FACULTAD DE TURISMO Y DIRECCIÓN HOTELERA SANT IGNASI
UNIVERSIDAD RAMON LLULL

YEAR 2015-2016

BACHELOR IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Dissertation

SEMESTER: 8

TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT: The current situation of Barcelona as a Shopping Destination.

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ABSTRACT

The **purpose** of this study was to analyze the current situation of the shopping tourism in Barcelona by examining how the city is promoting the product of shopping as well as identifying the profile of tourists and their favorite commercial areas. In addition, an analysis of the positioning of Barcelona as a shopping destination was carried out as well as an identification of the benefits resulting from it. Afterwards, some recommendations and future trends were pointed out in order to continue improving in the list of the most popular shopping destinations.

Shopping Tourism has greatly increased during the last few years. Although for many years shopping has been considered secondary when travelling, nowadays for millions of tourists it is the main or one of the principal reasons for choosing a destination. Consequently, the top tourism destinations such as Barcelona are currently allocating many resources to adapting and positioning themselves to receive this new type of tourism, meet their needs and reach their expectations.

To developed the **fieldwork** and, thus, obtain useful information, two qualitative techniques were used. First of all, 10 in-depth interviews with open-ended questions to 10 different professionals within the retail and tourism industry were carried out. Then, extra information was gathered in order to complement and contrast the results of the interviews.

Once analyzed the data collected, it was shown that Barcelona is more than ready to receive shopping tourists. This is mainly because although it has not such a complete commercial offer as other cities, it is much more highly considered in terms of the factors that accompany the shopping experience. In addition to that, it was detected that the profile of tourist that shopping tourism brings to the city is very beneficial as it is cultural, it stays three times more than any other kind of tourists and it has also a higher purchasing power, spending average and level of repetition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To begin with, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor and tutor Dr. Xavier Puertas for his full support, expert guidance, understanding and encouragement throughout my dissertation. Without his incredible patience, it would have been much more challenging.

I would also like to thank all the professionals within the tourism and retail industry for giving me the opportunity to develop such interesting interviews. Simultaneously, I express my appreciation to Ms. Kate Hart, English Support Coordinator, for her corrections and English language support.

Furthermore, I want to express my sincere thanks to Ms. Melanie Mcpherson for providing me some contacts in different hotels. Moreover, to Ms. Marta Capdevila, Coordinator of CDT, for helping me to find the appropriate academic papers and books to develop my dissertation, to Mr. Jorge Peralta, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, for the advice given, and to Ms. Anna Campañá, 4th Year Coordinator, for her patience and continuous support. In addition to that, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the teachers and professionals from HTSI School of Tourism and Hospitality Management Sant Ignasi, for their participation and collaboration in my undergraduate dissertation, making it possible.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family and relatives for their constant encouragement and support.

Barcelona, May 2016

Andrea Casajuana Serra

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Selling destinations as a brand is becoming more and more common. In the current tourist scene, a huge number of tourism places compete in attracting visitors, residents, and businesses. Hence, places must work on differentiating themselves from the others. As a consequence of this fact, the destination branding process has turned into the marketer's major tool due to its capacity for creating emotional engagement in customers' minds. In short, destinations need to create a brand to help their positioning as well as to emphasize the uniqueness of the place (Pereira, R., Correia, A. and Schutz, R., 2012).

Shopping Tourism is another relatively new topic which has been gaining importance during the last few years. It can be defined as a "contemporary form of tourism fostered by individuals for whom purchasing goods outside of their usual environment is a determining factor in their decision to travel" (UNWTO, 2014, p. 14). Although for many years shopping has been considered secondary when travelling, nowadays for millions of tourists it is the main or one of the principal reasons for choosing a destination (Meng, F. and Xu, Y., 2010). Considering this fact, most of the top tourism destinations are working on promoting the retail offer that they already have and are even creating new ones due to the fact that it has become a large source of income for them (UWNTO, 2014).

Barcelona is one of the cities which is riding highest as a shopping destination. In fact, it has become synonymous with shopping tourism. Furthermore, Spain's most popular city destination is currently considering the fourth "S" (Sand, Sea, Sun and Shopping) (Fernández, 2016). There is no doubt that the program of "Barcelona Shopping Line" undertaken by Turisme de Barcelona has been an incredible success resulting in not only the attractiveness of the city's retail offerings but also the overall appeal of the destination. Nowadays, Barcelona has turned into a powerful brand that hosts more than 7 million of tourists every year (Barcelona Turisme, n.d).

Throughout this study, an analysis of the current situation regarding shopping tourism in the city of BCN has been carried out by studying the different issues that this entails. Before that, a framework of destination branding has been developed including the most important definitions of the concept, the stages in branding process as well as the benefits resulting from that. Additionally, an overview of the concept of shopping tourism had been explained with the aim of getting more familiar with the concept as well as being aware of its increasing importance. After acquiring such knowledge on the topic, the practical framework will be undertaken by doing a deep analysis of Barcelona's product of shopping involving its benefits, positioning as well as some other relevant aspects. To sum up, some recommendations and future trends will be provided in order to learn more about the topic and pave the way for future research.

This undergraduate dissertation is organized as follows. The next chapter is the literature review where I will analyze the most important references according to my topic. Firstly, an introduction to the concept of brand is provided. Secondly, an overview of the tendency of destination branding processes is exposed through an explanation of its concept, components, 7A's theory as well as benefits. Chapter 3 provides the methodology of the procedures of research used in this thesis. Chapter 4 includes the findings and discussions extracted from the field work. Finally, in chapter 5, conclusions and recommendations are drawn as well as an explanation of the limitations I had throughout the study.

Figure 1: Barcelona Skyline

Source: Barcelona Skyline.(n.d.) [Online Image]. Available from: <http://www.photowall.es/canvas/barcelona-skyline> [Accessed 19 March 2016].

1.2 Motivation

I chose this topic because since I was young, I have been involved in the Fashion and Shopping World. This is because my parents have been working in the industry throughout their lives. Over the years, they have conveyed to me not only their passion and curiosity for the industry but also their knowledge and experience. In fact, I have been always very interested and passionate about their work, trying to learn as much as I can from them as well as going to all the trade shows that I could. This continuous contact with this world has enabled me to realize the huge quantity of people, money and interests are involved in this industry. In addition, last year, I had the opportunity to do an internship at XXL Communication, which is currently one of the leading companies in the industry being in charge of big brands such as Custo Barcelona or Andrés Sardà. There I was able to confirm my passion for Fashion as well as the importance that Shopping Tourism is gaining in Barcelona in terms of not only the number of tourists but also the sources of income that implies.

Taking all these things into account added to the fact it is a quite innovative topic, I decided to undertake this Undergraduate Dissertation with the aim of knowing more about the topic, sharing my passion with the lecturers as well as adding more research to this kind of tourism which is gaining so much importance and there is currently so little research about it.

1.3 Aim and objectives

1.3.1 Aim of the research

The overall aim of the research is to study the current situation of the shopping tourism in Barcelona by examining how the city is promoting and dealing with this “new” type of tourism as well as analyze the benefits resulting from it. Moreover, some recommendations will be provided in order to improve the positioning of BCN as a Shopping destination as well as to encourage and favor the shopping in the city.

1.3.2 Objectives of the research

To achieve this aim there are some key objectives that will need to be accomplished:

1. To analyze theoretical concepts in the literature review on Branding, Destination Branding and Shopping Tourism. This first objective will enable me to obtain an in depth knowledge of the topic and develop a theoretical framework.

2. To evaluate how Barcelona promotes and boosts the product of shopping as well as to evaluate to what extent the brand of Barcelona is used or not to sell. This will include an analysis of several key elements such as the initiatives done so far, the public and private position regarding this fact, the organizations involved, among others.
3. To identify both the most attractive areas within the city as well as the profile of tourists who come to the city.
4. To examine whether Barcelona is ready to receive this type of tourism as well as to highlight the benefits resulting from having it.
5. To study the positioning of Barcelona as a Shopping and Fashion destination among other leading cities such as Milan, Paris and London.
6. To provide recommendations and improvements to continue improving in the list of the most popular shopping destinations considering all the aspects previously mentioned as well as having a brief look at the future to detect future trends.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to provide a theoretical framework of the concept of branding pointing out the most relevant definitions and authors such as Ogilvy (1983), Godin (2000) or Stern (2006). Then, the concept of destination branding will be explained including the most important aspects of the process as well as the benefits resulting from it. Last but not least, an overview of the concept of shopping will be included highlighting some interesting points such as the main retail areas within a destination, the influential factors on destination choice and the top 5 destinations adapting shopping experiences.

2.1 Branding

"Brand is the name, symbol, term, design or any combination of these used to differentiate products or services from those of competitors" (Jafari, J., 2000, p. 56).

Although plenty of definitions have come up throughout the study of this field, marketers and academics support the idea that a brand is much more than a simple logo, tagline, or advertising theme. In addition to that, Bill Baker (2007) cited in her book entitled by *"Destination Branding for Small Cities"* the fact that most of the definitions have something in common and this is that they contain several of the following elements:

- A name, or symbol
- The source of a promise
- Distinctive or added value
- Personality and character
- The sum of the customer's thoughts and perceptions

Ogilvy (1983) was the first who proposed a holistic definition of brand as well the first who talks about its intangible aspect, the part that cannot be sold in the stores. He defines a brand as an "intangible sum of a product's attributes: its name, packaging, and price, its history, its reputations, and the way it's advertised" (Tapan K, 2005, p. 73). Hence, as can be observed in the definition, he includes not only the product itself but also everything that the consumer's experience with the company entails.

Godin (2005) introduced the idea that a brand must convey much more than just a well-designed logo explaining the fact that people want to buy those brands that they believe in.

This is the main reason why he defined a brand as “the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer’s decision to choose one product or service over another” (Wheeler, 2013, p. 4).

Three years later, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) cited in (Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. and Piggott, R., 2003) supported Godin’s concept of brand adding the idea of promising a memorable travel experience uniquely associated with the destination through branding. In addition to that, they also underlines the importance of solidify and strengthen the recollection of pleasurable memories.

Last but not least, Stern (2006) cited in (Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. and Piggott, R., 2003) went a step forward by including the consumer’s perception. He understand the brand as a “name or a symbol associated with a product which also denote a mental representation, an idea or a consumer’s perception of psychological meanings”.

2.1.1 Destination as a Brand

Nowadays places compete in attracting visitors, residents, and businesses. As product attributes are easily copied, presenting destinations as a brand which involves their qualities has become the marketer’s major tool for creating value. Thus, they are generating memorable positive associations and powerful place brand equity which is considered crucial to the marketing success of a tourist destination (Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. and Pride, R., 2011).

In addition to that, some recent research points out the tendency of differentiating places by underlining their “soft” factors such as the environment, entertainment and leisure services, friendly local people and so on. The main reason why it is because is becoming increasingly difficult to be over the competence focusing only on the “hard” factors as can be, for example, the economy, infrastructures, and accessibility (Pride, 2008) cited in Kavaratzis, M. and Ashworth, G. (2010).

On the other hand, a brand is an abstract message which is conveyed to a receiver who in this case is the potential visitor. However, each of them perceives and understands that message in a different way. This is the reason why, regardless of how the brand’s owner plans the brand to be understood, the customer associations are the ones that decide the output. Taking that into account, it is essential to have knowledge and be aware of the main elements of the brand which are referred to as brand identity, brand positioning and brand image. Although they are different concepts, all of them are closely connected to each other (Kavaratzis, M. and Ashworth, G., 2005). Next, each one will be explained briefly.

Figure 2: Elements of a brand

BRAND IDENTITY: Explains how the owner wants the brand to be perceived and understood by the users (customers/potential visitors). While the owners have the power to define the brand identity of a place, product or service, the users are the targeted group.

BRAND POSITIONING: It is an activity of creating a brand offer that demonstrates the competitive advantages of a brand as well as a value in the target customer's mind. In short, what this place, product or service has, that the other ones do not.

BRAND IMAGE: Describes the consumer perceptions of a brand. In other words, what is perceived by the targeted group when encountering with the brand.

Source: Kavaratzis & Ashworth, (2005)

Hence, brand image is not the context of the message but it is the context in which the message is received. Taking this fact into account, it can be said that brand image is not controlled by owners but by users. Moreover, although the brand identity is easy to change, if and how will influence the brand image is difficult to tell. This is one of the main reasons why the brand positioning is an essential part of the branding process.

