depth interviews, which mean there are not formal with a closed number of listed questions, it is better to have prepared few key questions to frame the conversation. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

The interviews were conducted on an informal frame, where the researcher asked few questions in order to start the conversation and whose main objective was to get the most in-depth as possible understanding of the supply chain function in the hotels in Spain, and therefore during the interview to keep the conversation on track of the supply chain management topic.

In order to do so and to nourish the conversation, the following questions were prepared and asked to the interviewees.

1/13 What is your role in the company?
2/13 What are your main tasks?
3/13 How long are you working for this company?
4/13 What are the strengths and weaknesses of the company?
5/13 What are the components of the supply of this hotel?
6/13 What do you evaluate as being the strengths and weaknesses of the supply chain of the hotel?
7/13 How do you evaluate the weaknesses? Through which tools?
8/13 What are the main objectives of the supply chain in this hotel?
9/13 How do you control whether or not you achieved them? What do you do when you don’t?
10/13 To what limits do you think supply chain can help customers to be satisfied? Does it help to retain customers/attract customers? How?
11/13 Do you target a specific type of customers? How do you modify the supply chain in order to do so?
12/13 What competitive advantage do you have? How did you achieve it?
Thanks to which activities in the company did they achieve a competitive advantage?

The researcher has used personal contact in order to realize the interviews. The main difficulty here has been to find professional people in the concerned field who accepted to take time to do the interviews.

Have been interviewed three professionals: the supply chain manager of a hotel group in Spain, the director of a hotel in Spain and the purchase director of a hotel chain in Spain.

The main drawback here is that none of them has accepted to be taped. All of them have however agreed for the researcher to take notes. Nevertheless even though the notes have been taken very carefully it creates a margin of human errors in the transfer of the exact words of the interviewees by the interviewer. Moreover as the three interviewees were Spanish the interviews have been conducted on their demands in Spanish and translated carefully later by the researcher. The interviews were conducted separately.

Here the interviews have been summarized in order to draw an analysis of the main ideas to retain in this study in order to answer the research questions.

The three interviewees were working in different Spanish hotel companies and wished to keep the full confidentiality about their names and the names of the companies for purposes of business intelligence, etc.

The interviewees were all of them working at their positions (nominated above) since more than five years.
Without consulting each other, as the interviews were conducted separately, the three interviewees agreed on the fact that the main visible strengths of a hotel in Spain are the recognitions of quality that can be attributed by the Spanish government\(^2\).

As they reckoned, the hardest thing to deal with in the hotel industry in Spain is the weather. Indeed, a lot of customers come according to the weather. For instance, summer 2013 has been a very hot and sunny weather which led to a record number of visitors, whereas summer 2014 has been until now less hot and rainier (a lot of storms especially in the region of Catalunya in the north of Spain).

Some of the strengths of the hotels differed according to the groups where the interviewees were from. One of them identified the competitive advantage of his company as being in the broad range of hotel types within the group: from the cheap hotel, to the familiar hotel or the luxury hotel (without children). The two other ones said their advantage towards their competitors was that they were the cheapest ones.

However all of them are in accordance with each other saying that the supply chain has to be very well defined with parameters which will ensure that the communication between the hotel group and its suppliers will be well established. Concretely, this means that all the references are studied before the highest period of tourists’ presence. The supply chain managers together with the director of hotels, and often the accountant make sure that only the most rentable and valuable references are being kept and that the most beneficial agreements with the suppliers have been signed before starting the so-called high season\(^3\). It can be hard to eliminate a reference (a product) from the menu as the hotel will never be a hundred percent sure that clients will not demand it; but if a product is making you lose money by having a margin too low between price of cost and price of sell there is no interest for the company in keeping it.

The errors within the supply chain need to be monitored in order to try avoiding them in the future. Therefore ERP\(^4\) systems between suppliers and hotels are necessary in order to improve the communication. They allow the hotels to keep a track of the mistakes that could

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\(^2\) As seen in the literature review, Spain has its own quality reward system in the tourism industry.

\(^3\) High season is commonly defined as the busiest period of the year for the holiday resorts or tourism industry, it is the “period when there are most travelers and tourists” (Collin Dictionary of Business, 2006) accessed Credo Online 22/07/2014

\(^4\) “Enterprise resource planning: a software system that coordinates every important aspect of an organization’s production into one seamless process so that maximum efficiency can be achieved” (Business The ultimate resource, 2009) accessed Credo Online 22/07/2014.
have been done by the suppliers in their deliveries but it also allow them to keep a track of their own mistakes (an inventory shortage for instance). The less mistakes are been done the more the customers are satisfied. Moreover, the communication between suppliers and hotels is very important as it allows the hotels to see and adapt what they offer to the customers: for instance if the hotel sees that one product is not appreciated by the customers present at this same moment in the hotel, it can be reported to the suppliers and easily replaced by another one. The management of the supply chain in hotels is a daily work and needs to be flexible enough in order to be modified if necessary: the Russian do not necessarily like the same kind of food as the French or the German (three very important tourists’ nationalities on the Spanish market).

The most important according to the interviewees is to keep a full board offer very accessible in term of price. To attract customers it needs to be cheap, however the quality cannot be neglect and is very important. Indeed, the role of the supply chain manager is also to make sure the quality of the food is as high as expected by customers. Nevertheless it is hard to have low prices, broad choice and fresh food (no frozen food) all the time. In fact, hotels in Spain often use frozen food such as frozen fish or meat in order to keep costs a bit down, enabling the offer of low prices to customers.

