

Slow and well-being tourism: The motivations and implications for their development in Switzerland.



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Submitted on: **24th of April 2022**

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Abstract

Slow and well-being tourism are both newer tourism sub-types. The former has no precise definition but is characterised as tourism undertaken close from home, using a slow mean of transportation and aiming to take time to enjoy oneself at the place of vacation. The activities undertaken during the holidays must also be soft as well as respectful of the local population. The latter is also known as wellness tourism. The goal of this sub-type of tourism is to achieve well-being of its participants, as well as reducing their level of stress. This can be achieved by various means from visiting spas and wellness centres to taking part to relaxing activities such as yoga or meditation. This work focuses on well-being tourism centered around nature and relaxing activities.

The objectives of this work are to, through a qualitative survey analysis as well as the analysis of a specific slow and well-being tourism offer, understand the demand for these types of tourism and issue recommendations for their development of Switzerland. Recommendations will also be issued for the improvement of the offer analysed.

The main results of this work show that the main expectations of vacations are to unwind and relax through a change of scenery but also to discover new cultures. They also highlight the prevalence of slow tourism in most people's life without the realisation that they are already practicing this type of tourism. Furthermore, this study calls attention to the ideal position of Switzerland as a domestic destination: its various landscapes and sub-cultures make it ideal to feel abroad without leaving the country. The influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on tourism is also pointed out in this thesis, in that it has compelled people to practice domestic tourism, although this measure is mostly only temporary, but has also promoted the development of well-being tourism. This development will continue in the future and necessitates the preservation of nature. Indeed, this component is paramount in both slow and well-being tourism and must be preserved to accommodate its participants. Finally, this study highlights a strong duality between ecology and economy, who are seen as non-compatible with each other. This is also reflected in the younger generation, who holds the power to promote slow tourism but are also tempted to travel abroad for cheap prices.

Keywords: Slow Tourism, Well-being Tourism, Experience Economy, Switzerland

Foreword and acknowledgments

This idea for the subject of this thesis stemmed from my own interest and the realisation that I had not taken the plane nor been on a vacation abroad since 2018. This aspect, as well as the Covid-19 pandemic who obliged me, similarly to many people, to stay in Switzerland for the holidays, allowed me to discover new places and activities in my own country I had not suspected, which proved to be very stimulating and eye-opening. As I was interested in both well-being and slow tourism, I realised that these two tourism types have many aspects in common: both aspire to the well-being of their participants, and both show a strong emphasis on taking time to relax and discover. These are types of tourism I personally wish to take part to, as opposed to organised stays and travels. I then decided to analyse a concrete offer of well-being tourism that would respect slow tourism principles and find itself in conjunction of those two tourism sub-types that sparked my interest. I discovered the company of which I analysed the stay through research and took an interest in their principles and motivations. The stay chosen for the analysis – *Yoga and detox in the heart of the Val d'Hérens* – was selected amongst the others because of its strong emphasis on locality as well as for my personal interest towards yoga, a practice which embeds itself well in the concept of taking time and relaxing.

The journey within this work followed the principles of the inverted funnel, in that research was foremost organised and based on precise questions about slow and well-being tourism, but later allowed for the discovery of a plethora of possibilities to tackle the subject, which permitted the establishment of various recommendations for the development of slow and well-being tourism in Switzerland.

I wish to thank the following people without whom this work would not have been made possible:

- Mr Emmanuel Fragnière, the responsible professor for this thesis, for his availability, his positivity and encouragements as well as his precious advice,
- The 13 people I interviewed, for their time and valued input,
- My friends and family, for their support and encouragements as well as their attentive review of this work.

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Introduction

Tourism is an industry which has perpetually known shifts and developments in its practice. Different and new forms of tourism have started to arise in the recent years. These find themselves split into two broad categories: travelling according to sustainability principles and well-being – either individual or collective (Oh, Assaf and Baloglu, 2014). In this thesis, two types of tourism linked to these new trends will be studied: slow tourism and wellbeing/wellness tourism. Slow tourism is a practice whose definition varies but which respects a number of criteria, such as travelling close to one's home and using slow modes of transportation. It must also respect the location as well as the inhabitants in which it takes place.

Concerning the latter, the two terms used to define this form of tourism – well-being and wellness – vary in their definition, wellness being more focused on taking care of the body and well-being encompassing other elements, such as economical or environmental. Given the nature of this type of tourism studied in this thesis, well-being and wellness will be used interchangeably. These two broad terms need refining in their definition; indeed, this type of tourism ranges from services close to health tourism, with the development of wellness centre such as thermal baths, or beauty centres (EHL Insights, n.d), to more holistic experiences closer to nature wishing to reconnect the body to the mind, using tools such as yoga and meditation stays. The latter will be the focus of this work. In Switzerland, well-being tourism has traditionally been focused on the Alps, through thermal baths and the “fresh alpine air” (Matos-Wasem, 2015).

The Experience Economy, a concept developed by Pine and Gilmore in 1998, is strongly linked to slow tourism. Indeed, this theory states that services are no longer sold to customers, but experiences are. Experiences themselves are becoming commoditised, and participants need to be engaged in a meaningful way to create a “memorable experience” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Slow tourism differentiates itself from eco-tourism by selling experiences to its customers and the Experience Economy theory will therefore represent a substantial aspect of this thesis.

This work will therefore explore slow and well-being through the establishment of a context and a literature review which will aid to comprehend the definitions and the

background surrounding these topics. The research question and objectives of this work will then be detailed and then answered through a dual-sided analysis. Indeed, the demand for well-being and slow tourism will be studied through a qualitative survey which will be answered by a sample of the general population. Three tourism professionals will also be interrogated to gain their opinion on the development of these two tourism types. The two surveys will then be analysed and dissected in order to draw conclusions and emit recommendations to better develop well-being and slow tourism in Switzerland.

An already existing offer of well-being tourism offer respecting slow tourism principles will also be analysed from the standpoint of two theoretical models as well as from the imaginary journey of the survey respondents. One model will study the offer from a slow tourism point of view and allow for suggestions of improvement on these criteria, while the other will focus on the Experience Economy and will offer guidance for the offer to provide a better experience to its customers. This two-sided analysis will allow to better understand and provide recommendations for an existing offer as well as for the development and promotion of more offers in Switzerland. Finally, a conclusion holding the main elements of the findings and the ensuing recommendations as well as highlighting the limits of the thesis will be presented at the end of the work.

1. Context

As an introductory point to this thesis, a threefold context articulated around the subjects of slow tourism and well-being tourism will be presented. It will hold political, economic, and social elements.

1.1. Slow tourism

Slow tourism is encouraged in some Swiss cantons' policies; indeed, the canton of Valais released a territorial development strategy – approved by the Confederation in 2019 – which includes seven principles to develop slow tourism in the canton through cantonal and communal strategies and objectives (Canton of Valais, 2019). The Confederation itself, through the Swiss Tourism Strategy, has put an emphasis on sustainable tourism: indeed, the strategy is focused on five main objectives which contain three actions each. The third objective is to “contribute to sustainable development” (Swiss Confederation, 2021) and its actions are to “preserve and enhance cultural buildings, quality of landscapes and biodiversity”, “support the adaptation to climate change” and “support the implementation of the *Swisstainable* program” (Swiss Confederation, 2021).

Swisstainable is the name of the sustainability strategy of Switzerland Tourism. This program wishes to further promote sustainable travel and tourism in Switzerland and advise its visitors to “discover nature closely in all its diversity”, “live local culture”, “consume local” and “stay longer and immerse oneself in discovery” (Switzerland Tourism, 2021). These values and recommendations follow closely those of slow tourism. Furthermore, the strategy is addressed to three separate audiences: firstly, the hosts, who must approve of sustainability and see it as an enrichment, then the tourism branch who must approve of the concept and team up with Switzerland Tourism and finally Switzerland Tourism themselves who place sustainability as a priority and must show the example. Switzerland Tourism also issued a logo based on three levels (Committed, Engaged and Leading) for tourism businesses who encompass their values on sustainability (Switzerland Tourism, 2021).

This increasing focus on sustainability is seen in many industries. It derives from climate change issues and the twofold challenge the world is facing as recognised by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in its 2011 *Towards Green Growth* paper: on the one hand a need is felt to address the expanding overall population by

broadening economic possibilities but on the other the environmental strains must be taken into consideration and focused on. Indeed, the climate change prevents the economic possibilities if not taken care of (Haxton, 2015). Tourism is responsible for a significant part of greenhouse gases emissions, particularly from transport which accounted for 22% of all emissions from transport in 2016 (United Nations, 2019). We therefore see a need for green growth, enabling economic progress while safeguarding natural resources. In order to do so, natural assets should be considered as creators of goods and well-being and strategies should be developed to ensure green growth which can mutually benefit the environment and the economy (Haxton, 2015).

Social medias, such as Instagram also provide a strong base for preoccupations over many issues, such as climate change, as it allows people to communicate in a facilitated way as well as follow the advice of influencers, in whom they put more trust than into professional advice (Baker & Walsh, 2020). Similarly, people have been longing for more humane and authentic touristic experiences when travelling; this phenomenon is due to a commoditised and industrialised tourism offer which has left travellers feeling like they do not get to experience local cultures while travelling and locals feeling like they are losing the meaning of their own cultures (Mbaiwa, 2011). This feeling, as well as environmental preoccupations – tourism being an industry having adverse impact on resources and contributing to land degradation as well as loss of diversity (Sunlu, 2003) has led to the development of slow tourism. A feeling of dread due to the life pattern established by our modern-days Western societies also pushed people to pursue occupations to improve their well-being and travellers are more and more wishing to return to simpler values and reunite their body and their mind through travel (Smith, 2003).

1.2. Well-being tourism

One trend worth noting in the domain of well-being is yoga. This ancient Indian discipline integrates the care of the mind and the body and aims to compose a holistic scheme uniting the body and mind. This practice has risen in popularity and has grown into a billion-dollar industry: in 2015 it was already a \$30 billion business (The Hindu BusinessLine, 2015). Yoga has evolved from a sacred tradition into a business of premium way of living. This worries some adepts that the essence of the practice may have been lost along the way (The Hindu

BusinessLine, 2015). Well-being tourism also wishes to provide transformative and holistic experiences for its customers. This principle which follows the precepts of the Experience Economy. Customers are willing to spend more money on good experiences, which create economic value and technology has enabled its spread (Rao, 2021). According to the Global Wellness Institute (2018), the well-being economy was, at the time, valued at \$4.5 trillions, and the well-being tourism sector at \$639 billion. It was anticipated to come to \$919 billion by 2022. Moreover, this type of tourism had an annual growth of 6.5% from 2015 to 2017 which is twice as quickly as traditional tourism, whose growth prevailed at 3.2% (Global Wellness Institute, 2018).

Well-being, incorporating notions of mental as well as physical health (CDC, 2018) has become an increasingly popular subject in the recent years; indeed, society as a whole, through media (including social media) has been talking more and more about the importance of overall well-being and mental health in particular (Hall, 2021). Indeed, the discussion around mental health has shifted in the last 10 years from being rooted in shame to nowadays being conversed about in a more positive way (Hall, 2021).

Finally, well-being is a concept more and more incorporated into different countries' policies: well-being is now measured beyond the countries' GDP since the latest does not consider health or happiness of the population. New aspects such as "health status" or "subjective well-being" (Exton & Shinwell, 2018) are now also taken into account to evaluate a country's population's overall well-being (Exton & Shinwell, 2018).

2. Literature review

The theme of the work and its research question gravitate towards three poles: well-being tourism, slow tourism and the experience economy. Two sub themes have also emerged from the subsequent research: serene tourism, a practice derivative from slow tourism and yoga tourism, a sub-type of well-being tourism. Academic research conducted around these themes is presented in the following section.

2.1. Slow tourism

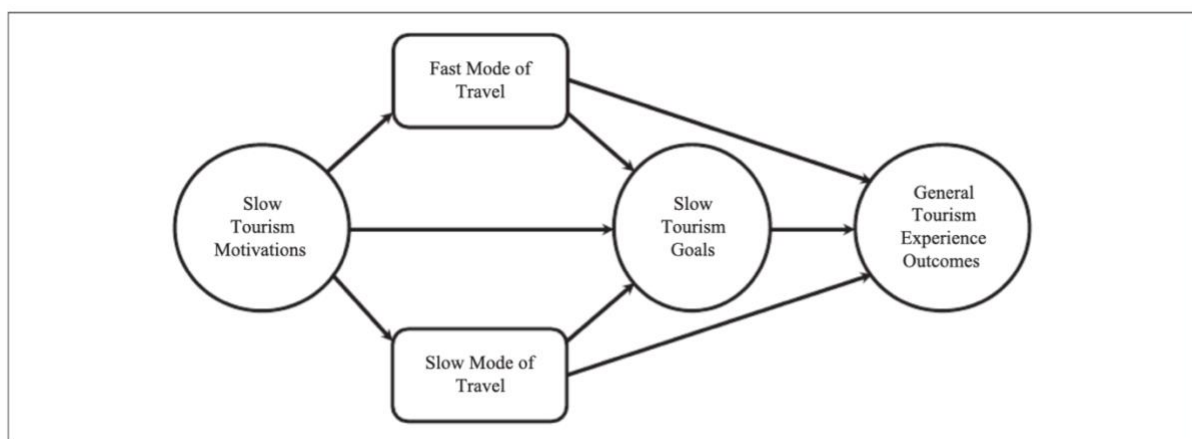
Slow tourism varies in its definition but its concept is derived from the “slow movement” (“slow food”, “slow cities”,...) (Moirá, Mylonopoulos & Kondoudaki, 2017) and emanates from modern-life concerns such as the constraints of our everyday lives which include a fast pace and a lack of contact and communication and connection with other human beings. Slow tourism aims to alleviate those preoccupations by providing answers in the form of human connection and the requirements to experience a purposeful life (Moirá et al., 2017). Slow tourism opposes itself to mass tourism and its fast pace. It aspires to promote a slower and more serene way of practicing vacation by taking time, using slower mode of transportations and enjoying time-off. Slow tourism revolves around the concept of slowing down and becoming closer to nature and other humans. Moreover, this concept is linked to others such as well-being tourism in the sense that the participants taking part in slow tourism wish to relax and restore themselves spiritually (Matos-Wasem, 2002).