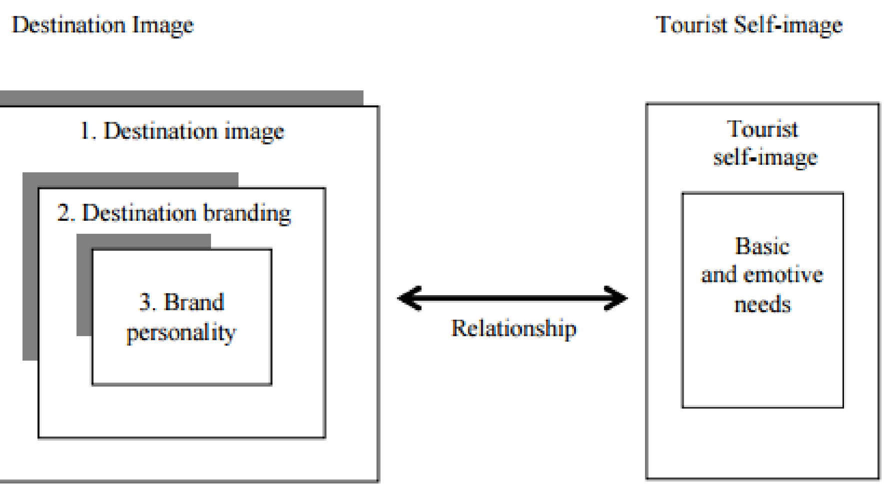
Regardless of all these items listed before, according to Baker and Cameron (2007) cited in (Baker, 2007), a destination brand must contemplate these following points in order to be successful:

- Credible
- Deliverable
- Differentiating
- Resonating with the customer
- Enthusing for stakeholders and partners
- Conveying powerful ideas

A common mistake in place marketing and branding is to try to be everything to everyone. Despite the size of the place that is going to be promoted as a brand, the aim is finding out a way to occupy a special place in the consumer's mind relative to competitors. In other words, places must focus on a particular niche of market. Otherwise, they will be treated as an umbrella or family brands so that sub-brands will appear to meet the particular needs or/and interests of the specific groups (Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. and Pride, R., 2011).

Another important factor that cannot be overlooked is the existing close relationship between destination image and destination branding. This is mainly because the image that tourists have towards destinations is one of the most influential points within consumer decision making process. Considering that, achieving a positive image of the tourist destination is the key for getting a real competitive advantage over the market place. This is the main reason why destinations are continuously trying to induce or build a concrete brand image over their potential customer (Hosany, S., Ekinci, Y. and Uysal, M., 2006).

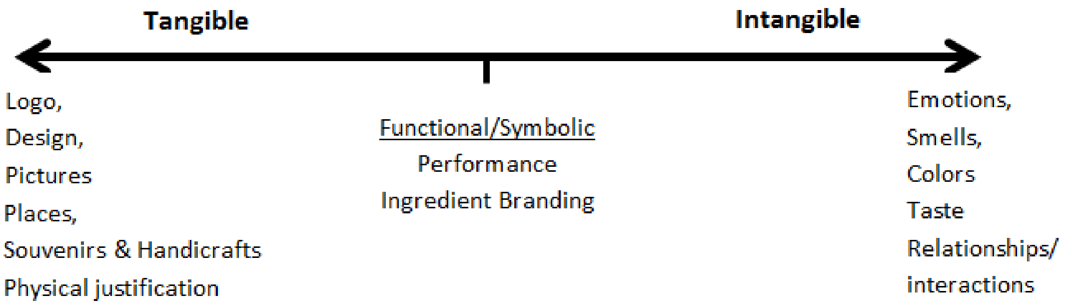
Figure 3: Destination Image and Destination Branding



Source: Ekinci (2003)

All things considered, the number of destinations adopting the concept of destination-brand-building is larger and larger. In fact, the development of destination brands has become a strategic tool all around the world as a consequence of the growing competition between destinations (García, J., Gómez, M. and Molina, A., 2011). In short, they must create a brand with the aim of helping the positioning as well as emphasizing the uniqueness of the place (Pereira, R., Correira, A. and Schutz, A., 2012).

Figure 4: Strategic branding of a destination. A framework



Source: Stephens, (2009)

2.1.2 Destination Branding Process

Branding destinations have become a vital process in the current destination management practice due to the existing huge amount of tourist's opportunities and travel locations. Additionally, most of them are threatened to be substituted unless they work on differentiating themselves amongst the competence (García, J., Gómez, M. and Molina, A., 2011).

According to Anholt (2010) there is a clear difference between brand and branding. While he defines brand as "a product, service or organization considered in relation to its name, identity and reputation", he talks about branding as "the process of creating and communicating this name and reputation" (Fan, 2010, p. 99). Considering that, the work concerning the branding process could be considered as the "every day work" whereas the brand becomes the outcome of the branding process itself.

Although destination branding has taken several branding techniques from commercial sector, this is much more complex. This is mainly because there are many more aspects that had to be taken into account when branding a place such as the economic, the environmental, the political, the cultural and the social, to name few. Furthermore, in destination branding, there is not only a unique organization in charge of everything; various stakeholders have to reach similar place branding strategies what makes the process even more complex (Kavaratzis, 2005). In this regard, the main aim of destination branding is to influence the people's mind and the perception they have about a place while, regarding the commercial sector, it is all about selling product or services (Anholt, 2010) cited in (Chang, 2014).

Then, an overview of the classical branding theory will be made due to it has been developed largely not only in the consumer products context but also in branding destinations. Mainly, its aim is to break up the complex concept of brand into a number of small components in order to make its management easier for marketing managers. These components are the following (Hankinson, 2005, p.3):

- Names, symbols and logos Aaker (1992) cited in (Hankinson, 2005) which aid identification and awareness Keller (1993).
- Brand images/brand identities which communicate a brand's meaning (Kapferer, J., 1992; Chernatony, L. and Dall'Olmo, F., 1998) cited in (Hankinson, 2005) through a set of associations Aaker (1992) cited in (Hankinson, 2005).
- Brand associations/elements held in consumer memory that form the basis of brand image/identity (Keller, J., 1993; Louro, D. and Cunha, P., 2001) cited in (Hankinson, 2005).

Regarding the last component, brand associations, a further classification into different attributes had been done: functional attributes and emotional/symbolic attributes. The first group gather the tangible features of a product or service while the second group involves all the intangible features that satisfy consumer needs for personal expressions, self-esteem or social approval Keller et al. (1993) cited in (Hankinson, 2005). Later, Keller (1993) and Park et al., (1986) cited in (Hankinson, 2005) added two other categories: experiential attributes which are related to the feelings when using the product or services and satisfy internally generated needs for stimulation and variety as well as brand attributes which involves the overall consumer evaluation of the brand.

Regardless of the growing importance that branding destination is gaining, every city must accurately analyze its own brand in order to realize about its position as well as to know if a branding process is needed or not. To do it, Baker (2007) proposed in her book entitled by "Destination branding for small cities", the following questions:

- Is it well known?
- Is the image accurate?
- Is it highly regarded?
- Do target audiences care what the city stands for what it can do for them?
- How different is the city from others?

In addition to that, it is important to ensure that there is a balance between the internal identity and the external image. It is very usually that a city projects itself as one thing but the reality is far different.

2.1.2.1 Components of DBP

Coming back to the branding process itself, it revolves around 5 components which will be listed and briefly explained below (Balakrishnan, 2009):

1. <u>Vision and stakeholder management</u>: Vision is the beginning of any successful strategy (Balmer, J., 2001; de Chermatony, L. and Riley, D., 1998) cited in (Balakrishnan, 2009). To have a well-structured long term objectives, vision can lead to performance results delivering at the same time the stakeholder's expectations. Branding complexity increases with the diversity of stakeholder's and customer's needs as well as their different objectives.
2. <u>Target customer and product portfolio matching:</u> Destination's products and services must be integrated with the overall branding strategy. These have to be based on both existing assets and those they are able to develop. Moreover, the goal is to match the destination image with not only the customer psychographic profile but also lifestyle variables and usage occasions.
3. <u>Positioning and differentiation strategies using branding components:</u> It is essential to work on brand identity to differentiate the brand amongst the competence in order to achieve a good positioning.
4. <u>Communication strategies:</u> An accurate analysis of media must be done in order to choose the most reliable for the potential customers.
5. <u>Feedback and response management strategies</u>: It is crucial to reduce the gap between communicated, conceived ideal and desired identities thanks to market research.

Therefore, by combining these brand components, destinations will not only attract more tourists, it will help customer to take a decision to visit as well as it will build loyalty.

2.1.2.2 Process of DB

To sum up this block, it will be exposed a model of destination branding process which is known for the name of "7A". The reason why it has been chosen this instead of some other it is mainly because of the importance it gives to keep the stakeholder's involves throughout the process, since the beginning to the end. Moreover, several studies have shown that it encourages the understanding and enthusiasm for the new brand.

The methodology that it uses consists on seven different steps with a particular question that must be answered. According to Baker (2007), these are the following:

1. **Assessment and Audit:** What is the brand's place in the world? It is usually not only the longest phase but also the most important. It involves reviewing as well as assessing the world in which the new brand must excel.
2. **Analysis and Advantage:** What will the city be known for? It provides a realistic picture of the brand figuring out the gaps and shortcomings that must be addressed. Moreover, it is the perfect moment to claim both your positioning and competitive advantage as well as to define the goals and strategies required to build the brand.
3. **Alignment:** What are the brand's relationships? It is focused on defining the relationships between the city's various internal locations, entities, and experiences within its limits.
4. **Articulate**: How can the brand be expressed visually and verbally? Once you have gathered the entire brand's information, it is time to start with the brand's designs and communications: verbal identity, brand name, tagline, brand stories, logo etcetera.
5. **Activation**: How will the brand come to life? This stage involves applying the different communications and on-brand actions that will evoke the wished responses from customers.
6. **Adoption and Attitudes:** How can stakeholders support the brand? This makes reference to how important is what people say about the brand. You can make a huge effort on brand's marketing, however, at the end, the most powerful, influential and credible tool are the people.
7. **Action and Afterward:** How will the brand be kept fresh and relevant? Once the brand is launched, it is not the end, it is just the beginning. It requires a monitoring and constant battle to remain relevant and attractive.

As can be seen, it is a very complete process. It follows a logical order that any country should apply. There is no doubt that the rigor and speed to complete these 7 steps will depend on several factors such as the size of the community, its stage of development, scope of the brand, the available budget, between others. Furthermore, although it is a path which has a particular order, sometimes it will be need to come back to an earlier step because the findings and solutions that have been revealed at a later step. However, at the end, this flexibility will make the brand stronger.

2.1.2.3 Benefits of DBP

Last but not least, worth underlining that building and maintaining a strong brand brings endless benefits not only to the community's marketers, but also to the customers and the community as a whole. Considering that, after determining a clear vision defining how you want your destination, the product portfolio as well as the portion of market you want to reach, you will expect to see these following major benefits (Baker, 2007):

- Influence in decision-making process: A strong and recognizable brand will makes the customer's decision-making process shorter. This will means to them a saves of time and efforts as well as a simplification in terms of choices.
- Creation of loyalty and advocacy: Brands convey their values creating an emotional connection with customers. As it is known, people get attracted for the brands which shared values with. At this point, it is where people feel so excited that becomes a totally "brand-lover".
- Capability of commanding a price premium: Market only allows one destination to base their strategy on prices (to be the cheapest). Others must find other ways to differentiate themselves amongst the competency. A strong brand could be a powerful solution due to it encourages customers to pay for those intangible benefits that can be offered to them.
- Easiness to introduce new products: A strong brand facilitates both the development and launch of new products as well as it makes the product lines less risky and more welcome on the whole by the customer (Morello, n.d.) cited in (Baker, 2007). The main reason why is because loyal customers will be often interested in its products and they will trust on them.
- Customer Recognition: When a customer wants to buy a product, its branding image usually plays an important role. This is because the fact of having a good reputation will completely influence on the customer purchase buying your product instead of those that are unknown.

2.3.4 The key role of the stakeholders in DBP

Freeman (1984) defines a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by, the achievement of a corporation’s purpose” (García, J., Gómez, M. and Molina, A., 2011, p.647). These can be not only companies or organizations but also investors, residents and many more.

The current literature regarding destination branding agrees that any city has more than one stakeholder that perceives the city in a different way. Additionally, it is from these interpretations that each of them expresses their own definition of brand. As has been mentioned before, differently from commercial brands, a destination brand is not own or controlled by a single organization but by a huge number of stakeholders (Stubbs, B. and Warnaby, G., 2014) cited in (Hankinson, 2005). Furthermore, they are who have the capacity of influence and co-create the brand much more than others. This is the reason why it is so much importance to take them into consideration (Baker, 2007).