The frozen food does not only allow a decrease in costs, it also avoid losses of food that is not consumed. This is the risk for a hotel which would propose a lot of fresh food, if the whole stock is not consumed, the rest needs to be thrown away and this represents a huge loss of money for the company.

To the concern of the adaptation of the food to the customers, frozen food also present the advantage of enabling the hotel to offer a larger variety of fishes or meats to the customers. The other method would be focusing on a type of customers and offering only fresh food convening to that type of customer at the risk to lose the others. However, this would be less rentable as it would cost more in any case and the hotel would have the risk of losing the customers that were not exactly targeted and therefore that stayed unsatisfied.

The way of having a competitive advantage is being able to offer something different from the other hotels in Spain, or thanks to the prices that are lower than any other ones, or a specific quality of food and services, or achieving both.
Qualitative analysis: Participant observation

During six months last year, I have been working as a purchase assistant in the administration department of a hotel chain named Grupo Reside and located in Salou (Catalunya, Spain). I have spent this year few days again in the company in order to check that everything I was going to say in the research was still up-to-date.

Grupo Reside is a hotel group being part of COMSA EMTE, which is an industrial company specialized in infrastructure and engineering. Grupo Reside itself is divided in two parts: an estate agency and a hotel group. I worked in the hotel group.

Those six months as a purchasing assistant enabled me to have a nice participant observation role. I could observe the functioning of the company and participate to the supply chain management of the hotel group at the same time.

The hotel group is organized in five vending points: Hotel Blaumar, Hotel Magnolia, Hotel Les Daliès, Hotel La Boella and Camping La Siesta; apart from which they also have a proper olive oil mill where they produce their own olive oil that they sell and use in their hotels and also sell in the rest of Spain.

All the centers are managed from the main offices. It is important to note that all the centers and the office are located in the same area, as presented on the following map.
1: Headquarters
2: Hotel Blaumar
3: Hotel Magnolia
4: Hotel Les Daliès
5: Hotel La Boella
6: Oil Mill

Here the camping is not presented as the focus of this study and of my job when I was working there was on the hotels.

Different aspects of the job have been interested and can be used for the present study.

First of all, even being part of the supply chain management team, it is essential to know what is going on with the sales. Therefore, a document was being done and distributed around the whole company in order to let each other know whether the company was doing good comparing with the budgets or not. The document was presented as followed\(^5\).

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\(^5\) The numbers have been changed for the purpose of confidentiality but the concept remains the same and will be explained here.
**PARTE DIARIO DE PRODUCCION**

**BLAUMAR HOTEL**

**DAY:** 31 /07/13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPT</th>
<th>Daily Sales</th>
<th>Month Sales</th>
<th>Estimated Month Sales</th>
<th>Accumulated sales same day last year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROOMS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44 604,69 €</td>
<td>1 290 263,37 €</td>
<td>1 324 400,00 €</td>
<td>1 277 900,53 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOOD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Board</td>
<td>7 659,71 €</td>
<td>220 333,85 €</td>
<td>263 084,51 €</td>
<td>258 024,88 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Blau Mar</td>
<td>358,21 €</td>
<td>16 554,72 €</td>
<td>15 812,12 €</td>
<td>15 812,12 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Blau Mar Swimming Poc</td>
<td>430,69 €</td>
<td>9 332,63 €</td>
<td>8 194,73 €</td>
<td>8 424,55 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Blau Mar Café</td>
<td>66,35 €</td>
<td>5 608,32 €</td>
<td>3 162,93 €</td>
<td>3 251,63 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Arena</td>
<td>920,00 €</td>
<td>27 866,37 €</td>
<td>36 354,50 €</td>
<td>30 771,38 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL FOOD</strong></td>
<td>9 434,96 €</td>
<td>279 695,89 €</td>
<td>326 608,79 €</td>
<td>316 284,56 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DRINKS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Blau Mar</td>
<td>1 359,61 €</td>
<td>37 165,41 €</td>
<td>36 991,27 €</td>
<td>38 028,67 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Blau Mar Piscina</td>
<td>665,84 €</td>
<td>23 882,34 €</td>
<td>18 200,59 €</td>
<td>18 711,02 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Blau Mar Café</td>
<td>349,66 €</td>
<td>12 102,90 €</td>
<td>11 534,35 €</td>
<td>11 857,82 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Arena</td>
<td>304,00 €</td>
<td>8 113,75 €</td>
<td>7 845,50 €</td>
<td>6 355,92 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL DRINKS</strong></td>
<td>2 679,11 €</td>
<td>81 264,40 €</td>
<td>74 571,71 €</td>
<td>74 953,43 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAUNDRY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9,32 €</td>
<td>874,08 €</td>
<td>957,90 €</td>
<td>957,90 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHONE CALLS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0,33 €</td>
<td>63,31 €</td>
<td>111,06 €</td>
<td>111,06 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARKING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>508,23 €</td>
<td>16 996,99 €</td>
<td>18 708,72 €</td>
<td>18 708,72 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VARIOS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided Sales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe box</td>
<td>578,30 €</td>
<td>16 053,38 €</td>
<td>16 755,80 €</td>
<td>16 755,80 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreative machines</td>
<td>1 363,63 €</td>
<td>1 313,56 €</td>
<td>1 313,56 €</td>
<td>1 313,56 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entr. Port Aventura</td>
<td>533,00 €</td>
<td>960,33 €</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other incomes</td>
<td>256,54 €</td>
<td>18 149,96 €</td>
<td>10 397,16 €</td>
<td>14 494,58 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL VARIOUS</strong></td>
<td>834,84 €</td>
<td>39 099,97 €</td>
<td>28 466,52 €</td>
<td>33 524,27 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SALES</strong></td>
<td>58 071,48 €</td>
<td>1 705 258,01 €</td>
<td>1 773 824,70 €</td>
<td>1 722 440,47 €</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N° occupied rooms  | 249 | 7 870 | 7 700 | 7 917 |
| % occupied rooms   | 90,22 | 91,98 | 90,00 | 92,53 |
| N° hotel clients   | 723 | 22 185 | 21 252 | 21 848 |
| N° Arena hotel     | 47 | 1 498 | 1 700 | 1 526 |
| % Double occupation | 2,90 | 2,82 | 2,76 | 2,76 |
| N° of employees    | 106,78 | 102,24 | 102,25 | 102,27 |
| Clients accounts   | 275 158,81 € | 275 158,81 € | 269 336,33 € |
| Agencies accounts  | 693 525,69 € | 693 525,69 € | 993 304,41 € |
| REVPAR             | 210,40 € | 199,31 € | 207,32 € | 201,31 € |
| REVPOR             | 233,22 € | 216,68 € | 230,37 € | 217,56 € |
| Average income room| 179,14 € | 163,95 € | 172,00 € | 161,41 € |
| Aver. income customer hotel | 83,47 € | 76,87 € | 83,47 € | 78,84 € |
| Ave. income customer Arena | 24,33 € | 24,33 € | 24,33 € | 24,33 € |
This document presented daily, allows (here to this matter) the supply chain management team of the group to see between others the percentage of occupation in each hotel of the group, and the number of full board clients, which means that the orders of food and beverage can accordingly be adapted.

