An investigation into Consumer Behaviour across e-tourism

An analysis of the behaviour of 18 to 25 years old on French online airline market

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Project submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Business Ordinary Degree in Marketing.

DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

March 2011

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Author's Declaration

I, Anne-Claire VELLUET, declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation, that during this period of registered study I have not been registered for any other academic award or qualification, nor has any of the material been submitted wholly or partly for any other award. I have personally carried out all the work of which this a record. The programme of study of which this a part has been delivered by Dublin Business School.

Signed:

Date: 14th March 2011

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank sincerely people who follow and support me to build this project.

First, I would like to thank Jacklyn Tully, my supervisor and lecturer project, for her advice and her guidance during all the process.

Secondly, I would like to thank Noel Gadinger who gives precious advice on this thesis and helps me to improve my English language during his class.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my friends for their support and mainly all the participants of my focus group: Alex, Manon, Ines, Andréa, Pauline, Jasmine, Derek, Marc and Julien. Thank you to spend time to participate to my focus group and to share your personal experiences and feelings.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my parents Jean and Francine and my brothers, Thomas, Mathieu and Julien, for their continuous encouragement throughout this project.

Abstract

The researcher analyses the consumer behaviour of French people aged between 18 and 25 years old on airline websites. The aim of this dissertation is to understand feelings and attitudes of French student people about online airline market. In a second time, the researcher wants to analyse factors which influence this people to buy online.

In relation to secondary researches, the author has reported some theories in books and academic readings to investigate this subject. A lot of stimuli and factors influence people to online purchase. Furthermore, the researcher will explore consumer behaviour in tourism and in more details the online purchase intention in e-tourism.

Then, the author will organise a focus group to collect all the necessary data of French 18-25 years old about their experiences and their feelings on airline websites. The price is the main factor which attracts people to buy on airline websites. But others factors are also important, like the past experiences of relatives, or the service quality.

Finally, the author will conclude with the help of all data collected during this research. This target audience is really influence by price in particular and sometimes in detriment of quality.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Eliot and Joppe (2009), there is an emergence of tourism online and new marketing facilities. Indeed, the market industry of tourism was booming in developed countries. To respond to that demand, companies had to develop their business and adapt themselves to consumers 'needs

Even though many studies have reported on the consumer behaviour in tourism, few were reported on e-tourism. So, the purpose of this research is to understand consumer behaviour faced to e-tourism and more particular on online French transport market.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

For this study the research question is **the web has helped to change consumer behaviour in tourism.**

1.2 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

In this research, the research hypothesis is **the web has a positive impact on consumer behaviour and on online purchase intention.**

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

- ✓ **To understand behaviours of consumers faced this market of e-tourism.**

- ✓ **To investigate factors those influence the purchasing decisions of consumers on the tourism products online.**

1.4 ORGANISATION OF THE RESEARCH

First, there will be an introduction of theoretical background of tourism market.

Then, the literature review will focus on the tourism consumer behaviour and on the motivation of Internet users to buy tourism product online.

The methodology will explain quantitative and qualitative research. The priority of the researcher is to analyse behaviour and feelings of consumers. The research tool the most adapted for this research is the focus group.

After, the research findings are the most important of the research. Indeed, the researcher will analyse all feedbacks and feelings of people who participate in focus group.

At the end, the researcher will give his recommendations based on primary and secondary researches.

1.5 LIMITATIONS

However, this research has some limitations; especially the small sample size is not very representative of French 18-25 years old. Indeed, the participants of the focus group gathered French students studying business in Ireland. All French people aged between 18 and 25 years old and used Internet daily are not all students and not studying the same subject as well.

The second limitation is the lack of experience to do a focus group, especially to guide the discussion and to analyse it.

1.6   CONCLUSION

In this part, the researcher explained briefly his motivations to do this business project. Furthermore, the author has been gave an overview of the dissertation part by part.

Chapter 2:

Literature Review

2.0 INTRODUCTION

What is tourism?

According to Tourism Society of England, *Tourism is the temporary, short-term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination*". In 1981, the International association of scientific experts in Tourism defined tourism in terms of *"particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home"*. There is an evolution between each of them. Indeed, at the beginning the tourism was considered only like leisure period, but now tourism can be associated to business activities.

The tourism market can be divided in five main sectors:

- The hospitality sector

- The attraction and event sector

- The transport sector

- The travel organizer and intermediaries sector

- The destination organisation sector

The tourism market has known a success in the mid of 1990's. Several factors must be taking into account. First, the emerging of global economy allowed to develop tourism opportunities worldwide and offered a lot of tourism employment. Secondly, the democratization of transport means allowed people to travel cheaper and worldwide. Thirdly, the improvement of new technologies and more particular Internet has allowed to companies to launch their tourism business online.

What is e-tourism?

According to Axinte (2009) *e-tourism is a part of area operations of electronic commerce, and has a grown number of travel agencies and tourism enterprises in global, national and regional levers that provide travel service through online transaction.*

E-tourism can be defined by all industry operations online; the "E" represents the state of electronic. With the involvement of new technologies and the failure of traditional way to promote tourism product (travel agencies…), tourism industry online has been boom. Mainly, Internet allowed creating a new marketplace online. This concept was born to the transformation of the economic structure and also in response to people needs. The involvement of electronic commerce allows agencies to expand their business.

The Information Communications technology (ICT) has a major role in the improvement of e-tourism. It allows people to find regional, national and worldwide information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week about intangible holiday and travel packages.

The literature review is divided in three main parts. Firstly, the research explains an overall view of the consumer motivation. In a second part, the chapter will focus on consumer behaviour in tourism. Finally, the last part will analyse the online purchase intention in e-tourism.

2.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

2.1.1 Stimuli

Before an online purchase, the consumer received certain stimuli, either is due to the **marketing strategies** and others result to **the consumer environment**. The stimuli represent all the knowledge and information about touristic product or service. This is one of the elements which can influence an internet user to buy online.

o **Marketing stimuli**

Marketing stimuli are all company strategies which attract people to sell a product. Marketing strategies are based on elements of marketing Mix, also called the 8 P's: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical environment and Productivity/quality. There are a lot of companies which share themselves the e-tourism market. As a result to this higher competition, the role of tourism business is to attract the traveller's attention. It can be the way to promote a tourist package, to do promotions or even to inform people. Internet users have a lot of choice between all the companies so in a first time, they used all the formal sources (advertising, brochures, sales promotions techniques, Public relation…)

According to Lin and Ding (2006), the tourism agents based their efforts on the design, state-of-the-art facilities and also on the promotion. Crosby et al. (1990) and previous studies considered that it is not the only determinant. Indeed, the company image must be taken into account and several factors allows to impulse purchasing:

- *The service that offered:* according to Perroud et al. (2006), the interactivity allows to satisfy consumers and mechanically improve their brand image.

- *The quality service of company* before, during and after the stay vacant.

- *The ease of purchasing and the easy-to-use a website* (Chiu, 2007, e.g appendix A).

o **<u>Other stimuli</u>**

The others stimuli also influenced consumer purchases intention. Indeed, these kinds of stimuli depend on the external environment lifestyles of each person. All these stimuli have an indirect impact on tourist's consciousness.

To these other stimuli, consumers used Informal sources. These sources are given by the *reference groups* that is to say by friends, family or others travellers.

