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## **PHD DEGREE**

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### **TITLE OF THE PHD THESIS**

Tourist children, environment and sustainability: weaknesses and opportunities to educate the tourist of tomorrow

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# Table of Contents

<b>PHD DEGREE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Table of Contents.....	2
List of Figures .....	5
List of Tables.....	5
List of Appendix.....	6
<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>7</b>
References.....	13
<b>Chapter 1.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The role of a special stakeholder: the case of children. A literature review.....</b>	<b>17</b>
1. Introduction.....	18
2. The child and the transformation into a social being .....	19
3. The constructivist and sociocultural child development .....	20
4. The agents of socialisation.....	22
4.1 The school system .....	23
4.2 The family.....	24
4.3 The peer group .....	25
4.4 The media .....	25
5. The child as a consumer.....	26
6. The consumer socialisation.....	27
6.1 The family as consumer socialisation’s agent.....	32
6.2 The peer group as consumer socialisation agent.....	33
6.3 The mass media as agents of consumer socialisation .....	34
6.4 Marketers as consumer socialisation agents .....	35
7. The stakeholder child.....	36
7.1 The double identity of the stakeholder child.....	38
7.2 The stakeholder child and the business .....	40
7.3 The stakeholder child and the family .....	40

8. Conclusion.....	40
References.....	42
<b>Chapter 2 (Paper 1) .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Where is research on tourist-children going to? A scoping review.....</b>	<b>47</b>
1. Introduction.....	48
2. Theoretical background.....	50
2.1 Child as consumer .....	50
2.2 Child in tourism research .....	50
2.3 Child as tourist .....	51
2.4 Systematic reviews in tourism research.....	52
3. Methodology .....	53
3.1 Identification .....	54
3.2 Screening and eligibility.....	55
3.3 Included articles .....	55
4. Results.....	69
4.1 Year of included articles .....	69
4.2 SCImago Journal Rank of included articles.....	69
4.3 Research approaches.....	71
4.4 Research methods and purposes .....	72
4.5 Research characteristics and findings.....	73
4.6 Five emergent dimensions of tourist-child research .....	75
5. Conclusion and future research.....	77
6. Limitations .....	78
References.....	80
<b>Chapter 3 (Paper 2) .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Systematic literature review: main procedures and guidelines for interpreting the results.....</b>	<b>85</b>
1. Introduction.....	86
2. Background .....	86
2.1 Origins, typologies, and goals of the SLR.....	86
2.2 Contribution of SLR in the exam of the state-of-the-art and main approaches.....	87
2.3 Formulate the research question .....	88
2.4 PRISMA original protocol .....	89

3.	Organizing the search (databases, operators and keywords list)	91
3.1	Building and meeting the criteria of inclusion/exclusion...	94
4.	Screening phase: Nvivo and Bibliometrix .....	96
5.	Interpreting and presenting the results.....	97
5.1	Case study's results.....	100
6.	Conclusion.....	102
7.	Case study- a systematic literature review of recent research about ecotourism hospitality management.....	102
8.	Case questions.....	105
	References.....	106
	Online resources .....	111
	KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS- Definitions for the key constructs...	112
	<b>Chapter 4 (Paper 3) .....</b>	<b>113</b>
	<b>Potentiality and weakness of EECs in Sardinia: chances to educate tourist-children and their families to the respect of the destination....</b>	<b>113</b>
1.	Introduction.....	114
2.	Theoretical background.....	116
2.1	Environmental education.....	116
2.2	Environmental Education Centers' activities and tourism	118
2.3	Institutional guidelines from governments and organizations	119
3.	Methodology .....	121
3.1	Research settings .....	121
3.2	Data collection.....	121
3.3	Data analysis .....	123
4.	Findings .....	124
4.1	Characteristics of CEAS offer .....	124
4.1.1	Typology of activities.....	125
4.1.2	The participants .....	126
4.1.3	The approach.....	127
4.1.4	The geography .....	130
4.1.5	The seasonality .....	130
4.2	Problems of CEAS.....	131
4.3	Activities for tourist-children and their families .....	134

4.4 Potential role of CEAS.....	140
5. Conclusion.....	143
6. Managerial implications.....	144
7. Limitations and future research.....	145
References.....	147
<b>Conclusion and final remarks.....</b>	<b>151</b>
References.....	155

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Thesis structure .....	12
Figure 2. Consumer socialisation model .....	28
Figure 3. PRISMA Flow Diagram.....	90
Figure 4. Eurovoc, associated results to ‘hospitality management’ under the term ‘tourism’.....	92
Figure 5. UNESCO Thesaurus, associated results under the term 'tourism'.....	92
Figure 6. Export from WoS.....	96
Figure 7. Import data from Zotero to Nvivo .....	97
Figure 8. Example of Word Cloud.....	98
Figure 9. Example of Auto Code .....	99
Figure 10. Example of Hierarchy chart with Automated Codification .....	99
Figure 11. Terms under 'Ecortourism' on UNESCO Thesaurus .....	103
Figure 12. Results in WoS authors section .....	104
Figure 13. Results in WoS countries/region section.....	104
Figure 14. Zotero findings all the available PDFs.....	105
Figure 15. Conceptual framework of children empowerment inside and outside the family context .....	118
Figure 16. Hierarchy Chart Code.....	124
Figure 17. Data compared by number of items coded .....	161

## List of Tables

Table 1. Selected articles' details .....	67
Table 2. SCImago Journal Rank of included articles .....	70

Table 3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.....	95
Table 4. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.....	104
Table 5. Interviews' details.....	123

## **List of Appendix**

Appendix A. Semi-structured interview protocol.....	158
Appendix B. Nvivo graphics.....	161

## Preface

Nowadays, sustainability is a relevant topic all over the world. Both countries and governments agree on considering planet earth's conservation and preservation as an urgent issue to manage, developing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a comprehensive guide with specific objectives to reach within 2030. Tourism and education are both cited as prominent points in the Agenda 2030 (DESA, 2016). On the one hand, it is necessary to promote sustainable tourism practices. On the other hand, access to education has to be guaranteed. For these reasons, Environmental Education (EE) begins to be considered more and more in pursuing these objectives. In the 1977 Tbilisi declaration the EE is defined as 'a process aimed at developing a world population that is aware of and concerned about the total environment and its associated problem, and has the attitudes, motivations, knowledge, commitment and skills to work individually and collectively towards solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones' (Stapp et al., 1969).

My research project, *Tourist children, environment and sustainability: weaknesses and opportunities to educate the tourist of tomorrow*, focuses on these fundamental issues. The aim is to identify opportunities and weaknesses for tourism organizations in pursuing these goals through EE's marketing and management actions, especially considering tourist children and their families. Moreover, a broader view is adopted with an eye on stakeholders' identities and its relationships, identifying the benefits of the adoption of environmental education for all the stakeholders involved.

Prior research on tourism has focused mainly on topics related to holiday, travel, fun, adventure, nature, local culture, entertainment, food and wine, etc. Though what happens when we think about sustainable tourism? Concepts are basically the same, what changes is the approach through which the tourist wants to live his/her own experience. Sustainability is 'a development condition capable of ensuring the satisfaction of the needs of the present generation without compromising the possibility to realize their own needs for the future generations'<sup>1</sup>. For these reasons, adapting behaviours and actions for a more conscious consumption, living a more sustainable life, should be achieved, according also with the SDGs.

Governments, institutions and companies are working to adopt and promote green standards both at local, national and international level. However, it is not easy to generate this kind of change in people. The communication strategy must be strong, direct, clear, and organized both in a long and short term view.

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<sup>1</sup> sostenibilità nell'Enciclopedia Treccani ([sostenibilità nell'Enciclopedia Treccani](#))

The Agenda 2030 for sustainable development is a treaty signed in 2015 by 193 countries pertaining to ONU, with the aim to reach the 17 Sustainable Development Goals within 2030. SDGs afford a lot of different topic, shedding light on the need to change people's habits at worldwide level. Considering our field of research I want to cite some specific goals of the Agenda 2030 (DESA, 2016):

- (8.9) by 2030 devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products
- (12.8) by 2030 ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature
- (14.7) by 2030 increase the economic benefits to SIDS (Small Island Developing States) and LDCs (Least Developed Countries) from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism

The relevance of sustainable development is extremely related with the respect of nature, avoiding waste resources, promoting a overall sustainable approach to everyday life. This need must be translated in good management practices even in tourism sector, supporting the growing of sustainable tourism for the contemporary promotion and protection of the tourism destination. Cultural tourism, rural tourism and heritage tourism are just a few of the more terms that could be used in this speech, along with the stakeholder marketing and management practices, which are the basis to build a profitable and fair future in this sector. Furthermore, sustainable tourism and stakeholder marketing are strictly connected because both follow the way to act today for a better future. On the one hand, sustainable tourism wants to preserve the actual environment and culture through the promotion of pro-environmental behaviours, cultural heritage, and sustainable practices both for tourists and sector's operators (Gossling et al., 2012; Gossling & Hall, 2019; Gossling & Peeters, 2015; Hall, 2011, 2019; Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017; Krippendorf, 1982, 1987, 2010; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2020). On the other hand, stakeholder theory wants to promote the cooperation between different agents for a social and economic profit (Freeman et al., 2020; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Hoerisch et al., 2014, 2014; Theodoulidis et al., 2017). These two approaches were already studied jointly by recent research (Hoerisch et al., 2014; Schaltegger et al., 2019; Theodoulidis et al., 2017; Waligo et al., 2013) and they perfectly fits with the objectives of the Agenda 2030, for these reasons they will be the two pillars of this work according to the established objectives of this thesis.

According to the Agenda 2030, the awareness about life-style impact has to be developed, especially for tourism habits. Moreover, the transmission of knowledge to the youngest generations has also to be kept in consideration. Today, Environmental Education is considered more and more an important topic, even in academic research. The application of EE to the tourism sector has also been recently considered by the academy, directly or indirectly talking about EE, studying multiple attempts done by tourist facilities to influence the environmental behaviours of tourists (Lee & Moscardo, 2005; Cvelbar et al., 2017; Casado-Diaz et al., 2020; Gabarda-Mallorqui et al., 2020; Llausas et al., 2020; Seraphin, 2020; Seraphin & Thanh, 2020, Seraphin



et al., 2020). Let us talk about the strategic role of tourist children in this sense. Children are curious and open-minded, also they have the desire to learn and, for these reasons, the majority of EE research focus on children. Child's development has been studied deeply, identifying several stages of development, both by psychology and sociology. Socialisation is the process through which the child become a social individual, learning all the social practices that are necessary to live among others. This phenomenon was also studied in consumer development. There are several studies about the child becoming consumers and related practices (Ward, 1974; McNeal, 2000, 2007; Grusec & Hastings, 2014; Ironico, 2014) and others about children as promoters of reverse socialization (Ward, 1974; Aghayeeabianeh & Talebi, 2020; Singh et al., 2020), having the capability to influence and change the eldest generations. Furthermore, the concept of environmental socialization (Gentina & Muratore, 2012; Gentina & Singh, 2015) add relevance to the previous sentences. Human relationship with the environment is extremely influenced by early experiences. Experiences in nature, knowledge about environment and pro-environmental behaviours as just a few of the more examples that can contribute in the process of the socialization with the environment. Nevertheless, tourist children are neglected subjects in tourism research (Small, 2008; Poria & Timothy, 2014; Canosa & Graham, 2016; Canosa et al., 2019; Canosa & Graham, 2020) even though sustainable tourism could find in them a key for the optimization of the stakeholders' cooperation through an ideal tourism based on multiple relationships and cooperation. Furthermore, the education of tourists is not investigated deeply (Falk et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the research has recently recognized the potentiality of children for the change into responsible tourism and sustainability (Seraphin et al., 2020), positively proposing the concept of children empowerment.