Özdemir and Çelebi (2018) describe the two types of motivation for visitors undertaking slow tourism: internal and external. The internal motivation, also known as “push factors” (Özdemir and Çelebi, 2018), comprises seven components, over which the destination has no impact: “relaxation”, “self-reflection and discovery”, “escape”, “novelty seeking”, “environmental concern” and “social interaction” (Özdemir and Çelebi, 2018). The authors emphasise the importance of social life within slow tourism, taking place amid the other travellers as well as with the local community. This emphasis is contrasted from the interactions existing in mass tourism, which are often limited. Furthermore, another capital aspect of slow tourism concerns ecology, as participants to slow tourism are more environmentally conscious than other travellers. Concerning the external motivation, also known as “pull factors” (Özdemir and Çelebi, 2018), the latter can be influenced by the

destination itself, since this component includes the perception of the destination as well as its goods and services (Özdemir and Çelebi, 2018).

Oh, Assaf and Baloglu (2014) submit a slow tourism framework based on the notions of motivation, mode of transport and tourism goals. They note that the motivation of the participant to slow tourism sets goals (either deliberately or not) for the experience, which will be more prone to be achieved if the motivation of the traveller is strong. The mean of transport – either slow or fast – also impacts the goals of the participant in that it may help achieve them. Eventually, the fulfilment of the traveller’s goals, fuelled by their motivation and supported by the mean of transport, firmly strengthens the result of the slow tourism experience.

Figure 1 : A conceptual framework of slow tourism



Source: Oh et al. (2014)

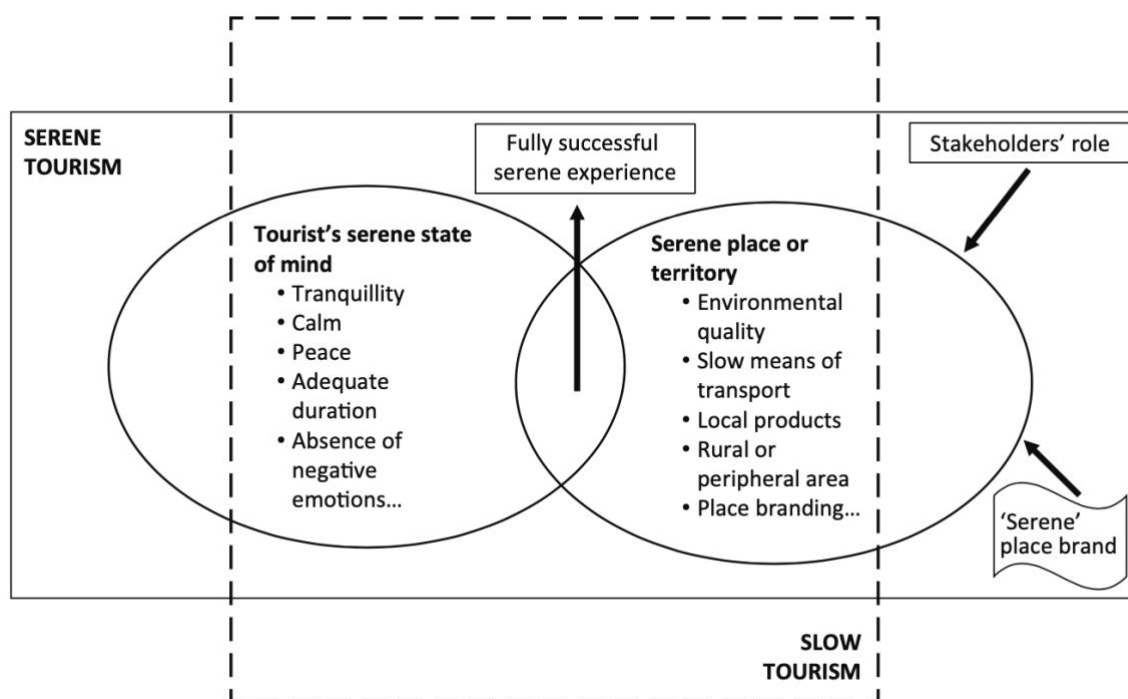
2.2. Serene tourism

Another tourism concept related to slow tourism is serene tourism: it is a more recent kind of tourism whose underlying values are “tranquillity, calm and peace” (Matos-Wasem, 2022) and whose goal is to obtain a serene mindset to reinvigorate oneself. In order to practice such a kind of tourism, one must be peaceful and resent no negative emotions. The most paramount aspect of this tourism type lies in its background: indeed, the transportation mode with which the participant proceeds towards the destination must have little environmental consequences. Moreover, the destination itself must be chosen carefully: it must represent a “serene space” (Matos-Wasem, 2022) and oppose itself to a fast pace, strain and clamour. Matos-Wasem (2022) further notes that serene tourism derives from a collaborative concept,

in which the marketing chosen for the destination must match the representation made by the local population. The locality itself should communicate a sense of serenity and this must be embodied by the locals. Furthermore, they should feel a sense of inclusion within the group.

Serene tourism, being a concept close to slow tourism, must embody the precepts of slow cities, prioritising local products and their “quality, value and taste” (Matos-Wasem, 2022). Overall, serene tourism respects many criterions of slow tourism, such as the mind state necessary to undertake this type of travel – “tranquillity, calm, peace, adequate duration and absence of negative emotions” (Matos-Wasem, 2022) as well as the peaceful location – enabled by the local stakeholders and which creates the “‘serene’ place brand” (Matos Wasem, 2022) – which must have “environmental quality, slow means of transport, local products, rural or peripheral area and place branding” (Matos-Wasem, 2022). These two aspects merged together create a thriving ordeal of serene tourism.

Figure 2 : The essential principles of serene tourism



Source: Matos-Wasem (2022)

2.3. Well-being tourism

Well-being, or wellness, is defined by the Global Wellness Institute (n.d.) as “the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that leads to a state of holistic health”. This

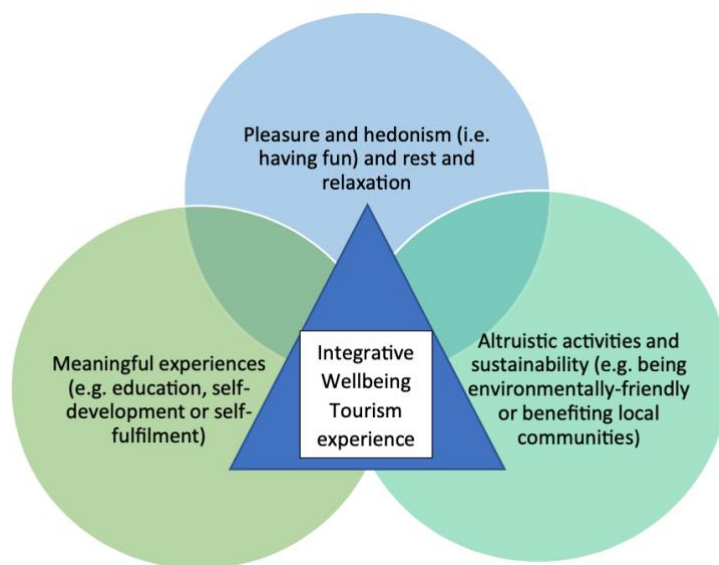
definition emphasises the dynamic aspect of well-being (there is a sense of purpose attached to it) as well as the “holistic health” (Global Wellness Institute, n.d.) showing that well-being expands further than physical aspects: indeed, well-being includes several dimensions: the first six were identified by Hettler in 1976: “physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, occupational, and social” (National Wellness Institute, 2022). A seventh dimension – environmental – was later added. Some other models vary and present up to 12 dimensions (Global Wellness Institute, n.d.).

Well-being tourism is, in turn, often linked to the notion of taking time and being in connexion with nature. A comprehensive concept is proposed to participants, in which they cater to their body as well as their mind. The scenery (ideally close to nature and secluded) is paramount, but the main focus of well-being tourism lies in the activities proposed in this landscape. Furthermore, self-fulfilment is involved, in that well-being tourism wishes to bring a transformational experience to the participants (Little, 2012). Well-being can be considered under two views: hedonic and eudaimonic. Hedonic well-being refers to the quest towards eluding pain and searching for pleasure, as developed by the Greek philosopher Aristippus in the 4th century: the ultimate goal of life is happiness. Opposing itself to the hedonistic view of life, the eudaimonic aspect signifies “to have a happy, true spirit” (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017) and is connected to the Greek philosopher Aristotle. This philosophy refers to the psychological well-being as well as purposeful deeds undertaken by individuals who do not simply pursue pleasure. This path emphasises “personal growth, self-fulfilment and development, full engagement and optimal performance of meaningful behaviour” (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017) which can be associated with other types of tourism, such as volunteer tourism. The main difference between these two views is the time necessary for well-being to be experienced: it is instant with hedonic well-being but delayed with eudaimonic well-being, as some of the actions undertaken can even be initially unpleasant and improve well-being afterwards (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017).

Concerning well-being tourism, both types of well-being can be experienced depending on the specific activity; as Kay Smith and Diekmann (2017) note, a trip to a spa could represent a hedonistic experience while a spiritual retreat could, in turn, bring a eudaimonic experience. The authors also note the importance of taking into consideration cultural as well as personal differences – not everybody will sense the same experience or perception of what is “good”

or not – as well as the fact that some experiences may seem good for one’s well-being but in reality are not. Tourism provides physical and mental well-being to its participants, but it should be kept in mind that well-being must benefit the greatest number and must therefore take into consideration local population and be mindful of their needs and well-being as well as the traveller’s. Some forms of tourism, such as slow tourism and well-being tourism, can provide utilitarian well-being. This form of contentment is brought by “morally good actions” (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017) and it should profit to the largest amount of people. Kay Smith and Diekmann (2017) propose an “Integrative Well-being Tourism Experience” model which is composed of three elements: “pleasure and hedonism and rest and relaxation”, “altruistic activities and sustainability” and “meaningful experiences” (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017). A tourism experience being integrative of well-being should assemble a balance of these three components (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017).

Figure 3 : Model of Integrative Well-being Tourism Experience

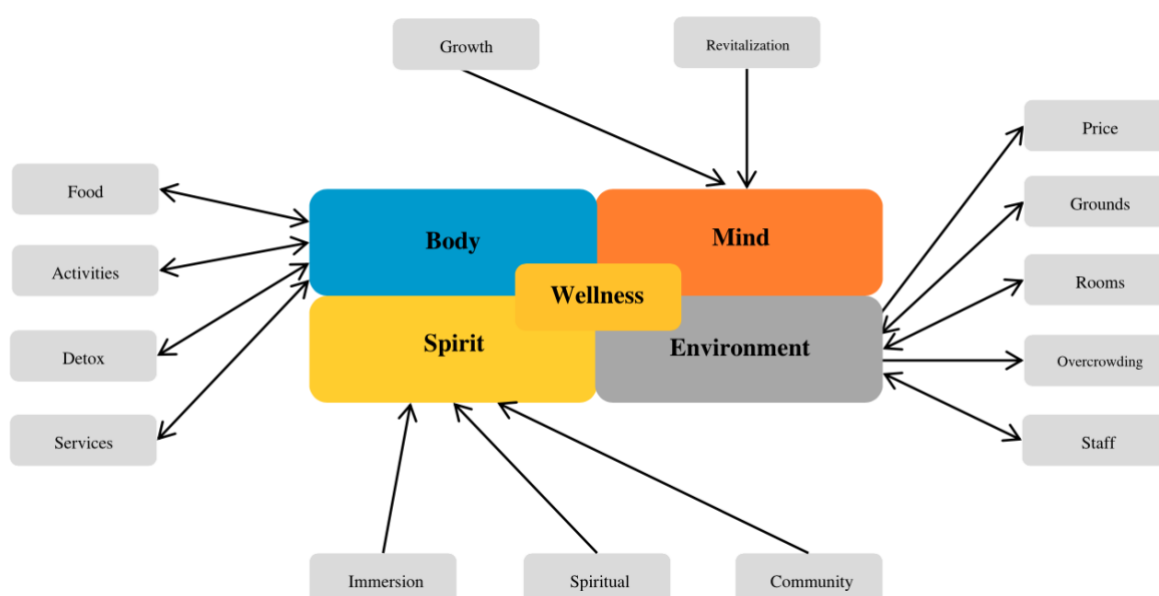


Source: Kay Smith & Diekmann (2017)

Well-being tourism is a growing sector: Dillette, Douglas & Andrzejewski (2018) estimated its growth rate at 7.5% per year. The result of this growth is the increase of well-being touristic offers existing in hotels or specialised well-being centres as well as the creation of specific touristic packages. Dillette et al. (2018) highlighted the root aspects necessary for the experience of well-being tourism and concluded that four facets are necessary: firstly, the body must be taken into account by establishing the physical requirements necessary for the stay as well as the food that will be served. This can allow future guests to comprehend the

holistic aspect of slow tourism, by taking care of the body also through food. Furthermore, the link to the local inhabitants must be emphasised. The whole proceeding of the well-being offer should be explained to the visitors, including some negative side-effects which can occur, so as to avoid negative surprises for them. The second dimension underlined is the psychological aspect. Indeed, well-being tourism leads to changes and improvements in that domain. The third aspect is the fact that people often experience well-being tourism alone but meet other participants during their stay: this social approach should be emphasised by well-being tourism businesses. Lastly, the authors note that mindful details and attentions at the place of the experience reinforce positive experience for the guests. These four elements represent the different aspects of well-being tourism (Dilette et al., 2018).