According to Crotts (1999), the informal channels of information, word of mouth, friends and other reference groups are at least as influential on purchase decisions as the formal channels. People tend to trust easily to opinions of their family, friends or groups whose interact directly with him. Indeed, they have a great influence on them especially during the purchase decision. Subjective norms have significant effects on behavioural intention (Klein and Hirshchheim (1989); Mathieson (1991) and Venkatesh and Morris (1996)). Moreover, according to Reigner (2007) comments and reviews online can be influence consumers in their purchase intention. Today, potential consumers are more influenced by the *consumer-generated sites* than professional advice (Dellarocas, 2003). Today, consumers are less confident about marketers and advertising. The image that a company sells can be different that the reality. In contrary, positive experience of reference groups are more real and therefore more influential. The researcher Henning- Thurau (2004) defined the *E-Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)* as *any positive or negative statement by potential, actual or former customers about product or company which is made available to a multiple of people and institutions via Internet.* Consumers prefer based their choice on real experiences of their relatives online or not.

2.1.2 Motivators

According to Flemming and Domegan (2007), *the purchase intention is influenced by psychological, personal, social and cultural factors*. In the stimulus-response model of buying behaviour, the stimuli are not the only factor which influences the online intention. It must take into account a lot of motivators. The main ones are listed on the appendix B (Swarbrooke, 1999).

<u>Consumer diversity factors</u>

Certain aspects influence the consumer behaviour:

-       ***Age***: is the main factor which has effects on consumer behaviour because in a same age range people have similar life experiences.

-       ***Gender***: according to ClichZ (2004) a difference exists between men and women with respect to the manner in which they shop online for holiday type purchase. Moreover, men and women are different in the information-processing styles, in decision-making styles and consumption patterns.

-       ***Sexual orientation:*** influenced on the preference of particular kind of service for example.

-       ***Regional differences:*** people don't consume in the same way in the different geographic locations.

-       ***Ethnic and religious differences:*** because people share a common heritage, values, beliefs and experiences

Needs, desires and motives

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, individual have a basic human psychological needs. Indeed, in an airline context, people care about safety and security (Perroud et al., 2006). Depending on each individual, the motivators and needs are more or less important. Each people are motivated to satisfy his needs. Pine and Gilmore (1999) said that "*we are now living in an Experience Economy*", in other words people attach more importance to experiences than to products and services.

Several writers have organized into hierarchy the tourist motivators. Iso-Ahola's (1982) determined two main categories of tourists: the first is tourists who want to escape (from their everyday life) or other prefer to seek new experiences. Beard and Ragreb's (1983) created a new approach called "*Leisure Motivation Scale*" based on 4 main elements.

- *Intellectual motivation:* discover and explore new things and/or cultures

- *Social motivation:* the desire to belong into a special group, to identify himself

- *Competence and mastery* of skills and abilities*:* through physically challenging activities

- *Stimulus avoidance motivations:* the need to find the best way to relax himself

Personal and economic factors

It depends on the different profile or personality traits of individual. Several factors must take into account like the disposable income to devote in tourism, or even the desires of individual and the way to put into action it.

In general, marketing researchers focus on two main targets.

- Young couples who have not children.

- The 50's and retired people, because they can devote their money in tourism activities and they have dependent children who leave home.

Social and cultural factors

Social factors match to all external influences and more particular related to all individuals. Social class structure is very important to take into account, because in a first time, values and aspiration of each group have an impact on consumer behaviour. The main reason is that individual interacts with people who are in their own social class and they share common life experiences.

2.2 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN TOURISM

According to Blackwell et al. (2001), consumer behaviour is defined as *the activities directly involved in obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services including the decisions processes that precedes and follows these actions.*

The research will focus on two main theories.

The first one has shown in appendix C. That is suggested by Mathieson and Wall (1982) and is called Model of Travel-Buying Behaviour. It is the process between the desire to travel and the respond to that need. During this process, people gather a lot of information which allow them to choose a company in particular.

The second one is shown in Appendix D and it is defined by Middleton and Clarke (2001) presented a stimulus response model of buyer behaviour for tourism. The model can be divided in four main components. The stimuli (e.g part 2.1.1) are the trigger element of the process. Then, the buyer characteristics and motivators affected the decision making process. All these factors lead to the consumer response. The researcher will focus on the consumer buying decision process (e.g appendix E); it can be divided in 5 main points.

1) **Problem recognition/ need recognition**

The problem recognition is the perceived difference between ideal and the desires of the consumer. Consumer decision making process is leading into action the development of ideal state. All elements of psychological core react during this step.

2) **Information search/ Internal search**

The decision process begins to solve the problem. In response to that, the consumer tried to gather all information that he remember. That is correspond to all information or feelings stored by the consumer during his past experience. The main types of internal information are:

- <u>Recall of brands:</u> when they are easy to remember, when the consumer has a consideration to a specific brand or when is loyal for a brand.

- <u>Recall of attributes:</u> when the consumer remember about a specific details of a product or service.

- <u>Recall of evaluations:</u> when a consumer like or dislike a thing, brand, product or service

- <u>Recall of experiences:</u> when the consumer remember about his own experience or that of person who lives with.

3) <u>Evaluation of alternatives</u>

The potential tourist can evaluate the alternatives offered by the e-tourism market. Firstly, he has to choose between different attributes (transport facilities, activities…). According to Howard (1989), the confidence about a certain company is also important. So the consumer likes to fell reassured with a well-known brand.

4) <u>Purchase decision</u>

The next step of the decision making process online is the choice of purchase. People are very influenced by the design of tourism website, prices, promotional package holiday and the easy-on-line booking.

5) <u>Evaluation of post purchase decision</u>

The end of process is the evaluation of people decision, they can be pleased or not. When the tourism consumer is satisfied by a service, his future attitudes toward this company will be positive. In another side, it may put into action that he wanted in the beginning.

But also, the tourism consumer could be totally disappointed. In this case, the consumer can developed regret about his online purchase and it may never buy that product again.

These positive or negative feedbacks will be spread with the word-of-mouth to his reference. According to Bansal & Voyer 2000; Brown and Reingen 1987; Duhan, Johnson, Wilcox & Harrell 1997) *the word of mouth is a major influence on consumer decision making.*

2.3 ONLINE PURCHASE INTENTION IN E-TOURISM

To understand the behaviour of consumers on e-tourism, Crosby et al. (1990) analysed first the o*nline purchase intention and its determinant* (e.g Appendix A).

The relationship quality has a big role in the purchase intention online. This model defined four main determinants specific to online service field in tourism, including perceived incentive, perceived service quality, perceived ease of purchase and perceived usefulness.

First of all, relationship quality is based on two things: the trust (Austin et al., 2006) and the satisfaction (Crosby and Stephens 1987). For consumer, his past experience for a service is very important.

If a consumer did not have any experience on a service online, he obliged to trust to company. Moreover, there are not verifiable vendors online (Austin et al., 2006), so there is a risk-taking. According to Money and Crotts (2003), the goal of potential consumer is to *minimize risks and maximize perceived quality of travel experience*. In the online travel product context, consumers have to face up to different risks (Lin et al, 2009):

- <u>Risk with the product itself:</u> online tourism product is intangible, so it is very difficult to evaluate the product or the service.