Keeping in mind sustainable tourism' objectives, Environmental Education, and the role of children as tourists, my research wants to investigate how to build a bridge between all these considerations, aiming to find marketing and management implications for the tourism sector's operators. In addition, the research aims to identify an overall policy path that goes in this direction. Due to the willingness to develop an helpful path for Sardinia, I decided to take it as a case study for the last part of my research because Sardinia is an important tourist region of Italy and every year, especially during the summer, is a very popular tourist destination thanks to its beautiful beaches and climate. Moreover, Sardinia suffers for the tourists' incorrect behaviours that damage the destination, an example of these behaviours are thefts of sand. During the whole thesis I use the term "child/children" to talk about individuals between 0 and 18 years old, as stated by the United Nations' Convention on the Rights (1989).

Considering these urgent issues, I developed the research questions of my thesis:

1. What is the state of art about childhood research? (Chap.1)
2. How is the child studied in tourism research? (Paper 1, Paper 2)

3. How hospitality sector could promote and protect the tourism destination, according to sustainable tourism principles and EE? (Paper 3)
4. Which actions of EE could be implemented for the education of tourist children and their families? (Paper 3)
5. Which path is necessary to pursue, both for tourists and citizens, in the short and long term? (Paper 3)

In doing so, I had to consider that a multifront approach was needed and I had to be conscious about the interdisciplinarity of the research. The first need relied in studying the state of the art, considering the basis of childhood literature, EE literature, children in tourism literature, and sustainable tourism.

During the initial part of my project, I could extend my knowledge about these topics, especially exploring the multidisciplinary context also using systematic methods to conduct literature reviews.

The first literature review was dedicated to know how the child was actually studied by the academic research, keeping in mind the objectives of my research. Due to the fact that the main subject of this thesis is the child, it was undoubtedly necessary to study how child development works and how the individual learn to live in the social word. In doing so, the first part is dedicated to the study of the socialisation process, different agents whose influence the child during the growth are exposed deeply. The second part describes the consumer socialisation and the agents connected to the formation of the child as consumer. The third part connect the multiple concepts of consumer socialization and stakeholder marketing to shed light on a new consideration of the child as stakeholder. During this first phase it emerged the topic of stakeholder identity (Crane & Kazmi, 2010), that pays attention to the multiple identities that a stakeholder could cover simultaneously. This knowledge is crucial for businesses due to the awareness that is necessary to adopt an inclusive stakeholder management policy. This first work gives to the reader the tools to understand the entire thesis, giving them essential information for understanding the full research.

The second part consists in a scoping review that aims to map tourism research that specifically addresses tourist-children, as this is the main subject of the thesis. This is coherent with the objectives of the entire study, which aims to connect multiple topics adopting a multidisciplinary view. A scoping review with systematic search resulted in the identification of 21 documents, which were qualitatively analysed, according to exclusion and inclusion criteria. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were specifically created for this thesis' phase. The findings proved that only a few researches consider tourist-children explicitly and highlighted a wide range of methodologies and research purposes. This first literature review allowed me to have a clear view of how tourist-children are analysed in tourism research revealing five thematic areas: 'experiential and memorable', 'educational and cultural', 'familiar', 'strategic' and 'ethical'. Moreover, this phase, alongside with the third chapter, helped me to find prominent gaps existing about this topic in tourism field of research. Critical implications and future research directions are suggested.

The third chapter of my thesis includes a work that will be published by Taylor and Francis in 2022 in a methodology book entitled *Research Methods in Business and Management: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives*. This chapter gives instructions and practical advice in conducting systematic reviews in the business and management field of research. The case study I present in this literature review focus on understanding whether and how the hospitality management literature effectively considers children. The primary research question was dedicated to investigate which was the role of children in the hospitality management literature. Other secondary questions were: what are the characteristics of studies on HM and children? What implications may the findings have for tourist facilities? How the HM addresses the special needs of children? Different perspectives, future directions, and gaps of the current state of art. In doing so, I used PRISMA protocol conducting a systematic literature review, identifying 42 final records. The qualitative analysis of this sample gave me more information about the topic and the extant state-of-the-art, giving me pieces of advices and knowledge useful in the following part of the thesis.

The last paper of my dissertation performs an exploratory case study focusing the attention on the case of CEAS (Environmental Education and Sustainability Centres of Sardinia). I investigated CEAS' work through Nvivo analysis of interviews, coding the information through nodes, according to the research questions. Due to the large quantity of information given by the CEAS, I provide the most effective ways for the tourism sector to educate tourists children and their families, giving some managerial implications and indications helpful for all the tourism organizations. Through few marketing and management actions, tourism organizations could raise awareness, protecting and promoting tourism destinations. The tourism sector can educate the adult tourist of today and the tourist children, namely tomorrow's tourists, simultaneously. The cooperation between tourism organizations and CEAS could create a new conscious generation of travellers. Moreover, I provide suggestions on a possible regional policy path that includes renovating the image of Sardinia as a 'sustainable island', both protecting the tourism destination and promoting the local food and culture, according to the SDGs.

The forth part of my thesis resumes the essential meaning of the work of the all three years of PhD, being a strong base to elaborate the conclusions.

This research project provides a bridge between Environmental Education, tourism marketing and management, and sustainable tourism. The study is quite indisputable of current relevance by giving a clear and helpful path over the short and long terms, both for countries, associations and tourism organizations.

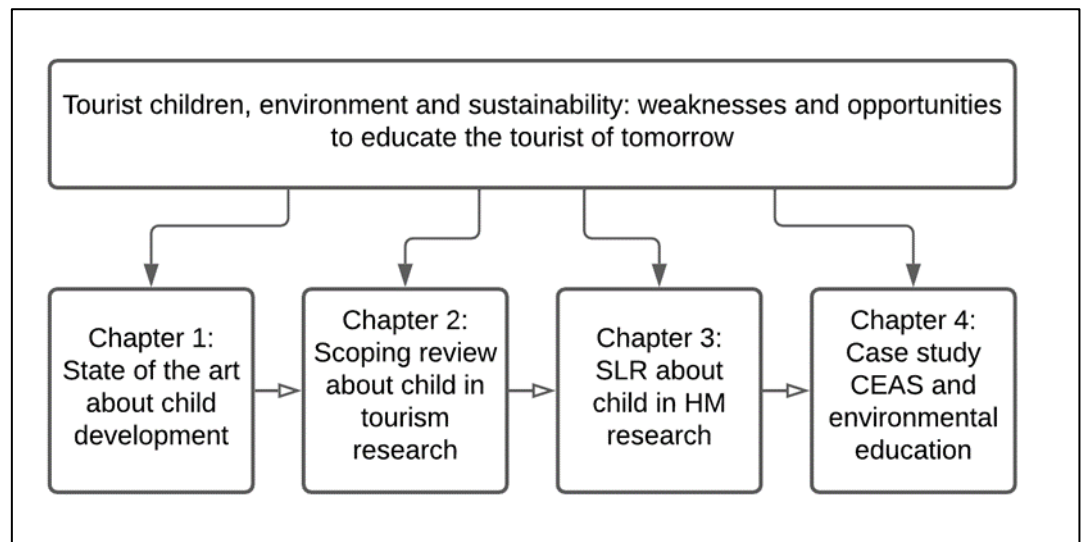


Figure 1. Thesis structure

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# Chapter 1

## **The role of a special stakeholder: the case of children. A literature review.**

### **Abstract**

Nowadays is essential to have a clear vision of how a stakeholder marketing approach can be helpful for the company. The objective of this article is to investigate the role of a unique stakeholder: the child. Children are unresearched subjects from a stakeholder marketing perspective. In this article, I expose the concepts of socialisation and consumer socialisation to have a clear idea of how the child is studied. Therefore, I propose a different view of the child's role combining consumer socialisation and stakeholder marketing approaches, giving a new contribution to the field of research through a different and hybrid perspective.

### **Highlights**

- This introductory chapter was needed due to the necessity to know how the child is studied both from a psychological and a sociological point of view
- Main perspectives of socialisation and consumer socialisation are exposed, with a clear description of all the agents
- A conceptualisation of the stakeholder child is exposed

### **Keywords**

socialisation

child development

consumer socialisation

socialisation's agencies

stakeholder marketing

stakeholder management

## 1. Introduction

When we think about the economic agent, the adult consumer immediately comes to mind, but we have forgotten when and how we started to consume. This basic and natural conception is in conflict with recent theoretical developments in marketing, we are referring to the stakeholder marketing approach (Hillebrand, Driessen, & Koll, 2015). According to this theory, we distinguish between the different roles played by the various actors in the build up of demand: consumers who pay, consumers who consume, consumers who influence behaviour patterns, and others. Traditionally, both in theory and practice, the main focus is on the paying consumer who, in simple words, has the money to buy a product or service. This inattentiveness to the other actors has led to various re-evaluations of the roles and types of relationships established.

Let us look at the dynamics of household consumption from a stakeholder marketing perspective. First, are we sure that purchasing power depends only on the economic power of the consumer? Second, what happens when we consider the different roles of consumers in a family context, considering that the children's segment is still very much neglected? What happens when we consider children as active and not passive consumers (Ironico, 2014)?

The reality that children do not have their financial resources does not necessarily imply that they do not play a significant role in purchasing goods and services for themselves or their families. However, this issue is not often investigated or considered by businesses. Keeping in mind that children will be autonomous consumers in the future, more attention should be paid to fostering the business-consumer relationship and building engagement from an early age. In this scenario, the significance of parental and family figures, the hierarchical roles related to consumption and children's presumed perception of these have to be considered. Ultimately, it is crucial to investigate how children can influence purchasing decisions despite not having purchasing power in the narrow sense. Therefore, research should adopt a twofold view. On the one hand, considering the child as unconscious stakeholder, with rights and needs. On the other hand, as conscious stakeholder (persuasive consumer) due to the strategic role played in family relationships and consumption habits.

Addressing this gap in the literature is crucial for several reasons.

First, because the composition, frequency and consumption of families' purchases have changed over the years due to the changing nature of modern society and the general change in household structure.