Figure 4 : Dimensions of the wellness tourism experience



Source: Dilette et al. (2018)

Smith (2003) notes that well-being tourism originated from a sense of loss driving out of our modern Western society pushing us to work long hours and which can leave us feel isolated and unhappy. This phenomenon is more common in urban areas and pushes people to pursue comfort in new endeavours. Both well-being and tourism aim to reconnect one's with their body, mind and spirituality as well as provide a form of evasion. The author also notes that this wish to escape is not new and has been observed for centuries, an example being the *Grand Tour* that was undertaken by nobility in the 17th and 18th century and that allowed young people to discover the world as well as themselves. An issue to the escapism

idealised in our travels is the confrontation to our own issues and concerns; this has also led to the development of holistic stays which aim to interconnect the participant with themselves and their worries. Contrarily to other types of tourists, the spiritual or holistic tourist looks for personal development and would rather be autonomous. They furthermore appreciate experiences linked with nature and pursue authenticity, which can lead them to engage with local populations. Moreover, tourism in general and well-being tourism in particular, are an allegory for life: as in life, one undertakes a journey when travelling. This journey connects one's inwardness with the outer world they are experiencing through tourism. Well-being and holistic tourism therefore have the power to truly change an individual's perspective and actions in life and help them reconnect with their true selves (Smith, 2003).

2.4. The development of well-being tourism from the Covid-19 pandemic

Well-being tourism can furthermore help ease some of the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, the overall mental health of the population has degraded since the start of the pandemic: according to the Swiss Corona Stress Study conducted by the University of Basel, 9% of the respondents presented severe depressive symptoms in April 2020 – during the first semi-confinement in Switzerland, and this number rose to 18% in November 2020 during the second wave (Taboada, 2021). A solution to counter this societal issue could be well-being and well-being tourism: hotels have been taking advantage of this new trend and have been offering an increasing number of USP including a “Health & Wellness” proposal for their customers (Observatoire Valaisan du Tourisme, 2021). Kay-Smith (2022) agrees with this postulate and states that the pandemic has had a negative impact on people's mental well-being due to the stress of getting sick, the decrease of social life and recreational activities as well as income deficit due to economic issues. Tourism, although often seen as a luxury and not as a necessity, proves to be crucial in socialisation and healing of the body and mind. The goal of undertaking tourism is to allow its participants to escape their daily occupation and unwind. The Covid-19 pandemic will impact the kind of tourism offered and well-being tourism will have a greater importance in the years to come as post-Covid-19 travel develops. New kinds of tourism – such as healing tourism, which is suggested to occur in a nature-based environment – will know a rise in their development. Furthermore, health and more particularly mental health will be at the centre of preoccupations and the development of

tourism and “nature-based, spiritual and transformational tourism” (Kay-Smith, 2022) may become a new well-being tourism offer. Well-being tourism, additionally to helping relieve “symptoms” of the pandemic, might help set up resilience, which enhances the ability to manage hardships. Kay-Smith (2022) defines the five “R”s of the wellness tourism post-pandemic as rest – a paramount venture within well-being tourism – followed by recuperation, which can either be mental, physical or both. After this step, restoration of the participant’s stamina and well-being occurs, which allows for the feeling of Resilience – allowing for resistance towards hardships to come – takes place. Finally, the participant comes to experience regeneration from their stay.

Figure 5 : The Five “R”s of Post-COVID Wellness Tourism



Source: Kay-Smith (2022)

2.5. Yoga tourism

Yoga tourism represents a niche market in the larger fad of “travelling to feel well” (Lehto, Brown, Chen & Morrison, 2006). Since many versions of yoga exist, many individuals can find a branch which corresponds best to their needs. The different branches of the discipline can be associated to the seven dimensions of wellness (Ponder & Holladay, 2013) – physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, occupational, social, and environmental¹. The only lacking wellness dimension in the following table is occupational, which is not associated to a variety of yoga.

The various branches of yoga are the following: Raja yoga which is also considered to be the most “classical” form of the discipline, and which is mainly based on meditation: it demands poise. Karma yoga positions itself upon the practice of acts of selflessness towards others. It puts importance on being aware of one’s acts and letting go of the potential

¹ As highlighted and detailed in point 2.3.

consequences of the actions. Bhakti yoga is rooted in the dimension of devotion and adoration of a divinity. Jnana yoga is based upon “wisdom and knowledge” (Newlyn, 2020) and includes studying reflective texts. Tantra yoga delves into emotions and bodily sensations. Finally, Hatha yoga aims to balance the body and mind through exercise and strength (Newlyn, 2020).

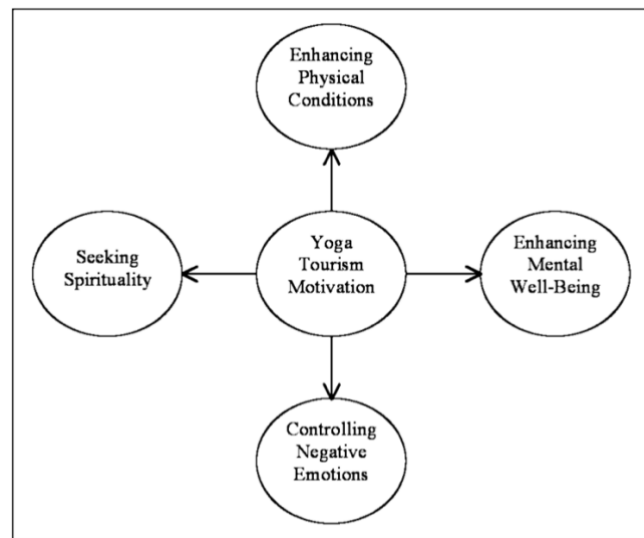
Table 1: The six branches of yoga associated to the seven dimensions of wellness

Six branches of yoga	Seven dimensions of wellness
Raja	Spiritual
Karma	Social/occupational
Bhakti	Environmental
Jnana	Intellectual
Tantra	Emotional
Hatha	Physical

Adapted from Ponder and Holladay (2013)

Some advantages of the practice of yoga include a reduction of tension and worry, amelioration of the breath, development of physical power and better flexibility. The tourists undertaking vacations around yoga are mainly middle-aged women who have a higher education level. The main incentives for undertaking this type of holidays are “renew oneself, relax, be more flexible in body and mind, let go of stress from busy life and help gain a sense of balance” (Lehto et al., 2006). These incentives match the main improvements identified by yoga specialists: “spirituality” (Lehto et al., 2006), physical and mental well-being and harmony with one’s emotions (Lehto et al., 2006).

Figure 6 : The Dimensionality of Yoga Tourism Motivation

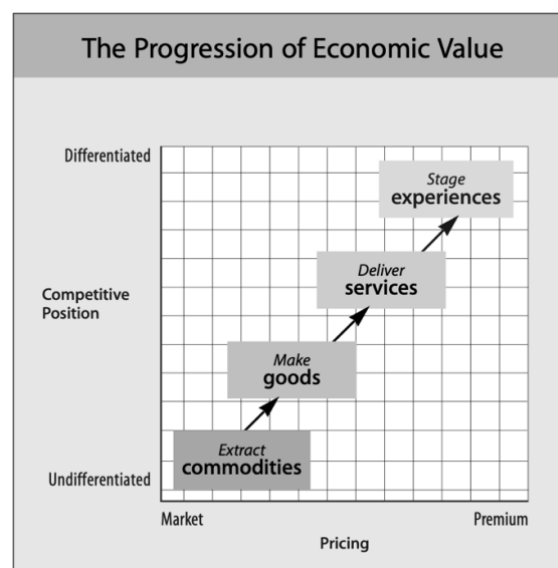


Source: Lehto et al. (2006)

2.6. Experience Economy

Well-being and slow tourism are both linked to the concept of the Experience Economy. This theory, developed in 1998 by Pine and Gilmore states that services have become a commodity and have therefore lost some of their value. The next step in the “progression of economic value” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) are the experiences. Pine and Gilmore articulate the needs for businesses to shift towards the Experience Economy to avoid their service become a commodity (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Figure 7 : The Progression of Economic Value



Source: Pine & Gilmore (1998)

Experiences allow for the offerings to be sold at a higher price than a similar service because customers will be drawn towards the unique economic offer. Furthermore, services simply become a stage on which the experiences take place; the real value of the service takes place within the experience staged towards the service; customers are willing to pay a higher fee to benefit from a meaningful experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Two aspects of the experience can be taken into account to consider them: the “customer participation” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) – which can either be passive or active – and the “environmental relationship” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), which represents the connexion between the customers with the experience. Customer can either absorb or immerse themselves in the experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

In order for experiences to prove themselves successful, they must offer a consistent high offer quality and renew themselves frequently, in order for customers to not become bored of them. Moreover, innovation will be capital for businesses to thrive (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). This theory is closely linked to slow tourism as the latter aims to provide a slower and more sustainable mean of holiday, while offering higher quality services and products (locally sourced). This intent also implicates a higher paying price for the customer as they are paying for a full experience and not only a simple service. This notion of experience is substantial in today’s economy, as stated by Pine and Gilmore (1998). Great conception, marketing and rendition of experiences is essential for customers to deem them worth of paying the price fixed for them (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). As well-being and slow tourism offers often find themselves in higher end of pricing (Little, 2012), it is therefore necessary to design great experiences around them. These experiences should answer a need of customer and be renewed to encourage customer return (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

3. Research question and objectives

The goal of this thesis is to concretely analyse a slow and well-being tourism offer in Valais through, through the use of two theoretical frameworks: Pécsek's Slow Tourism model and Pine and Gilmore's Experience Economy, as well as with the experience of participants taking part to an imagined journey. This will allow to gain insight on a concrete offer of slow and well-being tourism in Switzerland. Regarding demand, the goal is to understand the willingness of a general population to take part to this type of tourism as well as their motivation to do so.

The objectives of this work find themselves as follow:

1. Understand the demand concerning slow and well-being tourism offers.
2. Analyse a concrete tourism offer using a slow tourism model as well as criteria from the Experience Economy.
3. Formulate recommendations for the tourism offer analysed in terms of slow tourism and the Experience Economy concepts.
4. Formulate recommendations for the development of slow and well-being tourism in Switzerland.

A research proposal emerges from these objectives: *What is the motivation towards slow and well-being tourism and how can this type of tourism be promoted in Switzerland?*

4. Methodology

This work was realised through a two-scope analysis: on one hand, a study for the demand of slow and well-being tourism was realised through nine qualitative surveys. These included seven questions about the respondent's travel habits, preferences and their opinion on slow tourism and well-being tourism, to learn the general impression about these two types of travel. The survey also included a customer journey inviting the respondents to take part to an imaginative journey: a weekend stay themed around yoga and detox, taking place in Valais. On the other hand, a study of the stay previously stated was realised through two models: the Slow Tourism model developed by Pécssek (2014) and the Experience Economy criteria developed by Pine and Gilmore (1998). These two models helped understand to which extent the stay respected some slow tourism principles as well as the concept of the Experience Economy, in which slow tourism inserts itself.

4.1. Qualitative survey

The main population studied within the survey included four men and six women whose age ranged from ages 20 to 56. Most of them were students, with more than half of them in the tourism field and studying at the HES-SO Valais/Wallis and the remainder studying in other fields. They were chosen because it was thought to be interesting to gather opinions from people studying in the field of the subject (tourism) as well as people who would not be familiar with the theory behind tourism and having other points of view. The repartition of the respondents goes as follows: two men and five women between 20 and 25 (five of whom are tourism students, two of whom are not), one man between 25 and 35 and one woman and one man older than 50. It was considered important to include points of view of different age groups and occupations, to compare their vision on the subject. The interviews were conducted in person between the 11th of January and the 1st of March 2022, except three who were realised via Teams meetings. Notes were taken by hand on paper and later re-transcribed digitally.

4.2. Interview questions

The questions asked to these respondents orientated themselves around two main themes: slow tourism, which represented questions three to five, and well-being tourism,

from questions six to seven, and yearned to understand the opinion of the respondent on these two themes and whether they would like to take part to such forms of tourism.

The first question – “Tell me about your last holidays chronologically” – was relevant to neither of those themes and its result was not analysed as its goal was to put the participant in the mindset of travel and vacations and start with an “easy” question to help the respondent relax.

The second question, “What is your general expectations for your holidays?” wished to understand the respondent’s motivation for undergoing tourism in general and comprehend what they wish to do when going on holidays to better formulate recommendations for the implementation of slow and well-being tourism.