- <u>Risk with purchase mode and risk with site on which transaction is made:</u> people must trust in company when they give their card details

In the same time, according to Lin and Ding (2005), the goal of any organisation is to satisfy the consumer. According to Zeithaml et al (2000), the e-service quality includes *website facilitates efficient, effectiveness shopping purchase and delivery*. When all these factors are gathered, consumers tend to be more loyal to the company (Dunn et al., 2009).

However, Trust and satisfaction are not the only determinants, the switching costs (Yi and Jeon 2003) and promotions have positive impact on the online purchase intention.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In this part, the researcher has analysed the different steps of the online purchase intention on e-tourism. During this process, there are some stimuli and motivators which influence the consumer to buy online. Individual traits and influences of relatives groups are the main factors to take into account to understand this process.

Chapter 3:

Methodology &

Objectives

3.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Malhotra and Birks (2007, p. 1), *Marketing researchers support decision-makers by collecting, analysing and interpreting information needed to identify and solve marketing problems.*

The researcher gathered different kind of information like all the other researches, theories, and also the collection of information obtained from individuals. This part of the research will explain all steps of the marketing research and describe the methods the most adapted for this particular research.

The marketing research is divided in 6 main stages: *the problem definition, the research approach developed, the research design developed, the fieldwork or data collection, the data presentation and the data analysis and the report presentation (*Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p7).

3.1 PROBLEM DEFINITION

Problem definition is the first of the marketing research. According to Domegan and Fleming (2007, p56) *the problem definition is the first, initial step in any research project. The researcher questions what the problem is, what decision is necessary, and what information is needed for management to make decision.*

3.1.1 The research question

Malhotra and Birks (2007, p11) defined the research question as a *research undertaken to help identify problems that are not necessarily apparent on the surface, yet exist or are likely to arise in the future.*

For this study the research question is **the web has helped to change consumer behaviour in tourism.**

3.1.2 Research Hypothesis

In this research, the research hypothesis is **the web has a positive impact on consumer behaviour and on the online purchase intention.**

3.1.3 Research objectives

Research objectives are that the writer would like to achieve with the help of particular research techniques (McQuarrie, 2006, p29). The research objectives of this study are as follows:

✓ **To understand behaviours of consumers faced this market of e-tourism.**

✓ **To investigate factors those influence the purchasing decisions of consumers on the tourism products online.**

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Domegan and Fleming (2007, p66), *Research design is a blueprint or overall action plan for the remaining marketing research study*. There are 3 types of research design: the exploratory, descriptive and the causal research. The main information of each type of research design is shown in the Table 1 (e.g appendix F).

For this research the most appropriate is the exploratory research. Firstly because the aim of the research is to understand and chart the consumer behaviour faced the tourism product online. Secondly, because the writer does not want to quantify and does not know what is the most famous company on French market. The aim is to understand habits and the behaviour of young people when they are on airline websites.

3.3   DATA COLLECTION METHOD

3.3.1 Secondary research

Domegan and Fleming (2007, p81) *Secondary Data is data collected by another person for reasons other than the problem in hand.* In other words,

secondary data is all desk researches that is to say the researches published by other authors. It can be divided in two main categories:

- *Internal data: may be obtained from marketing or other functions* (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p85)

- *External data:* Malhotra et al (2007, p 100) explained that external *data is originated outside organization* (official sources, online databases, government sources…)

3.3.2 Primary research

Malhotra and Birks (2008, p 94) defined primary research as *data originated by the researcher specifically to address the research problem.*

3.3.3 Advantages and drawbacks of data collection

Secondary data is often more easier to collect because it is more accessible, and secondly, because it is less time-consuming. Kolb (2008) focuses on four quantitative secondary data (Academic researchers, trade associations, government sources and marketing research firms) and on three qualitative secondary data (popular magazines, business and trade publications and websites).

But secondary data is typically limited by their degree of fit to the current research problem and by concerns regarding data accuracy (Malhotra, 2002).

However, Primary research is more relevant and reliable than secondary data. But the data are relatively difficult to gather and expensive.

According to Domegan and Fleming (2007, p96) *Secondary data offer several advantages over primary data.*

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

3.4.1 Qualitative Research

Malhotra and Birks (2007, p 152) defined qualitative research as *an unstructured, primarily exploratory design based on small samples intended to provide insight and understanding.*

The purpose of the qualitative research is to assess the minds of consumers to discover their impression, expectations and prejudices (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p 158)

3.4.1.1 Focus group

According to Middleton et al (2009, p 166) is an interaction between a small group of individuals and the aim is to express their point of views on a particular topic or concept.

The objective of the focus group *is to generate ideas and understand customer needs, attitudes, perception and motives* about a certain product or service for example (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p160).

The interactivity allows to members of the group to express own ideas and increasing the spontaneity (Andreasen, 2002). The small sample size is not very representative of the target market.

3.4.1.2 In-depth interviews

According to Malhotra and Birks (2007, p207) In-depth interviews is *an unstructured, direct, personal interview in which a single participant is probed by an experienced interviewer to uncover underlying, motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings on a topic*. The advantages are close to the focus group, but there is only one respondent. The main strength is the one-to-one interview. In general, the interviewee is more confident and reveals easier his own feelings.

But, the in-depth interview is expensive and time consuming. Moreover, is difficult to analyse and in general the quality of results depend heavily on the interviewer's skills (Malhotra and Birks, 2007 p211).

3.4.1.3 Projective techniques

Projective techniques are used to encourage communication using non-verbal methods of response (Kolb, 2008, p158). Projective techniques are very different like the other methods because it is *clinical psychology, it gather all the subconscious motivations, true feelings and unlock attitudes* (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p176).

The projective techniques are used to understand internally persons who are shy or quiet during the other methods like focus group for example. But, projective techniques required trained interviewers and qualified analysts.

3.4.2   Quantitative Research

Domegan and Fleming (2003) defined *quantitative research as the collection of data which is open to interpretation, for instance on attitudes & opinions, and which might not be validated statistically*. Contrary to the qualitative research, the quantitative gathers a lot of respondents.

3.4.2.1 Survey

According to Malhotra and Birks (2007, p 265), *survey techniques are techniques based upon the use of structured questionnaires given to a sample of population.* There are four methods to do a survey:

- *__Personal interview__*:   it is a face-to-face technique, when an interviewer asks directly to a respondent.

- *__Telephone interview:__* interviewee phone to respondents and ask a series of questions

- *__Postal interview__:*   the interviewee sent his questionnaire to several respondents.

- *__Electronic survey:__*   via email or administrated on Internet. With the involvement of new technologies, the electronic surveys are more and more common.

3.3.2.2 Observation

This method allows observing behaviour of people or a real fact , in others words without communicating (Malhotra and Birks, 2007).

The observation research is difficult to analyse. Indeed, it may be time-consuming and expensive to collect in-depth information. And it may be unethical to observe consumers without their permissions.

3.5   DATA ANALYSIS

According to McQuarrie (2006, p 183), *Data analysis is a core competence of market research professionals.* To Domegan and Fleming (2007, p430), data analysis is defined as *a set of methods and techniques that can be used to obtain information and insights from the data*.

3.6   RESEARCH TOOL SELECTED

For this research is the method the most appropriate because, the aim of the study is to understand consumer behaviour and what are the factors which influence that. During the focus group, it is interesting to know what are attitudes and motives of individuals about tourism online and more particular on French airline Websites.

The researcher chooses the experiencing focus group: indeed, the goal of this focus group is to discover in-depth the participants' experiences and their attitudes in using these websites.