Second, in the age of social media, the group of children consumers is a very attractive group for business. It is necessary to consider them as a fast-

growing and expanding segment with specific characteristics and needs to be satisfied (Valkenburg & Cantor, 2001). For example, the fast fashion industry and the explosion of e-commerce have dramatically changed the consumption and perception of products and services. Children and adolescents are the consumers who are most influenced by these new trends and consumption practices, so their key-role should be considered. Children's relationships with brands, technology and advertising should play a key-role in building an image and a relationship that will endure and transform in the best way as time goes by. The knowledge of one's consumers and their weight in the present should not be less important than the weight they will have in the future.

Thirdly, we need to know better this segment and investigate the relationships that this group has with companies and other stakeholders, considering, at the same time, the group's vulnerability when we think of these stakeholders from a stakeholder marketing perspective.

This literature review aims to analyse the child as a dual stakeholder: holder of rights for marketers and companies and holder of rights within family's consumer and non-consumer decisions.

The review is composed of three parts. The first two parts aim at framing the topic and the existing literature on socialization and consumer socialization. The third part aims to expose the author's point of view, reconsidering the child both from a stakeholder marketing and a consumer socialization perspective.

The first part is dedicated to discussing the socialization process that guides the individual, during the entire course of his/her life, to acquire skills and interact with various agents that, especially during the childhood phase, influencing the development of the future adult. Therefore, during this first phase, the various agents of socialization and their specific impact during the childhood phase will be exposed and analysed.

A second part is dedicated to discussing consumer socialization agents, focusing specifically on the impact they have on the child during the development of the subject as a consumer. In this case, the treatment of marketers as agents of consumer socialisation is added to the analysis.

A third part consists of the suggestion of a different view of the child from a joint perspective, encompassing the basic concepts of stakeholder marketing and consumer socialization, framing the subject as a dual stakeholder.

## **2. The child and the transformation into a social being**

The child is a sensitive subject as a social individual and it has been addressed diametrically by multiple disciplines. Due to the constantly developing nature of the subject, it will be necessary, for this research, to use

different theoretical bases to understand the nature of the subject, having a clear view of the subject before framing it as a consumer. The disciplines that have mainly investigated this subject are psychology, sociology and educational sciences. The approaches are clearly different from each other, and therein lies the enormous importance of the multidisciplinary approach for the analysis of such a delicate subject. Each of the disciplines mentioned above, although with different aims and methods, has investigated the child's transformation from a biological to a social being: this means investigating how the individual integrates and adapts to a social context. This concept is defined as socialization and is characterized by a dual structure in which the individual is both a learner of behavioural patterns typical of his/her parents' generation and an independent developer within society. Socialization can be of two types: primary socialization and secondary socialization (Parsons, 1951). Primary socialization encompasses all those processes of acquisition typical of early childhood, where the agents of socialization having the most influence on the individual are the family and parental figures, who are essentially the only individuals with whom the child has a continuous relationship. As the individual grows up, approximately from the first insertion in a continuous play or school context, he will be influenced by other socializing agents such as school, peers and the mass media. This type of socialization is called secondary socialization. The child expands his/her network of people, building relationships characterized by continuity: these begin to have weight and relevance in his or her socialization.

We have said that the individual's socialization was studied differently depending on the discipline. For example, psychology has always focused on the processes through which the individual's personality is formed within the various social and family contexts, emphasizing the development of psychic processes and the development of cognitive skills. The educational sciences have always approached the socialization in teaching and learning to investigate how to propose an equal and fruitful teaching system. On the other hand, sociology has considered socialization to investigate the transfer of cultural heritage from generation to generation and to study how the social or structural contexts impact the social development of the individual. For this analysis, I will not refer to one of the three specific disciplines nor to one of the individual visions or approaches. However, I will set out the studies or theories that can set the framework about the child as a social individual, considering the next step for studying him/her as a consumer.

The issue is approached by marketing focusing mainly on the effects of advertising on children rather than on identifying the market segment. On a managerial level, the child is not considered appropriately, although there are several reasons why children should be re-evaluated in strategic terms.

### **3. The constructivist and sociocultural child development**

The development of children and their socialization has been studied through a constructivist approach by Jean Piaget and Lev Semënovič Vygotskij.

According to Jean Piaget, a leading theorist on the subject, cognitive development occurs according to universal patterns that allow certain degrees of understanding of reality depending on the child's age (Piaget, 1967). In this sense, the child is a constructivist individual capable of extracting knowledge and details from new events and objects (Shaffer & Kipp, 2013). Piaget's stages of cognitive development are four. The first is the sense-motor stage which occurs in the age range from birth to 2 years, in which learning about the environment is provided solely by sensory inputs and motor skills. The second is the preoperational stage, which runs from 2 to 7 years of age. It is the stage in which the child develops the capacity for representation and learning about the world through symbolic thinking. The third stage is that of concrete operations and goes from 7 to 11 years old. It is the stage in which the individual develops the ability to imagine through mental manipulations using logical thinking. The fourth stage is that of formal operations and runs from 11/12 years old until adulthood. At this stage, the individual can detach himself from real events to better understand them through abstractions or comparisons or hypothetical thoughts (Piaget, 1967; Piaget, Inhelder, & Andreis, 1982). In his theorization of cognitive development, consistent with psychogenetic theory, Jean Piaget states that the interaction between the surrounding environment, not understood only in sociocultural terms, and the individual is relevant to child development to the extent that the mind extrapolates knowledge and processes it, but genetic factors also play an important role in this process (Shaffer & Kipp, 2013).

Child development is studied by Lev Semynovič Vygotskij, considering as essential elements the socio-cultural environment in which the child grows up and the dominant culture to which the child belongs. This is the socio-cognitive theory (Vygotskij, 1973). In this case, the child's development is highly influenced both by the social environment, in terms of the relationships, and by the cultural environment, in terms of the dominant culture to which the child belongs. Human development is analysed by Vygotsky on two levels, cultural and interpersonal, while the individual level is, contrary to Piaget, little investigated (Vygotsky, 1973). At the cultural level, he discovered that children construct their knowledge of the world based, on the one hand, on the material or conceptual tools typical of their environment and, on the other hand, on the dominant culture in which they grow up. The child's cognitive development is strongly influenced by asymmetrical interactions with other individuals at the interpersonal level. In this case, the child plays the role of pupil and the adult the role of teacher, since he/she belongs to a cognitively more developed category (Vygotsky, 1973). This conception is embraced above all by pedagogical sciences because the help of an adult in carrying out specific tasks stimulates learning and cognitive development, exploiting the zone of proximal development. *Problem-solving* skills, for example, are not innate but are learned through social interaction and subsequently internalized (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). The tutor-learner model can be applied to different situations: within the family unit in the case of parent-child, within the school system in the case of teacher-student, or even within the play system when

knowledge exchanges occur between peers, i.e. between experienced and less experienced children. This learning process and the definition of adult/child roles have been taken up several times in pedagogy. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) define the adult's help as a scaffolding function, i.e. as a framework or structure defined in quality and type according to the child's characteristics, which helps and supports learning and cognitive development.

#### **4. The agents of socialisation**

According to socialisation, the child is influenced by different agents which, in different ways and at stages of the child's development, interact with the child, generating new awareness, behaviours and practices. As written in the second part of this review, this also has repercussions for consumption. Socialisation is how an individual becomes a social being, learning practices, social behaviours, and values handed down from generation to generation, thus involving adults and children reciprocally in teaching and learning processes (Grusec & Hastings, 2014). Therefore, the transfer of values and behaviours generates a kind of social continuity. However, it does not exclude the ever-present cases of resilience and rebellion that are especially typical of the adolescent period. Socialisation is a continuous process that does not stop with adolescence. From the definition of the phenomenon, it may seem that the new generation is in a passive position, but this does not correspond to reality. Each individual, within the limits of his or her cognitive developmental capacities, actively makes choices, deciding which practices, behaviours and agents to consider in his/her socialisation process. Socialisation is characterised by some inconsistencies, both for disagreement between the various agents and the frequent presence of fundamental confusion. The different actions undertaken by the different socialisation agents are often discordant and uncoordinated, ending up in delivering differentiated teachings and practices. Socialisation agents that have the most significant influence on the child's development as a social being are the family, school, peer group and mass media. As socialisation is a continuous process, not relegated to the adolescent or childhood phases, new agents appear and impact the adult.

Thorne (1987) identifies three main images through which adults in society consider children. The first two images are the result of filtering and analysis provided by the thoughts and ideas of adults, in which the active experiences of children are not considered, and children are seen as threats and victims of adult society. The third image sees children as learners of adult society: here, the function of children is to learn all the social practices, including consumption, that will help them to be part of adult society soon. This last image is consistent with the deterministic functionalist theory of social learning (Parsons & Bales, 1956), in which the individual's personality is formed through interactions with members of the nuclear family to acquire

practices and knowledge necessary for autonomy in adult society. The nuclear family sees the father as a worker, *breadwinner* and interface between society and other family members to construct external relations. The mother plays the traditional role of the housewife, and children are seen as social learners (Parsons & Bales, 1956). This view of social learning sees children as social learners whose development is closely related to interactive activities and does not consider the imitative processes later explored by Albert Bandura.

#### 4.1 The school system

Another deterministic-functionalist perspective is the reproductive perspective of Pierre Bourdieu, a critical French sociologist of the 20th century. This approach is based on the division of society into multiple social classes instead of the Marxist view of only two. The agents of socialisation that are considered by Bourdieu's studies in the child's social development are the family and the educational system, i.e. the school. In the essay *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984)<sup>2</sup>, Bourdieu and his research group presents a sociological investigation about consumption and preferences in post-war French society. The central concept of the study is the distinction between three different types of capital: economic capital, social capital and cultural capital. Cultural capital is the set of values, knowledge and practices typical of the social class to which the individual belongs (Bourdieu, 1984). It is mainly on the transmission of this type of capital that the parent-child relationship or the concept of socialisation in general terms is based. The theory of social reproduction is essential because the parental figures transmit to their children, in addition to the *habitus* of the social class (Bourdieu, 1977), the cultural capital of the social class to which they belong. This, in terms of the child's learning, profoundly influences the child's approach to the world, transmitting privileges, knowledge and values of the class to which they belong (Passeron & Bourdieu, 1970). In this sense, Bourdieu and Passeron's (1970) criticism is dedicated to the French educational system, which tends to emphasise existing social distinctions despite its intended purpose. By emphasising the cultural advantages acquired by wealthy parents' children, all the knowledge derived from the transmission of cultural capital, french school acts as fuel for the class struggle and the need for distinction. The distinction is a widespread and helpful practice, especially for the affluent classes to alienate themselves and manifest the existing differences with the other social classes. It is often manifested through material goods and ending in conspicuous consumption by the affluent class (Blumer, 1969; Simmel, 1957; Veblen, 1899).