Even with the huge quantity of studies noting this fact, many destinations are still making the mistake of not sufficiently informing, engaging and involving them. However, as very well Baker pointed the “true success will only happen if key partners and stakeholders are motivated, totally understand the brand, know how to use it, and genuinely want to support it” (2007, p. 164).

In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that, destination branding does not start from zero. In other words, every place is already branded; regardless of they acknowledge or realize it. Due to this fact, without the collaboration of stakeholders it will become very difficult to delete or modify the existing perceptions as well as to change the image. Thus, the investigation of the role that the stakeholders have in the place brand-building process and the involvement of them in the brand become a need for any destination (Dinnie, 2011).

2.2 Shopping Tourism

According to UNWTO, shopping tourism can be defined as a “contemporary form of tourism fostered by individuals for whom purchasing goods outside of their usual environment is a determining factor in their decision to travel” (2014, p. 14).

As Lau (2000) cited in Tosun, et.al., (2007) pointed out shopping as a major leisure activity is becoming an increasingly important element in tourism value chain. It has turned into a determinant factor influencing destination choice, a significant element of the overall travel experience and, in some cases the motivating factor for travel (UNWTO, 2014). In this regard, destinations are taking advantage of this new market trend by creating authentic and unique shopping experiences that add value to their tourism supply while they reinforce and determine their tourism brand and positioning (Meng, F. and Xu, Y., 2010).

In addition to that, shopping as one of tourists' preferred activities has become a significant economic contributor to the tourism and retail industries (ESADE, 2014). It is not surprising then that the shopping activity is usually the most important expenditure category on vacations and trips. In fact, for many tourists, a vacation experience would be incomplete without opportunities to shop (Keown, L., 1989; Turner, W. and Reisinger, Y., 2001) cited in Tosun, et.al., (2007).

To conclude, considering all the things mentioned there is no doubt that shopping tourism, in the short and medium term will become a key segment within the tourism industry. This is mainly due to its influence in local economies, its contribution to the consolidation of destinations as well as its capacity of creating of jobs (UNWTO, 2014).

2.2.1 Retail Areas within a destination

As a consequence of the growing importance of shopping tourism, destinations are expanding their touristic offer with the aim of meeting the potential tourists' needs. Table 1 shows an overview of the different retail spaces that a tourist can enjoy when visiting a destination. As mentioned before, because of shopping has become the main motive to travel, independent stores, malls, shopping districts and markets around the world are now considered a "mustsee" attractions. According to the UNWTO, these are the main retail areas (2014, p.17):

Table 1: Retail Areas in a city

Type	**Example**
Informal	Roadside hut, farmhouse, hawker/street vendor selling fresh foods, fruit, vegetables or handicrafts.
Automated retail	Vending machines, kiosks
Market (fixed)	Daily or weekly market held in a fixed location. Covered and or/outside.

Type	Example
Market (seasonal)	Christmas market, summer festival
Market (roaming)	Travelling market selling produce from another destination
Transport infrastructure	Shops located at airport, railway station, highway service station, ferry/cruise terminal
Urban centre	Village shops, town high street/shopping district, city centre precinct
Peripheral nucleus	Out-of-town entertainment and retail complex (ERC), outlet, retail park

Source: UNWTO, (2014).

2.2.2 Influential factors on destination choice

Throughout 2011 and 2012, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) gathered data from a wide range of sources in the name of Global Blue which is a business in charge of supervising transactions between shoppers, merchants and banks. The Globe Shopper Index's study wanted to assess destinations in terms of how much attractive were those for tourist shoppers. Next, the qualitative and quantitative indicators influencing the shopping tourists' destination choice will be listed. This will allow readers to realize how many other factors those are taken into consideration beyond the pure shopping element of their visit (Turespaña, 2014).

The influential factors will be organized by different groups following the structure of a main indicator with its own sub indicators. All the information explained below has been extracted from the Global Report on Shopping Tourism undertaken by UWNTO (2014):

1. **Shops:** Undoubtedly, all the items related with shopping are on the top of the tourist shopper's list when choosing a destination. These include the following aspects:
   - Malls & boutiques: Number of shops and number of major malls within a 20-km radius of the city center.
   - International brands: Number and variety of leading local and international brands
   - Seasonal sales: Duration of sales seasons (in weeks per year)
   - Genuine (as opposed to counterfeit) goods: Qualitative assessment of the amount of counterfeit goods in department stores, shops and markets.

Hence, as can be observed, shopping tourists make an in depth analysis of the shopping product and all this entails before choosing a destination. Although there are some others factors that they take into account, these are the most important. In other words, if they are not convinced with this first assessment, probably the destination will be discarded.

1.1 **Convenience:** There are some other items that shoppers considered crucial to achieve the success of the shopping experience. These are:

- Use of foreign languages: Convenience of using a UN language (Arabic; Chinese; English; French; Russian; Spanish) in the principal shopping areas.
- Shopping hours: Number of hours major shops open on Sundays (or equivalent), and the average number of hours high street shops are open Monday–Saturday.
- Price negotiation: Likelihood of negotiating a discount at a department store, a boutique store and a market stall.
- Safety: Qualitative assessment of the prevalence of violence and petty crime, as well as the threat of military conflict, political unrest and terrorist attacks.

As has been mentioned, tourists want to be sure that they will have a great experience. To make that possible, they must find low prices, discounts and do not care about the hours and days that shops are open. Moreover, they need to feel comfortable. This means that, as they will spend huge quantities of money, they want to be well treated. Therefore, they greatly appreciate the fact of being treated in their own language as well as going to places with low rates of crimes, terrorist's attacks and, so on.

1.2 Culture & Climate: Despite the fact that the main motive to travel for this type of tourists is to go shopping; they also consider the possibility of complementing their trip with other activities. This is the reason why they also consider the following factors within a city:

- Attractions & UNESCO sites: Number of Lonely Planet ® sights within the city and the number of UNESCO World Heritage sites (historical city centers receive double points) within a 30-km radius.
- International cuisine: Number and variety of restaurants.
- Popular events: Qualitative assessment of the availability of sporting and cultural events.

- Strictness of visa regulations: Score based on the number of nationalities that require a visa to enter the country, and the validity of the visa for entry to other countries in the region.
- Agreeability of climate: Score based on the number of wet, uncomfortably hot and uncomfortably cold months per year, and the average daily hours of sunshine.

There is no doubt that, it is always an add value the fact of going to a place that at a certain point offers you the possibility of doing some other leisure activity. Moreover, those cities that are easy to get in and those which have a wonderful climate, they are always much more attractive.

1.3 Affordability: There are many different aspects related to the daily-life cost that almost all the tourists take into account before choosing one destination or another. These are listed below:

- Exchange-rate stability: Change in value of local currency, measured against a basket of currencies (US dollar; yen; euro; renminbi; rouble) over the last two years.
- Dining: Average cost for three options: a three-course meal at a Hilton® restaurant (or equivalent); a drink at that restaurant (aggregated average price of a pint of beer, a bottle of water and a glass of wine); and a Big Mac® meal (or equivalent).
- Hotels: Average cost for two accommodation options: a room at a 4-star hotel and a room at a 2-star hotel.
- Shopper favorites: Cost of a representative sample of consumer products.
- City transport: Average cost of a taxi (initial meter charge plus one km) and a bus (single-ride ticket) in the city center.

Regardless of the type of trip that is going to be done, the cost of living considering aspects such as hotels, transports, and so on is going to be checked. Before deciding where to go, tourists want to know the money exchange rate between one country and another as well as to get an idea of what they are going to spend per day.

1.4 Hotels & transport: The different accommodation options as well as the transport network are two other important issues to be analyzed before taking a decision. Some of the items included in this group are:

- Quality hotels: Annual average hotel occupancy rate and qualitative assessment of upscale hotels within the city, based on the number of 4-and 5-star hotels, weighted by the city size.
- Airports & flights: Total number of arriving and departing flights in 2009/2010 at all airports linked to the city.
- Convenient transport to city center: Convenience of bus and rail links and the distance to the main international airport.
- Dependable city transport: Assessment of the quality of the public transport system, based on the availability of underground transport and the frequency of night buses on weekends.

They must think about the best way to get in, to move around it considering the variety of prices. Furthermore, they should analyze the different kind of accommodation available in order to choose the one that most fits with their possibilities and needs.

2.2.3 Top 5 International Destinations adapting Shopping Experiences

According to the UNWTO report, the world's top ten destinations in 2012 in terms of international arrivals were, in order, France, United States, China, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Germany, United Kingdom, Russia and Malaysia. Regarding the significantly growth on international arrivals and visitor spending, all destinations mentioned before has increased their interests in shopping by visitors, not only domestics but also internationals. To do that, they have incorporated some shopping experiences for visitors as well as they have promoted and enhanced more the ones that they already have. Next, some of these innovations will be explained:

- **France:** The French National Tourism Development Agency has focused on specific outbound markets by promoting shopping experiences not only in Paris but also in other large cities. To make that possible, these cities become partner with some big shopping malls and tour operators with the aim of creating different shopping products. A clear example of this was the campaign launched in 2014 by the name of “Shopping By Paris” which was a package that offered to the visitor a 10% discount in more than 270 stores valid for a specific period.

- **United States of America:** US Department of Commerce and US Travel Association point out that “shopping” and “dinning” are the most popular activities practiced by international visitors within USA. In order to have an idea, international visitors spend the 19% of their budget on retail and, in some particular markets, the percentage is much higher. New York is, without doubt, not only an ultimate shopping destination in US but also in the world. According to NYC & Company, the city’s official tourism marketing organization indicated that almost 25 cents out of every dollar spend in NYC is spent on shopping. Although shopping is already an innate part of NYC brand, entities that are in charge of marketing, are continuously allocating resources on promoting their shopping products.
- **Spain**: “Spain ranked second in the world for receipts from tourism spending in 2012 and is in the process of consolidating its image as a shopping destination, particularly with visitors from Latin America, the Middle East and Africa” (UWNTO, 2014, pg. 25). One of the most successful products launched within the Spain regarding this topic was the “Barcelona Shopping Line”. It was created with aim of focusing the attention on the city’s retail offerings and it consists on 5 kilometers long in where tourists can find both international brands and local retailers (Shopping Line, n.d.).
- **Italy:** The Italian Government Tourism Board, also known by the name of ENIT, has focused a big part of its efforts on promoting the country’s image as a shopping destination. In fact, Italia has always been a very well-considered country in terms of fashion and shopping. However, as the international tourism has grown dramatically, they have had to adapt to their needs, especially in fields such as visa processing and customer service training.
- **Turkey:** According to UWNTO (2014), Turkey has always attracted tourists for trade. Indeed, one of its most attractive sites is the Grand Bazaar. This is considered one of the oldest and biggest covered markets in the world, attracting from 250000 to 400000 visitors per day. Moreover, during the recent years, as a consequence of its increase of popularity, the country have focused on promoting other shopping spaces such as Cevahir Mall which is a modern shopping complex in Istanbul.