3.7 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

o	***Element:***	18/25 years old who use Internet every day
o	***Unit:***	Student of Dublin Business School
o	***Time dimension:***	2011
o	***Geographic boundary:*** French student in Ireland	

Why 18/25 years old?

This age range corresponds to the generation which grew up with the new technologies and more particular with Internet. It is interesting to understand the feeling of this generation toward e-shopping.

Why students?

It is interesting to understand online attitudes of people who are not yet on the labour market and so who do not earn their own money.

Why French people?

The study based on the French e-tourism market. It is interesting to ask French people about their knowledge and their using on French transport websites.

3.8   SAMPLING METHOD

The sampling methods consist to make conclusions with the analysis of data of a small portion of target market (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). The sampling process can be divided in five steps:

1ˢᵗ Step: Defining the target population:

That is to say specifying a precisely target audience. In this case, the research focuses on the French 18-25 years old

2nd step: Determine the sample frame:

In other words, Malhotra and Birks (2007, p 407) defined sample frame as *a representation of the elements of the target populatio*n. It can be difficult to generate entire list, the sample frame is often incomplete.

3ʳᵈ step: Choose a sampling method:

The researcher has the choice between two methods.

❖ **Probability sampling:** Burns and Bush divided into four techniques:

- ▪ **Simple random sampling** is *the use of random numbers to select each individual into the sample* (2008, p 300).

- **Systematic random sampling** is *the way to select a simple random sample from a directory or list that is much more efficient than with simple random sampling* (2008, p 303).

- **Cluster sampling** is *when the population is divided into subgroups, each of which represents the entire population* (2008,p 304).

- **Stratified sampling** is s*eparated the population into different subgroups and then samples all these subgroups using a random sampling technique* (2008, p 304)

❖ **Non-probability sampling:** Domegan and Fleming (2007) divided this method into four techniques:

- **Quota sampling**: it is *the most popular and it is the way to replicate the population without using random selection* (2007, p 394).

- **Judgement sampling** is used *the expertise of the researcher to hand-pick the sample units* (2007, p393). This method is cheap and time-saving but it depends on the researcher's knowledge of population.

- **Convenience sampling** is when *the sample is chosen "because they are here"* (2007, p392).

- **Purposive sampling** is when t*he sample is chosen because they are not representative of the sample (*2007, p393).

In this research the most appropriate is the non-probability sampling with the judgement sampling method.   The member of the focus group will be representative of the target audience.

4th step: Determine the sample size

Malhotra and Birks defined *sample size as the number of elements to be included in the study* (2007, p 408).

Here, the research will organize a focus group so the number of interviewee will be between 8 and 12 people.

5th step: Validation the sample

Malhotra and Birks (2007) defined validation of sample as *the way to account for sampling frame error by screening the respondents in the data collection phase*.

3.9 CONCLUSION

In this part, the researcher has chosen to do an exploratory research. Indeed, the aim of the research is to analyse the consumer behaviour online on e-tourism. The researcher wants to have the experiences and the feelings of French students aged between 18 and 25 years old on the French airline websites.

The most adapted method is the qualitative one and more particular the experiencing focus group. In terms of target, the researcher has chosen the non-probability sampling with judgement sampling method.

Chapter 4:

Data Analysis & Findings

4.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Domegan and Fleming (2003, p 412), data analysis can be defined *as a set of methods and techniques that can be used to obtain information and insights from the data.* In this part, the researcher will relate primary and secondary research in order to respond to objectives.

The research requires the following tasks:

- ✓ **Editing:** The aim of editing is to increase the precision of responses.

- ✓ **Coding:** The aim of coding is to gather same data in pertinent categories to avoid mistakes. There are two methods of coding: the pre-coding and the post-coding. In this research, it is more relevant to use post coding.

- ✓ **Tabulation:** There are two methods of tabulation: the simple tabulation and the cross tabulation. Tabulation is divided in three main tasks: sorting, counting and summarising.

- ✓ **Summarisation:** It is the way to gather the raw data into interesting findings.

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question of this dissertation is as follow: **Is the web has helped to change consumer behaviour in online tourism.**

According to this discussion, the researcher analyses that people have changed their habits, and now they buy easily online. They are not scared anymore to pay and to book online.

4.2 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

In this research, the research hypothesis is **the web has a positive impact on consumer behaviour and on online purchase intention.**

4.3 OBJECTIVE 1 – FINDINGS

In this part the researcher analyses and answers to the objective 1 which is as follow:

To understand behaviours of consumers faced to this market of e-tourism

To respond to that objective, the researcher analysed the discussion, and he can observed behaviours when people surf on airline websites. The participants paid attention into main themes: special offers, design, security, trust and risks.

4.3.1 Special offers

First, **the price** is the only argument used and supported by everybody during all the discussion. In relation to this research, special offers used to be the most important thing which attracting people on airline websites. Moreover, one person has paid attention on advertising only when there are special offers. For the most part, they don't care about all others services on websites like packages (ticket plus hotels for example) because they want to minimize costs. Only three of them found sometimes it is interesting for short trip.

4.3.2 Design

In a second time, the analysis shows that **design of websites** has a considerable impact on people. According to secondary research, Lin and Ding (2006) said that tourism agents based their efforts on design and on the start-of-art of websites to attract consumers. This method works in reality because when the researcher presents five websites to the participants, first of all people paid attention to colours and clearly of information.

"If everything is perfect on a website, I think planes are perfect too" (Manon)

After the visualisation factors, people want to surf on the website easily. According to Chiu (2007), ease of purchase and ease to use are two important ways

to attract people on websites. For a majority of participants, the ease to use and the time-consuming to book a ticket are very important.

"I think a good website must not be clutter […] you need to have something very clear without too many advertisements" (Derek)

In terms of destinations photos, people are conscious that it is a marketing strategy and three of them think photos are useless. But it makes some people to buy in certain time.

4.3.3 Security

The third thing is the **security** about a company. There are two kinds of security: the security about the companies and his reputation. The other is the security when you buy online. In the hierarchy of needs, Maslow has shown that individual must satisfy psychological needs. In the context of airline websites, Perroud et al. said that individual care about security and safety (2006). In this case, only two participants prefer buy more and be in safe airbus.

"I prefer take Air France to comfort and airbus you take, I don't feel in safe in Ryanair airbus!" (Jasmine)

4.3.4 Trust

Then, to build a relationship quality with some company, consumers have to **trust** and have to be satisfied about the service (Austin et al. 2006). For this discussion, people have trust in companies, especially because all of them have paid online. People are not scared to give their details card, because websites are more secure than before. At the same time, People are confident about the company they take, and they feel reassured when they know the company (Howard 1989). When they want to book a ticket, half of participants know exactly which company they will take. Only one person goes regularly to comparison-websites to choose company which offers better prices.

4.3.5 Risk

There are some **risks** when you book an online ticket. Link with secondary resource, Money and Crotts (2003) said that *the goal of the potential consumer is to minimize risks and to maximize perceived quality of travel experience*. Some participants are ready to take risks in paying less. But they know they can meet some problems about the organisation of the airline companies (Loss luggage/ bad quality service…).

"When you take Ryanair […] you have a problem one time on 100 flights, I prefer use Ryanair many time maybe there will be problem one time, I don't have to pay the double each time." (Alexis)

4.4 OBJECTIVE 2 – FINDINGS

In this part the researcher analyses and answers to the objective 2 which is as follow:

To investigate factors those influence the purchasing decision of consumers on the tourism product online.