One of the most important aspects of the job within the supply chain of a hotel group is the cost control. A group of hotel such as Grupo Reside implies a lot of references (products), most of them being food and beverage.

Between the numbers of references used and sold mainly through the restaurants of the hotels, it is important to check that the margins are still interesting for the administration of the hotels, otherwise the references that are considered as not worth anymore have to be eliminated or replaced. Usually this check is done before the high season, when there are still not many customers in order to check that the best and more valuable references are going to be offered to the customers.

Moreover, once a month an analysis of costs was realized. Each hotel was divided into centers in order to be managed more easily, and the goal was to check the comparison between costs and sales in each center. The analysis was presented as followed.
## COSTS ANALYSIS

### HOTEL Blaumar MONTH juin-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REAL</th>
<th>BUDGETED</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>REAL</th>
<th>BUDGETED</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breakfast Buffet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 774,88</td>
<td>73 917,60</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>209 117,04</td>
<td>190 690,08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 188,44</td>
<td>28 853,80</td>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>81 629,02</td>
<td>74 436,04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39,04</td>
<td>39,04 %</td>
<td>N° Breakfast</td>
<td>45 859</td>
<td>41 818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,78</td>
<td>1,78</td>
<td>Costo por servicio</td>
<td>1,78</td>
<td>1,78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Menus / Lunch-Dinner Buffet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103 037,03</td>
<td>123 649,37</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>260 236,40</td>
<td>259 857,58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 601,97</td>
<td>44 246,38</td>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>108 465,11</td>
<td>105 053,83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35,52</td>
<td>35,78 %</td>
<td>N° Full Board</td>
<td>45 859</td>
<td>40,43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,28</td>
<td>Average Income</td>
<td>5,67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,23</td>
<td>Cost per Service</td>
<td>2,37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,40</td>
<td>Cost per person</td>
<td>2,40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant Arena</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 923,12</td>
<td>25 662,00</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>75 916,78</td>
<td>102 648,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 376,94</td>
<td>7 698,60</td>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>22 775,04</td>
<td>30 794,40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 409</td>
<td>N° Services</td>
<td>4 200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19,82</td>
<td>Average Income/service</td>
<td>18,08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,95</td>
<td>Average Cost/service</td>
<td>5,42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,00</td>
<td>30,00 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>30,00</td>
<td>30,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bar / Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 027,77</td>
<td>5 168,33</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>16 166,06</td>
<td>11 758,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 467,78</td>
<td>1 167,38</td>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>2 787,21</td>
<td>2 848,81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,28</td>
<td>22,59 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>17,24</td>
<td>24,23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant Blaumar</td>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 242,02</td>
<td>26 258,83</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>71 622,93</td>
<td>63 595,67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 564,79</td>
<td>4 017,18</td>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>11 749,46</td>
<td>9 910,04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16,76</td>
<td>15,30 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>16,40</td>
<td>15,58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant Arena</td>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 811,68</td>
<td>6 461,00</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>26 613,00</td>
<td>22 152,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 266,61</td>
<td>2 143,51</td>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>9 113,11</td>
<td>6 969,60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29,02</td>
<td>33,18 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>31,85</td>
<td>31,46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bar / Drinks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 799,96</td>
<td>16 989,50</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>49 765,70</td>
<td>39 708,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 166,49</td>
<td>3 056,76</td>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>8 974,97</td>
<td>6 753,31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,99</td>
<td>17,99 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>18,03</td>
<td>17,01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This analysis is done by the supply chain management team and analyzed with the hotels’ directors in order to check the yield of each center.

The company Grupo Reside finds its strengths in the fact that they have different hotels corresponding to different types of customers. Hotel La Boella is a convention center and a luxury hotel where there are only thirteen bedrooms. Hotel Magnolia is a luxury hotel targeting mainly business men and couple who want to relax in a hotel that is not allowed to children. Hotel Blaumar is the biggest hotel of the group, it is the familiar hotel. Finally Hotel Les Dalies is the cheapest hotel of the group, targeting families but also friends coming on holiday in Salou for cheap prices.