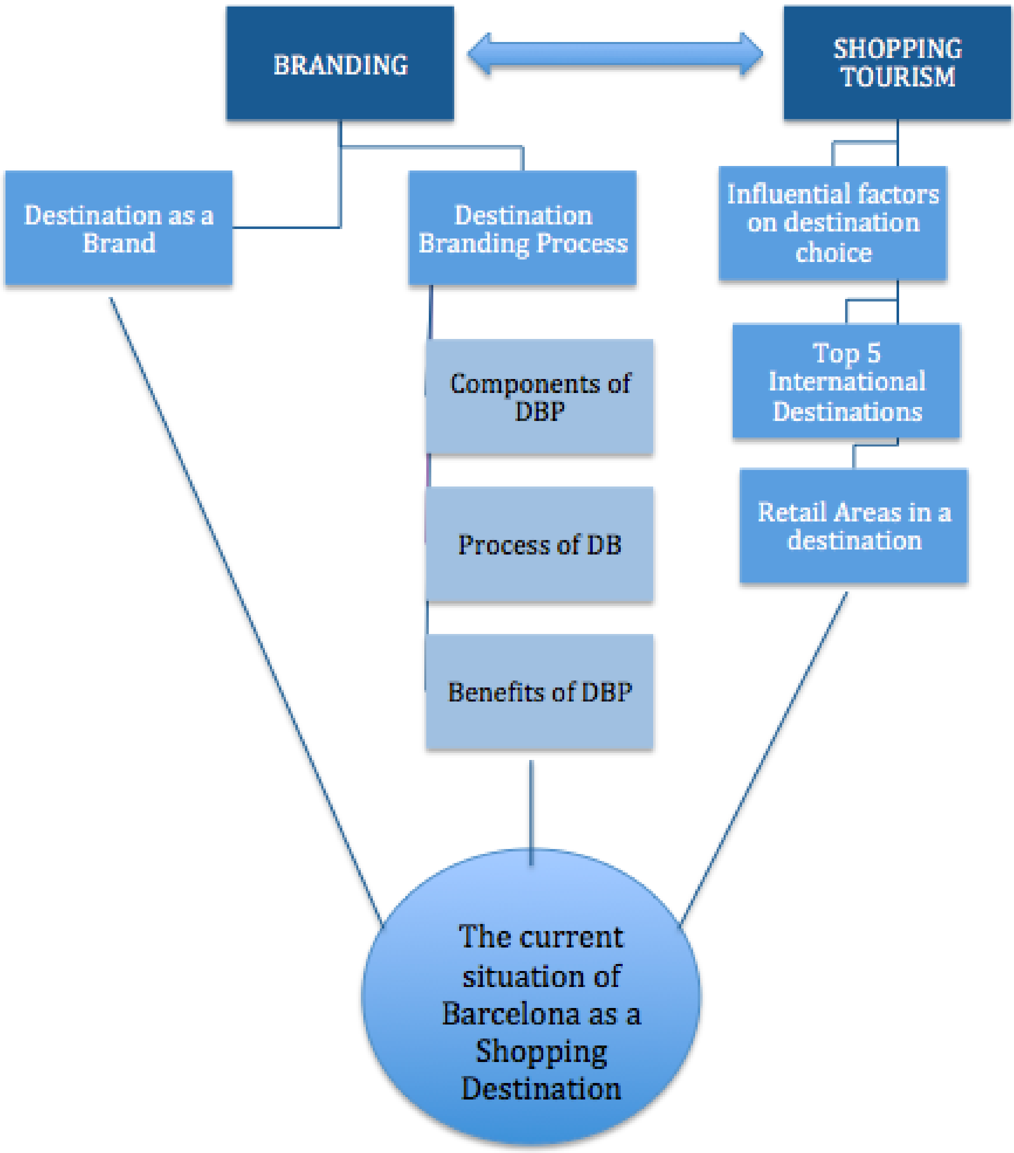
To conclude, as Shopping Tourism is increasing year after year, destinations are not only enhancing their shopping facilities but also creating new shopping experiences (Global Blue, 2015). Thus, they can get a higher benefit from their visitors by making them to spend much more when visiting the destination as well as encouraging them to come back.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework is an analysis of the data explained in the literature review where the different points established have been studied in order to find answers to the research statement which is "The current situation of Barcelona as a Shopping Destination".

In order to draw conclusions, an overview of the concept of branding and its most important definitions through different authors have been analyzed and commented. Afterwards, the destination branding process has been studied as its increasingly importance nowadays in the tourism scene.

Furthermore, a general study of the shopping tourism and its background has been done in order to get more familiar with the concept and thus realize how much has increased during the last few years. To conclude, the influential factors on destination choice from the point of view of shopping tourists, the different retail areas in a city as well as the top 5 destination adapting shopping experience has been explained as they are some key points that should be understood to develop the fieldwork and reach the goals and objectives.


BRANDING
SHOPPING TOURISM
Destination as a Brand
Destination Branding Process
Influential factors on destination choice
Components of DBP
Top 5 International Destinations
Process of DB
Retail Areas in a destination
Benefits of DBP
The current situation of Barcelona as a Shopping Destination

3. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this undergraduate dissertation is to examine how BCN is promoting and enhancing the product of shopping which will involve analyzing and studying different aspects such as the organizations in charge of, the benefits of this type of tourism, the positioning of BCN on this field, among others. In this chapter, a description of the research design will be provided as well as the different data collection techniques applied in order to obtain the information to reach the main objective and to provide some recommendations and conclusions.

This dissertation has been carried out with the intention of providing further knowledge about Shopping Tourism and be helpful for those professionals who are interested in knowing how BCN is facing and adapting itself to this “new” typology of tourism.

3.1 Research Methods

To begin with, the different research designs will be explained in order to fully understand each one and then to describe the ones used in this dissertation with their particular advantages and disadvantages.

Firstly, the research approach must be chosen and there are two that can be applied: deduction and induction. The first one, induction, is described as a process of reasoning in which people arrive to universal concepts based on individual cases (Ruiz, J., 2012). On the other hand, as Spangler (1986) cited in Altinay, L., Paraskevas, A., Jang, S., (2016) deductive approach is the “human process of going from one thing to another such as moving from known to the unknown”. Therefore, it implies a clear theoretical position prior to the collection of data. In addition to that, it helps to better explain and understand the pattern of relationships and interactions between the variables that are being looked at.

Secondly, there are two different types of design research: Qualitative and Quantitative. The quantitative research aims to determine how one thing (a variable) affects another in population, by quantifying the relationships between variables. On the other hand, qualitative research aims to develop an understanding of the problem in which phenomena and behaviors take place. In addition, quantitative research methods are much more structured than qualitative ones (Newman I., and Benz C., 2008).

Thirdly, primary or secondary data can be used. Primary data is the information collected by you, on your own. In other words, it means original data gathered specially for a purpose in mind whereas secondary data is recorded by someone else prior to and for another purpose different than the current ones (Newman I., and Benz C., 2008). It involves less time, effort and cost.

All things considered, this dissertation follows a deductive approach. First, a theoretical framework is done by including the most relevant definitions of branding and destination branding followed by the explanation of the destination branding process, its benefits and an overview of the shopping tourism concept itself. Afterwards, the practical field is carried out by putting all this theory into practice. Thus, conclusions and recommendations can be provided.

Looking into the practical framework, qualitative data collection methods techniques will be used. The main reason is because Shopping Tourism is a new topic and, thus, a lot of research into it has not been carried out so that it will become quite difficult to draw conclusions just from questionnaires. In other words, it needs an in-depth analysis on not only what is its current situation, its positioning but also how it is being promoted from the different companies and organizations. Therefore, considering that, as it is a more generic study; qualitative methods are the best option because of their flexibility.

Last but not least, a combination of primary and secondary data will be made. While the theoretical framework will be based on information already gathered by other researchers specialists on each field investigated (secondary data), in the practical framework, the data will be extracted from my own interviews (primary data), which are going to be explained more deeply in the following section. Furthermore, the fact of combining these two types of data is very enriching because it allows you to not only become familiar with the topic by knowing how it has been investigated but also to check that literature review, give your own data to the research and draw your own conclusions.

3.2 Data Collection

The fieldwork will be based mainly on two qualitative techniques which are In-depth Interviews and Data Collection.

To begin with, 9 in-depth interviews will be carried out to 9 different people who are in contact with the Tourism Industry and the Shopping sector. Three of them will be specialists in the shopping sector; three will be hoteliers and the last three shopkeepers. Therefore, three different interview samples will be formulated, one for each group. However, all of them will be structured in the same way: the first part will be variable depending on the group type asking for more particular aspects such as their market strategy, distribution channels, target and so on, while the second part will be more general and, thus, common for all groups asking for their opinions as a professionals within or in contact with the sector, all of them related with Barcelona as Shopping destination (trends, positioning, benefits, recommendations etc.)

This way, knowledge can be gathered and contrasted together with information and opinions on the topic from three different points of views: specialists, hoteliers and shopkeepers. Furthermore, three different people have been chosen as two sometimes it is difficult to draw conclusions and the third one is usually the decisive one to opt for one side or the other.

Looking into the type of interviews, they will be individual, face-to-face and open-ended questions. This decision has been taken mainly due to the fact that to be face-to-face with the person interviewed will allow you to take advantage of social cues. Social cues such as intonation, voice, body language, to name a few, that can give you a lot of extra information that can be added to their verbal answers (Opdenakker, R., 2006). Furthermore, the answers will be more spontaneous and the interviewer could reroute an answer if he/she sees that the respondent does not answer what he/she wants.

In addition to that, they will be individual because although developing group interviews is a very interesting and enriching fact, taking into consideration how new the topic is, individual opinions, recommendations and comments will be more helpful and accurate. Linked to that, the type of questions chosen will be open-ended. This way, longer responses and more information will be extracted as well as giving the researcher the opportunity to gain insight into all the opinions on the topic (Olabuénaga, J., 2012).

Last but not least, they will be carried out in a quiet and closed environment. The interviewees will be encouraged to talk and explain further their opinions and knowledge. Thus, it is expected to be an interesting dialogue for both sides. Although there will be a structure suggestions and ideas beyond preset questions will be very welcome.

On the other hand, another qualitative technique which is Data Collection will be used in order to complete and contrast the in-depth interviews mentioned before. This will be based mainly on gathered extra material in order to analyze it and draw conclusions beyond interviews. In each interview developed, the interviewee will be asked to provide extra material that can be interesting and relevant for the dissertation such as reports, studies, corporate presentations, to name a few. Furthermore, other helpful material will be look for by the interviewer.

3.3 Implementation

The methods set down worked completed as expected. The interviews were carried out in a quiet and friendly atmosphere where a natural conversation was had without any prompting on the part of the interviewer. In addition to that, all the interviews were recorded which allowed me to listen to them again and was helpful for their transcription. Moreover, all of them gave me the permission to put not their name but their charge within the organization what it is more than enough.

Another fact worth underlining is that most of the professionals were very welcoming and interested in my dissertation asking more about it, giving me contacts which were very helpful for the development of the dissertation as well as asking me about the possibility of sending them the whole project once finished. However, some others did not respond to the request to conduct an interview or simply indicated that because of security policies were not able to do it. Thus, it had to look for alternatives.

Nine interviews were enough to gather a general idea of the topic as it was expected. However, an extra interview was developed to a specialist who was not foreseen. The opportunity arose so it was decided to do it as more knowledge never is wrong. Furthermore, almost all respondents gave me extra material to complete what they have explained or just further interesting information.

Once answers were obtained, a transcription stage, analysis and evaluation of the data was done in order to extract the information reached, develop the findings and contrast with the theoretical framework. Afterwards conclusions, recommendations and limitations were exposed.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter the results of the data analysis are presented. The data was collected and subsequently processed in order to answer to the aim and objectives described in the Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The instruments to collect the information were, on the one hand, 10 in depth interviews to 10 different people involved in a way to the Shopping and Tourism Industry. On the other hand, Data collection method was used in order to complete the information gathered. Those interviews were carried out from 15th March 2015 to 10th April 2015.

4.1 Findings based on in depth interviews and data collection

The analysis of the answers of the questions formulated on the interviews as well as the extra data gathered from different reliable sources will provide a larger knowledge to the reader about the Shopping Tourism in Barcelona. Due to the extensive and interesting is this topic today, lot of information was provided. Therefore, it will be showed the most relevant aspects within it so that a better understanding of this type of tourism that every day is gaining much importance in our city will be possible. Afterwards, the similarities and contrasts with the literature review will be presented and thus the conclusions will be drawn.

4.1.1 The promotion of the product of shopping in Barcelona

Barcelona has a huge number of factors to become a shopping destination. It is for this reason that, since some years ago, the organizations of Barcelona both public and private are working in this field.

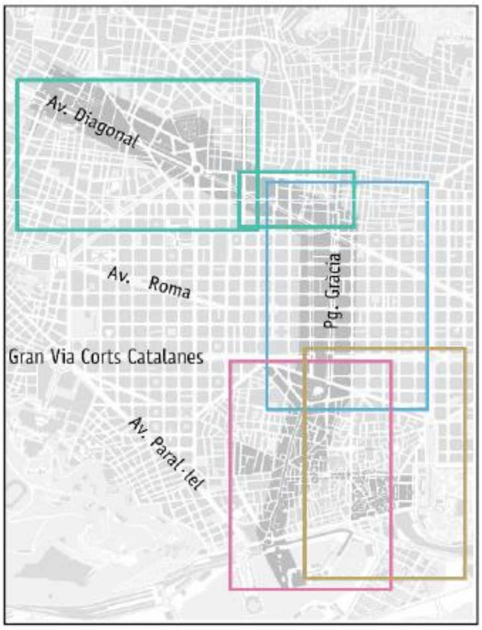
Turisme de Barcelona as the responsible of Shopping Line explained was created in 1993, after the Olympic Games, with the aim of being responsible for the promotion of tourism in Barcelona. Since then, it has been working on caring and enhancing the tourism as a whole, not only the aspect of shopping. As the Director of Cotton House said very well, it has tried to extend the “Olympic Games effect” the maximum possible. According to the Corporate Presentation provided by the Responsible of the Shopping Line within Turisme de Barcelona, this organization is a consortium formed by a combination of, on the one hand, the Official Chamber of Commerce, the Industry and Navigation and the Foundation Barcelona Promotion that represents the private sector and, on the other hand, the City Council of Barcelona which represents the voice of the public sector (Personal Communication, March 21, 2016).