To respond to that objective, the researcher analysed factors which influence people to buy online an airline ticket. The participants paid attention into main themes: Price, experience and the service-quality.

4.4.1   Price

In theories, the elements of Marketing Mix have an important impact on the purchase intention (Middleton, 2009). In this discussion, **price** is the most important factor which attracts consumers online. Indeed, all of them have ever flied with low costs companies. For six of them, these kinds of companies are their first choice when they travel. Moreover, everybody have ever taken low costs companies, three of them thinks it is a risk-taking but it is due to cheap price.

In my opinion, you have a high level of expectations compared to the price you pay. In your personal point of view, if you think it is a cheap company, the level of services must not be high. (Derek)

4.4.2   Experience

According to Reigner (2007), *the subjective norms* have a big influence on purchase intention. In fact, everybody pay attention to their relatives 'experiences.

You will not go to unknown websites; you will use other people advice. You don't want to be the first to use a website for airline, because it is an important purchase (Alexis)

But there are two kinds of people in this category of people.

The firsts are them whom influence by informal channels and word-of-mouth (Crotts, 2003). In this case, experiences of friends and family are very persuasive.

I am really influenced by my relatives. For example, Jasmine said that she had very bad experiences with Ryanair, so after that, […] I think I will not take Ryanair anymore (Andréa).

According to Henning-Thurau (2004), the e-word of mouth allows people to publish and share their past experiences online. In general, this category of people attaches importance to relatives 'experiences but not on online experiences of people.

In contrast, I don't mind about what people say on online discussion, just mind about people who are close to me (Manon)

The other category is whom people are more independent and less influential about others.

If I haven't made my choice, I hear about my relatives. But when I'm loyal to a company, I don't care about bad experiences of others. (Ines)

Four people said they don't care about bad experiences of others and on these four people, only one lived his own bad experiences. Even if they hear about bad experiences, these people continue to choose the company which offers better price.

In relation to secondary researches, ClichZ (2004) based his study on the difference behaviour between man and woman. This trend is confirmed in this case, indeed, men are less influenced by relatives than women.

4.4.3   Service

In relation to Dunn et al. (2006), when there is a well-quality service, consumers tend to be more loyal to company. In this discussion, five of the participants are loyal to a special company. In this five, four is loyal to a low costs companies.

There is a link between the service of company offered and the loyalty (Perroud et al. 2006). Indeed, when consumers are satisfied about a company service, he will be easily loyal to this company in the future.

Otherwise, his own bad experiences and that of relatives have a negative impact on brand image and on purchase intention. Indeed in this discussion, five persons have lived their bad experiences with a company in particular bad quality-service. Only one person of them changes to another company. But in general, they continue to buy in the same company even if they can hesitate or have doubts.

Even with these problems, with the prices of Ryanair, I will take this company again in the future. (Jasmine)

4.5 CONCLUSION

In relation to primary and secondary researches, the author highlights several ideas on consumer behaviour on e-tourism.

First, to respond to the objective one, the researcher emphasises on consumer behaviour faced to airline website. To summary, when people surf on these kinds of websites, they are very attracted first by prices and then by well-design websites. The trust and the satisfaction to a company are also important to them.

Secondly, to respond to the second objective, the author analysed what influenced the most people online. For these age range, price is the most factors which influence themselves. After, experiences of relatives and quality-service can have an impact on people.

Chapter 5:

Conclusion and Recommendations

The main purpose of this dissertation is to analyse if **the web has helped to change consumer behaviour in tourism.** This dissertation focuses his research on consumer behaviour of people aged between 18 and 25 years old on French airline websites. In relation to primary and secondary data, the researcher has demonstrated that young people are the generation who live and grow up with new technologies. Moreover, companies have to understand and analyse these habits and lifestyles to adapt their online business in relation to needs of this target.

The first objective of this research was to understand consumers behaviours faced to this market of e-tourism. The best manner to attract people aged between 18 and 25 years old is price of airline ticket. In general, young people prefer focus on the price than quality. Certain persons pay attention to the structure of a website, like the ease to use, the ease to find information and ease to pay, in certain case, it can be a motivators to buy online. Again, the author has shown that people are conscious about the risk-taking when they travel with low costs companies.

The second objective of this research is to investigate factors that influence the purchasing decisions. It has been found that young people attach a major importance to prices and promotional offers. Indeed, most of 18-25 years old are ever students and they are not earning their own money. The main goal of them is to minimize costs. The author highlights also on the own past experiences or that of his relatives. It plays a major role on the purchase decision. Companies have to promote a well brand image and a good quality service, because people choose their companies in relation to word-of mouth and to their past experiences.

As regard to the research hypothesis, the author has decided to confirm it. **The web has actually a positive impact on the consumer behaviour** on this age range of 18- 25 years old. Fist, they are entirely reactive about the Internet improvement and about the new technologies. However, people are more and more demanding about the quality-price ratio, they wish have lower prices with well-quality service.

RECOMENDATIONS

For the future researches, the author recommends to study on another age range. First, it will be interesting to compare the expectations of older people and to know if the web satisfied every generation of French population.

Companies have to give a well brand image of them and assure their quality service because young adults are the consumers of tomorrow.

Internet can offers a lot of opportunities, but companies have to be innovative and adapt themselves to young adult needs and more particular in terms of publicity for example. Indeed, this generation are not very influential, so companies have to create different manners to promote their brand, no with traditional ways.

Today, Airline purposes special offers when you book online a long time in advance. More you book your airline ticket soon, more it is cheaper. The author recommends that companies could be creating a last minute service where people can

book their airline ticket at the last time. It could be beneficial both for companies and young adult. Indeed, companies could fill the empty seats when airbus is not complete. And in the same time, it pushes people to buy airline tickets on impulse.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Figure 1: <u>Online purchase intention and its determinants in e-tourism</u>
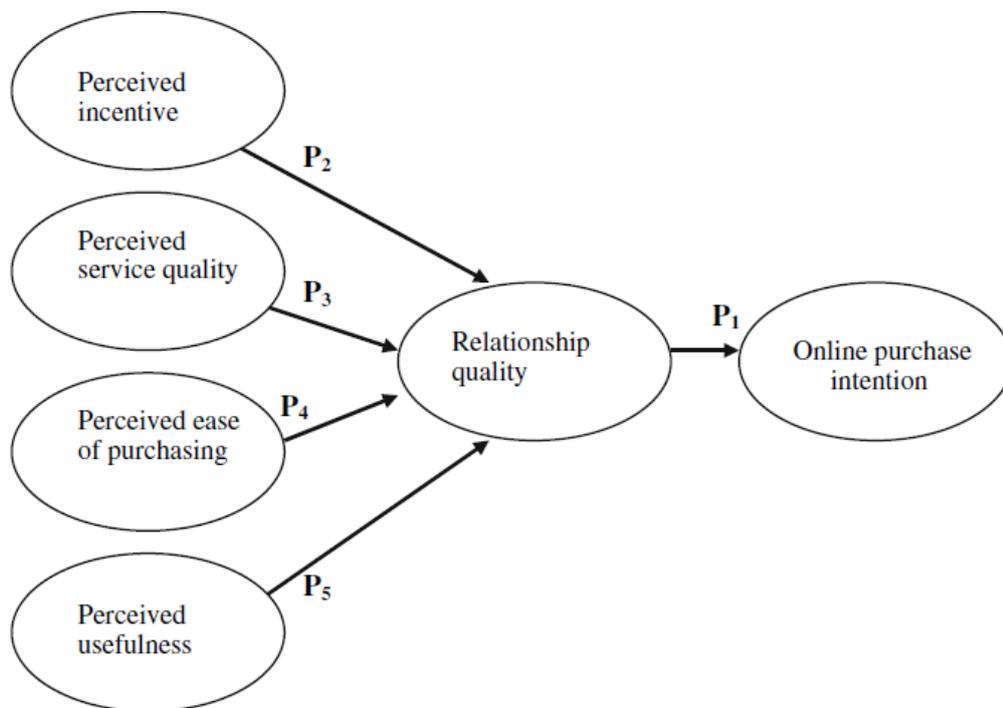
Source: **Chou-Kang Chiu. Understanding relationship quality and online purchase intention in e-tourism (23 nov 2007) p 671**