The third question, “What do you think of the concept of “slow tourism”? Have you already practiced, or would you be willing to practice it?”, started with the definition of the concept of slow tourism to most of the respondents, who were not familiarised with it. Its purpose was to gain an insight of the popularity (or not) of slow tourism as a practice and understand people’s opinion on this type of tourism.

The fourth question, “Would you be willing to spend your holidays in Switzerland near your home?” aimed to understand the motivation – or lack of it – of the respondents to pursue tourism within Switzerland rather than abroad. It was followed by the sub-questions “Do you think that the Covid-19 pandemic has compelled some people to stay in Switzerland rather than go abroad?” and “Do you think this tendency will bring a « new normal » or rather that we will see a return to past habits?”. The goal of these two questions was to understand the opinion of the respondents towards the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on domestic tourism and whether they thought this impact would be long lasting or, on the contrary, only temporary.

The fifth question: “Do you think it is possible to « feel abroad » and discover new things in your country?” was one of the most capital questions of the survey and wished to understand whether the respondents felt like they could feel abroad and have a sense of change of landscape while staying within their own country. This question proved essential to develop hypotheses on the development of slow tourism in Switzerland.

The goal of the sixth question, “What degree of importance do you grant to the concept of well-being?” was to understand the level of concern put on well-being in general by the respondents in their life. This included the notions of taking care of the body and mind, eating well, taking time to unwind as well as practicing unwinding activities such as yoga and meditation.

The seventh question, “Would you want to/have you already spend vacations oriented around well-being and relaxation?” wished to understand the willingness – or lack of it – of the respondents to take part to well-being tourism.

The eighth question consisted of a customer journey in which the participants imagined they experienced a stay and provided their likes and dislikes of the experience, as well as what they would like to change within the experience. The customer journey consisted of a 10-slides presentation² comprising pictures as well as text describing each activity of the stay. This presentation was shown and read to the participants. This imaginary journey allowed for an interesting comparison with the theoretical analysis previously conducted.

The ninth and final question, “Is there a question I did not asked that you would have liked me to ask?”, allowed the respondents to bring their own insight and ideas on the subject and brought some interesting additional elements to the analysis.

4.3. Professionals qualitative survey

Three tourism professionals were interrogated using a personalised survey for each. Firstly, a professor at the HES-SO Valais/Wallis (who will from thereafter be referred to as RM) who is specialised in slow tourism provided answers concerning the demand surrounding this type of tourism. This interview was conducted via Teams and lasted around an hour. Some questions asked (questions four, five, eight and nine) were the same as for the general survey. In addition, this person was asked about their own definition of slow tourism since this type of tourism does not benefit from an official definition, it was interesting to gain their insight on the subject. A question was also asked about their opinion on the development of slow tourism, in order to gain their point of view on the potential development this type of tourism could have in Switzerland. Finally, the question “According to you, what should be put in place

² See Appendix III

to further promote this type of tourism in Switzerland” allowed to gain this interviewee’s point of view on the promotion of slow tourism and how it could be improved.

Secondly the co-founder of the company organising the stay that was analysed (who will be referred to in this work as SR) answered questions about their company and its offers as well as questions on slow and well-being tourism. This interview was conducted over the phone and lasted for about 45 minutes. The respondent was asked 30 questions, the first 12 consisted of the presentation of their company as well as additional information needed to complete the analysis of the yoga and detox stay through the two frameworks and the eight following questions were about the topics of slow and well-being tourism. The respondent’s own definition of slow and well-being tourism was asked, to gain perspective on their own vision of these tourism types. The interviewee was then asked about the development potential of the type of stay they propose in Switzerland, which mostly revolve around the concepts of slow and well-being tourism as well as the necessary infrastructures that would be needed to further develop these kinds of tourism in the country.

Finally, an associate professor and researcher at the Budapest Metropolitan University (who will be referred to as MS) provided a valuable insight on well-being tourism, their domain of expertise. This respondent was not available for an in-person interview, due to their busy schedule, and the questions were therefore sent and answered directly on a Word document sent by e-mail. MS answered seven questions oriented towards well-being tourism, including their own definition of this industry, and whether or not they think the Covid-19 pandemic has helped or not the development of well-being tourism, which provided a very valuable insight on the assumption that this type of tourism is currently being developed because of the pandemic and its consequences. The respondent was then asked about the transformational aspect of well-being tourism and the type of well-being tourism which, according to them, will develop the most in the future, which offered an assessment of the future of this industry as well as the importance of nature within it. Finally, the last question touched upon the subject of the promotion of well-being tourism and what would be necessary, in terms of infrastructures and policies for example, to develop this sector.

5. Analysis of a slow / well-being tourism offer

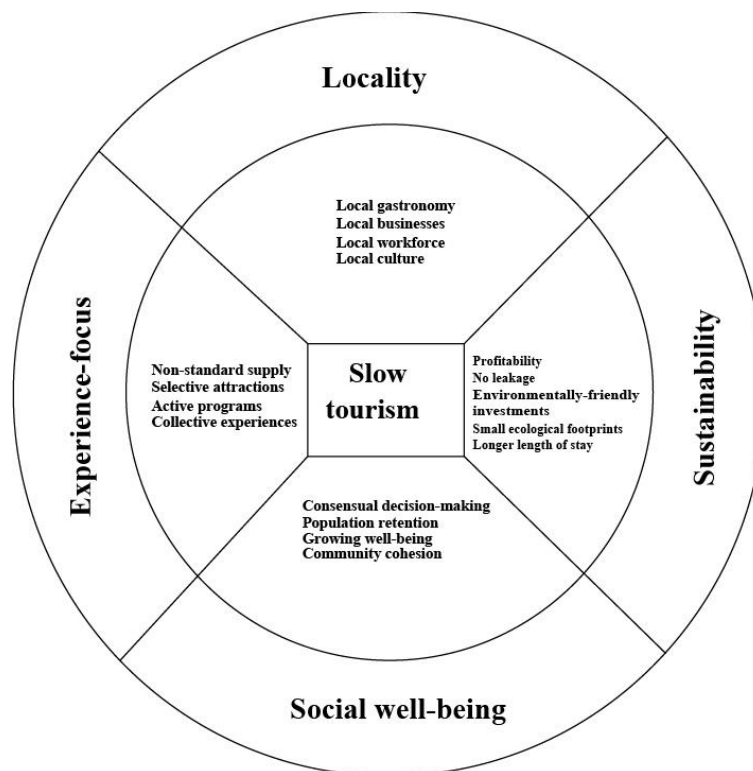
In order to gain perspective on the offer of the type of tourism analysed in this work, the theoretical analysis of a slow tourism stay was conducted according to two models – Pécsek’s Slow Tourism Model and Pine and Gilmore’s Experience Economy.

The offer analysed is the one of a slow-tourism business based in Valais which proposes many stays surrounding nature and well-being. The stay chosen for this work – *yoga and detox in the heart of the Val d’Hérens* – was selected for its slow tourism principles and wellness components, making it an ideal offer over which to formulate recommendations to further its slow tourism and Experience Economy elements.

5.1. Slow tourism model

Pécsek (2014) designed a slow tourism model based on four notions: locality, experience-focus, sustainability and social well-being. This model was chosen because of its slow tourism criteria as well as for its simplicity and clarity. In the following section, each pillar of the model will be briefly presented and analysed for the sub-mentioned offer.

Figure 8 : Slow Tourism Model



Source: Pécsek (2014)

5.1.1. Locality

Firstly, concerning locality, it is noted that “gastronomy (food, traditions, cooking methods)” (Pécsek, 2014) can be beneficial to highlight other cultural principles and the other way around. Furthermore, a rising demand for local goods and services will generate in turn a demand for jobs, which will be filled by local individuals (Pécsek, 2014).

The pillar of locality is strongly represented in the offer studied. Indeed, the hotel in which the participants are staying at (the *Mayen Anako Lodge*) is made up of six agricultural buildings which have been saved from destruction and renovated as to preserve local heritage and architecture. The buildings were used in the past to store cereals, hay or other provisions and were also used as stables. The choice of this hotel for the stay highlights the cultural heritage of Valais and allows participants to discover it better. Furthermore, the locality itself is pleasing to the eye, since the stay takes place in the Val d'Hérens at the foot of the Dent Blanche in a beautiful environment. Moreover, the two external people providing workshops during the stay (yoga and cooking classes) come from the region; the yoga teacher is Canadian but currently lives in Switzerland and the cooking teacher comes from Valais and has initiated a change agency around the slow food movement called COOS. The food used in the cooking and the workshops during the stay is therefore local and respecting slow food principles, such as having a short circuit and being in season.

5.1.2. Experience focus

Concerning experience-focus, it is the criteria that differentiates slow tourism from “green tourism” (Pécsek, 2014) since slow tourism emphasises more on the experience of the stay than the latter. Moreover, tourists feel a need for genuine experiences which can be fulfilled with a personalised plan. It is also noted that slow tourism supplies more genuine experiences thanks to its emphasis on contact between local residents and tourists as well as its slower pace (Pécsek, 2014).

The experience of this offer finds itself in the concept of well-being and holistic tourism offered: the participants are taking part in the stay to (re) discover themselves and take some time off their busy day-to-day schedules. The authenticity of the experience resides in the locality of it, immersing the participants into a beautiful scenery and allowing them to experience unique activities, such as staying in a renovated *mayens*. Furthermore, the stay

itself envelops the participant into an experience involving their mind as well as their body; they connect their thoughts and bodily movement using yoga and meditation and learn to eat healthier, in season food.

5.1.3. Sustainability

For the pillar of sustainability, we can observe that this concept comprises three notions: “social, economic and environmental” (Pécsek, 2014) and that these three concepts should all be taken into account to consider a slow tourism activity (Pécsek, 2014).

The length of this stay is only that of a weekend, this criterion of slow tourism (longer lengths of stay) is therefore not respected. Moreover, the location (Val d’Hérens) where the stay takes place is situated quite remotely and is therefore mainly accessible by car. It is nevertheless interesting to note that accessibility by public transport is possible and is indicated on the website. Furthermore, the co-founder of the company estimates to about 30% the proportion of the clientele who come to the stay using public transportation. They also promote carpooling between participants by creating a chat group before the beginning of the stay, in order to reduce the number of cars present and therefore their impact on the environment. The activities proposed during the stay (yoga, meditation, hikes and cooking workshops) all present a very low to non-existent ecological footprint. The company as a whole only promotes activities with a minimised impact on the environment and, for example, do not propose any stays around skiing. However, the use of public transportation to reach the location of the stay is not particularly promoted.

5.1.4. Social well-being

Finally, for social well-being, this pillar regroups the positive repercussion of slow tourism on the local population. The consent of the local community is paramount to the implementation and the development of slow tourism in a given area (Pécsek, 2014).

The social benefits brought onto the local population by the stay are limited but nonetheless existent: indeed, the company offers welcoming baskets for the participants to their private stays and these baskets are made in partnership with the villages’ local shops (such as groceries, butcher shops or bakeries) which brings revenue and visibility to these shops. Furthermore, the stay itself helps local shops since it brings them customers and

therefore an increase in revenue. The local habitants are not involved directly in the stay, nor do they benefit from any kind of discount on the stays, although it is something the company is open to consider. The social aspect of the stays is something the company puts a strong emphasis on and encourages by creating a group chat prior to the beginning of each stay to encourage the participants to get to know each other.

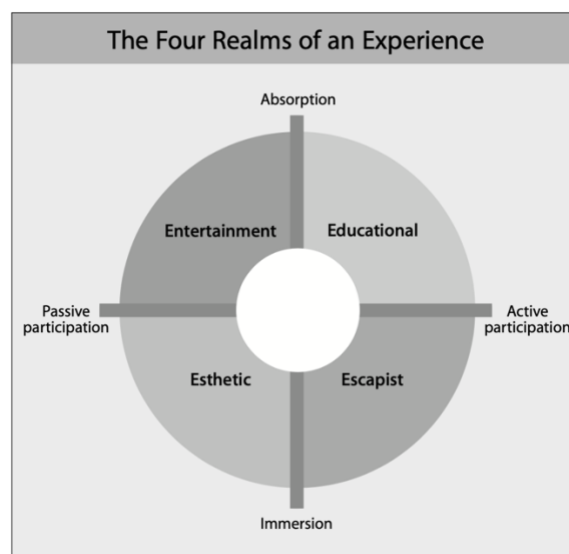
5.2. Experience Economy

As exposed beforehand, the concept of the Experience Economy developed by Pine and Gilmore in 1998 matches some principles of slow tourism. Indeed, in slow tourism does not represent a simple service which is being sold to the participant, but a transformative experience: it is what distinct slow tourism from eco or green tourism. In order to issue recommendations for the slow tourism offer to become a better experience, it will also be analysed throughout two aspects of the Experience Economy: “The Four Realms of an Experience” and the criteria to “Design Memorable Experiences” (Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

5.2.1. The Four Realms of an Experience

According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), four categories of experiences can be defined – “the Four Realms of an Experience” which are sorted according the two aspects cited above; experience can be either be “entertaining, educational, escapist or aesthetic” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Figure 9 : The Four Realms of an Experience



Source : Pine & Gilmore (1998)

The best experiences include elements from these four realms where they establish a “sweet spot” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) and form a valuable experience. Furthermore, five “Key Experience-Design Principles” have been established by Pine and Gilmore (1998); these principles are the following: “theme the experience” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) – conceive an experience around a coherent and well-defined theme which will create a seamless experience, “harmonise impressions with positive cues” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) – establish positive impressions to reinforce the experience to the customer, “mix in memorabilia” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) – offer goods to be purchased to serve as a memory of the experience and “engage five senses” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) – experiences being successful the more senses are engaged (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

The stay studied falls in the escapist category. This means that the participation within the adventure is active, and the customer is immersed within the experience. The absorption realm is also included in the experience as the participants take part in workshops and learn about different subjects in a more theoretical manner.