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<sup>2</sup> Originally published in 1979

## 4.2 The family

The importance of the family and parents as agents of primary socialisation is central to the social development of the individual. The traditional family has the following composition: father, mother, children. Taking into consideration the evident changes and the lesser presence in today's world of this traditional nucleus, some researchers have investigated the role of the members within the family (MacDonald, Crown, Kieren, & Badir, 1990), especially referring to the key role of the mother, who holds an important and relevant position for the child, also within consumption practices (Carrigan & Szmigin, 2006). Parsons and Bales (1956) divided parental roles and responsibilities into two categories: instrumental and expressive. The instrumental category encompasses all activities related to the economic sustenance of the family, educational discipline and protection from external threats, while the expressive category refers to activities of sharing and caring for offspring (Parsons & Bales, 1956). According to the article, instrumental activities were mainly associated with the father figure and expressive activities with the mother. From the point of view of the individual's development, the child will come into contact with the various social groups and, through interactions with them and using the practices acquired thanks to the family as an agent of socialisation, will learn social practices useful for integration and adult life in the future. From a Marxist and androcentric perspective, the man played the role of father of the family as an active member of capitalist society and procurer of family income. According to the feminist perspective, women play a key role in producing culture within history through their various activities, both working and non-working, and cannot simply be labelled as passive agents (Thorne, 1987). Over the years, the family structure has undergone various changes until today, when there are many different types of families. This change has led to a different perception by children of parental roles: in particular, it emerged that the perception of the paternal role is influenced by ethnicity, the gender of the child, and by the form of the family (divorce, separation etc.) (Finley & Schwartz, 2006). The decay of the standard traditional family structure has led to a reversal of the roles of household members concerning consumption, especially about children, and redefined the role of the mother in economic terms (McNeal, 2007; Wayland & Coe, 1994).

The main problem with the determinist perspectives outlined above is that the child is seen as other than oneself and is used by adults to define what he is not: this leads to inaccuracy and objective blindness to child figures (Thorne, 1987)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The consumer socialisation's perspective, a typical construct of the consumer behaviour field of research, which tends to take up the theoretical inheritance of it by also seeing the active role of the child as consumer, will be further explored.



### **4.3 The peer group**

The perspectives mentioned above on the socialisation of children consider the subject as passive and receptive<sup>4</sup>. This issue is approached differently by William Corsaro: the scholar considers children as passive individuals receiving culture and frames them as generators of it, reconsidering the concept and weight of childhood socialisation (Corsaro, 2017). The concept of interpretative reproduction of peer culture is central to Corsaro's studies, and it is related to children's creative and innovative interpretation of norms belonging to the adult world in which they socialise. Therefore, there is no direct appropriation of adult culture. However, there is a gradual interpretation and innovation of it by children who process information in an autonomous and entirely personal way. Learning information from the adult world in order to reproduce it through the schemes/patterns typical of the world of childhood create a new autonomous peer culture, understood as a 'stable set of activities and routines, values and interests produced and shared by children through reciprocal interactions' (Corsaro & Eder, 1990). The sharing of the culture by children, acting as active agents of socialisation, generates a feeling of belonging, providing security for the individual. It helps to provide tools and methodologies for dealing with everyday life problems and emphasises the resistance exercised by children to the rules set by adults and the authority exercised (Corsaro & Eder, 1990). Corsaro carried out a relevant study using the ethnographic method, i.e. starting from observing what children do to arrive at an understanding of why they do it (Corsaro, 1979). The peculiarity of the study lies in the researcher's success in appearing as an abnormal adult, and therefore in the total integration in the peer culture, from which adults, considered as individuals with power and authority, are usually excluded (Corsaro, 1979).

### **4.4 The media**

Regarding the mass media as agents of socialisation, the discussion is extensive and rich in content. The continuous change of new technologies and the increasingly precocious approaches lead the new generations to be more and more addicted and comfortable using them (Wartella & Jennings, 2000). Even just looking around, we can see how the mass media influence children so much. For example, it is usual letting children play with their smartphone or watch an episode of their favourite cartoon while they are out running errands or whatever: the influence of media in the lives of children and adolescents has seen a marked increase in recent years (Prot et al., 2015). Exposure to media's content generates desires for dedicated

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<sup>4</sup> Excluded from this statement are Piaget's interactional constructivist perspective and Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective.

products and services, often even proposing stereotypical gender or racial dynamics models. The power of mass media as agents of socialisation is therefore indisputable as they provide tools and practices for learning in both negative and positive ways (Prot et al., 2015). For example, the continuous exposure to commercials promoting foods rich in sugar or fat stimulates children's desire, often leading to a disproportionate consumption of them (Story & French, 2004). This phenomenon affects child's health, leading to sedentariness and obesity (Gorn & Goldberg, 1982; Halford, Gillespie, Brown, Pontin, & Dovey, 2004)<sup>5</sup>.

Moreover, in the digital age, children are increasingly exposed to dedicated and non-dedicated content and can easily circumvent age restrictions to access the content of all kinds. For example, the use of playful moments through certain video games could become negative because it has been shown that exposure to violence, even in a playful context, has a strong effect on a child's and adult's predisposition to violence (Anderson, Gentile, & Buckley, 2007; Bushman & Huesmann, 2006).

The phenomenon of social media *influencers* has powerful relevance and impact on children's socialisation as they are seen as role models. In addition, online peer-to-peer communication about consumable products and services is a critical component to consider (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). In this context, *advertising* practices are closely related to consumer socialisation. It is often the *influencer* himself who provides certain useful tools for consumption methods or for certain goods to be preferred over others, disrupting the dynamics of consumer learning.

## 5. The child as a consumer

In order to deep into a more marketing and *consumer behaviour* discourse, we have to consider other theoretical constructs generated by the concept of socialisation which have laid the foundations of social development. The social learning theory is a critical theory of social psychology set out by Albert Bandura in his 1977 article *Social Learning Theory*. The behaviourist theory states that the individual, by imitating and observing other people without interaction, indirectly elaborates and acquires new behavioural practices: the insertion of the cognitive constructs of developmental psychology into a sociological/social framework allows for interesting analysis and vision. This perspective considers fundamental phenomena such as learning through indirect experiences, rewards, punishments and the function of reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). Of particular relevance to this review is the concept of the formation of behaviour from observing the behaviour of other individuals, in particular parents, defined

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<sup>5</sup> In the following section I will discuss how this exposure generates an important influence on family consumption decisions.

as models, and the identification and interpretation of roles to develop social behaviour. The interpretation of roles allows the child to construct his/her role as a social individual. This theory can undoubtedly be applied to consumption practices: from an early age, children see and observe the consumption practices of their parents and, indirectly, learn them (McNeal, 2000). For example, there are online games for girls through which they can go shopping at the supermarket, buy clothes for themselves or others, or look after a baby, putting themselves in the role of a woman or a mother following traditional roles. This *observational* perspective makes *children as agents in their own socialisation* (Grusec & Hastings, 2014), emphasising the process by which they become autonomous social beings.

Before being a consumer, the individual undergoes both motor and psychological development, and in particular, the relationship between motor and consumption behaviour is crucial<sup>6</sup>.

In his book *On becoming a consumer* (2007), McNeal identifies the various stages of *consumer behaviour development*. The researcher identifies five main stages that coincide with different stages of childhood. The first stage is observational and involves children up to 6 months of age. The second stage is from 6 months to 24 months (2 years) and comprises demands and concealment. The third stage is from 24 months to 48 months (2-4 years) and comprises selective actions and appropriation. The fourth stage is from 48 to 72 months (4-6 years) and is the period of *co-purchase (co-shopping)*. The fifth stage lasts from 72 to 100 months (6-8 years) and is composed of independent buying. In his book, McNeal also dwells on the substantial difference between *consumer socialisation* and *consumer behaviour*<sup>7</sup>. *Consumer socialisation*, which is typical of psychological studies, is full of studies concerning the effect of the media or advertising on children. This misunderstanding is conceptually deviant if we consider that what this branch of research should focus on is children's behaviour as consumers and social beings and not the effects that the environment can have on them. The branch of *consumer behaviour*, on the other hand, is related to all marketing studies and focuses on all the typical mechanisms of *decision making* and the various dynamics of consumer behaviour.

## 6. The consumer socialisation

*Consumer socialisation* is a field of research belonging to the consumer behaviour strand. Consumer socialisation is a set of practices, behaviours and attitudes that children learn about consumption and that will lead them, in the future, to be independent consumers (Ward, 1974). The concept is important

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<sup>6</sup> All motor activities facilitate consumer behaviour, most motor activities develop as a result of consumer behaviour and most motor behaviour coincides with consumer behaviour (McNeal, 2007, p. 97). Similarly, psychological development goes hand in hand with motor development, and consumer behaviour patterns emerge consequently and inseparably from physical and psychological behaviour patterns (McNeal, 2007, p. 123)

<sup>7</sup> p. 22 in McNeal, J. (2007). *On becoming a consumer*. Routledge.

because it recognizes the importance of the social role in an individual's consumption behaviour and investigates how social behaviour impacts it (Ward, 1974). In the article *Consumer socialisation (1974)*, Ward said that this field of research has to consider two different types of learning. On the one hand, the processes directly related to the acquisition of skills, knowledge and consumption behaviour and, on the other hand, the processes by which children acquire the social motivations that have consequences for their consumer behaviour.

Interest in this topic has grown over the years and has been the subject of analysis by policymakers, marketers, educators and academics dealing with consumer behaviour and consumer socialisation (Moschis & Churchill Jr, 1978, 1979). The two main models are the *social learning model*, which gathers the inheritance of Skinner and Hull, and the *cognitive development model*, which is based on Piagetian theories (Moschis & Churchill Jr, 1978). In the article *Consumer socialization: a theoretical and empirical analysis*, Moschis and Churchill use and schematize a conceptual model that encompasses both the conceptual bases of the cognitive/psychological approach and those of social learning.

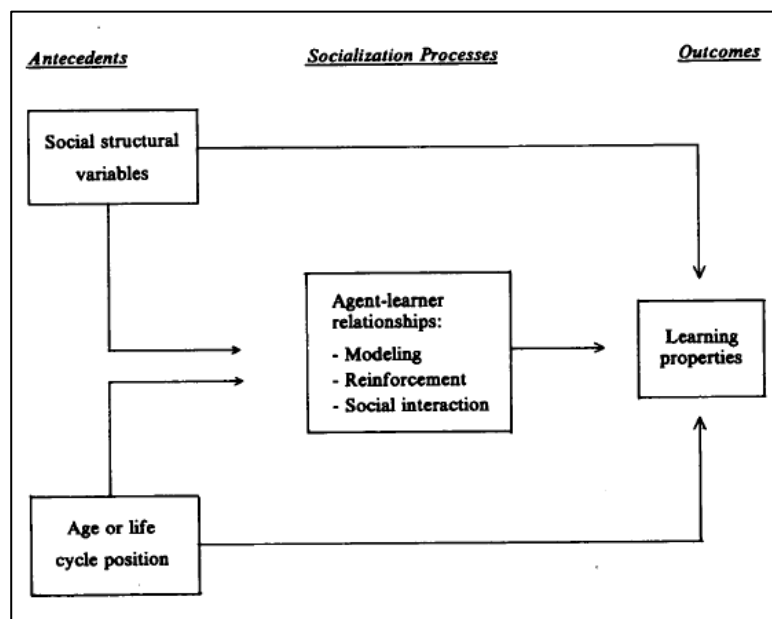


Figure 2. Consumer socialisation model<sup>8</sup>

There are both social and cognitive/psychological variables such as age or development in this model. Therefore, these antecedents influence the socialisation process and the agent-learner relationship in the patterns' composition, positive or negative reinforcement, and social interaction. The combination of these factors generates and establishes the learning properties, seen as the actual outcome.