APPENDIX B

Figure 2: A typology of motivators in tourism
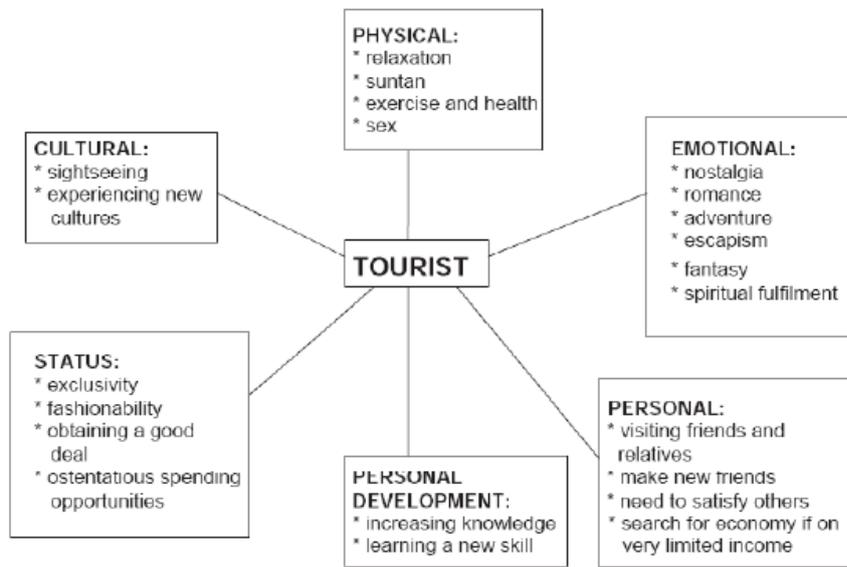
Source: Swarbrooke, J., Horner, S.: Consumer Behaviour in Tourism, Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford, 1999., p. 87