Moreover, it cooperates with other public organizations as well as with approximately 1,500 private companies with which shares experiences and knowledge on the tourism promotion field.

In 1999, Turisme de Barcelona decided to launch a program entitled by “Shopping Line”. As the current responsible of this program explained, it was created mainly because it was detected that tourists coming to the city always dedicated a part of their stay to buy something for themselves, for a friend or someone of their family. Hence, Turisme de Barcelona came up with this program to promote the city as a shopping destination.

The Shopping Line is the largest commercial continuous in Europe and it has an L-shape which gives its name to this axis. It takes 5 km long and goes from the harbor of Barcelona to the highest part of the city. It goes not only through different commercial zones but also through different icons of the city in terms of culture, architecture, design, art and museums, as very well indicates its official website (www.barcelonashoppingline.com). So, undoubtedly, it is its complete offer which makes this axis so appealing.

Figure 5: Barcelona Shopping Line



Source: Turisme Barcelona (2015)

Until 2014, which means the fifteen first years, so much work was done to enhance this shopping area. This was basically because of its well connection and its full offer. In addition, another factor that plays an important role on that is the fact that the average of hotel nights spent by tourists in the city is a little bit more than two (Global Blue, 2015). Considering that, they do not have so much time to go the peripheral areas of the city. However, as the Barcelona's transport network has improved and grown a lot together with other factors, nowadays Turisme de Barcelona is working on a new program entitled by "Barcelona Shopping City". The aim of this is to expand the shopping tourism to other areas within the city that have also a very interesting commercial offer. A clear example of these could be the zone of "Creu Coberta" which is near Plaza Espanya as well as very close to Fira Barcelona. Hence, it is a good choice for business travelers who want to buy something but do not have enough time to go to the city center. Also, another example could be the "Gay Eixample" which is an area where it is possible to find shops full of clothes and accessories for this particular niche of market. Besides the two examples mentioned before, there are many others which will be listed throughout the dissertation.

Therefore, Turisme de Barcelona is nowadays working to expand the shopping tourism to other interesting commercial areas that can be attractive for those tourists who are looking for a local, unique and differentiated offer. As the Corporate Presentation of Turisme de Barcelona indicated, Barcelona has more than 20 commercial axis as well as 12 shopping centers and markets so that worth taking advantage of them (Personal Communication, March 21, 2016).

Figure 6: Shopping Areas in Barcelona

Source: Turisme de Barcelona (2015)

Turisme de Barcelona does not give financial aid to other organizations, foundations or shopkeepers. However, it helps them by promoting the product of shopping internationally, participating in some important tourism trades as well as cooperating with other interesting companies such as airlines or travel agencies in order to encourage them to generate packages or programs including shopping as they include cultural visits. Furthermore, it is in contact with other Spanish institutions such as TourEspaña in order to be informed about potential customers or future trends in the sector.

Looking at its promotion elements, it uses off and online tools which are both of them explained in its corporate presentation (Personal Communication, March 21, 2016). On the one hand, Turisme de Barcelona develops two off-lines tools which are Barcelona Shopping City Map and a Shopping Guide of the Shopping Line. Both are launched twice per year in four languages and translate to eight languages which are Catalan, Spanish, English, French, German, Russian, Chinese and Japan. Moreover, both are distributed to more than 20 tourists' information points, cruise terminals, hotels and other kind of tourist accommodations, shopping, among others. Also, the two are sent to the tour operators, travel agencies and journalists who participate with the promotion actions of Turisme de Barcelona. On the other hand, regarding the online tools, Turisme de Barcelona uses mainly one which is its official website. It is translated to eight languages, it includes a search for stores with geolocation as well as a new section entitled by "news" where memberships can publish their news and share them through the channels and social networks of Turisme Barcelona. Despite these promotional actions mentioned before, there are so many others such as workshops with tour operators in origin, international campaigns to give notoriety as well as a monthly submission of the arrival of cruise ships in town, to name few.

So, all things considered, during many years, Turisme de Barcelona has been, undoubtedly, the main promoter of tourism in the city and, almost all the people interviewed have pointed out how well Turisme de Barcelona has worked in the branding of the city making everyone feel proud to of it besides making tourism grew in an impressive way. This explains the reason why all the businesses of the city which includes hotels, shops, and organizations, among others are using the brand of Barcelona to promote themselves. As the Director of Barcelona Oberta said, "Barcelona is a brand to use as often as possible and more".

However, all the interviewees even the responsible of the Shopping Line within Turisme de Barcelona agree that this fact has changed with the new mandate at the City Council. As the Marketing Director of Santa Eulàlia said, nowadays the City Council has curbed the expansion. Every year Barcelona was opening more than one hotel and now everything has been stopped and regulated. She underlined the example of the Four Seasons Hotel which it has to be opened at the Deutsche Bank building but it had not been given the license. Other examples that came out were the failure to allow open on Sundays, the fact of not see the tourism as a source of income as the Director of Barcelona Oberta pointed or the fact of not applying the right policies for the right tourist areas mentioned by the Business Intelligence of La Roca Village (LRV).

Considering all these factors, nowadays the private organizations and companies are those which are allocating resources and big efforts to promoting and boosting the product of shopping. Nevertheless, all of them are aware that without the help and support of the public administration, it will be very difficult. They really trust on the public-private consortiums. As the Responsible of Competitiveness and Trade Training of Chamber of Commerce mentioned it is desired that Turisme de Barcelona and all the organizations and institutions which are in contact with the City Council make it see that tourism is a source of income that generates a huge number of jobs within the city. Otherwise, as very well the Business Intelligence of La Roca Village said, Barcelona will continue loosing opportunities in the field as it has done in recent months.

So, as can be seen, private companies has a huge role in the promotion of shopping tourism and, **La Roca Village**, even not being located within Barcelona, it is under the brand of Barcelona where is leading the shopping tourism as its Business Intelligence explained. Thus, it is essential to take it into account when talking about the promotion of the product of shopping in Barcelona. Considering this fact, its strategy, distribution channels and an overview of its key partners has been figured out thanks the interview done to him. He explained that its strategy it is mainly based on tourism. Value Retail is leading shopping tourism for some years due to few years ago it was positioned as a tourism destination within their villages. This means that, within its marketing department, the most important part in terms of people is the tourism and it is also where most of the investments are allocated in order to develop campaigns both in destination (BCN) as well as in the countries of origin of tourists such as China or Latin America. In addition to that, there are two other pillars, which are the digital area and the media which includes radio, newspapers, retail magazines, fashion magazines, and so on. The Business Intelligence of LRV put lot of emphasis on the digital part. This was because, as he explained, nowadays being on social media and use the online tools is vital to attract the markets and thus, positioning BCN as a shopping destination. Moreover, as very well he said, markets such as China or the East of Asia use very much more the smartphones than us. This is the reason why it is so important to have a strong digital strategy. So, the mainly promotion channels are those mentioned before: radios, newspapers, magazines, among others together with some key partners which are different tour operators considered relevant for LRV's product.

Looking into agreements and joint work developed with public administrations, the Business Intelligence of LRV pointed out that it does not have any specific agreement with Turisme de Barcelona but it is involved with some products that it commercializes such as the Touristic Bus, Barcelona Card, Restaurant Guide, among others. However, La Roca Village has a huge agreement with Turisme de Catalunya. This includes some actions such as multiple cross marketing activities, participation in trade shows and sales missions, visibility and promotion through Reps of Catalonia Tourism in origin & strategic markets and, so on. In addition to that, since two years ago, LRV has an agreement with the Country Council. Both are working together in a project entitled by "Taula de Turisme de Shopping" which wants to develop the product of shopping in a provincial level.

Following with the agreements, LRV works also together with a huge number of companies within the tourism industry in order to promote its product and reach a wider market. Some examples of these are "El Gremi d'Hotelers de BCN", specific hotel chains such as NH, particular hotels that at some point in time are interesting for LRV and, so on. In terms of transportations, LRV is in contact with Sagalés because of this company also provides a bus from BCN to LRV, although they have their own which is the Shopping Express. On the other hand, they also have deals with travel agencies that are quite big or specialized in international tourists who are from 3 to 5 days in the destination and LRV work to include one day for shopping as an activity in Barcelona.

Therefore, once knowing what LRV is doing so far it is true that there is a strong effort on promoting and enhancing the product of shopping. As its Business Intelligence pointed out, nowadays the main shopping tourism promotion in Barcelona and even in Catalonia is part of a private company, not part of public organizations. "LRV really find reasons to invest in this type of tourism because it generates visits and a much higher spending", he pointed.

A part from the organizations and institutions both public of private mentioned below, there is a third important role when talking about promotion and shopping tourism in Barcelona which are the **associations** and **foundations**. As the Responsible of Competiveness and Trade Training of the Chamber of Commerce said, BCN has a high percentage of businesses that belongs to some of this kind of organizations. Although there are many, it will be underlined two which are defending quite different ideas because of the businesses that are representing. On the one hand, there is the "Amics del Passèig de Gràcia" that, as the name indicates, it is in charges of defending and promoting the interests of the businesses located mostly along the Passeig de Gràcia or nearby. It has a national and international approach and it stands for a tourist city as it is clearly specified in its official website (www.barcelonapaseodegracia.com/asociacion). In contrast, there are other foundations such as the Fundació Barcelona Comerç that represented the interests of those businesses which are usually small or from families that are located in peripheral axis. Therefore, they are not usually in favor of opening on Sundays, define more tourists' areas and, so on. As the President of the Fundació Barcelona Comerç indicated, the two points of views are very respectable and each of them has their particularly reasons and thoughts.

Closely related to that, as a consequence of the discussions regarding the commercial opening hours, a new organization came out two years ago. This is **Barcelona Oberta** (BO). As its Director explained in the interview that was carried out to her, BO was born with the will to be the organization that grouped all commercial areas of the city center that were not grouped anywhere. Despite the fact of wanting to extend the commercial opening hours, BO has many other objectives. Some of them are the will of an international promotion of Barcelona as a city of shopping and an intention of spreading out the tourism to other more peripheral axis. Hence, at the end, BO is trying to group all those organizations with which share the same way of thinking that it defenses. This is an open city that is already positioned in the world as a specific way and the tourism is a source of income. Therefore, any rule or law that put in danger the arrival of tourists, it will mean a problem for our businesses and organizations.

Leaving all this aside, it cannot be forgotten the key role that also plays the **different businesses of the city** in the promotion of Barcelona. This is about the efforts done by the shopkeepers, restaurants, hotels and all the others companies related in a way with the industry which are developing a really attractive and interesting offer by providing an excellent service and experience. In addition to that, this is also about how mutually they help each other to generate tourist traffic from common agreements which end up being win&win actions. For example, as the Marketing Director of Santa Eulalia commented, mini dressers are created on specific hotels in exchange for a rental in order to increase store traffic. Other example could be what Rabat Store does. The Rabat Magazine is already included in the airlines most used by its clients in exchanges Rabat gives to them a % of the sales that are made thanks to them.

To conclude, there are many organizations in Barcelona that have an important role in the promotion of tourism. However, not all of them have the same thoughts and perceptions about turning Barcelona into a tourist destination. Hence, the different points of views have to be listened in order to find the way of beneficiating the ones who are in favor of tourism without penalizing and greatly affects the others.

4.1.2 An overview of the shopping tourists profile and their favorite areas in the city

After asking to 10 different people within the retail and tourism industry as well as contrast and complete the information with some reports carried out by Global Blue, an overview of the typology of shopping tourists has been figured out.