5.2.2. Designing Memorable Experiences

Pine and Gilmore (1998) defined five fundamental experience-design postulates which will be explained briefly and analysed for the sub-mentioned tourism stay in the following section.

5.2.2.1. Theme the Experience

In order to provide a coherent experience to the customer, the latest must be constructed around a clear theme, as to not confuse the participants. Experiences centered around well-defined themes are overall more successful and remunerative. A good theme ties the whole experience together and makes it feel seamless to the customer (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

In the case of the company studied, each stay is themed around the main activity promoted; in the case of the Yoga and Detox stay, the main theme observed is the mission towards well-being and holistic health. The lodge in which the participants are staying fits into this theme firstly through its modern interior design, fitting into the minimalist aesthetic often associated with well-being practices such as yoga or mediation and secondly because of its location in the middle of nature tying in the theme of a calm and peaceful environment. Furthermore, the theme and therefore the activities change according to each season. For

example, in the summer yoga is practiced outside, in nature. The food served to the participants also varies according to the time of the year.

5.2.2.2. Harmonise impressions with positive cues

In order to reinforce the theme, positive cues must be introduced in the experience, such as ways of greeting customers, specific designations of some items or better indications of locations.

For the company, the good-natured and simple ambiance they thrive to establish in the stays is created through clear communication and positive relationships between the participants. To do so, a group chat is created before the stays so that participants can get to know each other before the start of their holiday; this helps create a friendly and easy-going atmosphere. Furthermore, the instructors are friendly and help maintain the positive climate. The ambiance is mostly created by the participants themselves and can switch depending on the groups. For their private stays, they provide a guide to offer participants a more seamless experience: this guide contains information about the location as well as advices on what to do in the region and where to go out to eat. For their group stays, they also provide a program of the planned activities which is available in the main building and provided to each participant via e-mail.

5.2.2.3. Eliminate negative cues

Negative cues can include direction or directive given in a negative way to customer (for example by using a negation in a sentence) as well as any cue that contravene and goes against the theme. “Overservicing” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) can also represent a negative cue, as customer can feel annoyed by some overly done details in service (for example brochures containing hotel information filling the hotel room) (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Concerning the studied offer, the activities in the stays can be skipped if the participants wish to do so. This allows for a lack of frustration of the participant and an overall more positive impression. The most important aspect for the company is that the participants enjoy themselves and have a good time, they should therefore not feel forced to take part to an activity if they do not wish to.

5.2.2.4. Mix in memorabilia

Memorabilia consist of goods purchased to remind people of the experience they went through, whether it be vacations or another occasion. It is noted that memorabilia can be sold at a higher price than similar goods out of the “souvenir” context. If the experience is satisfactory for the guest, they will then want to remember it by keeping a souvenir (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

The company studied does not currently apply the concept of memorabilia. On their website they do sell gift baskets (composed of products sold by local partners – which promotes locality), but they are intended for customers who purchase a gift card for a stay, as an accompaniment, not as a gift by themselves. During the stays, no memorabilia can be purchased, customers simply shop at the local stores of the destination if they wish to.

5.2.2.5. Engage all five senses

Pine and Gilmore (1998) note that “the more senses an experience engages, the more effective and memorable it can be”, meaning that the experience should not only engage the sense of sight or hearing but add the sense of touch, taste as well as smell.

The stay being a complete experience taking place on multiple days, all five senses are engaged. The sense of sight is engaged throughout the entire stay: firstly, the location – both the surrounding nature and the accommodation – are beautiful and pleasant to look at and all the activities proposes engage sight as well (walks, yoga, workshops, etc..). The sense of hearing is engaged in a similar manner, all throughout the stay; the participants can hear the nature surrounding them, the instructions during their classes and the other participants. Touch is also quite present in the stay, mainly throughout the yoga classes in which the participants connect with their own touch and body. The sense of smell is also stimulated during the stay, on the one hand through the smell of food being prepared and later savoured by the participants and on the other through the multiple scents present in nature than can be experienced during the various walks and hikes. Finally, the participants are served three meals a day and therefore taste various food during their experience; for some of them the food served will also represent a discovery (if they have never tried this aliment before) which will add a layer to the engagement of their sense.

6. Findings

In the following section, the findings of the two surveys conducted will be presented. Firstly, the general survey results will be exposed, and they will be followed by the survey results of the three professionals interviewed. One of the professionals interviewed – RM – also took part in the imagined journey of the analysed stay³ and their results are therefore also presented, separated from those of the other respondents, in the following section.

6.1. General qualitative survey analysis

This general qualitative survey was answered by ten participants. This first question of the survey concerned the participant's last holidays and aimed to set the participant in the mood to think about their vacation and later, slow and well-being tourism. This question, being personal and irrelevant for the analysis, was therefore not included in the results of the survey.

6.1.1. Expectation from holidays

When asked what they generally expect from their holidays, respondents principally mention two aspects: the discovery of local cultures (mainly of new cuisines, art or architecture) and of local populations as well as the need to unwind and relax and have a change of scenery ("get out of the daily routine") from their everyday life. Some respondents also emphasize on their need to practice different activities during their holidays.

6.1.2. Slow tourism

Concerning slow tourism, two types of profile emerge: the respondents who have already practiced slow tourism and the ones that have not. The respondents who have already done slow tourism all share as a common similarity: they have all practiced this type of tourism "involuntarily", often by travelling within Switzerland and taking time to discover the country. The respondents who have not yet tried slow tourism would almost all like to try it, although sometimes with some reservations, like the financial aspect of this kind of tourism or the necessity to travel near their home (as opposed to go abroad). The respondents note the importance of establishing links and having a positive impact on the local population when travelling. Some interviewees truly believe that slow tourism will represent a significant part of tourism in the future and is a good solution to counter mass tourism, although a respondent

³ Section 6.1.7.

express concerns over the potential over tourism which could occur if a lot of people were to take part to slow tourism. A respondent also state that they would not like to experience slow tourism as they like to do as many activities as possible during their holiday and would not like to stay at one place for a lengthy period of time.

6.1.3. Vacations in Switzerland

When asked if they already have spent their vacations in Switzerland, the majority of respondents state that they have already done it, although not willingly for some who only stayed in Switzerland when there were travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. They mostly state that there are lots of new things to discover in the country and that travelling close to their home has also helped them better explore their region. An emphasis is placed on the importance of experiencing a change in scenery and different activities from their day-to-day life in order to enjoy holidays in Switzerland. Three interviewees stated that they would not be willing to travel within Switzerland as they need a complete change of scenery during their holidays that cannot be offered without travelling abroad. A respondent also raises the question of promotion of Swiss tourism; indeed, they feel like they would be more tempted to stay in the country for their holidays if better promotion and endeavours were offered.

All respondents think that the Covid-19 pandemic has generally compelled people to stay in the country for their vacations, a few of them have found themselves in that situation. Concerning the aftermath of the pandemic, the respondents are split into two: around half of them estimate that the travel habits of people will be deeply modified and that they will reduce their amount travel abroad and, on the contrary, travel more within Switzerland. The reminder, on the other hand, think that the reduction of travelling seen during the pandemic is, similarly to other measures such as the wear of masks, only temporary and that tourism will go back to “normal” afterwards when restrictions will be completely lifted. An interviewee finds themselves in the middle as they think people will travel again like they used to after the end of the travel bans but that the experience of having had to stay in the country will have been eye-opening for them and will have allowed them to see new things to do within Switzerland.

An interesting element mentioned by multiple respondents is the willingness to reduce travel, not because of the pandemic and the realisation of the beauty of richness of our

country but rather according to each generation: indeed, older people are usually less environmentally conscious and will most likely not change their travel habits, whereas the younger generation is more preoccupied with the environment and attempts to reduce their travelling (especially by plane). On the other hand, a respondent notes that social networks (such as Instagram) push younger people to travel to remote and exotic locations to see in real life the landscapes they can observe through their phones.

6.1.4. Feeling abroad in your own country

All respondents except one feel like it is very possible to feel abroad in your own country (in our case, Switzerland). The factors helping them to go through a different experience form their everyday life are the various climates, environments, landscapes, cultures and languages offered throughout the country. An interviewee also notes that simply experiencing a change of rhythm from your everyday life can help make you feel different, without having the need to travel at all.

6.1.5. Well-being

Concerning well-being and its importance within their life, the interviewees are split into three categories: the first one is made up of a minority of respondents who put a great importance on the concept of well-being and thrive to remove stress from their life. To do so, they experience unwinding activities such as getting massages and also seek to travel to relaxing places. The second category consists of respondents who put a mild importance on the subject: they consider well-being to be substantial but put an emphasis on the fact that it must not become the main focus in one's life. They also generally focus more on food and exercising as a mean to unwind and taking care of themselves rather than trying out activities specific to well-being. The third category of respondents state that well-being currently represents a small part of their life but that they would like to practice it more and further take care of themselves than they currently do. An interviewee highlights the importance of taking time to slow down (by doing activities such as meditation) and opposes it to the time spent on social media.

6.1.6. Well-being tourism

When asked if they would like (or have already tried) to spend vacations around the concept of well-being, only three respondents state to already have experienced this type of

vacation by going to thermal baths. Just a little more than half of the respondents would like to try out well-being tourism – the reasons stated being that it is important to let go of everyday stress by taking time for well-being and taking time to recharge, the curiosity of trying something new and the want of doing this type of tourism surrounded by a beautiful landscape.

The other half of the respondent who would not like to take part to well-being tourism state that this type of tourism would bore them or that they would waste their time and that they would rather take part in more active vacations. Some also say that solely focusing on well-being during their holidays would be too limiting for them, or that it does not represent what they look for when going on vacations. One respondent states that they would not enjoy this type of tourism for the time being but perhaps they would when older and feel a need to destress from their everyday life.

6.1.7. Yoga and detox stay

The respondents were showed a customer journey of one of SR's company's stays – *Yoga and detox in the heart of the Val d'Hérens*⁴– and imagined they experienced this journey. They had to then state what they liked, disliked and what they would change about the stay. RM also took part to this imaginary journey.

6.1.7.1. Like

Most of the respondents liked and pointed out the location of the stay and its immersion in nature, which they deemed appropriate to the activities proposed during the stay. The overall concept and program, as well as the emphasis put on relaxation and well-being was appreciated by four respondents. Two interviewees noted positively the possibility of skipping certain activities if they did not feel like taking part to them. Furthermore, four respondents appreciated the various workshops proposed during the stay and the fact that the competencies learnt during these workshops can be applicable in everyday life. Three respondents appreciated the food and the meals served during the stays. Yoga was an activity that some respondents enjoyed trying out for the first time.

⁴ See Appendix III

RM liked the location of the stay as well as the various activities proposed.

6.1.7.2. Dislike

Some respondents deemed the amount of yoga to be too much for them. They also did not enjoy, for the majority, to wake up at dawn. Some respondents also disliked having to share a room with another participant. Two respondents pointed out the decoration of the accommodation room, which they did not appreciate. Moreover, two respondents did not appreciate the overall concept of the stay, which they deemed interesting but not corresponding to their interests. The fact that the walks and hikes included a meditative component did not suit some respondents. One interviewee did not appreciate that all of the activities are done in group and cannot be done individually, and another did not like the type of meals served during the stay (detoxifying) as they like to splurge on food during their vacations. Finally, some respondents thought the price was too high for only three days of vacation.

RM did not appreciate the length of the stay, which they considered to be too short and therefore too stressful. They also disliked the focus of the stay on the individual's well-being and not on the group.

6.1.7.3. What should be changed

Concerning what they would like to change in the stay, some respondents would like different activities (more physical) as well as workshops or activities around anxiety and stress and how to manage it. Two respondents would like the price to be cheaper. The decoration of the room is also an aspect two respondents would like to change. Furthermore, some interviewees wish the stay would last longer than a weekend in order to truly relax and others would like to wake up later in the morning. Some respondents also would like a change in the food available during the stay; they would like less plant-based food and more indulging ones. A respondent also noted it would be interesting to learn about plants and their various benefits as well as symbiosis with nature while hiking as well as more philosophical workshops on life.

RM would like a longer stay (from one to two weeks) and would also like to get to know the other participants better. They would like longer walks during the day and get to learn

about and pick-up plants that could then be used in cooking. They would also like to experience discussions and connexion with the group, almost therapeutically. Finally, they would like to better discover the region.

6.2. Professional qualitative surveys

The surveys presented in the following section varied from one respondent to the other as the questions were personalised according to their respective domains of expertise. The questions are presented in the section below, gathered into common themes.

6.2.1. The professionals interviewed

The three experts interviewed each answered separated sets of questions according to their domain of expertise. RM – professor at the HES-SO – brought insight on slow tourism, SR, the co-founder of the slow tourism business organising the stay, answered questions about their business as well as slow and well-being tourism, and finally MS shared their knowledge on well-being tourism. In the following section, the pronoun “they” will be used to guarantee the respondents’ anonymity.