APPENDIX C

Figure 3: **Model of Travel-Buying Behavior**

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┌──────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐
│  Felt need/  │   →    │ Information   │
│   travel     │        │ collection    │
│   desire     │        │ and           │        ┌──────────────┐
│              │        │ evaluation    │   →    │Travel decision│
└──────────────┘        │ image         │        │  (choice      │
                        └──────────────┘        │  between      │
                                                │ alternatives) │
                                                └──────────────┘
┌──────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐               │
│   Travel     │        │   Travel      │   ←           ↓
│ satisfaction │   ←    │ preparation   │
│ outcome and  │        │ and travel    │
│ evaluation   │        │ experiences   │
└──────────────┘        └──────────────┘
```
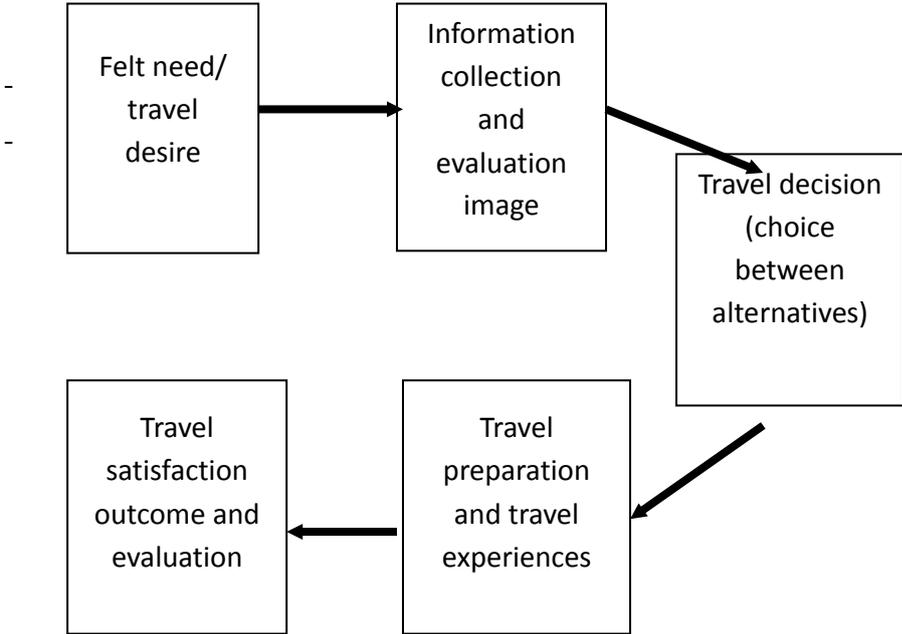
Source: **Mathieson and Wall (1982)**

APPENDIX D

Figure 4:   **A stimulus response model of buyer behaviour**
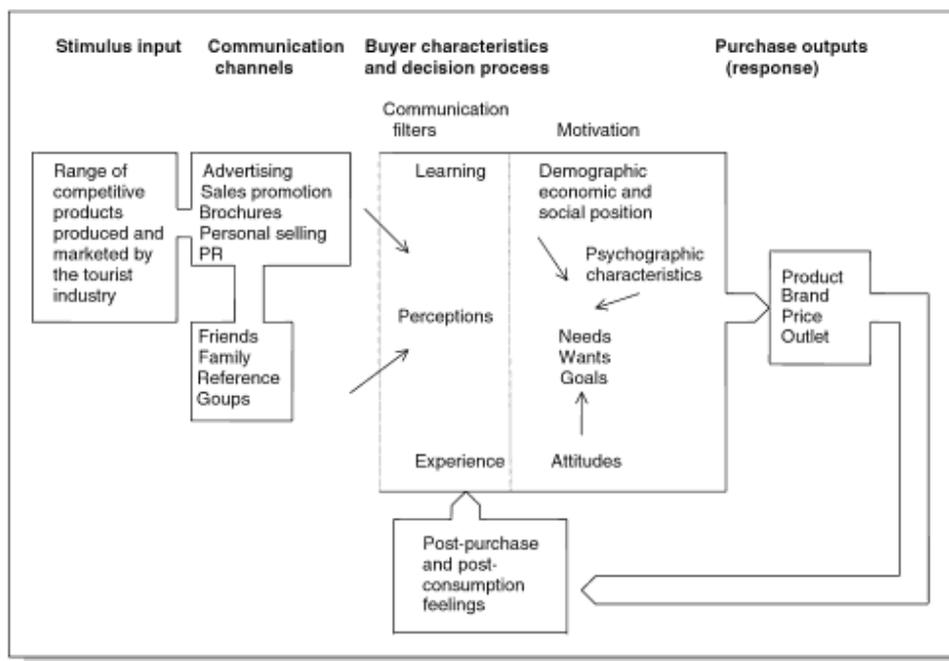
Source: **adapted from Middleton and Clarke (2001)**

APPENDIX E

Figure 5: **Consumer buying decision process in tourism**
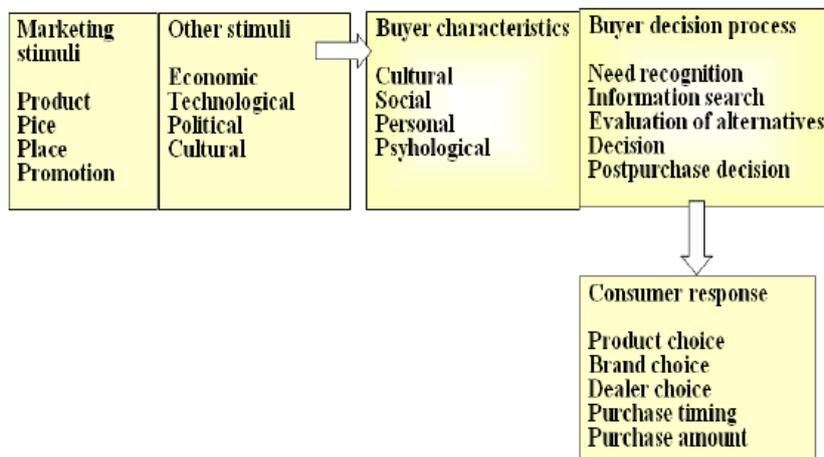
Source: Kotler, P., Bowen, J., Makens, J.: Marketing for hospitality and tourism, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River NJ, 2003, p. 201.

APPENDIX F

Table 1: Choosing a research Design

	Exploratory research	**Descriptive Research**	**Causal Research**
Data type	Qualitative	Qualitative or quantitative	Quantitative

Aims	To explore, chart, identify, define	To describe, quantify	To establish, cause and effect
Nature of variables	Unknown, Undocumented	Known, associations and documented	Known exactly, clearly supported
Degree of formality	Relatively little	Some to extensive	High mathematical content
Data type	Literature Review Expert survey Focus group In-depth interviews Projective techniques	Literature Review Surveys Observation Panels	Literature Review Expert Survey Experiments (Surveys) (Observation)
Sample size	Small	Small to Large	Large
Question types	Probing Response driven	Some probing Interviewer driven	No probing
Hypothesis	Generates, Develops	Tests and/or Generates, Develops	Tests

Source: Domegan and Fleming (2007, p69)

APPENDIX G

FOCUS GROUP: E-TOURISM

Objective 1: To understand behaviours of consumers faced to this market of e-tourism

Objective 2: To investigate factors those influence the purchasing decision of consumers on the tourism product online.

EXPLANATIONS

Today, we are talking about the e-tourism and more particular the main airline websites used by French people.

The aim of the focus group is to understand what motivate you to choose a specific website and analyse your behaviour when you surf online.

First, I explain you what is e-tourism. With the improvement of new technologies, the travel agencies have launched their tourism business online. So E-tourism is all the tourism operations: transport, hospitality, accommodation…

Today, I based the discussion on the transport sector and more particular on the French airline website. I divided the focus group in three times, first you present yourself. Secondly, you will answer to the questions, and the third time is several debate about the subject.

The aim of this discussion is to exchange ideas and know the feelings of each person. Nobody is here to judge anyone, so do not worry and speak about your experiences and your feelings. For the smooth progress of the focus group, when you are not agree, can you don't interrupt the talk and speak one person after another.

The discussion should last one hour and a half approximately. If you need a break, tell me.

Presentation of participants: 9 French Students whom studying in DBS (Dublin)

Alex -21 years old	• 2/3 hours per day • Social networking - Watching video - Talk with his friends
Manon - 20 years old	• 3/4 hours per day • Talk ing with friends on social networks - Sending emails - Playing games somtimes
Andréa - 20 years old	• 3 hours per day • Social networking -Sending Emails- Watching and listening videos
Ines - 20 years old	• 4 hours per day • Checking emails - Social networking - Watching videos
Pauline - 21 years old	• 4/5 hours per day • Sending emails - Social networksing- Tool to work
Jasmine - 19 years old	• More than 5 hours per day • Working - Social networking -Watching videos - Sending emails
Derek - 19 years old	• 4/5 hours per day • Social networking - Sharing videos - Skype
Marc - 19 years old	• 3 hours per day • Do shopping - Social networking
Julien - 18 years old	• 4 hours or more sometimes • Watching videos - Listening music - Social networking

1) *How many of you have already paid online airline tickets?*

Everybody

> ### *STEP 1: CHOICE OF WEBSITE*

2) ***How many of you, go first on the price-comparison websites before booking their airline ticket?***

4 of them: If they don't know the company, the first time they go to these websites

1 of them: Go regularly in these websites

4 of them: Never go to these websites

3) ***Which are the main airline website you use?***

RYANAIR: 7

AIR FRANCE: 2

AER LINGUS: 2

4) ***What encouraged you to choose an airline website?***

-*Well-known company?*

-*Price/ special offers?*

-*Habits?*

-*Heard about this website?*

RYANAIR: Best price

AIR FRANCE: Comfort / Safety Airbus / Quality service (Eat/luggage…)

5) ***Are you loyal to a special airline company? Why?***

-*Recall of past experiences?*

-Quality of company services?

-Offer the best price?

-Trust in the airline company?

Pauline: Depends on the destinations

6) **Have you ever buy low cost airline tickets? Why or why not?**

Everybody - 8 of them

7) **In your own experience, is airline companies' advertising have an impact on you?**

Manon: RYANAIR When there are special offers (for example Airline Return Tickets to London 10 euros). When companies don't launch offer, I don't care about the advertising.

8) **How many of you are sensitive to experiences of relatives (friends/family/ online discussion)?**

Everybody - 8 of them

STEP 2: ONLINE NAVIGATION & PURCHASE

9) **In your own experience, what attract you when you surf on airline website?**

-Ease to use?

-Special offer?

-Design of website (colours/structure…)?

-Clarity of information?

-Photos?

Andrea: Ease to use/ ease to find information / ease to modify the research

Derek: Print ticket everywhere when you want = no time consuming when you are at the airport.

Manon: RYANAIR website for example, I just pay attention to special offers. If I go to AIR FRANCE website: clean / design/ perfect on the website so people think, the quality of the plane/companies are perfect too.

10) ***How many of you are attracted by the package with several services combined?***

Jasmine: Interesting sometimes

Alex: For short trip it is interesting

Derek: when visit country is can be interesting but we are student, so we don't have the money to buy hotel. Airline ticket is just for going to point A to a point B.

Presentation of 5 websites: Air France / Ryanair / Easy Jet / Aer Lingus / Wizz Air

(more interactive)

11) *What do you think about these websites? Which website attracts you the most?*

WIZZAIR: Bad colours (too pink)

AIRFRANCE: Attract the most

RYANAIR: Only the low costs offer/ too much things on websites/ bad colours / too many ads/ spams

12) *Have you ever purchased on impulse due to an interesting deal?*

Marc, Manon, Pauline: Yes to go to London – Last minute tickets

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STEP 3: POST PURCHASE

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13) *How many of you have a bad experience with an airline company?*

5 of them

13 Bis) *If yes: Do you think you will buy again to this company in the future?*

Alex: RYANAIR: loss of luggage

Manon: RYANAIR Weigh restriction for luggage: for one kilo too much, I had to pay extra costs

Jasmine: RYANAIR – Landing in Belgium instead of Paris – All the night in airport – No information – really cold – Bus only in the morning – No food and no water (there were children in the airport) No good service – no good organization.

Pauline: RYANAIR Luggage too large so extra costs

Derek: RYANAIR problem with delays / cancellations: no information about the flights

Even with these problems, with the prices of RYANAIR, they can take again this company.