Let's start by looking at the **nationalities** of these. Focusing on the non-EU countries, there is no doubt that since some years ago the Chinese is increasing steadily and nowadays continues being the top 1. Thus, was indicated by all the interviewees as well as corroborated by the Global Blue Report (2016) which is based on the Tax Free transactions. Moreover, according to the Global Blue (2016), in 2015, the Chinese nationality had an increase of 84% compared to the year before. The second most abundant nationality today in Barcelona regarding shopping tourism is the American, especially those tourists who come to the city on cruise. Many of them have a high economic level which makes the spending in the city high. According to the Global Blue (2016), in 2015, BCN had an increase of 81% in terms of American tourists in comparison with the previous year. The Russian market although it has decreased during the last years, it continues to have an important weight in shopping tourism. Moreover, a surprise fact mentioned by the Shopping Line responsible of Turisme de Barcelona is that although it has decreased in terms of number of tourists coming to the city, it has increased their average ticket. In addition to that, there is another important market which is the Middle-East that has grown during the last few years but more staggered. As the Shopping Line responsible within Turisme de Barcelona mentioned, it is a very nascent market yet, do not want to be seen much because of its religion due to luxury is a sin for them. Despite this fact, they are very good shopping tourists. Also, there are others potential markets which are expected to grow a lot over the next few years. These are, as indicated almost all the respondents, other regions of Asia such as South Korea market or Taiwanese market which had increased 92% and 82%, respectively compared to 2015 (Global Blue, 2016). It has been observed that, the currency change has a strong impact when tourists deciding which destination to go. Nowadays, the two more favorable nationalities regarding this aspect are China and Korea. In contrast, Russia is one of the less what clear explains its decrease.

Figure 7: The impact of currency exchange

Source: Global Blue Report (2016)

Also, the respondents indicated that BCN has a huge number of European tourists. However, as they do not use Tax Free, it is more complicated to extract information about them. Nevertheless, thanks to the credit card transactions as well as the daily contact with the shopping sector both Chamber of Commerce and Turisme de Barcelona listed the French market as the top 1. Apart from this, there are others markets such as Germany, Italia or United Kingdom.

Coming back to the non-EU countries, their spend average is usually around 515€. The tourists who spend the highest are Hong-Kong, China and EEUU with an import of 1,049€, 960€ and

672€ respectively (Global Blue, 2016). In contrast, locals (inhabitants of BCN) or even the European tourists spend usually less. For example, the Director of the Rabat Stores explained that in the store of Passeig de Gràcia tourists have an average ticket of 3,500€ whereas locals 1,800€. The same happens in Santa Eulàlia where the tourists have a ticket average of 1200€ while locals 800€ being the highest the one of the American (1,500€), the second one the Chinese (1,300€) and the third one the Russian (1,100€) as its Marketing Director indicated. The fact that it has been observed and corroborated by all the respondents is that both non-EU countries and European take advantage of the price. In the case of the non-EU countries is mainly because of the Tax Free but also due to the products are usually cheaper than in their countries which it is the same that happens with the rest of the countries within Europe.

Looking at the **seasonality**, all the interviewees pointed that the high season starts on April and finish on October. Regarding the number of tourists, the strongest months are both July and August. However, regarding the number of shopping transactions, the strongest months are during the spring and autumn as it is when tourists with high purchasing power come to the city with the aim of going shopping. The Chinese New Year is another aspect that all the respondents underlined. As the Responsible of the Shopping Line and two other shopkeepers mentioned are the days in which Chinese come to BCN and spend more money. Every year is in a different day but it is usually in January or February which it has been very favorable for the city because these two months used to be very low. In addition to that, Santa Eulàlia added as well that in Christmas Time the number of tourists and sales rise again. After that, it downs to Easter.

As many of the respondents indicated and as Global Blue Report corroborates, the **average stay** of tourists in Barcelona is a little bit more than two 2 hotel nights. If you would join the nights in tourists' apartments, would be almost 3 nights as very well pointed the President of the Fundació Barcelona Comerç. This means three or four days in the city where tourists have enough time to go shopping although Sundays are closed. A proof of this, it is that BCN is the first city in Europe where tourists spend more on shopping, ahead of London, Paris, Amsterdam and Rome as he very well indicated. So, for the moment, it has been detected that the fact of not open on Sundays is not an inconvenient for tourists, but for shopkeepers of the tourists' areas.

Another fact that corroborates this is that when Turisme de Barcelona did surveys in order to know the degree of satisfaction of tourists about shopping in the city, the results were very high. Moreover, they did not say anything about the businesses opening hours and pointed out the good treatment received. Moreover, as many of the respondents indicated, Barcelona has a high level of repeat tourists which means that they enjoy and want to return.

On the other hand, when asked **what tourists value the most of shopping** in BCN, all the respondents did not hesitate to indicate the price. All tourists are much advantage of price and Tax Free. As the Director of Rabat Stores indicated, they come and show you the photo of the product they want and when you see what does it cost in their country, you fall surprise. Or, another example is the case of Japanese that arrive with large lists of products to buy as very well indicated the Responsible of Shopping Line. In addition to that, the Director of Rabat Stores also underlined that tourists really like both designs of the shops and the products offered. Barcelona has products that cannot be found in their countries or even in other parts of the world.

A surprising fact mentioned by the director of Rabat Stores is the fact of how quickly Asians are Europeanizing. This means that, while few years ago they were looking for bright and gold products, increasingly more like our products and trends form here. Any city takes a long time to accomplish this, about 10 years, while we have achieved it in three years.

Continuing with the factors that tourists appreciate the most of buying in Barcelona, the Director of Marketing of Santa Eulàlia mentioned the personalized treatment that they received, especially in the premium area. This is where the luxury brands are.

Turning to the other side, analyzing **what tourists like less** when buying in Barcelona, the two shopkeepers mentioned above, Rabat and Santa Eulàlia, were not able to say none. They believe that, within the premium area, there is a really high level in terms of offer, service, and variety. As the Marketing Director of Santa Eulàlia pointed out, “it is true that in recent years many international stores have opened however, we continue to have unique and local stores like Rabat, Colmado Quilez or us that makes this complete and differentiated offer”.

The President of Fundació Barcelona Comerç said that BCN has another kind of tourists that do not have such a high purchasing power or simply prefer other kind of stores that are outside of the premium area. They want to buy something more unique, special and alternative so that they decide to go to the neighborhoods. Here, a problem comes up. Once tourists leave the premium areas, staff is not so prepared. Then, it is when tourists complain about the service received because they are not treated properly with their languages. As he indicated, this could be the biggest weakness that Barcelona has so that it needs to work on it to improve.

Regarding the **favorite areas** for shoppers within the city, Passeig de Gràcia is undoubtedly the most demanded. Thus was indicated for all the respondents as well as corroborated by the Plan of Turismo de Compras (2015). Moreover, if we analyze the most demanded shops by tourists, all of them are located in Passeig de Gràcia. Some of these are Louis Vuitton, Hermes, Prada and Loewe as the professionals interviewed within hotels indicated.

However, there are **other areas** which have a great potential and are slowly gaining importance. Although there was some diversity of opinions, all of the interviewees pointed the Born district as the top one. Then, some others were mentioned such as Barna Centre, l'Eixample, Creu Coberta – Sants, "els Encants", to name few.

In addition to that, it came up the comparison between La Roca Villlage and Paseo de Gràcia in terms of type of the target attracted. While Turisme de Barcelona considers that they have a completed different target, La Roca Village and Barcelona Oberta considered very similar. Actually, they think that the fact that tourists go to La Roca Village instead of Passeig de Gràcia is mainly because of the amount of promotion and hard work they have been doing for so many years together with the fact that it is opened on Sundays. This means that when a tour operator has to decide where to bring tourists if they want a shopping day in BCN, they include LRV instead of Passeig de Gràcia. In contrast, Turisme de Barcelona believes that it is not the similar due to the fact that the tourists that go to the LRV want only to shop while Turisme de Barcelona works with the aim of achieving that the tourists who come to the city to visit the culture, to enjoy gastronomy and so on, add the shopping activity as way of completing their stay.

Summarizing, Barcelona attracts non-European and European shopping tourists. Regarding the firsts, Chinese, American, Russian and Middle-East are the top markets while regarding the seconds are French, Germany, Italian and United Kingdom. However, there are some potential markets which are going to grow in the future such as the Taiwanese market or South Korean market. On the other hand, looking at the favorite areas within the city, Passeig de Gràcia has been the top 1 without doubt. However, nowadays it starts to be considered other areas characterized by its unique and local offer such as the Born district or Creu-Coberta.

4.1.3 Barcelona as a shopping city and the benefits that this entails

When asked if Barcelona was prepared to satisfy the needs of this type of tourism and become a shopping destination, all the respondents said yes. It was quite surprising because all of them agree on the type of answer given. The reasons why they think that BCN is more than ready for this type of tourism is because of apart from its complete offer in terms of shops, BCN has many other things to please them. Shoppers do not just look for the offer of shops within a city. According to the Shopping Report carried out by UWNTO in 2012 as well as other studies developed by Global Blue (2015), shopping tourists consider much more things when choosing a destination. Barcelona has an incredible weather, beach, an enviable cuisine, a strong and interesting cultural and architectural offer, among other strengths. Moreover, it has to be added the factor that is a small and very well connected city so that it is very easy to see all its parts quickly. Moreover, looking exclusively at the aspect of shopping, it has a very completed and differential offer. As the Shopping Line corporate presentation indicated, BCN has more than 12 commercial axis as well as 12 shopping centers and markets. This is the reason why Barcelona Shopping City, the program mentioned in the first section, is trying to spread out the tourism to all these other interesting commercial zones. In fact, as it was mentioned before, Barcelona offers the largest commercial hub of Europe entitled by Shopping Line.

Another powerful aspect of the city that all the interviewees pointed out is that BCN has an offer that combines international brands such as Louis Vuitton, Channel or Gucci with local products what makes the offer more attractive and unique. In addition to that, there is the factor of the price that cannot be ignored as it is very attractive.

There are many factors that demonstrate that Barcelona is prepared and is gaining ground in the field shopping. As the hotels, shopkeepers and specialists in the field indicated, during the last few years, it has been a clear increase in terms of shopping tourism. In the case of the hotels such as Hotel Majestic, Hotel Cotton and Hotel Claris pointed have been detected this increase through the packaging of their guests as well as the amount of questions that they make to the Concierge or the responsible of Guest Relations regarding shopping. In the case of Shopkeepers, they have noted that the percentage of customer’s tourists is much higher than a few years ago and it continues growing. For example, Santa Eulàlia, even being an emblematic shop of BCN, nowadays has 60% local customers versus 40% tourists. Furthermore, the Marketing Director of Santa Eulàlia explained that it is one of the shops which has this percentage lowest due to the fact that locals are very loyal to them. However, there are other international brands located in Passeig de Gràcia that has 70% tourists versus 30% locals. In addition to that, many international chains have opened in Passeig de Gràcia in the recent years and others are about to do so such as Céline. This fact also indicates that even these brands with such prestige and name see Barcelona as a city with great potential in terms of shopping. Obviously, Global Blue through the Tax Free and Global Refund through the credit card transactions can also appreciate the huge amount of money spent in the city as well as its steady growth. Last but not least, worth underlining that, according to Global Shopper Index, Barcelona has been positioned the first in terms of the city where the tourists spend more money on purchases within Europe as it was mentioned before.

All things considered, there is no doubt that Barcelona can be considered as a shopping destination. It has all the necessary factors to match the shopper's needs. However, as all the respondents indicated, there are many aspects which should be worked and improved in order to continue growing. All of them will be list and commented in the last section entitled by *Recommendations, Improvements and future trends on this field.*

Looking at the **benefits** that the shopping tourism is bringing and can bring to the city in a future, the respondents mentioned different aspects closely related between them and quite common with each other. All of them agree that tourism is one of the main sources of income that the city nowadays has. For this reason it is important to care for and take advantage of it.

All of them also indicated that attracting shopping tourism does not only means incomes for those who are explicitly within the retail industry, but also for all those services that complement the experience such as hotels and restaurants. Thus, everyone gets benefit from it. As very cleverly the Director of the Cotton House said, “at the end we are all services so that shopping is like a partner of us”. This fact is closely aligned with the phenomenon that mostly of them mentioned that it is called “the multiplier effect or the social return”. This means that shoppers leave lot of money to the city which can be reinvested in other areas.

Moreover, tourism generates wealth. As indicated the Responsible of Competitiveness and Trade Training of the Chamber of Commerce it is not only wealth in terms of money but also social which means a better distribution of this. It is important to underline that, as is showed in the corporate presentation of Shopping Line, trade represents a 14% of the overall PIB in the city (Personal Communication, March 21, 2016). This means that, it generates many work places and taxes. "A new demand requires new services to be satisfy it" as the Marketing Director of Derby Collection mentioned. Therefore, it opens a new field to explore.