However as a lot of companies, Grupo Reside tries to decrease costs as much as possible in order to lower prices and therefore attract more customers. In order to do so, the company uses different techniques.

The first one is the outsourcing of some services: for instance the laundry. This avoids the company having to own machines for the laundry service, and it avoids the company having to hire more personal in order to take care of this service.

Second of all the company uses something called the concept of centralized kitchen. This means that the food for all the hotels is prepared in one main center where are concentrated the cooks, who are making the foods for all the hotels of the group. There are some costs advantages linked to this method: the company does not need a very good cook in each hotel, but they need one or two in the centralized kitchen, and they is no service so they can be cooking the whole day. The cooks in charge of the cooking are not the one dealing with the timetables of the breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Moreover, this system of centralization of the kitchen allows the company to realize economies of scales by making bigger orders on certain food and beverages for all the hotels at the same time.

Then some techniques to lower costs can be found at the level of the contract. Indeed, the technique of obtaining discounts for paying quicker can be a good approach in order to reduce costs but also to establish a trust relationship with the supplier. This consists in paying at 30
days instead of 60 days after delivery obtaining a discount of between 1 and 5% on the total price for instance.

In this company, some products are bought in advance for the whole year based on estimation from the previous year. For instance they buy some types of fishes this way. Concretely, this means they order a quantity of fish they estimated they will need for the whole season/year (this is fresh fish that the supplier freezes himself) and the hotels receive it little by little according to their needs. That way there is a reduction of warehousing costs. The most advantageous interest to that technique is that the price of fishes varies a lot along the year, with that technique the buyer orders it and pays the whole stock for the year at the cheapest moment of the year. This is a win-win situation in the sense that the supplier is paid in advance for a chain of hotel which is a big customer for him.

The company also tries to find the best alternative they can to some very expensive products/services. In the case of this company, in hotels very often in Spain the breakfast is served on a buffet form and the customers help themselves and eat how much they wish. It is the same for the drinks (hot drinks and juices). However the companies realized that making the fresh orange juices with the machines was costing a lot of money. Indeed, the machine does not press the fruits 100%, there is a loss of fruits. Therefore the company looked for a supplier who provides fresh pressed and bottled orange juices delivered at the hotel every two days (because the fresh juice cannot be conserved longer because it is fresh and natural without any conservative added). That way was cheaper to the hotels that the old machines they had which were creating a loss of fruits during the use.

The group of hotels where was the participant observation was done is located in Catalonia, in the North of Spain. This is a region where the Russian tourism is very present, especially in June and July. That is the reason why the hotels there need to adapt their services to the Russian customers who have very different tastes to the Spanish customers for instance.

Since 2008 there are a lot of Russian people in Spain especially in the North (Catalonia) and they do not have the same food habits as the Spanish tourists for instance. Russians like to eat a lot of fishes and fruits, whereas Spanish people on holidays consume a lot of meat and pastries.
The adaptation of the menus and activities constitute a competitive advantage for the hotels which decide to put it in place. Grupo Reside for instance decided to adapt its menus to the taste of Russian customers and to create a Flamenco Show mainly steered towards Russians. This creates an advantage for the group, passing agreements with some tour-operators, compared to other hotel groups who just continue the same way they were operating before the peak of Russian tourism since 2008. Moreover, Russian tourism increased in Spain at the moment where local tourism decreased because of the economic crisis.

However, the hotels are being careful as they do not want to neglect the other nationalities of customers.
Discussion

The research questions of this study were:

- How does the supply chain participate to the performance of hotels in Spain?
- How do hotels in Spain manage their supply chain in order to satisfy their customers?
- How through the supply chain management can hotels in Spain create a competitive advantage towards their rivals?

In the literature review has been seen and defined the tourism in Spain and the supply chain management, as well as more into details how a supply chain can be more effective especially in hotels. It is hard to bring something new to the literature as not so many recent literatures has been done especially about hotels in Spain and their management at a supply chain level. However the research that has been conducted here through the questionnaire, the interviews and the participant observation allowed the research to get an in-depth view of the supply chain management in hotels in Spain, from the customers’ point of view, as well as from the professionals’ point of view. This gave a new approach to the literature as most of the present available articles are realized whether on the customers’ point of view, whether on the professionals’ but rarely comparing and trying to make match both.

Nevertheless the hotel industry in Spain is a very changing industry. Indeed, it relies a lot on weather for instance, which makes that some year there are more customers, and some years less. This means that through the questionnaires distributed this year it might not be obtained the same answers as it could have been obtained last year. Furthermore have been collected “only” 62 answers. With more responses might have been captured other conclusions, as a nationality could have been more dominantly present in the collected questionnaires.

Moreover, the professionals have a proper point of view, this means this is subjective, it cannot be taken as an absolute truth without being shaded.

The participant observation is a good way of finding out exactly how the supply chain is managed in a hotel in Spain. However, even if the research tries to get the most objective
point of view as possible, it is always narrated and therefore giving the point of view of the narrator.

The research contributes to the area in the way that most of the articles in the literature are very academic and theoretical; it is hard to find practical cases (Spencer and Kim, 2011).