14 *) According to you, what are the effects of bad after-sales service?*
- *Un-loyalty?*
- *Bad publicity for the company with worth-of-mouth?*
- *Dissatisfaction?*
- *Influence for the future purchase?*

Jasmine: Don't create loyalty with consumers – Not beneficial to the company

Pauline: Brand Image can be damage

Manon: Really bad word of mouth: people talk more about their bad experiences than good experiences

Debate 1: Design on airline website?

Alex: Easy to understand/ easy to use

Manon: Special offers attract the most with colours, for example RYANAIR: colours are not attractive

Andrea: colours of Ryanair are not attractive as compare with AIR FRANCE: more professional and serious- Design – facilities to use.

Ines: the different aspects of websites are not really important: just easy to use / no long time to book online.

Julien: most important for a website is ease of visualization because some people are not very good computer scientist.

Derek: good websites must not be clutter: no too many ads – very clear – easy to watch what you need and what you want

Pauline: If the website is clear, it can be easy to use it

Ex: register yourself on the website: it is really small sometimes in the corner of the websites

Jasmine: Lot of people are choose RYANAIR for prices but for her the most important is the bright of information

Manon: sometimes, you have to see the security trough the websites (e.g AIRFRANCE) – more save when you go to AIR FRANCE websites whereas when you go to RYANAIR: colours (yellow and blue) and ads everywhere, you are not really confident with the company.

Alex: You will not go to websites no unknown; you will use other people advice. You don't want to be the first to use a website for airline, because it is an important purchase.

The moderator: About the photos online, what do you think about that?

Derek: AIRFRANCE: you can see all the destinations- really attractive – catch your attention

No photos on RYANAIR: just write the destinations

Photos are efficient to attract the customers

Manon: on AIRFRANCE website there are the photos of the staff never seeing on Ryanair websites.

Julien: it is useless to have pictures of staff

Alex: He thinks the same. Moreover, he thinks the photos are useless, because it is just a marketing strategy, on each country there are great picture of everything (beaches, something like that)

Jasmine: she doesn't agree because it depends of person, you can be more confident, more reassure yourself.

Derek: Some people want to put a face on staff because they are feeling more confident. For certain people it is very important.

Ines: It is not really important. Most important for her is the price. It is not a photo of person who smiling who change someone.

Andrea: More the websites is attractive, more company focus on marketing, it allows mainly to make money

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Debate 2: Influence of Relatives

Alexis: Listen my family, my friends about their experiences: it is really important to me, how are the airline companies.

Manon: I care about the bad experiences of relatives; if you know friends who had a really bad experience with a company, you can never fly with this company. And if they have a good experience they don't talk about that. So I think I'm influenced by the advice of others.

Andrea: I really influenced by my relatives. For example, Jasmine said that she had very bad experiences with RYANAIR, so after that, I took RYANAIR only one time but it is just because of the price. I think I don't take RYANAIR anymore.

Ines: If I haven't made my choice, I hear about my relatives. But when I'm loyal to a company, I don't care about bad experiences of others.

Julien: I don't really care about the bad experiences; I took always RYANAIR on my own even if I hear a lot of bad experiences. I believe I would never change RYANAIR when I fly on my own or maybe a low costs airline.

Jasmine: Did you ever have a bad experience?

Julien: No, never.

Jasmine: That's why you say that. Because, if you have a bad experience in your own, the next time I think you will not get this same company. In general, people don't care about the negative word of mouth, but if you hear bad things about a company, you can hesitate to purchase an airline tickets. But I think if you have a bad experience yourself, only once, you will have a doubt.

Julien: It happened for you with RYANAIR, but it can be happen with any low costs company.

Jasmine: Yes but if it happen, they have to search a solution for all the passengers, RYANAIR never search a solution, they left everybody at the airport. All the workers of RYANAIR getting hotels, but don't worry about the passengers.

Julien: but, are you sure if it happen when another company, are you sure, will it be the same?

Jasmine: in my experience, I took AIRFRANCE, and when there are problems, they search another flight and refund us our ticket. When it is happened with RYANAIR, you can have money back, you can't have anything.

Julien: RYANAIR is a low costs company, it is two different strategies. AIR FRANCE is one of the best companies in the world.

Jasmine: at the end, you pay a cheap price but you sleeping in the airport.

Derek: I agree with Julien, because it is not the same, the level is not the same.

Ines: Yes, when you buy AIR FRANCE ticket, you pay for the quality service but you have a big difference of price between the two companies (RYANAIR & AIR FRANCE for example). So if you buy low cost ticket and you have nothing, it is fine. If there is a problem; you have the risk to pay an extra to the hotel or something like that.

Derek: in my opinion, you have a high level of expectations compared to the price you pay. In your personal point of view, if you think it is a cheap company, the level of services must not be high.

The moderator: ***You have to talk about relatives and not about Ryanair or companies in particular.***

Derek: the relatives are important about the viral marketing, because they had previous good experience, there is a word-of-mouth and there is an impact on people. Because marketer have all the same goal: sell their products, so when the information come from relatives, people are more receptive/ more confident.

Manon: In contrast, I don't mind about what people say on online discussion, just mind about people who close to me. If people I don't know, I don't very mind about their experience.

Andrea: It depends, on the packages for example; there are some comments about experiences that I read it and it can be interesting. Maybe, it is not influenced my purchase behaviour but I take care of these comments.

Pauline: I have a friend who has a problem when he registered online, it didn't print the right ticket so when he came to the airport, and he had to pay like 40 euros to have the right ticket. I continue to take RYANAIR because it is the cheapest way to travel but with all my relatives' experiences, I will take care more when I will buy ticket.

Derek: but your friend is responsible for the fact that he forgot to print his ticket. When you book your ticket, they sent you a mail and you have to print your ticket before the flight, 2 or 3 hours before.

Pauline: Yes, but it is the same problem, if the website is not clear enough, and if you don't really know and when you use the website for the first time.

Derek: What are the points that are not clear enough?

Pauline: the information

Jasmine: it is written in small letters.

The moderator: Now, we can back to your discussion about the price between the different companies.

Alex: the price and the quality service. When you take RYANAIR, you know that you have just the flight, maybe if there are some problems. But it two big different things: but you have a problem one time on 100 flights. So I prefer to use RYANAIR many times, maybe if I have a problem one time that pay the double. After, I don't have bad experience with that, so if a day I have one, maybe it can change my mind.

Jasmine: In my situation, my first time I took RYANAIR; I have a bad experience, so now I took AIR FRANCE.

Manon: But there are a lot of others low costs companies for example EASYJET, it is also a low costs company but I think it is really better.

Jasmine: but I think a little bit more expensive.

Derek: I think you cannot compare EASYJET and RYANAIR. The difference is that EASYJET is a part of the group of BRITISH ARIRWAYS and RYANAIR is its own company. The budget is different and the service is different.