6.2.2. Slow tourism

For SR, slow tourism involves slowing down the pace and taking time to discover something new, and not purely consume a service at a fast pace. The offers supplied by their business integrate themselves in slow and well-being tourism because, firstly, these two concepts are linked together, and their offers allow the participants to take time to discover the cultural heritage as well as themselves. They also think that, in order for slow tourism to develop itself in Switzerland, original products and offers that are currently not developed in the country (such as stays for families – in the form of “sustainable Club Med”) must be offered, since our country is not competitive pricewise. Moreover, similarly to what has been developed in Italy, financial help could be offered to farmers to help them develop Bed and Breakfast on their properties. This model offers the advantages of developing high-quality accommodation as well as promoting a form of local tourism which benefits the local population. It can also help save and promote local architectural heritage. Finally, SR notes a strong duality between economy and ecology in general and also in tourism: some initiatives are taken to promote slow tourism, but they do not go deep enough nor seek to understand the root of the issue, they only stay on the surface.

According to RM, slow tourism is a new modality of tourism which happens, as its name states, slowly. Its concept is to take time to travel towards the destination as well as to do the activities once you have arrived. Slow tourism promotes the opposite precepts as our modern society, which works around speed and accelerating. It allows its participants to consider things under a new point of view and also promotes a reduced use of energy – it is therefore more ecologic – as well as reduced social damages since contact and exchanges between the visitors and the local population is encouraged. They finally highlight the lack of distance necessary to practice slow tourism – you do not need to go far to experience it – and also notes the same paradox/duality between economy and ecology as SR; there is a strong economic urge to “go back to how things were before” the pandemic, when it is not sustainable to think this way.

In order to further develop slow tourism in Switzerland, RM thinks that the information currently available on slow food, slow tourism, pedestrian tourism, etc.. should be centralised on one website and social network to make it easier for people to inform themselves on this subject. They note that the infrastructures needed already exist but are not correctly promoted. Furthermore, some initiatives such as Switzerland Tourism’s *Swisstainable* label can be questioned in their motives; do they really thrive to make a change, or do they have other intentions?

6.2.3. Well-being tourism

According to SR, in well-being tourism, health and well-being are at the centre of the stay. In addition to having a good time, you enjoy yourself, meet some people, learn new things and finally grow from the experience.

MS thinks that well-being tourism will develop more in the future due to increasing interest towards lifestyle change; this is also seen through a growing enthusiasm towards nature-based activities. They also note a growing interest for water-based wellness tourism, such as thermal water spas, as well as a trend on mental health with activities such as yoga and meditation knowing growing attention.

6.2.4. Feeling abroad in your own country

For SR, it is possible to feel abroad in your own country, but the change of scenery will not be as drastic as if you were to go in a further away destination. In order to experience a change of scenery, you have to be open-minded. Furthermore, in Switzerland, culture change from one region to another, although it is necessary to preserve the heritage and the traditions of mountain regions to be able to provide this change of scenery.

RM shares this opinion in that they think it is absolutely possible to feel abroad in your own country and especially in Switzerland since the cultural richness of the country, its four languages, the multiple regions and the mix of urban and rural regions facilitates this feeling. This richness allows people to discover entirely different landscapes and more authentic places while staying close to their living place. They also point out, similarly to SR, that feeling abroad stems from a mindset: being curious, open and leave room for the unexpected. One should rather be open to discover things, even in one's own city and not hold a list of achievements accomplished during their holidays.

6.2.5. Influence of Covid on people's travel habits

A big change in people's travel habits was noticed in 2020, particularly during the summer, when it was difficult to accommodate the demand for the number of people wanting to vacation in the mountains. SR thinks that some people will keep their newly found habits but that most will want to travel abroad again because it was missed. For them, a change in travel habits will not occur because of the pandemic but because of the newer generations who are more sensible to the environmental issues and will therefore travel less and less far. RM also thinks that most people will want to practice tourism like they did before, but that some people will have found new centres of interest by spending their holidays in Switzerland. Furthermore, climate change issues and concerns towards tourism, such as "flight shame", will lead people to change their ways of travelling. They also notes that, sooner or later, the way we consume will need to change and that it would be preferable to do it now, in an organised way, than when it will be too late and rushed.

Concerning well-being tourism, MS estimates that the pandemic will develop well-being tourism and this for two main reasons: firstly, people who were infected by Covid-19 – and especially those who suffered from long Covid – feel a need to recuperate from the sickness.

Secondly, for the people who were not sick, they still experienced much stress from the pandemic and the situation it generated: people had to work from home and worried about the sanitary situation. This engendered a rise in demand for well-being and wellness tourism. As a response, they note that many spas and wellness centres have begun proposing packages to help people who were sick to bounce back and regain stamina as well as counsel or offer therapy to enhance their mental well-being which has been negatively impacted because of Covid. Furthermore, people can turn themselves to relaxing activities, such as meditation and yoga. For MS, the most significant impact on well-being tourism after the pandemic will be the concern placed upon nature and its landscapes: a need is felt to escape crowds and spend more time outside.

7. Discussion

For this chapter, elements that were emphasised in the survey synthesis as well as in the literature review will be considered and developed as hypotheses.

7.1. Reasons for undertaking tourism

Hypothesis: In general, what is expected of vacations is to, on the one hand, unwind and relax by experiencing a change of scenery and, on the other, discover new cultures and people.

This hypothesis linked to elements drawn from the general survey analysis shows that the main motivation for tourism mainly stems from two reasons. The individuals undertaking tourism wish to relax, unwind and forget about their everyday life by experiencing a change of scenery. This concurs with Snepenger, King, Marshall & Uysal (2006) who state that four dimensions can be observed regarding tourist motivation: these are “personal escape” (Snepenger et al., 2006) (i.e. going away from the usual environment, experiencing a change of rhythm from day-to-day life, or reduce a negative feeling), “interpersonal escape” (Snepenger et al., 2006) – get away from bothersome individuals, avoid a stress-inducing environment or simply to evade socialisation in general. The third dimension is “personal seeking” (Snepenger et al., 2006) (share your experience with other people, experience a positive feeling about yourself and get the possibility of discovering new things by yourself) and the fourth is “interpersonal seeking” (Snepenger et al., 2006) which includes the notions of finding yourself with people sharing common interests, spending time with relatives or friends and make new encounters (Snepenger et al., 2006). Tourism offers should therefore allow its participants to experience relaxation from their vacation. This represents an opportunity for both slow and well-being tourism whose objective is to provide resting and stillness. These two types of tourism could therefore be developed and promoted as relaxing to engage more participants.

This last notion links to the second reason identified for undertaking tourism: meeting locals and discovering new cultures, cuisines and architectures. This notion is linked to the need we feel to go away from what we experience every day and confront ourselves to new cultures and ways of living. This notion can be seen as paramount for most people interrogated since, although almost all of the respondents consider feeling abroad in their own country (in this case Switzerland) to be possible, although they also wish to go abroad and discover new

and “exotic” landscapes, cultures and tastes. It can therefore be concluded that one out of the two main considerations expressed when travelling can be accomplished while staying in Switzerland while the other can only to a certain extent: the need of going abroad is considered relevant to experience a complete change of scenery. This can represent an opportunity for slow tourism, who could be promoted as a mean to travel less abroad. Instead of going abroad for vacations multiple times a year – or even once a year – some of these travels could be replaced by domestic tourism in Switzerland, which already fills up some of the reasons one may feel to go on holidays and allow the participant to, to a certain extent, experience a mild change of scenery.

7.2. Slow tourism

Hypothesis: Slow tourism is already a somewhat common practice, but people do it without noticing.

When interrogating people, it was noticed that, upon describing the concept of slow tourism to them that many had already practiced this type of tourism in their lives, or at least partly, often by going for vacations in Switzerland and staying at the same place for a more or less lengthy amount of time and practicing “slow activities”. These criteria correspond to those of slow tourism and, even though not all criteria of the branch are respected, already shows an interest towards slow travel from the general population.

This shows that, although the concept of slow tourism can seem like a new and breakthrough notion, most people have already practiced it in their lives, which can seem positively surprising. It can feel like the concept of slow tourism is “gatekept” and made seem like a type of travelling undertook only by a specific sub-group of individuals particularly aware of the environment and that can make it less accessible to the general population, whereas the realisation that most of the general population has already undertaken vacations which can be qualified as slow tourism can help to better promote this type of travelling among the general population. Indeed, people are more likely to take part to this form of tourism if, in their mind, it is not inaccessible and difficult to put in place but, on the contrary, that they have already taken part to this type of tourism in the past “unknowingly”. In order to then help people realise how slow tourism is easy and approachable to establish, it needs to be

better promoted by tourism organs and the information should be centralised and easily accessible.

7.3. Influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on tourism

Hypothesis: The Covid-19 pandemic has compelled people to stay in their country for their vacations, but it will most likely only be temporary for most people.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected the whole world since 2020, has strongly impacted the tourism sector. A significant number of countries closed their borders as a response to the crisis and the number of international flights was strongly reduced. These factors as well as the overall fear of travelling due to the pandemic, pushed many people to stay in Switzerland for their holidays, especially during the summer of 2020. This “forced” stay allowed many people to discover the beauty, the diversity and the many activities available in their country, all of which they did not necessarily initially suspected. This phenomenon also had a positive impact on the environment since travels were reduced. However, this effect of the pandemic, which can be seen as positive, will not last. Indeed, as seen through the qualitative surveys, many of the interviewees feel like tourism will go back to what it was before as soon as the restrictions will be lifted. The respondents themselves feel like they have missed going abroad and will do it again as soon as they can.

The professionals share this opinion; indeed, they noticed a significant change in people’s travel habits in 2020 because of the restrictions and there was therefore not enough offer to answer the demand since so many people wanted to stay in Switzerland. They also note that this trend will most likely only be temporary since people feel a need to go away to “compensate” the travels they did not take during the pandemic. As of the start of 2022, people are once again starting to travel more as rising numbers are seen in bed nights. This is a positive factor for the economy, and more specifically the tourism economy who suffered badly from the restrictions these past two years, but less so for the environment. Where it was once thought that the Covid-19 pandemic would perhaps change people’s vision on climate change and help them realise the positive change occurring from the sanitary restrictions, it is observed today that this is not the case and that people wish to travel again, as far and as often as before. However, and as noted by the professionals interviewed, some people will certainly have experienced new and interesting activities in Switzerland and will

have found new centres of interest. These people represent an opportunity for domestic and slow tourism as they have tried out – and enjoyed – vacations in Switzerland. They may want to currently enjoy their newly found freedom and travel to remote and exotic places but will perhaps want to, at times, discover another part of Switzerland or go back to a location they enjoyed discovering in 2020 during the semi-confinement. Even though people did not seem to reduce their travelling post-pandemic, it still represents an opportunity for slow travel as they were able to discover a new, slower, way of practising tourism.

7.4. Travel habits and age

Hypothesis: Travel habits and wants change according to age; the younger generation holds the power to reduce their travels and become pioneers of slow tourism but can also be tempted by cheap offers and landscapes seen on social networks.

We see a strong cleavage between the younger and older generations when it comes to travelling. Indeed, the “millennials” and older generations wish to travel a lot for a cheap price and are more careless about the environmental consequences of their various journeys. As noted by the tourism professionals interviewed, these people will want to travel “like before” the pandemic – which means mass tourism, organised stays and cheap flights. A professional also states that people in general have missed this type of tourism and, even though they may have tried out slower or more ecological forms of tourism in 2020 and 2021 they will not persist in this type of tourism.

However, younger generations are more eco-friendly: they have been raised with ecological preoccupation and are conscious of the issues of many industries, including tourism. A raise of concerns, especially in the so-called “flight shame” – a movement from Sweden which advocates the use of train for transportation as opposed to the plane (Asquith, 2020), have helped raise awareness about the tourism model we have promoted for so long: a multitude of cheap flights and stays to try and see as much as possible and as many destinations as possible. Younger generations are therefore more conscious of these issues and tend, for some of them, to travel within Europe and by train, therefore embodying some principles of slow tourism.

On the other hand, most young people are on social media where they see a daily proliferation of beautiful images from all parts of the world, and mainly destinations which find themselves far away from Switzerland. This bombardment of photographs makes younger people want to see for themselves the dreamy destinations shown and pushes them to travel more – and by plane of course. Furthermore, some of these destinations become so popular and therefore crowded that it then causes issues for the ecosystem as well as the local population. We can take as an example – even before social media existed – the 2001 movie “The Beach” which made Maya Bay, the beach it was filmed on, so popular that its ecosystem was strongly damaged and had to be closed for three years before opening again at the beginning of 2022. This example shows the impact that media can have on tourism and, more largely, the nature of the location, and its negative consequences.

As seen in the initial hypothesis, a strong duality is therefore observed within the younger generation between ecology and the will to travel in a manner respectful of the environment and the will to discover the world, and especially the beautiful landscapes seen on social media.

7.5. Feeling abroad in your own country

Hypothesis: Switzerland, through its variety of landscapes, languages and cultures, represents an ideal destination to stay in for its holidays; and, to do so, the individual identity and the traditions of its regions must be preserved.

Throughout the qualitative surveys, it was noticed that Switzerland is seen by most respondents and professionals as an ideal country to stay in for the holidays: indeed, as four official languages are spoken in the country and a variety of landscapes – from big cities to countryside, lakesides and mountains – can be travelled to, one can easily experience a change of scenery and have a feeling of being abroad in the country. Indeed, if a German-speaking person from Zurich was to travel to the Val d’Hérens in Valais they would experience a strong change of scenery, from the language to the type of landscape experienced.