Moreover it enables to see that what is said in the literature about supply chain management practices in general (see literature review) can be applied to the hotels in Spain. The study could continue to see if it could be applied in a more general matter to the hotels in the world and not only in Spain.
Conclusion and recommendations

This research had three main objectives: to prove that the supply chain management in hotels has an influence on their performance (that is to say on their sales) to show that through different practices of the supply chain management hotels can attract certain new customers (who will be defined later) and satisfy their existing customers (in order to retain them) and to prove that thanks to the well management of their supply chain, hotels can obtain a competitive advantage.

The literature review has shown the relationship between supply chain management and performance. The academic articles put in evidence the positive relationship between complex supply chains and high performance. Later in the study thanks to the data findings, it has been seen that supply chains in hotels in Spain correspond to the criteria of complex supply chains, which means they could be associated to high performance.

The literature also showed some concepts that could be put in place in the supply chains of companies in order to get customers’ satisfaction, such as the information sharing through the e-procurement and the integration of the supply chain. However it was nuanced by the fact that it is not easy in practice. Nevertheless it has been seen through the qualitative data analysed through the interview and the participant observation that some of those practices were set-up in hotels in Spain in order to achieve high performance.

The secondary data through the literature showed in order to achieve competitive advantage through the supply chain management, customers had to be included in the processes and the operations. Indeed, this is part of the supply chain integration. In the primary data collection, it has been first of all seen what customers of hotels in Spain really were looking for and expecting from the hotels they were booking in Spain. Later, it has been checked by the interviews and the participant observation that the hotels were also taking into account what customers wanted and were expecting, especially about the cheapness. The study mainly showed that the first criteria for customers to choose to spend holiday in hotels in Spain was because it was cheap; and it then showed that hotels in Spain were very conscious about it and therefore very attentive in order to have the lowest costs as possible (at a supply chain level) in order to offer the lowest prices as possible.
However, the quality also has been underlined in the inquest to the customers. They are looking for cheap prices, but with a good level of quality of services and food. For instance they are expecting fresh food in the hotel restaurant, when in order to get cheaper costs hotels often use frozen food (see participant observation).

After this study, it is recommended to hotels in Spain to work carefully on the quality of services and food they offer to their customers. It has been shown that some customers were complaining because of the quality of the food served or of the services in general (their language was not spoken). On a supply chain level, the food quality is possible to be dealt with. Indeed, the recommendation is to reduce the broadness of the menu in order to be able to offer fewer products but fresh ones. Putting in place a system of e-procurement with suppliers is interesting in the way that it is a way to share information. That way, the supplier can see on a real time the stock of fish for instance (each sort of fish) that the hotel has; and make recommendation on a daily basis directly on the system to the buyer in order to propose which fresh fish (staying in the fish example) he has.

The image of quality might be hard to change in the mind of customers who go on holiday to Spain. However, finding a way through for instance the information sharing (thanks to e-procurement, enterprise resource planning and supply chain integration) is already a path in the way of not only having low costs (and therefore low prices) but also better quality. Indeed, the quality is part of what creates a competitive advantage. If all the hotels in Spain compete to have the lowest prices as possible in each category, if one has for the same prices a better quality he has a competitive advantage towards the others as the customers will choose the one with the best quality.

An approach that could be worked on in a future project about hotels in Spain, it is suggested to work on the “specific expectations” some customers could have. For instance nowadays it is very important for hotels to be classified if they are able to receive disable people, allergic people, etc. In Spain there are specific touristic guidebooks that indicate this kind of hotel, and this is a real added value for a hotel to be in it. It is a real competitive advantage.

As seen during this study, costs need to be lowered in order for the hotels to be able to offer lower prices. It has been shown that they are lowered through different practices of the supply chain such as economies of scale, etc. but costs do not have to be lowered only by the supply
chain. Indeed, costs can be decreased by other departments such as reducing costs of the marketing department, or the human resources department.

Moreover, as stated early in the study, performance of the hotel do no only rely on the supply chain but also on the human resources department and more in general on the leading management. Actually, in order to achieve customers’ satisfaction it has been proved that employees’ satisfaction is essential. The happier the employees will be at work, the more performance will achieve the company, and the more customers will be satisfied. This along with the supply chain practices for the hotel to perform will create a competitive advantage too.

For further research it is recommended to the hotels in Spain to study the leading management styles and practices that can lead to employees’ satisfaction.
Lessons learnt

The research for the MBA dissertation has been an occasion of learning to research but not only.

During the scholar year of the MBA at the Dublin Business School, the researcher did the Belbin learning style test in Professional and Personal Development classes. It came out with the highest score: shaper. Shapers are people who like challenge and enjoying stimulating the other members of a team, however they are very argumentative, which can offend some people when working with them. (Cottrell, 2013)

In terms of the thesis, it means that at the beginning when the challenge was very high because the topic was still not chosen, the researcher was very excited about the questioning.

However the first lesson that can be taken from this work is that the main difficulty has not been about finding the right subject (even if it has not been easy to find one), but to get very well organize to know exactly how to conduct the research.

The second lesson learnt is that a lot of time has to be taken into account for the interviews. Indeed, not only the time of writing the questions and making contacts has to be taken into account, but also the time necessary to wait until the persons will have time to dedicate to the interviews themselves.

The research took classes of project management during the year at Dublin Business School. Even though during classes a special point was made about the importance of planning and time management, and it has been checked along the year with the different projects in teams or alone that were conducted, the thesis being the largest project realized this year, it allowed the concretization and applications of the techniques learnt in project management. Moreover, it made the researcher realize how much it can go wrong on a time level. Some unexpected events can always come out such as here in this case health problems that are difficult to control, which means the planning had to be re-adapted.