<sup>8</sup> p. 600 in Moschis, G. P., & Churchill Jr, G. A. (1978). *Consumer socialization: A theoretical and empirical analysis*. *Journal of marketing research*, 15(4), 599-609.

The article *Consumer socialization of children* by Deborah Roedder John in 1999 aims to collect and think about the extant articles concerning *consumer socialization* and provides an exciting starting point. Based on the articles reviewed and based on the reference theories, the author establishes three macro stages of consumer socialisation related to macro age groups. The characteristic that distinguishes Roedder John's perspective is that consumer socialization must be seen and considered as a process closely linked to individual development (Roedder John, 1999). For this reason, the need for integration between theories of cognitive development and theories of social development must be deepened.

Therefore, the three stages developed by Roedder John consider both Piagetian (McNeal, 2007) and Selmanian theories<sup>9</sup>.

The first stage is called the *perceptual stage* and goes from 3 to 7 years old. In this stage, the child can focus only on one product or attribute, often considering only physical attributes and not realizing what exists beyond the product or the attribute itself, such as the symbolic meanings of the brand or other. Information is limited as the adaptability and the child approaches all consumer situations with egocentrism.

The second stage is called the *analytical stage*. Children aged 7 to 11 years begin to acquire and develop skills and knowledge about consumption. Information processing develops, and product categories or prices are considered more functionally, avoiding the focus on only one dimension. In general, the child is more flexible, adaptive and responsive.

The last stage is the *reflective stage*, and involves children aged 11 to 16, where subjects approach consumption more thoughtfully and strategically.

Patti Valkenburg, on the other hand, defines three stages of child development as a consumer (Valkenburg & Cantor, 2001). The first stage is the preschool stage and includes children aged 2-5 years: this stage is composed of tantrums and negotiation. Children cannot distinguish reality from fantasy, thinking that any information derived from advertising is true and focuses on a single attribute when evaluating a product.

The second stage corresponds to the early primary school period. It includes children aged 5-8 years and is composed of adventure and the first purchase. Children still have difficulty in distinguishing reality from fantasy at this stage, and they still believe that everything they see on television is true. However, they have developed a higher level of attention. Around the age of 5, they start making independent purchases without their parents.

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<sup>9</sup> Robert L. Selman developed a theory based on the individual's ability to take on another person's perspective and understand their feelings, thoughts and behaviour. The stages developed by Selman are set out in his 1971 article *Taking Another's Perspective: Role-Taking Development in Early Childhood*. The first stage is characterised by egocentrism (3-6 years), the second stage is social-informative role-taking (6-8 years), the third stage is self-reflective role-taking (8-10 years), the fourth is reciprocal role-taking (10-12 years), the fifth is social role-taking (12-15 years and beyond).

The third stage is the late primary school stage and includes children aged 8-12 years, characterised by the phenomena of conformity and annoyance. At this stage, peer's opinions start to be very important. The ability to focus on the whole and not on individual product attributes emerges along with attention to detail. Loyalty and proximity to the various brands are fundamental at this stage.

In the article *Communicating in childhood: from consumer socialisation to fashion socialisation*, Simona Ironico proposes a theoretical model that exposes the process of children's consumer socialisation (Ironico, 2007). To the list of consumer socialisation agencies, the researcher has added the agent 'marketing communication'. This agent is defined as 'advertising and the whole set of promotional initiatives implemented by companies that create *awareness of* brands and products by helping to build consumer preferences, values and attitudes'<sup>2</sup>.

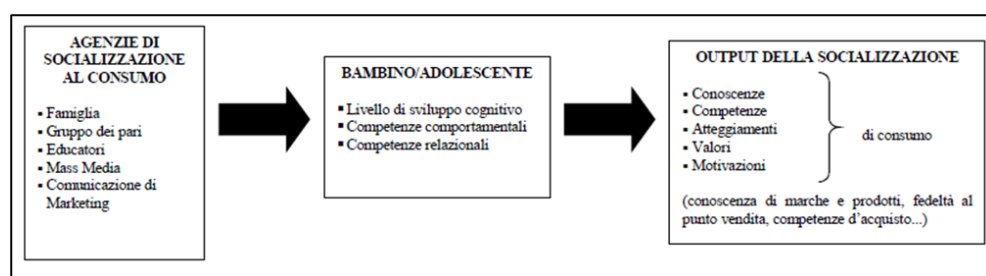


Figure 2. Socialisation of consumption<sup>10</sup>

Ironico's proposal is definitely interesting: classifying marketing communication as an independent agent of consumer socialisation and not as a function belonging to the mass media agent re-evaluates its importance, purpose and relevance in the process. The autonomy of marketing communication is also validated by McNeal (2007), who considers the family and *marketers* as the two most important sources of influence in the development of the child consumer<sup>11</sup>.

Ironico proposes in his 2014 book *How Children Become Consumers* a further model that explains the evolution of children into consumers.

<sup>10</sup> P. 2 in Ironico, S. (2007). *Communicating in childhood: From socialisation to consumption to socialisation to fashion*. Ocula, 8, 15.

<sup>11</sup> P. 317 in McNeal, J. (2007). *On becoming a consumer*. Routledge

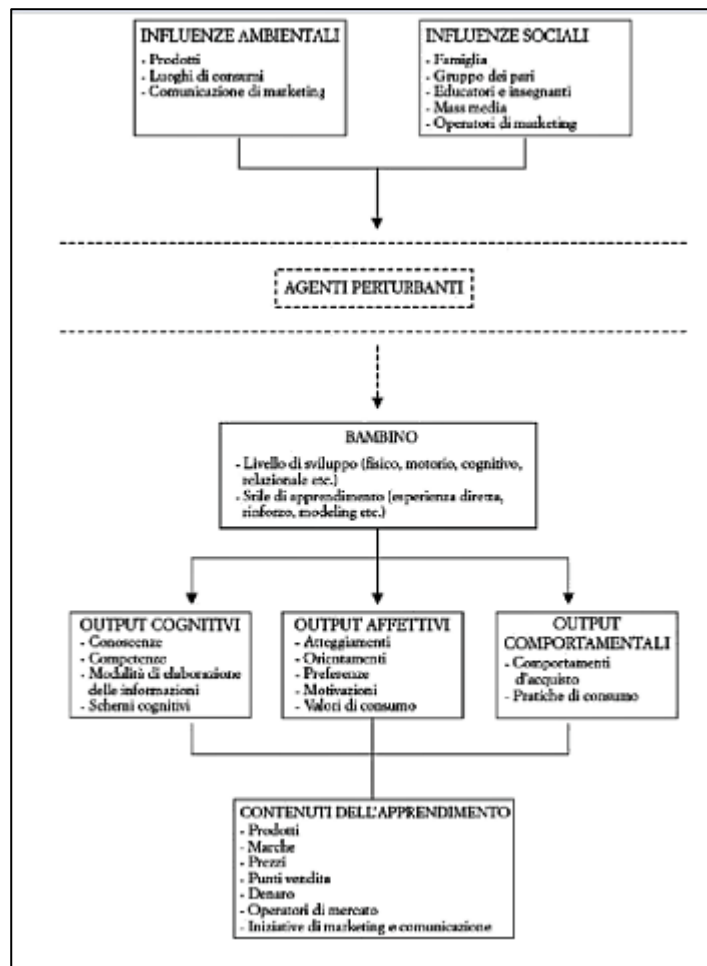


Figure 3. A model of how children become consumers<sup>12</sup>

This model assumes that there are social and environmental influences: the social influences are the traditional socialisation agencies i.e. family, educators, peers, mass media and marketers. The environmental influences are all those instances through which children learn and interact autonomously without the necessary presence of other social actors (Ironico, 2014). The influences just described do not always act directly on the child but are filtered by disruptive agents, every agent of socialisation can potentially be a disruptive agent (Ironico, 2014).

The child generates three different types of outputs related to various aspects of consumption: cognitive outputs (knowledge, skills, ways of processing information, cognitive schemas), affective outputs (attitudes, orientations, preferences, motivations, consumption values) and behavioural outputs (purchasing behaviour, consumption practices). The set of these different outputs composes learning contents of consumer socialisation (products, brands, prices, outlets, money, market players, marketing and communication initiatives) (Ironico, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> P. 24 in Ironico, S. (2014). *How children become consumers*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa.

In the following paragraphs, the agents family, peers, mass media and marketers will be examined as consumer socialisation agents. It was decided to exclude from this review the agent of the school education system (educators and teachers) as the research did not produce enough relevant results (Shim & Koh, 1997).

## 6.1 The family as consumer socialisation's agent

The family is the socialisation agent for primary consumption (Kerrane, Hogg, & Bettany, 2012; McNeal, 2007).

The transmission of consumption practices is manifested as the family's influence on the child's behaviour as a consumer. The influence can be direct or indirect and is closely related to the type of family in which the individual grows up (Moschis, 1985). Family communication *patterns* are different according to the style of the family itself. There are four main family types (Moschis, 1985): *laissez-faire*, characterised by little communication, *protective*, aiming at social harmony and obedience while leaving the child a slight possibility of expression, *pluralistic*, encouraging the child to express himself and develop new ideas with open communication and without authority or obedience, and *consensual*, aiming at family harmony by encouraging the development of the child's ideas and combining them with her/his own. The communicative style adopted by parents in *consumer learning* practices affects the child's formation into a consumer and impacts the autonomous consumer they will be in the future (Thorson & Horstman, 2017).

The role children play in family shopping changes according to their age. When they are young, they are mere spectators sitting in the shopping trolleys or at their parents' side, passively storing information and consumption practices that are fundamental for the future. When they are older, they become real consumers with small tasks such as finding certain products or choosing between various products belonging to the same category through the *co-shopping* procedure (Carlson & Grossbart, 1988; Carruth & Skinner, 2001). The practice of *co-shopping* is also the method through which parents, especially the mother, actively teach their children some *skills* related to consumption (Carruth & Skinner, 2001). The practice of *co-shopping* takes on different nuances depending on the *parental styles* of the father and mother and the age of the child (Carlson & Grossbart, 1988). However, parental influence as an agent of *consumer socialisation* weakens as the child gets older (Ward, 1974).

When children grow up, the phenomena *pester power* or *nag factor* is going to occur. These are nothing more than terms to define the phenomenon of caprice at the place of consumption or even at home, to obtain specific products from children (Baldassarre, Campo, & Falcone, 2016; Bridges & Briesch, 2006; Lawlor & Prothero, 2011; Page, Sharp, Lockshin, & Sorensen,



2018). Moreover, in this case, children often develop real strategies to persuade their parents to obtain the much-desired product, influencing family purchases (Ironico, 2014). Collective strategies are often established with siblings. The different weight of maternal and paternal roles within the decision and the parental sympathies expressed for one or the other child often play a crucial role (Chauhan, 2017; Kerrane et al., 2012).