However, and in order to keep distinct places and regions in the country, it is paramount to preserve the individual identity and the traditions of each region. Indeed, if the proper identities of the regions were to disappear and become unified into a common identity, the

appeal, originality and added value of these areas would disappear, which would, additionally to a loss of identity, mean reduced tourism in those regions. Slow tourism has therefore a strong development potential in Switzerland because of its strong cleavage (in both the landscapes and the cultures), which in this case acts as a strength since it displays a diversity which can be used as a strong argument towards the development of tourism within the country – and for its own inhabitants. In order to develop slow tourism in Switzerland, more promotion should be done by national tourism organs – such as Switzerland Tourism – and the information about this type of tourism should be centralised. Indeed, the information exists but is not highlighted enough and people do not have easily access to it.

7.6. Duality between ecology and economy

Hypothesis: A strong duality between ecology and economy exists

A strong duality between ecology and the economy is noted in the qualitative survey by some respondents and two professionals. These two concepts are seen as opposed to each other and non-compatible. This phenomenon has been more noticeable because of the Covid-19 pandemic and its severe economic impact on the tourism industry. Many, especially tourism businesses, are looking forward to “going back to the way things were before” the pandemic. However, this line of thought is not sustainable and shows that, while we could have thought that the pandemic would bring a change in people’s way of thinking and functioning, this does not seem to be the case. Tourism organs, such as Switzerland Tourism are reporting back their 2021 numbers with a positive increase in domestic tourism (17% more bed nights compared to 2019) and a development in visitors from the European markets. This trend continues in 2022 with Swiss visitors planning weekends and short stays within Switzerland. However, what is mostly noticed is a drop in bed nights from foreign visitors (80% less compared to 2019) and its negative impact on tourism in Switzerland. A notion used many times by tourism professional is that of “going back to normal” (taking 2019 as the reference year). It is indeed planned by Switzerland Tourism that their numbers will go back to normal in 2023, apart from those of foreign visitors which are only projected to equal those of 2019 in 2025 (Switzerland Tourism, 2022). We can therefore notice that the positive impact on the pandemic on Swiss and European bed nights does not seem to rejoice Switzerland Tourism who would rather focus on foreign – for example Asian – markets and attracting them back in

Switzerland. The pandemic could have, for tourism as well as almost every other industry, produced a change in the line of thinking. We have seen during the beginning of the pandemic the positive impact of restrictions on the environment, mainly because of the reduction in mobility – drop of 90% in public travel – from the lack of planes seen in the sky to the amelioration of the quality of water (Mousazadeh et al., 2021). Instead of focusing on this environmental improvement and wishing to continue going in this direction – while keeping in mind that our current way of life is not compatible with the climate change consequences we are trying to avoid – we see instead a strong economic will to “forget” about the pandemic and its impacts (whether negative or positive) and chase the same numbers of visitors and profit as the pre-Covid period.

This same concept of duality can be observed and reported within the tourism industry itself: indeed, the industry can be very damaging for the environment as well as the local populations inhabiting the regions visited by the travellers and it is therefore important to find harmony between the participants, the locals and the environment. As stated by Kay-Smith (2022): “[...] the balance between the environmental impacts and social and economic benefits of tourism development needs to be taken into account”. Tourism mostly brings economic benefits to the regions it takes place in but this needs to balance with the damage it can create for both the nature and the population.

Ecology and economy are seen as two separate entities who are not compatible and cannot thrive together. To change this, a new way of practicing tourism must be found to accommodate the economic and social needs of tourism while being more respectful of the environment: these principles correspond to slow tourism, which could therefore be an interesting tool to use within the future development of the industry.

7.7. Development of well-being tourism because of the Covid-19 pandemic

Hypothesis: Well-being tourism has known a sore in its development because of the Covid-19 pandemic and will continue to develop in the future.

As highlighted by MS in the qualitative survey, people wish to relax more and more due to the Covid-19 pandemic occurring worldwide since 2020. Indeed, some people have been sick with Covid: occurrences such as long Covid – a version of the sickness in which people present

symptoms such as shortness of breath or tiredness long after their initial infection (World Health Organization, 2021) – have negatively impacted people’s physical health. Furthermore, many people have also experienced mental health disruptions, due to measures such as lockdowns and working from home. These various issues caused directly or indirectly by the pandemic have boosted the popularity of well-being tourism. Indeed, people wish to heal and rest themselves physically as well as mentally. This has prompted some wellness centers to offer stays based around well-being in general and mental health and therapies in particular.

In the future, it can be argued that well-being tourism will continue to develop because, as mentioned in the context, mental health and well-being are given a rising importance in our society. Hence, it can be assumed that an increasing number of destinations will orientate themselves towards well-being tourism since it is a growing sector. This development will require the protection of natural zones – in order to guarantee true relaxation for the participants – as well as the conversion of tourism destinations into well-being tourism destinations.

7.8. Importance of nature

Hypothesis: In both slow and well-being tourism, nature plays a capital role in the experience and must be preserved in order to offer a quality experience.

In both types of tourism studied in this thesis, nature and its state have a paramount impact on the quality of the travelled offered. Nature must be preserved and be left as untouched as possible by the human hand in order to offer the most stillness, calm, peace and therefore embody the principles of both slow and well-being tourism.

As we live in a constant, dynamic and technologically developed world, people feel the need to decompress and experience quiet peace in nature. A deep link to nature can be felt by most people, this environment bringing us back to the roots of our development and evolution. This allows for a feeling of stillness and serenity in a peaceful surrounding. However, it can be noted that built urban areas are becoming dominant over raw, undomesticated ones and that preserved nature is becoming increasingly rare. This poses multiple issues – from environmental to social ones – but concerning tourism, and especially the two types of tourism studied in this thesis, nature represents a paramount component of the two. Indeed,

as stated by Matos-Wasem (2022) in the literature review, the location in which serene tourism takes place must emphasize slow pace, resting and stillness. This could be deemed impossible in an urban environment. Similarly, and for well-being tourism, Kay-Smith (2022) argues that healing tourism, a new kind of tourism closely linked to well-being, should take place in a nature-based environment.

These types of tourism currently only represent a niche market but will develop increasingly in the future, along with environmental and health preoccupations from the population, and both require a natural and calming environment. It is therefore paramount, not only for the environment and our planet itself, but also to ensure the future of tourism, to protect natural resources and landscapes. This applies not only for newer kind of tourism such as those discussed in this thesis but also for more traditional kinds, as tourists travel in order to see new sceneries and cultures, and if those were to disappear there would be no use for travelers to undertake journey to these destinations since the uniqueness of the latest would have vanish.

8. Managerial recommendations

In this section, managerial recommendations will be presented. These will be split into two main categories: indeed, recommendations regarding both the tourism offer analysed as well as managerial recommendations linked to the qualitative survey will be formulated.

8.1. Recommendations for the analysed offer

According to the analysis conducted in section, using both the Slow Tourism Model developed by Pécssek (2014) and the Four Realms of an Experience and the criteria to Designing Memorable Experiences from the Experience Economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), recommendations aiming to improve the offer and allowing it to better respect the criteria of the two models will be proposed in the following section. Some recommendations are also issued from the imaginative journey undertaken by the respondents of the qualitative survey.

8.1.1. Sustainability

An important aspect in slow tourism concerns the length of stay; it is indeed recommended to experience longer stays in order to truly enjoy the location as well as the surrounding nature and the activities. The company should therefore propose the same kind of stay as the one analysed (yoga and detox) but on a longer period of time (for example one week) rather than only over a weekend. This also a recommendation which emerged from the imaginary journey of the survey's respondents.

The use of public transportation is not encouraged much in the stay – although the use of carpooling is – it could be interesting to further promote the use of public transportation by, for example, providing discounts to participants who choose to come by train or to provide combined (and advantageous) rates including the transportation and the stay, all in one.

8.1.2. Social well-being

The involvement of the local population is currently limited and concerns only shops and businesses. In order to better match slow tourism principles, it could therefore be interesting to further involve the local population of the locations in which the stays take place. Tourism should indeed provide opportunities – both economic and social – to the community it develops within. In the case of the stay, the locals could be encouraged to participate in the activities by being offered a resident discount, upon presentation of the residency card for

example. This could help bring awareness to the company and what it is they do as well as the way in which they promote the residents' region. Furthermore, the local community could be involved in the process of development of the activities: they could give their opinion and bring insight on the way their region is being presented and "used" for the stay. This presents a double advantage: it gives a sense of involvement to the concerned community and helps them better accept the company and the stay they implement. It also provides meaningful insight on the region since they know the place in which they live better than anyone else.

8.1.3. Memorabilia

It could be interesting for the company to provide memorabilia for their stays, which they do not currently offer. They could, for example, design a gift basket for each destination, made up of local products (very similarly to the service they already provide for their private stays) and sell them at the end of the stays, as a way to remember the destination, through gastronomical specialities specific to each region for example. Recipes of dishes than can be made using one or more of the ingredients in the basket could also be included: these recipes could also be some that were eaten during the stay and could act as a reminder using another sense (taste) of their experience. Moreover, each stay is themed around a main activity (in this case yoga): memorabilia around the activity could then be proposed to the participants at the end of the stay in order for them to continue practicing the activity on their own. In this case, yoga mats, clothes and books could be sold. The material could be branded with the company's logo to emphasise the memories tied to this specific stay. If they wanted to take this idea further, it could also be interested to design "limited editions" material with designs unique to each stay and location, this would further advertise the items as being exclusive to each experience.

8.1.4. Greater diversity of activities

Emerging from the observation of the respondents from their imaginative journey, it would be interesting to diversify the activities offered during the stay out of its main focus. For example, some respondents suggested the addition of the discovery of medicinal and aromatic plants in order to learn about their benefit and use them in cooking. Such diversification could spark interest in the participants and have them coming back for another

stay with the company that emphasise the new activity discovered and therefore help customers to come back and become loyal to the company.

8.2. Qualitative survey recommendations

In this section, general recommendations towards better promotion of slow and well-being tourism in Switzerland issued from the qualitative surveys of both the general populations and the experts will be used.

8.2.1. Slow tourism

As shown in the survey analysis, most people have already undertaken a tourism experience comprising one or more slow tourism component(s) without realising it. In order to help raise awareness over slow tourism and help develop it, more promotion should be done, especially towards the younger generation who show an increased interest towards environmental and social preoccupations and are therefore more likely to be sensible to the precepts of slow tourism.

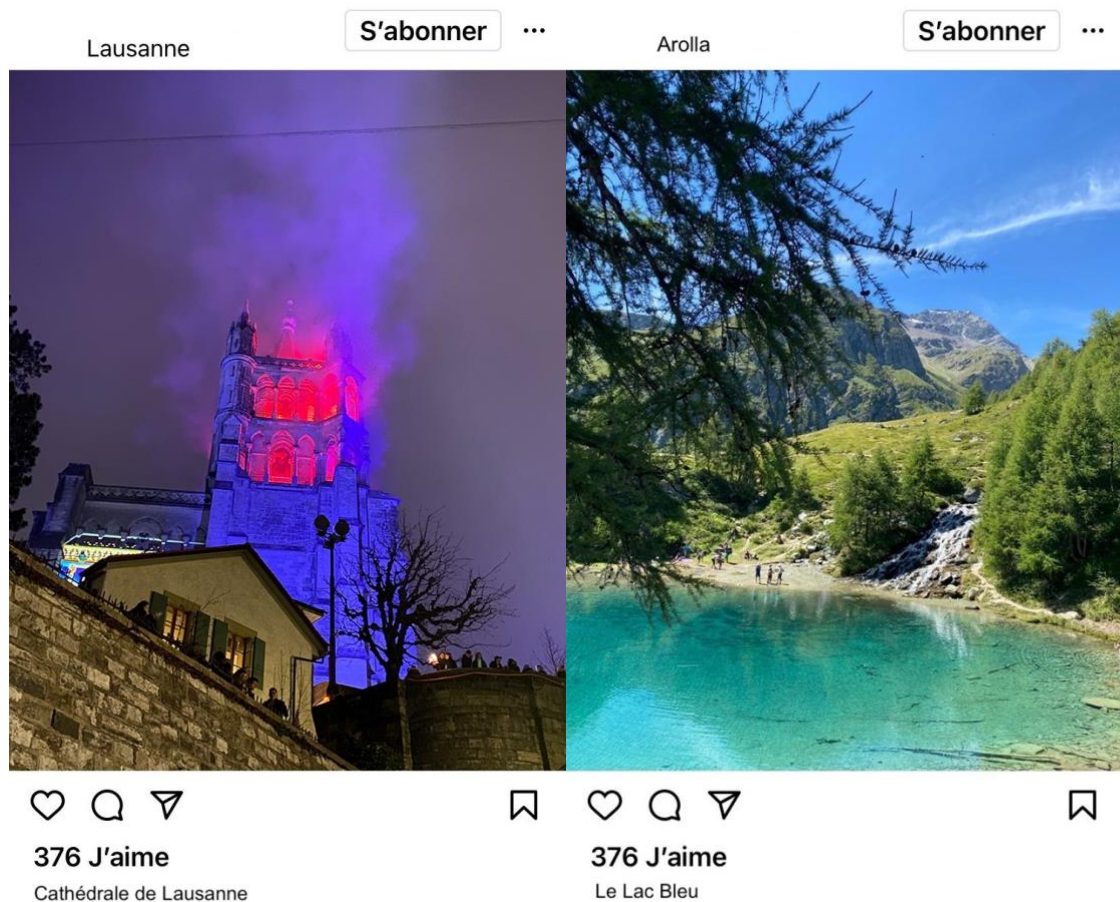
8.2.1.1. Use of micro-influencers and social media

A raised importance should be placed on slow tourism from national tourism organs who currently only promote “traditional” tourism with little concern over ecological issues – even though this has been increasing in the recent years – but the emphasis is mainly put on economic growth and attracting customers from foreign countries rather than promoting softer types of tourism for national customers. However desirable to encourage better sustainability and environmental protection, it is not possible to immediately switch from one model to the other, this transition should therefore happen softly and begin with more promotion of tourism in Switzerland for its own residents, and especially younger generations. This could mainly be conducted on social media, for example through the use of influencers. Indeed, influencers create a link with their communities and represent “real people” rather than celebrities. Moreover, and as seen in the context of this thesis, people put more trust into influencers than in professionals. Keeping this concept in mind, it could be interesting for tourism organs to use micro-influencers (meaning influencer with a smaller – but often more engaged – audience) to promote the various Swiss regions. An influencer from each of the 26 Swiss cantons could represent their region and present places to see, activities to do and

specialities – for example gastronomical – of each destination. Two examples of posts which could be realised throughout this concept are shown in figures 10 and 11. The first shows an urban location through an event which takes place there: Lausanne and its burning cathedral on New Year's Eve. The second presents a mountainous destination, the Lac Bleu in Arolla and highlights the natural beauty of the place.