Finally one of the most important lesson learnt is that choosing the topic is not only choosing something liked but also checking there is an important enough literature on the topic to do a dissertation about it. It is not good enough to have chosen a topic and then having to change it
because there are not enough things about it to write a whole thesis, or not having thought about all the different aspects of it.

During this thesis, therefore some things could have been done differently, such as choosing the topic in the first go more carefully checking all the aspects of the literature and how was going to be conducted the research (through which methodology).

Moreover some “margin time” should have been more carefully taken into account as the researcher had to face some unexpected events (health issues) which implied travelling back to home country to go to hospital and doctors, this delayed a bit the plans done for the work on the thesis.

Questionnaires could have been distributed to more people in order to try getting much more responses, which would have been more representative of the population of tourists in hotels in Spain.

With a thesis based on more months, the participant observation could have been done about a longer experience, which would have brought more information and insight.
Reflection

The choice of the topic has not been an easy part to do for me as I am very interested in different sectors which are: fashion and tourism. I first decided to do my thesis about fashion and how supply chains are organized in the phenomena called fast-fashion, however when I started the research I realized it was going to be harder as I thought to find information and data on the topic that were recent enough to be used in the study.

I took a quite long reflection time to decide what I should do with my topic. The reflection was mainly based on what I will do once I am finished with the MBA and the dissertation. As I already have had two working experiences in the tourism industry I realized I really wanted to work in this sector and I decided to do my thesis about something that I would use while looking for a job. That is the reason why I did the thesis about the supply chain management practices and their effects on the hotels in Spain.

The fact that I decided to study more especially the Spanish market is that as I started the thesis I also started to look for a job in hotels in Spain, and I wanted the thesis to help my develop knowledge about the topic in order to know a bit more about the sector I was applying in. Moreover, it is a sector in which I already worked in the specific territory of Spain.

I tried to get the most relevant sources I could in order to pursue this study. Some of my assumptions changed while doing the thesis, but some of them happened to be true. I for instance thought quality was more of a focus for hotels in Spain as it is and costs are the main focus. However, it has been very hard to find specific resources especially in the literature about the supply chain management practices in hotels in Spain. It is quite easy to find resources about supply chain management, as it is to find them about hotels but to find about the supply chain management in hotels is quite complicated, and especially on the Spanish market is very rare. I got very worried at that stage that I could not find the articles I was looking for, but I learnt to use better the databases accessible online via the library’s website of the Dublin Business School, and I finally did find what I was looking for. Nevertheless, I appreciated the challenge as a shaper (Belbin test) at the beginning of the thesis of not knowing yet how I will organize myself to manage finding all the data I was looking for.
During the phases of research in the sense of finding data I was surprised to see that it was as difficult to approach professionals. Indeed, I knew that questionnaires usually did not have very high rate of return but I did not know that it was going to be as hard as that to get interviews with professionals and more especially that they would not accept to get recorded.

I was especially surprised that most of the data found were academic and not practical and I hope I brought something to the research in the way that I tried to get a balance between academic data through the literature review and practical data through the questionnaire, interviews and participant observation.

According to the S.H.A.P.E. test (Cottrell, 2013), my learning style is “activist”. This means I like to work with intuition in a spontaneous way. I appreciate especially learning by experience, that is to say learning by doing. More especially I usually prefer team work. As a shaper in the Belbin test I like to motivate the team when I work in one and sharing with people by working with them, but it can be hard for me to get motivated to work on my own. Moreover I am structured enough and this creates me problems when it comes to such a project as the MBA dissertation.

Nevertheless, during the year I followed classes of Professional and Personal Development, which helped me to see what my points to improve were, so I got conscious of it. I also did classes of Project Management where I learnt that if a project is not very carefully planned it is very likely to fail (Larson and Gray, 2011). However, even though I learnt it in class and I studied some concrete cases, it has still been hard for me to plan my own project, and I realized I should have planned it earlier taking into account that things could go wrong and forecast a margin time in case.

If I had the chance to do it again, I would take more time for the reflection on the choice of the subject at the beginning of the period. Indeed, at the beginning I thought choosing a subject was easier and creating fewer consequences than it really is. I should have thought since the right beginning of the MBA year of what I was willing to do after the scholar year of my MBA, it which sector I wished to work and in which sector it actually was possible.

I made the choice to write my thesis from another country that Ireland, so I was far from the Dublin Business School while realizing the project. Indeed, it would maybe have been easier to write it from Dublin as I would have had an easier access to the library and the organization
of the meetings with my tutor would have been easier. However making this choice has allowed me to be in the country I was doing the thesis about. This enabled me to have a direct contact with customers and professionals of the Spanish market. Moreover, making contacts and trying to understand better the market has permitted me to find a job in Spain in the hotel sector.
References


Appendices
Appendix 1


This “research onion” explains the different ways to collect and analyse data for the thesis.
Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Dear participants,

My name is Sophie Dubreuil from Dublin Business School. I am conducting a research about hotels in Spain in order to complete my MBA thesis.

The goal of this questionnaire is to help me understand what customers look for when they come to hotels in Spain.

The participation to this study is totally voluntary and has nothing to do with the hotel you are staying in.

If you decide to take part, the questionnaire should take only a few minutes to complete.

Please tick the box corresponding to the answer matching the most your point of view. If you would like to add any comment to your answer please free to do so.

You answers and all the information you provide will remain totally confidential. Therefore you are not asked to provide at anytime in this questionnaire neither your name nor address.