The family also plays a mediating role within *consumer socialisation*: filtering out certain content typical of advertising is an attitude that many parents adopt to protect children from the negative or aggressive effects that marketing communication might have (Calvert, 2008). This behaviour echoes the concept of disruptive agents set out in Ironico's model (Ironico, 2014).

The role of the mother is decisive within child consumption: the mother figure is always seen as the one who holds the power to approve or not the purchase of a product; obviously, this characterisation has been attenuated over the years but remains in mass culture (Wayland & Coe, 1994). The mother first teaches to her child on which product or brand is the best, often giving reasons that will then heavily define the purchasing behaviour that the child will have in the future as an adult consumer (Packard, 1958). On the one hand, the mother figure also can evaluate a product for quality and convenience (Carruth & Skinner, 2001; Ironico, 2014). On the other hand, the father figure does not play a relevant role and is often tasked with looking after or distracting the child for leaving time and peace of mind to the mother in choosing the child's product (Ironico, 2014).

## **6.2 The peer group as consumer socialisation agent**

The peer group plays a significant role as a socialisation agent to consumption. As children grow, they begin to be autonomous consumers and look to the peer group for companions in consumption or figures from whom they can obtain approval (McNeal, 2007; Moschis & Churchill Jr, 1978).

This phenomenon also occurs during the primary school years where children can often express their consumption style showing their scholastic gadgets, as for the clothing worn under their aprons. Influences and involvement in the consumption of one product, brand or service rather than another are easily shared among peers by determining the collective consumption of a good by word-of-mouth processes. From the age of 12 years, *co-shopping* begins to be shared less with parents and more with peers (Ironico 2014). *Co-shopping* with peers concerns products of low-cost value, the most important purchases are always made with the mother's help (Meyer & Anderson, 2000). In contrast, Bachmann et al. (1993) showed that the influence of the peer group on the individual's consumption is only manifested in the consumption of *public luxuries*. However, the opinion and influence of peers is considered to be completely irrelevant in the choice of other types of *private necessities*.

The influence of peers in the consumption practices of the individual assumes a particular relevance since individuals seek models to be inspired by and consume what is trendy to belong to a group, according to an *affiliation* motivation (McNeal, 2007). The consumption of the same product or the possession of it determines a social status that leads to belonging or not to a particular group. A complementary motivation is the *achievement*, in this case, individuals seek in the consumption of a specific product the means that will lead them to the objective to be achieved, that is to demonstrate their ability in some activity to parents and peer groups (McNeal, 2007). This is consistent with social identity theory, which states that affiliation in groups affects the definition of the individual's social identity in terms of categorisation, identification and social comparison (Tajfel, 1982). It is precisely for these reasons that the influence of the peer group on the individual's purchasing choices finds its peak during the adolescent period (Ironico, 2014).

### **6.3 The mass media as agents of consumer socialisation**

Mass media as agents of consumer socialisation play a relevant role in the discussion of this topic. Nowadays, children are exposed to mass media such as television, cinema, radio, newspapers and magazines from an early age. They are even more exposed to the *new media*, i.e. all those digital media that have allowed the continuous and immediate dissemination of information and content worldwide (Wartella & Jennings, 2000). The media propose models, identities, lifestyles, and consumption patterns, thus playing a fundamental role in *consumer socialisation* (Ironico, 2014). Children are viewers of television programmes from an early age and they consequently also view advertisements. However, the distinction between dedicated programmes and advertisements appears when children grow up, when they begin to be conscious about the negative intentions of advertisements (Baldassarre et al., 2016; McNeal, 2007; Roedder John, 1999). Indeed, advertisements often generate inappropriate or unhealthy consume desires in childhood, such as the consumption of food that is excessively rich in fat (Calvert, 2008). The psycho-seduction of children, Vance Packard's term, aims to create in children the assiduous consumption of a certain sponsored product and the propaganda for it (Packard, 1958).

The offer dedicated to children is undoubtedly extensive and varied and takes into account age differences. For example, various thematic television channels differ according to whether they are targeted to men or women, early childhood or late childhood, etc. Within entertainment programmes, *product placement*, sponsorship or testimonial practices are often used (Ironico, 2014). The media themselves provide instructions on consumption practices through the proposal of images and advertisements that indicate information on the consumption and meaning of a product (Ward, 1974). Think, for

example, of toy advertisements in which prices, points of sale and occasions for using the good are indicated. Children can often be exposed to content that is not dedicated to them, such as content dedicated to the adult world, which also causes the indirect learning of consumption practices.

However, the advent of new media has changed the approach to consumption in the world of children. Through new media such as Instagram, Facebook, youtube, twitch, myspace etc., children and adolescents can quickly see content that is either dedicated to them or not and positive or negative (O’Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Prot et al., 2015). This chance causes dangerous exposure to sponsored content by *influencers* or content that is not dedicated or suitable for their age, despite direct or indirect parental control (Buzzi, 2011). Above all, video games allow the child a total experiential immersion to test lifestyles and products (Ironico, 2014). *The Sims* video game, for example, allows the creation of one’s own alter ego who can virtually live a life characterised by a wide range of consumer choices, from the home to beauty products, etc.

## **6.4 Marketers as consumer socialisation agents**

We have already said that children know what is best to ask for and when. They can develop strategies to get what they want as a reward or simply after insistently asking for the desired product several times through various tantrums. Children already know how to behave, ask, and find the products they want.

Marketers play a very important role as agents of consumer socialisation through various strategies: points of sale, advertising, products, catalogues, sponsorships, events, promotions, the company website (Ironico, 2014).

*Visual merchandising*, for example, also deals with the children’s segment. The children products often have specific locations to stimulate and facilitate physical achievement for children, who are smaller in stature than adults. The first shop in which children approach purchasing is the supermarket, where the first demands are made and where the first individual purchase is likely to take place (McNeal, 2007). In addition, shops adopt many strategies to involve children in the purchasing process: for example, mini trolleys dedicated to children, real vehicles for compulsive buying (Packard, 1958) or play areas that create and act on the experiential dimension of the purchase moment. In some clothing shops, various toys or objects stimulate the child’s interaction with the place, often aiming to distract the child from the process to leave the adult time to decide what to buy for the child.

The advertisements, especially in the child’s early years, are directed to the mother figure, the true holder of the child’s consumerist needs. Especially in the first years of a child’s life, children are considered a secondary market because the purchasing processes are carried out by parents (Ironico, 2014). An example are nappies, baby food, powdered milk, and all those products

that the newborn or very young child consumes but cannot buy and choose directly, as he or she is still totally dependent on the parental figure. This tendency to direct marketing communication towards the parents diminishes with advancing age and with the child's *consumer development* (McNeal, 2007). However, it never disappears completely: we often find the mother as a key figure in advertisements for snacks or clothing. Advertising directed directly to the child becomes important from the age of 6-7 years, at this stage the child begins to make the first individual purchases (McNeal, 2007).

Through the practice of *product placement*, products intended for children are placed on websites, television programmes, films or video games (Calvert, 2008). Product placement in children's content can be controversial because, although duly reported as an *advertising practice*, it is difficult for children to understand the commercial intent behind the presence of the product in the content they are watching.

Another strategy used by marketers is to play on the playful dimension of products. The inclusion of any playful component within the product or service generates a significant appeal for the child himself, who better approaches knowledge and consumption (Ironico, 2014). The phenomena of *play value* and *trans-toying* are easily found in many products and services dedicated to children (Ironico, 2014).

Using typical characters from the world of children's entertainment to convey messages about consumption and products to children is a practice widely used by companies. Through the use of special licences, *co-marketing* practices (Ironico, 2014) use characters from famous cartoons on product packaging, advertisements and more (Calvert, 2008). Some companies create their own brand ambassador animated characters to stimulate children's interest and sympathise with the child segment (Calvert, 2008).

The use of *testimonials* such as *celebrities* or *influencers* is also a means by which marketers communicate with children. The phenomenon of *celebrity endorsements* is widely used to propose products through the use of *celebrities* who can stimulate children's interest in a particular product (Calvert, 2008). The same system is used with *influencers* who, even more than *celebrities*, can be seen by children as role models.

## **7. The stakeholder child**

In the third era of marketing, companies need to build and plan their marketing communication from a *stakeholder orientation* perspective. This approach considers all parties, called stakeholders, who influence and are influenced by the company's work, Marketing is required to create stakeholder unification and value creation (Lusch & Webster Jr, 2011). According to *stakeholder theory*, the company must consider consumers and

employees, suppliers, the media, competitors, the government system, local communities, etc. (Freeman, 2010)<sup>13</sup>.

Stakeholders should be considered not only in economic terms but also in terms of social identity. Stakeholder identification should not only be based on economic involvement. However, it should also consider the stakeholder's social identity to have a clear idea of the various stakeholder groups and types that gravitate around the company's activity. This approach is adopted by Crane and Ruebottom (2011) to identify individuals as having a specific social identity: it is precisely on the basis of this assumption that it is necessary to identify stakeholders taking into account not only the economic component of the relationship that exists between them and the company. Many groups are often overlooked and not considered as stakeholders: LGBT, African Americans, animal rights activists, children, etc. (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011). It is necessary to identify these stakeholder groups as part of a reference market segment and, being market segments, they can be considered as a single social group that influences and is influenced by the company and its actions and relations on the market (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011). The identification of single entities allows for a *multiple stakeholder* view. This perspective considers the primary stakeholders and the secondary stakeholders from a value production and exchange perspective (Hult, Mena, Ferrell, & Ferrell, 2011), taking into account the multiple interests that each stakeholder group has (Bhattacharya, 2010).

This approach is consistent with the vision of stakeholder theory and is well explained in the following sentence by Freeman (2007, p. 159):

*MFS (management for stakeholders) requires that we see stakeholders as fully human. Customers are not just "buyers" and employees are not just "human resources." They are people with names, faces, children, hopes, and desires, subject to the same complexity and foibles as all of us.*

Therefore, the concept of stakeholder is closely linked to social identity, and all those characteristics that distinguish members of the social group from non-members have to be considered. The individual stakeholder may also belong to different groups simultaneously: cases of overlapping memberships of different stakeholder groups are normal due to individual interests, memberships and identities (Rowley & Moldoveanu, 2003).

Children are not often considered by companies: this is both because they lack purchasing power and because, due to their developing cognitive state, they are hardly considered in terms of stakeholder management. Moreover 'The social identity *children*, though very much on a firm's radar, is unlikely to be recognised as a category for stakeholder identification and management across the various economic connections with the firm'<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> First published in 1984

<sup>14</sup> P. 83 in Crane, A., & Ruebottom, T. (2011). *Stakeholder theory and social identity: Rethinking stakeholder identification*. Journal of business ethics, 102(1), 77-87

In this perspective, I want to analyse the child, who belongs to the stakeholder group of consumers, as an individual with further interests, also far from the ordinary consumption sphere, without forgetting his identity in a consumer socialisation perspective. What I propose with this contribution is to reconsider children as a stakeholder group, with a certain social identity, influenced by the agents of consumer socialisation, according to Ironico's (2014) model, who are mutually connected and influenced by each other.