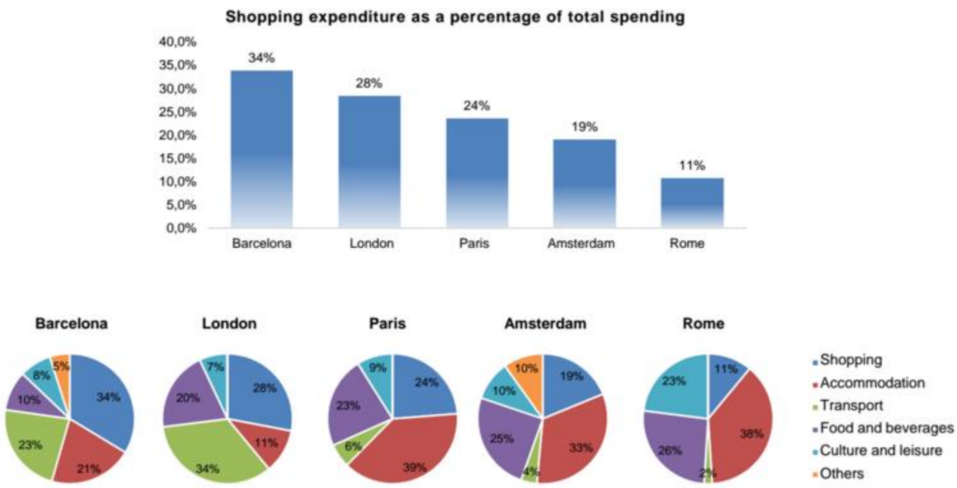
In addition, the shopping tourists are a very interesting profile for the city. This is because not only most of them have a high purchasing power and have a predisposition average spending much higher than any other kind of tourist but also because they are cultural. As the Business Intelligence of LRV indicated, their average stay is three times longer than the other types of tourists so that they have more time to visit museums, theatres, monuments and, so on. Hence, as very well said the Director of the Hotel Cotton House, this type of tourism is helping at the same time to position Barcelona in all its aspects.

To sum up, Barcelona is more than ready to match the needs of the shopping tourists. This has been clearly reflected with continuous growth of Shopping Tourism in the city as well as the high rate of repeat tourists. In addition to that, many benefits are extracted from it, not only in terms of new jobs and incomes but also in in terms of social return and better distribution of the wealth. This is the reason why it is important to continue working in this field and thus, continue improving in the list of the most popular shopping destinations.

4.1.4 The positioning of Barcelona as a shopping destination among Paris, Milan and London

Barcelona, as was mentioned before, it is the first city in Europe ahead of Paris, Milan and London in terms of spending on shopping.

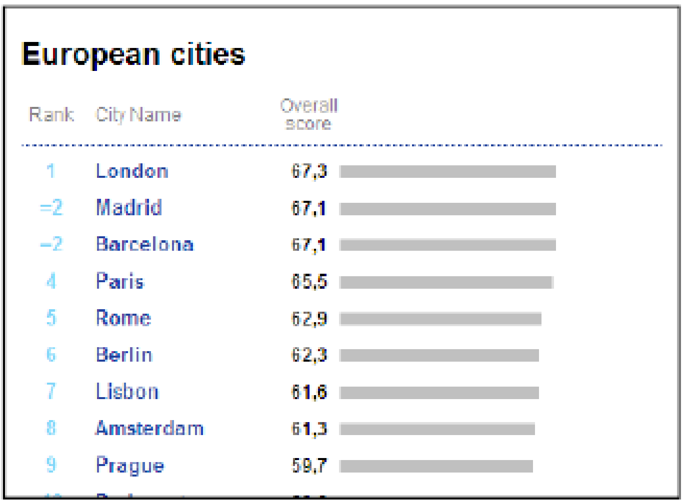
Figure 8: Tourism spending distribution



Source: ESADE (2014)

In addition to that, Barcelona is together with Madrid the second favorite city for tourists to go to shopping, after London. Both classifications have been extracted from reports based on the Global Shopper Index.

Figure 9: Favourite destinations for shopping tourists


European cities

Rank	City Name	Overall score
1	London	67,3
=2	Madrid	67,1
=2	Barcelona	67,1
4	Paris	65,5
5	Rome	62,9
6	Berlin	62,3
7	Lisbon	61,6
8	Amsterdam	61,3
9	Prague	59,7

Source: Plan de Turismo de Compras (2015)

Then, the weaknesses and strengths of Barcelona in comparison with London, Paris and Milan will be listed according to what the interviewees pointed out.

To begin with the **strengths**, most of respondents indicated that Barcelona is much more attractive than these other cities not only because of the commercial offer but also because of the components that accompany the shopping experience. Nowadays, be differentiated by your commercial offer is very difficult due to the globalization. As the Business Intelligence of La Roca Village indicated, most of the international brands are present in all the cities so that tourists do not care shopping in a city or another. This is the reason why it is essential to have others competitive advantages to stand out from your competitors. Barcelona still having very much international brands, it retains that unique and local offer that represents its identity and makes it special and different. However, as very well indicated the Marketing Director of Derby Collection, this interesting and genuine offer can also be found in the center of Paris, even in London. The same happens with the cultural, architectural or gastronomical offer. Nevertheless, Barcelona has others strong aspects that make it very attractive and have none of these other cities. These are its incredible climate and sea that make the experience much more enjoyable as well as its big advantage in terms of prices that are much lower than in these cities. Furthermore, BCN has an interesting metropolitan area with the outlet of La Roca Village and the one that is going to be opened in Viladecans. He also pointed, as an expert of marketing that, it is not the same to sell "you can find shops" that to sell "you can find shops and….". Barcelona is more powerful in selling the fact of shopping in a holistic way, this means, as an experience. Furthermore, the Director of the Cotton House Hotel noted another interesting point which is that Barcelona offers a very personalized service that these other international cities do not offer. To complete what the respondents indicated, some other strong points of BCN have been extracted from the "Plan de Turismo de Compras" carried out by the government of Spain in 2015. The city of Barcelona has a higher percentage tax refund that its main competitors as well as a lower minimum amount to be repaid the VAT (90,16€) which is less than in Paris (175€) or Milan (155€).

Turning into the **weaknesses** that BCN has compared to Paris, London or Milan, most of the respondents indicated the fact that the other cities have much more experience in the field of shopping than Barcelona. As the Director of Marketing of Hotel Majestic mentioned, these cities have spent many years focusing on this area which has made earning lot of name in the shopping and fashion industry. This is closely linked with the aspect that the Responsible of Competiveness and Trade Training within the Chamber of Commerce indicated: "Barcelona is not yet a reference site shopping for luxury tourists, however, the other cities yes". In other words, as the "Plan de Turismo de Compras" pointed, Barcelona has a deficit image as a leader in shopping tourism destination. Another aspect that the Business Intelligence of LRV came up with is that, although during the recent years many international brands have opened in Passeig de Gràcia, there are many missing yet. Paris, London and Milan have a more completed commercial offer in terms of international brands. He also indicated together with the Director of Barcelona Oberta that Barcelona has many policies that do not promote shopping tourism. Some of these are the businesses opening hours as well as the fact of do not define more shopping areas. Other weaknesses that have been extracted from the "Plan de Turismo de Compras" are the following: In Barcelona, the minimum amount to be repaid the VAT (90,16€) is more than in some competing cities such as might be the case of London (36€). Last but not least, even with the current importance of the technological devices, there is a little content on the commercial offer of BCN on digital platforms compared to these other cities.

Leaving all the things mentioned aside, as most of the respondents indicated, it is important to take into account that BCN is very new in this area. Despite this fact, as the Responsible of Shopping Line within Turisme Barcelona mentioned, the response has been very good. In other words, in a very short time it has been achieved much. This is the reason why many of the interviewees believe that today Barcelona is not up to its competitors but it is only a matter of time.

Summarizing, Barcelona does not have as good positioning as the other cities in regards to the commercial offer. Although lots of international brands are opening in BCN, many of them are missing yet. However, it is much highly considered in terms of all the factors that accompany the experience. This is the reason why Barcelona has achieved such a good positioning in such a short time.

4.1.5 Recommendations, improvements and future trends in the field

When asked about the future trends in Shopping Tourism, all the respondents answered that, as people in direct contact with the sector, have the feeling that shopping tourism will continue to grow much over the next few years. As the figure of Competitiveness and Trade Formation within the Chamber of Commerce indicated, BCN has a very attractive offer, an incredible price-quality relation, a high rate of tourist repeater and also, unfortunately, it is being benefited from everything that is happening in the Middle East and North Africa. However, others respondents expressed their concern regarding factors such as terrorist attacks that are happening today around the world, the current position of the city council as well as the vandalism in Barcelona. The Director of the Hotel Cotton House expressed his concerned about the current situation in the world. As he indicated, “Hope that BCN does not have a woeful fright as could have happened in other cities. This makes a lot of damage and, at the end, it is a global problem”. Also the Director of Guest Relations of Hotel Majestic pointed that there are many American tourists who are already afraid to come to BCN for what happened in Brussels and Paris. As United States is so big, they see these two cities as the same destination that BCN. Closely related to that, both the Directors of Marketing and Guest Relations of Hotel Majestic indicated that the current vandalism existing within Passeig de Gràcia, worries and frightens tourists.

Last but not least, there is another aspect that worries some of them. As the Director of Barcelona Oberta indicated, the future of BCN depends very much on the position that the City

Council take regarding this aspect. If it lets Turisme de Barcelona do its job and continue promoting tourism that was for the reason why it was created, the city can continue to grow and gain competitiveness against its competitors. Otherwise, it will be very complicated.

Leaving this aside, some **future trends** were underlined. Regarding the commercial offer, as very well the Marketing Director of Santa Eulàlia indicated, there is and will remain an increasingly trend to enhance the unique shops in order to not fall in what everyone fears which are the "cloned cities". Moreover, she added that, increasingly more tourists appreciate authenticity, handmade products and exclusivity. Looking at nationalities, as she clearly mentioned, there is always some of them that decrease but others increase and Korean surely be one of these.

On the other hand, talking about the shopping areas within the city, the Responsible of Shopping Line of Turisme de Barcelona indicated that there will be a clear expansion into new commercial ones with the aim of decongesting the city center.

Last but not least, the Business Intelligence of La Roca Village mentioned two more trends related with the importance of digital and hospitality in the shopping experience. Nowadays, if you are not focused and positioned in the digital world, you can hardly come into contact with tourists who are still at home and are looking for information. Increasingly, relations between tourists are made through the Internet. On the other hand, the innovation that LRV is incorporating is the term of hospitality in the shopping experience. As he very well pointed, today it is possible to buy whatever you want on the Internet 24hs 365 days a year. In the end, shopping tourism involves travel and dedicate a day or half to make purchases and the hospitality in service is what best allows us to differentiate ourselves from these purchases are not made through other channels such as the Internet. As he added, shoppers when deciding to go to a destination to shop, they are looking also for the experience that this entails, not only acquire products. Moreover, in the future, this is the reason why they will come to buy in BCN instead of in other city as well as repeat and come another time.

Regarding the **recommendations** and **improvements** on this field, all the respondents mentioned and thus corroborated by the Global Blue Report (2015) that the public organizations and institutions should allocate more resources on promoting the shopping tourism internationally what means in countries where BCN have or could have tourists from. As the Marketing Director of Hotel Majestic indicated, although the private sector is trying to do their best without the help of the public sector they are not able to reach those international markets due to big part of them are small companies. Moreover, as the Business Intelligence of La Roca Village indicated, investments on promotion and positioning of Barcelona had to be done also regarding the rest of the companies within the retail industry. He pointed out that if the companies invest and come to BCN, they will have the tourists by which they have invested and they will be in an environment where they could carry out their activities and continue to grow. Closely related with this, the City Council should decide which model of city it wants as the Director of Barcelona Oberta very well indicated. After that, a promotion and marketing plan can be carried out enhancing not only the city center area but also some others than although they are not as rich in culture and architecture, they have many other interesting things that can attract tourists.

In addition to that, many of the interviewees believe that, the shopping regulations should be renewed in order to be more flexible, they are very archaic. As both the Business Intelligence of La Roca Village and the Director of the Hotel Cotton House indicated, there are so many obstacles when someone wants to open a new business in the city which limits its growth. This is the reason why often projects that could be very interesting will end up losing.

Furthermore, the policies of overture regarding the opening hours should be relaxed with the aim that each shopkeeper has the maximum of opportunities to reach their kind of client. There is no sense that a bakery has the same schedule as a shoe store as the Business Intelligence of La Roca Village said very intelligently.

Also, other recommendations such as to enhance and differentiate the offer were mentioned. The Marketing Director of the Derby Collection suggested that the product of shopping should be sold in a more holistic way. In other words, more like an experience together with other attracting products such as the cultural or gastronomic. In addition to that, the unique and emblematic boutiques of the city should be potentiated in order to be differentiated among other cities leaders in shopping. Related to that, BCN should innovate and look for the areas within the service or technological level for example that are underexploited with the aim of standing out above the competitors.