I hope the completion of this questionnaire will be enjoyable. If you wish any further information please feel free to contact me to the following email: sophiedubreuil86@gmail.com.

Many thanks for your help.

1. Gender
   - Male
   - Female

2. Age
   - Between 18 and 25
   - Between 25 and 35
   - Between 35 and 55
   - More than 55
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<td>Open question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you go often on holiday in Spain?</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How often do you go?</td>
<td>each 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>each year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>twice a year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How long do you usually stay there?</td>
<td>few days (less than a week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>more than 2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. In which context do you usually come to Spain?</td>
<td>Business trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holiday with friends</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trip on my own</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Where do you usually stay?</td>
<td>hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>camping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>private accommodation</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Why do you choose Spain?</td>
<td>it's the cheapest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it's the closest</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it's the best quality</td>
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10. How would you characterize holiday in Spain?
   - Relaxing
   - Lots of parties
   - Quiet
   - High quality of food and services
   - Family time/visits/beach

11. What is the best aspect of the hotels in Spain?
   - They are cheap
   - The food is very good
   - The service is of very high quality
   - The location is perfect (beach, etc)

12. What do you prefer the most when the hotel adapts its menu (etc) to my taste, nationality specialities for instance?
   - When the hotel is the occasion to taste new local food

13. How do you evaluate the service quality in hotels in Spain in general?
   - Very low
   - Low
   - Average
   - Good
   - Very good

14. Do you have a favorite hotel in Spain (where you usually go for instance)?
   - Yes
   - No

   If yes, please go to question n° 15; if no, please go to question n° 16.

15. If yes, why?
   - The location is perfect
   - The food quality is very high
   - It's the cheapest hotel I found
   - The service quality in general is very good

   Once this question answered, you can please go directly to question n° 18.
16. If no, why?
- Last time I was disappointed of the one I booked
- I like to test new places

If you answered “last time I was disappointed of the one I booked”, to this question, please also answer the question n° 17. If you answered “I like to test new places”, please go directly to question n° 18.

17. Disappointed, what about?
- noise
- food quality
- too expensive
- nobody spoke our language

18. When you go to the restaurant of the hotel you expect:
- very bad quality
- bad quality
- average quality
- good quality
- very high quality

19. When you eat at the hotel restaurant you expect:
- frozen food
- fresh food (e.g. fishes daily fished)

20. When you go on holiday in a hotel in Spain do you book full-board offers?
- yes
- no

21. No, why?
- it is too expensive
- the quality is not good enough
- you prefer taste local food in other places than the hotel

22. Yes, why?
- it is cheaper than eating in other restaurants
- it is more practical
- the quality is very good
- the food is adapted to my tastes
- the food choice is very broad
Appendix 3

Interview

Sophiedubreuil86@gmail.com

Topic of the thesis:

Hotel Industry on the Spanish Market: Supply Chain Management a way of creating a competitive advantage?

The goal of this interview is to learn more about supply chain management thanks to the help of professionals of the hotel industry in Spain, and more especially to have an insight about the relation between supply chain management and a potential competitive advantage for the company.

The answers to this interview will be used in the frame of my research which is strictly scholar. All data will remain confidential and anonymous if desired by the interviewee.

14/13 What is your role in the company?

Que es su rolo en la empresa?

15/13 What are your main tasks?
Que son sus tareas principales?

16/13  How long are you working for this company?

Desde cuándo trabaja usted en esta empresa?

17/13  What are the strengths and weaknesses of the company?

Que son las fuerzas y debilidades de su empresa?

18/13  What are the components of the supply of this hotel?

Como se organizan los componentes de la cadena de proveedores en su empresa?

19/13  What do you evaluate as being the strengths and weaknesses of the supply chain of the hotel?

Que evalúa usted por ser las fuerzas y debilidades de la cadena de proveedores de esta empresa?

20/13  How do you evaluate the weaknesses? Through which tools?

Como evalúa usted las debilidades? Con que herramiento?

21/13  What are the main objectives of the supply chain in this hotel?

Que son los objetivos principales de la cadena de proveedores de su empresa?
22/13 How do you control whether or not you achieved them? What do you do when you don’t?

Como controla usted que ha conseguido los objetivos o no? Que hace usted si no lo ha conseguido?

23/13 To what limits do you think supply chain can help customers to be satisfied? Does it help to retain customers/ attract customers? How?

Hasta que limites piensa usted que la cadena de proveedores puede ayudar a la satisfacción de los clientes? Puede la gestión de la cadena de proveedores ayudar a atraer y retener a los clientes? Como?

24/13 Do you target a specific type of customers? How do you modify the supply chain in order to do so?

Se orienta su empresa a un tipo especial de clientes? Como modificais la cadena de proveedores para conseguirlo?

25/13 What competitive advantage do you have? How did you achieve it?

Que ventaja competitiva tiene su empresa? Como lo ha conseguido?

26/13 Thanks to which activities in the company did they achieve a competitive advantage?

Gracias a que actividades de la empresa habeis conseguido esta ventaja competitiva?
Appendix 4

E-thesis submission form

E-Thesis Submission Form

Dear Student,

Please complete all fields listed below as applicable. Leave fields that do not apply to you blank. Sign this cover sheet by typing your name in the appropriate field at the bottom of this page and submit as a separate MSWord or PDF document alongside your thesis via the designated Moodle Submission Page.

If you have any questions concerning this submission form, please contact the library at esource@dbs.ie.