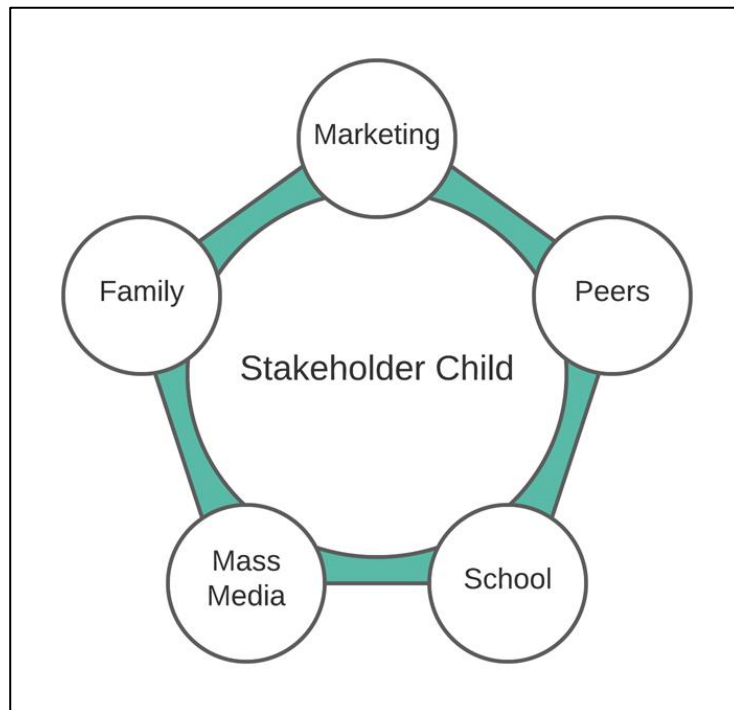


Figure 4. The stakeholder child and its relationships in the perspective of consumer socialisation (author's elaboration)

The child assumes the role of a stakeholder, with multiple interests according to the perspective of *multiple stakeholder marketing*, next to all the agents listed by Ironico (2014). These agents simultaneously act on him/her in terms of consumer socialisation agents influencing him/her, being influenced by the composition, characteristics, actions and multiple interests of the stakeholder child.

### **7.1 The double identity of the stakeholder child**

According to the stakeholder marketing perspective, stakeholders interact with each other directly or indirectly. Moreover, marketing management has to consider these relationships. In traditional marketing, value was seen as something created exclusively by the company. However, according to stakeholder marketing, value is created by all stakeholders and

by the company itself (Hillebrand et al., 2015). Indeed, stakeholder marketing provides a better understanding of the stakeholder network by focusing on optimising the exchange of value and having as its objective the moral and ethical downsizing of management (Parmar et al., 2010). The normative/prescriptive approach of stakeholder theory is consistent with these statements (Hult et al., 2011).

The child is often considered only as consumer. However, according to a stakeholder marketing perspective, it should be considered for every stakeholder role he/she plays, even though not belonging directly to the sphere of consumption. For example, suppose a child is a stakeholder because he or she is the child of an employee of a particular company. In that case, the child has different interests in the company than he or she does as a consumer (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011). There is a need to investigate the issue by moving from a stakeholder business-centre perspective to a stakeholder identity-centre perspective, as Crane and Kazmi have already outlined in their article (2010).

This review aims to investigate the subject specifically from a *consumer socialisation* and *stakeholder marketing* perspective. In this framework, the child plays a central role as a stakeholder, characterised by its dual identity: on the one hand, it maintains the role of a stakeholder for companies as a consumer, being able to influence through its own behaviour the work of the company and to be influenced by it in turn; on the other hand, the child plays the role of a stakeholder in family decisions, both consumer and non-consumer, influencing and being influenced by them.

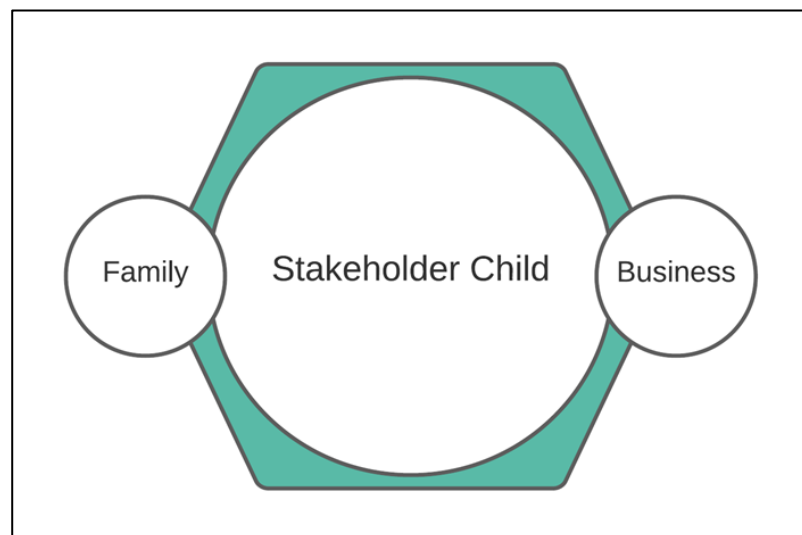


Figure 5. The child as a dual stakeholder (author's elaboration)

For a clearer schematisation, the stakeholder child assumes the role of a stakeholder with a dual identity:

1. The stakeholder child is a holder of rights and interests for companies. The child must be protected and taken into account by companies in an appropriate way, both as a consumer stakeholder and as other stakeholder type.

2. The stakeholder child has both rights and interests within the family. First, because family holds the purchasing power of the child. Second, the child holds other type of rights when there is a business-to-household relationship that does not involve consumption.

## **7.2 The stakeholder child and the business**

Businesses must consider the stakeholder child in the most appropriate way. The study by Crane and Kazmi (2010) identifies the various corporate responsibilities that companies have towards children: physical protection, moral protection, social and cultural participation, economic well-being, education and employment, family life and parental employment, impact on children's charities. The impact of companies on children can be positive or negative, depending on the consideration that companies have towards the stakeholder child, and direct or indirect, depending on the more or less present influence of the agents of socialisation (Crane & Kazmi, 2010).

Except for the company's target market, the stakeholder child should be considered in all its facets: direct consumer, influencing consumer, child of company employees, belonging to the local community etc. Moving away from the main identification as a consumer, the company's vision should look at the stakeholder's overall well-being without harming him/her or infringing on his/her rights.

## **7.3 The stakeholder child and the family**

The stakeholder child should be categorised by the composition of and the relationship he/she establishes with his/her family, in line with *consumer socialisation*.

Suppose the family has members who work for a company, which may or may not provide goods or services involving children. In that case, the company have the corporate responsibilities towards the children as children of its employees: this is consistent with the *stakeholder marketing* perspective.

Moreover, for the consumption, children have been shown to exert an influence on family purchasing decisions. In the previous paragraphs, direct and indirect ways in which children exert their influence on family decisions, whether they concern consumption or not, are exposed. It was also clarified how they differ according to the type of good or service to be purchased.

## **8. Conclusion**



As explained above, reconsidering the child through a stakeholder marketing view could generate some benefits both for the child and for businesses.

The necessity to adopt a stakeholder-identity perspective (Crane & Kazmi, 2010) is most of all important when considering children. This multifront approach leads to the conclusion that every stakeholder needs to be considered in its multi-identity personality. Children would benefit a lot from the adoption of this approach because they would be considered in a broader way, which could give them a fair care from businesses.

Many are the advantages that this approach can give for the management of the company. First of all, businesses can contribute in a sort of education of the child, giving them right information without fall into the trifle of misleading advertising. Second, establishing a fair relationship between business and child has also a positive impact on parents, who start to feel a positive opinion of the business that think about their children with respect. Third, developing this type of relationship has a positive impact on the general image of the business, showing the attention of it for these kind of topics. This last reason is also justified by the assumption that children could act on the oldest generations through *reverse socialisation*. Fourth, the image of the business could be positively improved due to the attention paid in terms of corporate responsibility.

In a long term view, applying this perspective can be significant both for the protection and enhancement of the child through all his identities. Considering the child as an adult consumer in the future is the key to develop fair communication strategies, retaining the consumer and establishing a strong relationship in a long term view.

In conclusion, there is a strong potential in adopting this point of view, both for children and businesses. Especially in tourism industry, this approach could be useful for the education of the tourist, ensuring destination's protection and enhancement in the long term. This statement will be discussed in the following chapters, as it is the main finding of this thesis.

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## **Chapter 2 (Paper 1)**

### **Where is research on tourist-children going to? A scoping review**

#### **Abstract**

Academic research usually confines children to a marginal role, even in tourism research. Tourism research has been mainly focused on studying on how the presence of a child can influence the choice of some family tourist activities. This article aims to identify and examine tourism research studies that specifically address tourist-children. A scoping review using PRISMA protocol was conducted, and 21 documents were qualitatively analysed, according to exclusion and inclusion criteria. Findings proved that only a few researches consider directly tourist-children, using a wide range of methodological issues, answering to the research questions. This study provides academics with a clear view of how tourist-children are studied in tourism research revealing five dimensions of interest, namely 'experiential and memorable', 'educational and cultural', 'familiar', 'strategic' and 'ethical'. This study also shows critical gaps and suggests future research directions, especially in the field of tourism management.

#### **Highlights**

- This study provides a scoping review of tourist-child studies in tourism research
- The majority of extant research adopts a qualitative approach, using several different methods
- Five thematic dimensions of interest are identified
- A dearth of research and managerial implications on tourist-children is identified

#### **Keywords**

tourist-children

tourism research

tourist

child

scoping review

# 1. Introduction

Today many tourists are families. The family group is the first social and cultural reference group of anyone, and it is interesting to study how necessities and choices change according to the chronological state of this group. Also, families are now different from before; there are a lot of different ones for numbers and typology of people that relegate the vision of the nuclear family to an old position (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015). We can observe that there are various typologies of families, depending on social classes, gender, and culture (Hughes & Southall, 2012; Schanzel, 2012). In this framework, having children or not affects the choice of a holiday and tourist activities, depending, for example, on the number and the ages of children. Parents have also to consider a child's characteristics, needs, hobbies, before and during holiday and tourism activities.

The fact that the child does not have his/her financial resources does not necessarily imply that he/she does not play a crucial part in the choice of goods and services in a tourism context. However, this issue is not always investigated or considered in this way by tourism research, in which the focus is more on how parents perceive and manage the influence and pressures of children, and the tourist-child is often studied only as a member of a family unit (Schänzel, 2010). All the above-mentioned means that usually, researchers investigate children's perceptions, needs, and desires without asking directly to kids (Canosa & Graham, 2016; Cullingford, 1995). Tourist-children is often studied as a passive member of a family tourist group (Thornton et al., 1997) or as an active member who has an influence on parents decision-making processes but always in a travel dimension perspective and without investigating their perspective (Poria & Timothy, 2014), focusing on how having children influences the parents' choices of holidays.