To conclude, although Barcelona already has a good positioning as a shopping destination and it attracts a huge amount of shopping tourists, there are some aspects that have to be improved. This is about, for example, renewing and makes more flexible some shopping regulations. In addition to that, some future trends have been figured out and should be taken into consideration in order to be able to differentiate themselves among other destinations and thus, avoid to become “cloned cities”.

5. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the main objectives of the study are presented through taking into consideration the literature review and the findings obtained with the in depth interviews and the data collection. Afterwards, the limitations that had been faced will be mentioned and explained as well as the recommendations for future research.

5.1 Conclusions

Looking at the **first objective**, undertaking the literature review, it was possible to analyze the growing tendency of selling destinations as brands. As Pride (2008) mentioned, nowadays it is increasingly difficult to be differentiated from other destinations through physical attributes because they can be easily copied. This is the reason why during the last few years places are allocating many resources to create successful unique brands with emotional associations. After interviewing some key stakeholders of Barcelona, it can be affirmed that this city is a clear example of success thanks to the creation of a powerful brand. As Montse Arnau indicated, Barcelona goes beyond selling products, it sells experiences full of emotions. On the other hand, shopping tourism which is another increasing and current topic was studied when developing the theoretical framework. According to Lau (2000) shopping is becoming an increasingly significant element of the overall travel experience being in some cases the motivating factor for travel (UNWTO, 2014). Taking that into consideration, both public and private organizations in Barcelona have been working very hard during the last few years in order to accommodate this type of tourists as well as to reap the maximum benefits from it. Nowadays, according to the Global Shopper Index, Barcelona is the first city in Europe in terms of spending on shopping as well as the second favorite for tourists together with Madrid for going shopping.

The **second objective** of the study was to evaluate how Barcelona promotes and boosts the product of shopping as well as to evaluate what extent the Barcelona brand is used or not to sell. As was mentioned in Chapter 2 by Kavaratzis (2002) in destination branding there is not only a unique organization in charge of everything but various stakeholders who makes the process more complex and this can be clearly reflected in the case of Barcelona. Public organizations, private companies and associations have to agree on how to sell the product of shopping which becomes very difficult due to the diversity of opinions. While the current City Council of Barcelona is in the process of regulating some tourism activities, private companies put all their efforts into promoting it. What is more, in the case of specific associations, depending on the interests of the businesses which they are representing they are actively promoting more shopping as it is the case of Amics del Passeig de Gràcia. However, as was mentioned by Baker (2008) when explaining the key role of stakeholders, the true success will only happen if all of them work together. In addition to that, the product of shopping is sold as part of a "package" which means not individually but in a holistic and experiential way. Closely related to that, shopping tourists when going to a destination to buy something want to experience everything that this entails, as it is the main differentiating factor of shopping in one city or another, even taking into account buying online. This fact is supported by the brand definition of Ogilvy (1983) mentioned in the theoretical framework which refers to the intangible aspect, to everything that involves the consumer's experience. Moreover, as Baker (2007) indicated having a strong brand brings endless benefits for everyone, not only for the marketing department of Barcelona. From the primary data obtained, it was determined that almost all the stakeholders of BCN are using the brand of Barcelona in one way or another, not only the ones mentioned above but also the tourists and the community as a whole.

According to the **third objective** of identifying the most attractive areas in the city as well as the profile of shopping tourists that come to the city, although UWNTO (2014) indicated different types of retail areas within a destination, in the case of Barcelona, the majority of shoppers look only for big shops located in the high street of the city which is Passeig de Gràcia. However, there is another type of tourists who start looking to something more unique and local so that it begins to spread out to other areas such as the Born. Regarding the nationalities, it was seen that the current top three international markets are the Chinese, the American and the Russian market however there is a strong presence of European countries such as France, Germany and United Kingdom. In addition to that, it was detected that some other areas of Asia are growing and will continue to grow in the future such as South Korea or Taiwan. Looking at the seasonality, although in terms of number of tourists the highest months are July and August, in terms of number of shopping transactions the highest are during the spring and the autumn. Closely related to that, it was figured out that the shopping tourist is a kind of tourist who not only considers the commercial offer but also other aspects such as the culture, climate and/or affordability as UNWTO (2014) indicated in the list of the influential factors by shoppers on destination choice included in Chapter 2.

Hence, this the reason why when evaluating the **fourth objective** of examining whether Barcelona is ready to receive this type of tourism and highlighting the benefits resulting from having it, it was determined that BCN has all that is required to match the needs of shopping tourists. Moreover, tourism shopping brings to the city much more than new jobs and higher incomes. It brings, on the one hand, a very interesting tourist profile that not only has a higher purchasing power and willingness to spend more but also a tourist that triples the average stay of any other and they come back. Moreover, on the other hand, it brings a social return and a big multiplier effect that allows a greater distribution of the wealth as well as the use of that money for other actions.

The **fifth objective** was to examine the positioning of Barcelona as a Shopping and Fashion destination among other leading cities on the issue such as Milan, Paris and London. As the definition of brand positioning given by Kavaratzis, M. and Ashworth, G., (2005) in Chapter 2 indicated, it is about underlining competitive advantages that means identifying what Barcelona has that the others do not have. Once the interviews were developed and contrasted with the extra information, it was concluded that today BCN does not have such a complete commercial offer as the other cities have due to although it already have lot of international brands, many of them are still missing. However, considering the city as a whole as well as the factors that accompany the shopping experience and those that are taken into account by shoppers, BCN is much more highly considered. It has incredible weather, a wide and excellent offer in terms of culture, architecture and gastronomy as well as an unmatched price-quality ratio. This is the reason why BCN has achieved such a good positioning in such a short time.

Finally, regarding the **sixth objective,** after analyzing the literature review and the obtained data, it can be concluded that some recommendations should be drawn by public institutions as they are the ones who should play the major role in promoting the product of shopping of Barcelona. It was determined that the shopping regulations of BCN should be renewed in order to be more flexible. This is because when someone wants to open a new business in the city, many obstacles are imposed which limits its growth. Closely related to that, the opening hours of commercial businesses within touristic zones should be reconsidered allowing shopkeepers to make the most of shopping tourists. Last but not least, the unique and local shops of Barcelona should be further enhanced together with the fact of improving the service given to the shopper as they are the factors that will allow Barcelona to be differentiated from other city leaders in shopping. Otherwise, as a consequence of the globalization, all of them will end up being "cloned cities" with the same commercial offer. Hence, a tourist will not care about walking through the center of one city or another.

Before concluding, a brief look at the future was taken in order to point out some upcoming trends in the field. There is no doubt that shopping tourism will continue increasing in the coming years. Shopping tourists will increasingly appreciate the authenticity, exclusivity and the handmade products. Moreover, there will be a tendency of introducing the concept of hospitality within the shopping experience enhancing the personalized service. In the case of Barcelona, work will be done in order to decongest the center and boost other commercial areas of the city full of local products and unique brands.

5.2 Limitations

Several factors have limited the research results. It is important to mention the lack of prior research studies on the topic together with its newness and breadth, the failure to interview all professionals desired as well as the current situation within the City Council. Consequently, the accuracy of the research might have been affected as a result of these limitations.

As a consequence of the lack of prior research studies on the topic, it was very difficult to gather academic papers and journals in order to develop the literature review, especially the part of Shopping Tourism. This is the reason why a wide range of authors were not included and much of it was taken from the same source. Luckily, some reports undertaken by prestigious organizations in the area were published and lot of relevant and interesting information for the research could be extracted.

Closely related with the aspect mentioned above, the newness and breadth of the topic was another limitation I had to deal with. This fact was an added difficulty that made the development of this dissertation harder. There were no guidelines or clues to know if I was on track or not, in fact, at times I felt that I was leading the way where there was much to discover. Consequently, I found I wanted to analyze many things in a limited time and space so that I had to decide how far to go, that is, what to include and what not. It is for this reason that I do not know to what extent I was able to pick the most relevant aspects and adequately explain all the information gathered from the in depth interviews and data collection.

In addition to that, the failure to interview some professionals considered very helpful for the dissertation made the fieldwork more difficult taking much more time and having to look for alternatives within a rather limited period. A request for an interview was sent to Mandarin Hotel, Condes Hotel and Loewe but due to security policies or lack of time they were not able to do it. Therefore, two other hotels were interviewed although they are not located in Passeig de Gràcia, but close. Consequently, the responses may have been a little less accurate. Closely related to that, 10 interviews were developed to 10 different organizations and companies within the shopping sector and tourism industry trying to show different point of views regarding the same issues. However, the more people I would have been able to interview, the more accurate the results would have been. Nevertheless, it took lot of time to reach the professionals, carry out the interviews as well as write them up. Hence, a realistic and achievable sample within the time available was established.

The current situation of the City Council altered and limited the results in a way. This is because it was detected when doing the fieldwork that people are slightly obsessed with the position adopted by the current mayor of BCN regarding tourism. As a consequence, many answers referred again and again to Ada Colau's policies forgetting everything that has been done so far. If the same interviews had been carried out before this new mandate many other interesting things would have appeared.

Therefore, because of all the factors mentioned above, it is possible that the findings, recommendations and improvements are not as accurate or precise as desired.

5.3 Recommendations

The Shopping Tourism and its continued growth and strong presence in Barcelona are a very interesting topic of major importance at the moment. As the Global Blue Report (2016) indicates this kind of tourism is increasing year by year and it is likely to continue like this for many years. Nowadays tourism is the main source of income for BCN and the shopping tourist is a very interesting profile for the city. This is the reason why Barcelona has to be well positioned as a shopping destination, be prepared to satisfy their needs and take advantage of it.

Due to the fact that Shopping Tourism is a type of tourism that has only gained much importance during the last few years it has not been as studied as other topics. Hence, there are not many academic papers regarding this field. Taking that into consideration, it is important to complete and contrast the information with other materials such as reports or studies carried out by prestigious organizations in the sector. Furthermore, it has to be added the fact that it is a topic which is in full development and growing, new information is continuously coming up. Therefore, it is essential to be aware of it to try to keep your research as updated as possible.

Closely related with the point mentioned before, shopping tourism is a much broader topic than it seems at first glance. It involves many different aspects which are worth examining in-depth. However, they are very complex so that it is very difficult to include and study all of them in a single piece of research. This is the reason why I highly recommend focusing the aim of the research in order to achieve successful and accurate results.

When developing this dissertation, it has been detected that, most of the time not everyone shares the same opinions and thoughts in regards to a topic. Hence, it is important to ensure to take into account the different points of view, show all of them and not generalize. It will be the way to provide useful and real knowledge to the field.

Throughout this study, some interesting points have come out which could be possible propositions for future research. When the profile of the shopping tourists in BCN was analyzed, it was figured out that the there is a market which has grown considerably during the last few years becoming the top 1. This is the Chinese market. Moreover, it was determined that other markets from Asia are increasing and will have a huge presence in the future such as the South Korean market or the Taiwanese market. Taking that into account, it would be interesting to develop a framework that gathers information about the Asian culture, traditions and expectations with the aim of knowing how to match their needs and expectations. Thus, BCN will continue attracting such an interesting and profitable market for the city as is the Asian one.

Another recommendation would be to compare the target of La Roca Village and Passeig de Gràcia. When the interviews for the fieldwork of this dissertation were developed, it was detected an interesting fact regarding these two commercial places. Turisme de Barcelona considers that Passeig de Gràcia has a completely different target from La Roca Village because, from their point of view, the tourists who come to Passeig de Gràcia go shopping as an activity within their stay while the tourists who come to LRV come to BCN only to go shopping. On the other hand, the person responsible for Business Intelligence of LRV believes that both have the same target. He pointed out that the only reason why tourists decide to go to LRV instead of Paseo de Gràcia is a problem of marketing and promotion. In orther words, LRV is allocating much more resources to promoting their product so that it is reaching and attracting the tourists in a better way than Passeig de Gràcia does. Therefore, there is a field to discover and study to what extent these two shopping areas are competitors.

Furthermore, by interviewing some different professionals in the industry, it was observed that the tourism in general but even more the shopping tourism is highly concentrated in one area which is the Passeig de Gràcia. However, as was mentioned several times throughout this dissertation Barcelona has much more interesting commercial axis. Considering that, it would be interesting to undertake a study in order to detect which areas would be the most powerful to spread out the shopping tourism as well as the ways to potentiate them.

Finally, when taking in to account the diverse recommendations that have been mentioned, it is important to bear in mind the advice and limitations listed before in order to achieve successful results.

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