**Figure 10 : Example of a post showcasing
Lausanne**

**Figure 11 : Example of a post showcasing
Arolla**



Source: Author's photos.

To push this concept further, the inhabitants of the region themselves could promote their regions on social networks. This could be put in place through the use of hashtags, specific to each canton for example, used on social media posts showcasing the region, its beauty and its specificities. This way, each individual could share their own region and what they love about it, encouraging other people to visit.

These two ideas do not, *per se*, embody every criterion of slow tourism but could already help awareness towards a kind of tourism more respectful of the environment and some of its principles. This could also help bring attention to each region and their traditions which is paramount to promote tourism within Switzerland since one of the strengths of the country lays in its diversity, which should be preserved and promoted. Moreover, specialists note the importance of facilitating the access to information concerning slow tourism. Indeed, it is noted that the resources do exist, but they are not centralised or promoted and therefore difficult to access. Information should be centralised on one website and referenced on many respectable websites, such as those of national or local tourism organs in order to be easy to access.

8.2.1.2. Promotion of train travel

Our society encourages, principally through the means of social media, to fly off during long weekends and party away in Europe. It is not celebrated as much when people stay in their own country for their vacation and simply take time to discover and enjoy it. In order for more people to practice more sustainable forms of tourism and go away less far for their holidays, it must become popular to do so. This way of living should therefore be promoted as ideal and trendy by the relevant stakeholders, in this case tourism organs, although they are not the only ones with an influence on the subject. Indeed, politics and restrictions can largely impact the population in their life choices. If flying away for the weekend became too expensive for the majority of the population, they would stop doing so. Flying would become a luxury and a mode of transport used only rarely, once a year or so. If, on the other hand, train became more financially accessible and easier to book, more people would choose it as their mode of transportation. Finally, if slow tourism became trendier (and travelling abroad more shameful), people would find staying in Switzerland for their vacations and enjoying slow activities more appealing and enjoyable and would perhaps choose this over vacations abroad. Similarly to the idea of using micro-influencers to promote the various cantons and regions of Switzerland, encouraging people to visit regions of Switzerland would, ultimately, encourage them to stay within the country for their holidays and therefore reduce their amount of travelling, and especially travels by plane. An issue raised by a respondent in the qualitative survey is the one of the prices of train tickets which are substantial in Switzerland. An idea to reduce their cost has already been implanted by SBB CFF in the form of supersaver

tickets which, when bought in advance, can offer up to 70% discount compared to regular fees. These tickets allow passengers to travel for much cheaper within the country. One of their current issues is the limitation within areas comprising regional fares. It could be interesting to extend to supersaver tickets to these areas. Furthermore, special fares and reductions could be proposed by SBB CFF in the summertime to encourage the Swiss population to discover their country. The discovery of Switzerland is already supported by the national train company who proposed day trips within the country: the train ticket purchased for a destination offers 10% on some activities. This concept could be further developed, for example by proposing slow tourism stays in farms (see recommendation 8.2.2.1.) with a combined advantageous price including the stay as well as the transportation using public transportation. Indeed, the easiness of buying the accommodation as well as the means of transport to get to the destination will push more people to choose this type of vacation rather than if they had to buy everything separately. Tourism packages including slow tourism accommodations or activities and train transportation could therefore be created and promoted by Switzerland Tourism and SBB CFF.

8.2.2. Preservation of nature and local heritage

As seen in the hypothesis, both nature and local heritage and traditions must be preserved in order to undertake both slow and well-being tourism.

8.2.2.1. Preservation of local heritage

The preservation of local cultural heritage is best done with the help of the local populations themselves: indeed, they know their region better than anyone and find themselves in the best position to formulate their needs and wants in order to protect their regions and their beauty. This can be done with competent authorities consulting with locals to understand their motivation and needs to develop tourism in the region. Tourism can and should benefit the local community before anyone else. As highlighted by SR in the qualitative surveys, an example of this is *Agriturismo*, a concept similar to Bed in Breakfast, developed in Italian farms and agricultural buildings (Bakerkian, 2019). This concept presents a threefold advantage: firstly, it provides a high quality of accommodation since they function like small hotels, secondly, they help promote local tourism which benefits the local population and thirdly this type of accommodation can preserve and promote local architectural heritage.

Indeed, some buildings which were destined to be destroyed in Italy were saved and turned into *Agriturismo*.

The state, via its tourism strategy, should promote this type of renovation and preservation of heritage which allows for the creation of more accommodations, and therefore better tourism offers, as well as provide a basis for slow tourism through the individual identity and characteristics of each region as seen with its local architecture. This promotion could be done in the form of financial support to local farmers to help them transform old buildings into Bed and Breakfast. This new type of accommodation should then, similarly to slow tourism, be likewise promoted by national tourism organs in order to raise the general public's awareness about their existence. This concept joins the one of the accommodations in which the analysed stay takes place, the *Anako Lodge*, which was originally an agricultural structure destined to be destroyed but which was later turned into an accommodation.

Figure 12 : The Anako Lodge in the Val d'Hérens



Source: Anakolodge (n.d.)

In Italy, the characterisation of an *Agriturismo* goes as follow:

- Give hospitality in a space destined to travellers,

- Furnish meals and drinks mainly composed of own products or products of farms in the area, with a preference for products under the DOP, IGP, IGT, DOC and DOCG labels,
- Organise tasting of farm products,
- Organise recreational, cultural, educational and sport activity aiming at enhancing the territory and rural heritage. (Agroturismo.it, n.d.)

These characteristics respond to many slow tourism aspects, such as the preservation of heritage and the locality of products. The same criteria basis could then be implanted in Switzerland for agricultural structure to develop themselves into an organised network of farms Bed and Breakfast, in a way similar to Italy.

8.2.2.2. Preservation of nature

Concerning nature, it represents a paramount aspect of both slow and well-being tourism as it is necessary to ground and slow down as well as to relax. In order to preserve it, strict regulations and laws should be put in place. An interesting way in which to preserve nature is by transforming areas of lands into protected spaces, with the help of nature conservation organisations, such as Pro Natura in Switzerland, who manages already 700 natural reserves in the country. Their goals are, among others, to reinforce biodiversity, protect landscapes and increase relationship with nature (Pro Natura, n.d.). Those goals complement notions of slow and well-being tourism. Regions who need protection should be transformed into protected or dedicated spaces to practice slow forms of tourism within the area. Another example could be to transform areas into national parks, who then put an emphasis on “sustainable development, encourage slow tourism and promote local products thanks to the "Swiss parks" label” (Swiss Parks, n.d.). National parks also offer overnight stays based on slow tourism, such as camping or cabins (Swiss Parks, n.d.). Overall, strict rules should be established (such as a limited number of visitors per year) to protect the designated area as well as its natural charm for the visitors.

8.2.3. Well-being tourism

Well-being tourism is a trend on the rise, as seen through the literature reviews as well as the interviews of professionals. Because of the rise in mental health issues – but also a rise in the willingness to talk about this subject – as well as physical and mental health predicaments caused by the Covid-19 sickness well-being tourism will rise to become a highly relevant type of tourism in the near future. In order to develop it and according to professionals, the governments play a paramount role. They should promote a healthy lifestyle and praise the benefits of well-being and well-being tourism, such as going to healing landscapes and taking retreats. The environment in which the population lives is also paramount: it should be as clean, green and healthy as possible in order to promote well-being. Indeed, in order to promote well-being tourism, well-being itself should be made a priority. We have seen with the Covid-19 crisis that governments can unlock important amounts of money for the health and protection of their population. Furthermore, the Swiss Federal Council has published their health policy strategy for the years 2020-2030. It includes, among others, the notions of environmental hazards and the necessity to preserve natural landscapes as well as the promotion of health in the workplace.

Governments should issue campaigns surround health and well-being to encourage individuals to take better care of their individual health: this will bring multiple advantages such as having less medical – and therefore insurance – expenses from the reduced number of sicknesses arising as well as having a better working population, meaning better economics. To do so, campaigns such as health weeks could be put in place, during which informational videos and conferences would take place. Furthermore, companies should also prioritise the health of their employees by offering paid well-being leaves, during which the employees would be encouraged to retreat and relax. They could also put in place gamification programs surrounding health, encouraging people to walk more during the day or stand up from their desk at regular intervals to exercise for a few minutes. In work cafeterias, healthy lunch options should be proposed. This would allow the employees to improve their work performance but also to be more mindful of their own well-being, which in turns encourages the development of well-being tourism.

Conclusion

In this work, slow and well-being tourism were explored together as rising trends in the tourism industry and their significant link to one another was uncovered: these types of tourism both put people and their well-being at the centre of their preoccupations, and both show a strong emphasis towards nature and its importance within tourism. It is also paramount in both practices to relax and take time. Hypotheses concerning the motivation of the general population to take part to these types of tourism were formulated and studied and recommendations to develop slow and well-being tourism in Switzerland were issued.

To answer the research question: *“What is the motivation towards slow and well-being tourism and how can this type of tourism be promoted in Switzerland?”* We can state that both types of tourism arouse the interest of the general population and that they would be willing to take part to it. Many already travel within their own country and try to use slower means of transport and take their time within their tourism activities, which already corresponds to precepts of slow tourism. Concerning well-being tourism, it can be noted that, although the concept does not appeal to everyone, people are, overall, showing an interest towards letting go of their everyday life and the accompanying stress and take time to regenerate. They also show a strong enthusiasm towards nature. In order to better promote these two tourism types in Switzerland, it is suggested to, foremost, preserve both the natural sceneries as well as cultural heritages of specific regions since they are vital to these kinds of tourism. To do so, sensible areas of lands should be transformed into protected spaces or national parks. To protect cultural heritage, the local population should be consulted in order for tourism to benefit them. Another suggestion is to transform agricultural buildings into Bed and Breakfast accommodations.

Then, in order to promote slow tourism, two main suggestions emerge: the first is to use social media and micro influencers to spotlight various regions of the Switzerland and inspire people to discover their own country. The second consist of promoting train travel by extending the supersaver tickets to regional areas and offer reductions for train travel in the summertime as well as tourism packages including a slow-tourism stay or activity and the transport by train.

To promote well-being tourism, it is primordial to firstly take care of the population's well-being as whole: indeed, the government should promote a healthy lifestyle by ensuring a clean environment in which to live in as well as promote health in the workplace, for example through gamification, and organise awareness campaigns around well-being.

The limitations of this work mainly concern the tourism offer analysed. Since it proved impossible, for confidentiality reasons, to gain the feedback of actual customers, an imaginary journey was put in place. While the latter proved very interesting and helped gain feedback about the perception of such an offer, interrogating real customers would have helped gain more insight on their experience. Furthermore, the analysis on only one offer of the company can be limited: more insight would have been gained if more offers were studied. Another limitation regards the population studied for the survey: indeed, 10 people represent a narrow portion of the general population and it could therefore bring a larger insight on the subject if a larger sample of people participated to the qualitative survey.

To go further with this work, it could be insightful to analyse another offer from the same company as well as other slow tourism offers by using the same or different frameworks to compare them together and gain more insight on concrete offers. Moreover, being able to interview actual customers of those stays would provide useful feedback. This work focused especially on well-being stays based on nature and activities such as yoga, but it could be interesting to study other branches, like water-based well-being tourism (such as thermal baths).

Overall, slow and well-being tourism represent part of the future of the industry. Indeed, the time of organised stays and mass tourism is slowly decelerating, and people wish for more mindful links to the places and populations they are visiting as well as with themselves. Furthermore, some health issues arising more and more push people to take better care of their mental as well as their physical health. All of these factors combined with climate change push people to seek more sustainable ways of travelling and make slow and well-being tourism interesting sub-categories to develop within the industry. Furthermore, they share many similarities and can therefore be combined in interesting and rewarding way, as demonstrated with the tourism offer analysed during this work.

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Author's statement

I hereby declare that I have carried out this final research project on my own without any help other than the references listed in the list of references and that I have only used the sources mentioned. I will not provide a copy of this paper to a third party without the permission of the department head and of my advisor, with the exception of those who provided me with information needed to write this paper and whose names follow: RM, SR and MS (anonymous).

Sierre, April 24th, 2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Siess', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Amélie Siess