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<td>Dubreuil, Sophie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author:</td>
<td>10043961</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Number:</td>
<td>Patrick Mongey</td>
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<td>Supervisor(s):</td>
<td>Specify what kind of (if any) material accompanies your thesis (e.g. ppt., audio/video file etc.). Submit this material via Moodle as a separate file.</td>
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<td>Email:</td>
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<td>Author Affiliation:</td>
<td>Name of the relevant DBS School where you are based (School of Arts, School of Business and Law, Professional School etc.).</td>
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<td>Year of graduation</td>
<td>The year that you will your studies/graduate in format: YYYY (e.g. 2014)</td>
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<td>Specify what kind of (if any) material accompanies your thesis (e.g. ppt., audio/video file etc.). Submit this material via Moodle as a separate file.</td>
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Appendix 5

Deposit agreement

Deposit Agreement

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Please sign this deposit agreement electronically and return it to your thesis supervisor for filing, and keep a copy for your own file.

Signature: Sophie Dubreuil     Date: 14/08/2014

DBS School: [Type here]

Contact details: sophie.dubreuil@get-mail.eu
Appendix 6

Poster
ABSTRACT
Purpose: The goal of the research was to show how supply chain management can be used in the hotel industry on the Spanish market to create a competitive advantage. In order to do so the study examines some practices that can lead to reducing their costs in order to satisfy their customers but also to obtain quality and therefore a competitive advantage.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study is done in a descripto-explanatory way in order to analyse data through a qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data are collected through interviews of professionals of the hotel industry in Spain and a participant observation on the supply chain of a hotel group in Spain whereas the quantitative data are collected through questionnaire distributes among customers of hotels in Spain.

Findings: Using the analysis of the data it can be deduced that it exist a positive correlation between supply chain management in hotels in Spain and performance of the hotels. Moreover, customers are willing cheap prices and therefore there are some supply chain practices that can be adapted to hotels in Spain in order to do so.

Practical implications: In order to obtain a real competitive advantage, the hotels have to put in place supply chain practices that allow and cheap costs (therefore cheap prices) and good quality if they want to gain and retain customers and be different from their competitors.

Originality/value: The study brings a balance between academic research and practical implications about the supply chain management in hotels in Spain. On a longer term, more studies could be done in order to generalize those practices and apply them to hotels in more countries over the world and not only on the Spanish market.

INTRODUCTION
This study is about supply chain management in hotels in Spain. More especially it is about finding new supply chain practices that can be adapted to the hotels in Spain in order for them to obtain a competitive advantage.

In order to do so the study has been conducted including primary and secondary thesis which will be answering the research objectives and the research questions.

The research questions are organized as followed:
- How does the supply chain participate to the performance of hotels in Spain?
- How do hotels in Spain manage their supply chain to satisfy their customers?
- How through the supply chain management can hotels in Spain obtain a competitive advantage?

The three main objectives to the thesis are the followings:
1. To prove that the supply chain management in hotels has an influence on their performance.
2. To show that through different practices of the supply chain management hotels can attract certain new customers and satisfy their existing customers (in order to retain them)
3. To prove that thanks to the well management of their supply chain, hotels can obtain a competitive advantage.

METHODOLOGY
Using an interpretivist philosophy the study has been conducted collecting secondary data from the literature (academic articles) from the online databases especially Emerald and Ebsco and then primary data will be collected.

In order to get more insight the research has been conducted in a descripto-explanatory way that allowed the research to go more in-depth into the analysis. Qualitative and quantitative research are being used.

The quantitative data will be collected through questionnaires among customers in hotels in Spain. This gave us an insight of what customers were really looking for by coming on holiday in hotels in Spain. Qualitative research is collected through interviews conducted with three professionals: a supply chain manager, a purchasing director and a hotel director. They are all working for hotel groups in Spain but not from the same companies.

Moreover, qualitative data will also be collected through a participant observation done in a hotel group based in Catalonia (North of Spain).

The qualitative research allowed the researcher to draw conclusions on which practices of the supply chain were linked to customers’ satisfaction and could create a competitive advantage.

RESULTS
As it is showed during the analysis of the questionnaire, customers come to Spain for its cheapness. Therefore in the literature review and in the interviews and participant observation have been seen some supply chain practices that allow hotels to get lower costs in order to be able to offer cheaper prices to satisfy the expectations of their customers.

The main practices retained are:
- E-procurement
- Supply chain integration
- Use of the enterprise planning system

Which allow the hotel to share information with their supplier.

Moreover in order to reduce costs, most of the hotels in Spain use central purchases benefiting of economies of scales. However it has come to our attention during this study that customers expect more quality from the hotels services and food.

DISCUSSION
Even though the study contributes to the literature in the way that there is an existing literature already but it is more academic, and this study brings a new balance making the link between academicians and practitioners.

Indeed some academic suggestions are not always easy to adapt to the practice, however some of them are flexible and it can be managed to be adapted.

Moreover as suggested in the literature, companies should focus even more about quality and not only about costs in order to get a real competitive advantage.

For further studies on the topic, it would be a good approach to start with. Quality does not only mean food quality but also service quality that can be managed through human resources management and leading management to obtain also employees’ satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS
Customers expect very cheap prices from hotels in Spain when they go on holiday there. Those prices can be obtain only by lowering costs.

It exists supply chain practices that help to lower costs such as economies of scale, early supplier payment, contracts, using frozen food, etc.

However, hotels have to be careful because nowadays hotel industry in Spain is a very competitive industry and all of them offer low prices, the way to obtain a competitive advantage probably lies in trying to be different, and therefore offering a very good quality of food and services for instance for the same prices as the others.

REFERENCES