If we consider that children will be independent tourists in the future, research should pay more attention to the care of the children's tourism experiences, both for the protection and the satisfaction of them and for the related satisfaction of families. These motivations carry out the need to have Child-Centred research, especially in tourism research (Canosa et al., 2019; Canosa & Graham, 2016). Also, investigating tourist-children have a deep significance from a tourism-management perspective: the hospitality system that wants to direct their services to families and children has to know better the needs and desires of these subjects to build a better supply for them. From a tourism management perspective, families and children are indeed important segments for tourism businesses, and any information that can help them to satisfy their target has to be known and useful. The completeness of knowledge of these kinds of tourists is also crucial for several marketing and communication implications.

There is a need to address this literature gap to clarify how research considers tourist-children in tourism research, both for the utility in general



tourism research and tourism management and marketing research. This field of research is rich in possibilities due to the developing nature of the considered subjects, both children and families. Also, the multiple social implications that can change each research perspective and the contribution to the strategic planning of tourist facilities contribute to making attractive this field of research. The need to provide a scoping review lies in the call to cover this gap, summarizing state of the art, and giving advice and insights for future tourism research that involve tourist-children, avoiding to miss the focus on these subjects. I will explain adopted reasons for methodological choices in the following paragraphs.

There are no reviews that expose directly and clearly how tourist-children are approached in tourism research, even if we have a systematic review that analyses the state of research for host-children, excluding tourist-children (M. J. H. Yang et al., 2019) and a review on the state of art regarding young residents studies in tourism research (Canosa et al., 2016). It is also been published a research note by Poria and Timothy (2014) that investigate the critical gap of tourism literature about children's travel experiences. The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the state of tourism research in studying children as tourist-children, with the aim to cover avoided topics of the above-mentioned reviews, giving advice for future research both for academy and businesses. This article aims to systematically expose with which methods tourist-children are studied and in how many cases researchers directly include tourist-children in the study.

With these premises, this article aims to answer this general question:

- How is the child studied as tourist in tourism research?

Finding the answers to the following specific research questions:

- (i) Which are the research approaches used?
- (ii) Which are the primary research purposes and methods used?
- (iii) Which are the main themes and findings regarding the role of tourist-child in tourism research?
- (iv) Are there any emergent dimensions in this field of research?

To pursue these goals, a scoping review using PRISMA protocol has been conducted. I made this choice because this is a transparent and trusty method (Moher, 2009; Moher et al., 2015; Perry & Hammond, 2002), and this allows us to focus just on the field of research that is of our interest, namely tourism research. Furthermore, systematic reviews are adopted in tourism research according to the article *A systematic review of systematic reviews* (Pahlevan-Sharif et al., 2019) and often regard articles published in high quality journals. To conduct this review, I use the The United Nations' Convention on the Rights (1989) child's definition: each person who is between 0 and 18 years old.

This review has a deep significance because it reveals reasons why it is vital to study tourist-children, clarify preferred methodologies, methods, and approaches, visualize the situation of tourist-children in tourism research, and find five dimensions of tourism research that involve tourist-children, giving new directions and advice for the future research, answering to the call to have a theoretical framework that could guide the research with tourist-children in tourism field (Canosa & Graham, 2020).

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Child as consumer**

During past years, researchers studied how socialization has an impact on the child in terms of consumption. Consumer socialization is a branch of consumer behavior research and embraces the group of practices, behaviors, and attitudes that the child learns about consumption, and that will lead him, in the future, to be an independent consumer (Ward, 1974). Traditional consumer socialization agents are family, school, peers, and mass media; these agents have a profound impact on becoming a consumer: for instance, children, from an early age, see and observe parents' consumption practices and, indirectly, learn these practices (McNeal, 2000). For example, there are several online and offline games for girls where they can be an adult: shop at the supermarket, buy clothes for themselves or other individuals, take care of a baby, playing the woman's traditional role or other. This observational prospective states children as active agents in their socialization, evolving in autonomous consumers (Grusec & Hastings, 2014). To the agent's list, Ironico (2007) added marketing communication as a stand-alone agent. This agent corresponds to 'advertising and the whole set of promotional initiatives implemented by companies to create brands and product awareness and to help to build preferences, values, and consumer attitudes' (Ironico, 2007, author's translation). The autonomy of marketing communication as agents is also validated by McNeal (2007) who considers family and marketers as the two most important influencers in the development of the child as consumer.

### **2.2 Child in tourism research**

Tourism literature and childhood studies have several connections. The extent tourism literature shows that there are multiple ways in which children and tourism studies coexist in this field of research. A lot of different approaches and topics exist that embrace children in tourism research.

Some tourism studies include children in their researches investigating the orphanage tourism phenomenon, studying how local children's poorness is commodified as a point of interest for volunteer tourists (Reas, 2013). Tourists that want to live these kinds of experiences are commonly prompted also by the local organizations and holidaymakers (Reas, 2013). In this case, the child does emotional labor that affects the relationship with the volunteer tourist (Guiney, 2018). Emotional engagement with local children is, in fact, very significant for volunteer tourists and visitors; however, it becomes a problem for the emotional pressure on which orphans are subjected (Guiney, 2018). In the article *Childhood studies and orphanage tourism in Cambodia* (2015), Carpenter explains why it is crucial to adopt a fair approach to this type of research for all the involved stakeholders.

Orphanage and volunteer tourism are not the only fields of tourism research that shed light on the child as a community's member of the travel destination. Another part of tourism research considers the child in the investigation of child sex tourism, which is the activity to travel for having sexual experiences with children in usually developing countries. Here the focus is to understand if the phenomenon is associated with people who travel for that strict objective, or it can be referred to other types of travelers that join this kind of experience during a typical holiday (Davidson, 2004). The research also provides a panoramic of which measures and programs governments and organizations of affected, and not only, countries adopt to fight this kind of tourism (Tepelus, 2008), and also proposes some policy recommendations to protect children involved in this context (Walters & Davis, 2011).

There is another group of tourism literature that pays attention to children in tourism that is studying how tourism has an impact on resident children of host countries. Here the focus is to research how living in a tourist country affects host children's perception of the tourism phenomenon and of tourists who visit their country (Canosa et al., 2016). Some studies also provide a literature review on host-children labor connected to tourism issues (M. J. H. Yang et al., 2019).

The majority of tourism studies that include children belong to family tourism. The research investigated the influence of children on parent's choices as a family group and related decision-making dynamics under the parental perspective. An example of this field of research is the article *Who is the decision-maker: the parents or the child in group package tours?* of Wang et al. (2004), in which researchers had also interviewed some children.

### **2.3 Child as tourist**

The ways in which a child develops his/her skills as consumers can be obviously adopted also for the tourist-children in a tourism view.

In tourism research in fact, consumer socialization has been studied to understand how consumer socialization relationships and dynamics affect

family holiday decision-making (Aleti et al., 2018; T. A. Watne et al., 2014; T. Watne & Winchester, 2011). However, the majority of tourism research investigates, for example, the families' choice of holiday destination or activities, including tourist-children as variables (Nichols & Snepenger, 1988), or measuring how parents perceive children's influence in those kinds of choices (Ritchie & Filiatrault, 1980; Jenkins, 1978). This assumption has generated many studies involving family leisure but has often missed the children's personal views (Canosa et al., 2019). Furthermore, the influence of children on parents has also been studied considering children's point of view both in business research (Flurry & Burns, 2005) and in tourism research analyzing children's points of view (Curtale, 2018; Wang et al., 2004). As Canosa et al. (2019) say, a child-centred tourism research that implies investigating *with* children instead of *on* children has ethically necessary, and it is also necessary the promotion of an interdisciplinary view to force a new research agenda that includes childhood studies and tourism studies.

Assuming that the importance and the presence of a child as a member of a tourist group have a heavyweight in the choice of conducting research involving children as tourists, there is a well-defined gap that has to be addressed to pursue the objective of Canosa et al. (2019). In the article *Tracing the contribution of childhood studies: Maintaining momentum while navigating tensions* (2020) Canosa and Graham conduct a systematic review of extant childhood research and find out that regarding tourism research there is the need to have a clear theoretical framework to give a direction to tourism research involving children with the aim to expand knowledge even exceeding the boundaries of the individual disciplines. Then, as I already exposed, the missing clearness in the approaches and methods that tourism academy uses when researching with children is the focus of this review. I aim to provide a general guide to tourism academy and tourism businesses that want to research *with* tourist-children, answering to the call of the studies (Canosa & Graham, 2020, 2016), as mentioned earlier.

The general question of this review conducts us to the necessity to have a detailed overview upon state of the art in tourism research concerning the figure of tourist-child to resume and expose topics, methods, and points of view concerning this subject.

## **2.4 Systematic reviews in tourism research**

This work adopts a scoping review to systematically identify answers to our research questions without losing the general question of this study. Most of the tourism research that involves children, directly or indirectly, concern family holiday decision-making; for this reason, the choice to adopt a systematic approach is necessary because it gives us the possibility to exclude all the articles that do not have a specific focus on tourist-children, accordingly to inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Systematic reviews are often used in bibliometric research, especially in recent tourism research (Koseoglu et al., 2016) with high-level journal

publications (Pahlevan-Sharif et al., 2019), but it is considered a suitable methodology also for business research through many different shades (Snyder, 2019; Fisch & Block, 2018). These types of reviews are largely used in tourism research both as quantitative (Le et al., 2019; Yung & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019; M. J. H. Yang et al., 2019; E. C. L. Yang et al., 2017) and as qualitative (Wattanacharoensil & La-ornual, 2019) analyses. The systematic review has also been adopted in tourism research to analyze a movement with the selection of websites, cases, news, or blogs, as shown in the article *Metoo and tourism: a systematic review* (Ram, 2019).

The systematic qualitative review has the particular aim to map the evolution of disciplines (Koseoglu et al., 2016), and that is another reason why the use of this unique bibliometric analysis fits perfectly with the general and specific questions of this research. Some tourism researchers have, in fact, already adopted a bibliometric approach to pursue similar aims of this article (Chi et al., 2020; Ruhanen et al., 2015).

In the article *Tracing the contribution of childhood studies: Maintaining momentum while navigating tensions* (2020) Canosa and Graham applied a bibliometric approach to trace the composition of childhood studies using PRISMA method (Moher et al., 2010). This study also evokes and calls to the necessity to have a clear guide to the extant research of tourism research studies concerning tourist-children.

The existing tourism literature has, in fact, yet conducted a systematic review to study state of the art regarding child labor in the tourism sector in the article *Host-children of tourism destinations: systematic quantitative literature review* (M. J. H. Yang et al., 2019). Yang et al. made a clear choice of deciding to exclude all the articles that were focused on tourist-children: this left us the possibility to conduct this study to be a reference point for future tourism research.

### **3. Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to map the existing tourism research literature concerning children as tourists, including only the studies that have an explicit focus on the tourist-child, and discovering manners, methods, purposes and findings in this area of research. I applied the PRISMA protocol to conduct a scoping review. PRISMA method is a strategy search based on a particular protocol to follow (Moher et al., 2015) and the PRISMA Flow Chart of this research, adapted with some modifications, is displayed in Fig. 1.

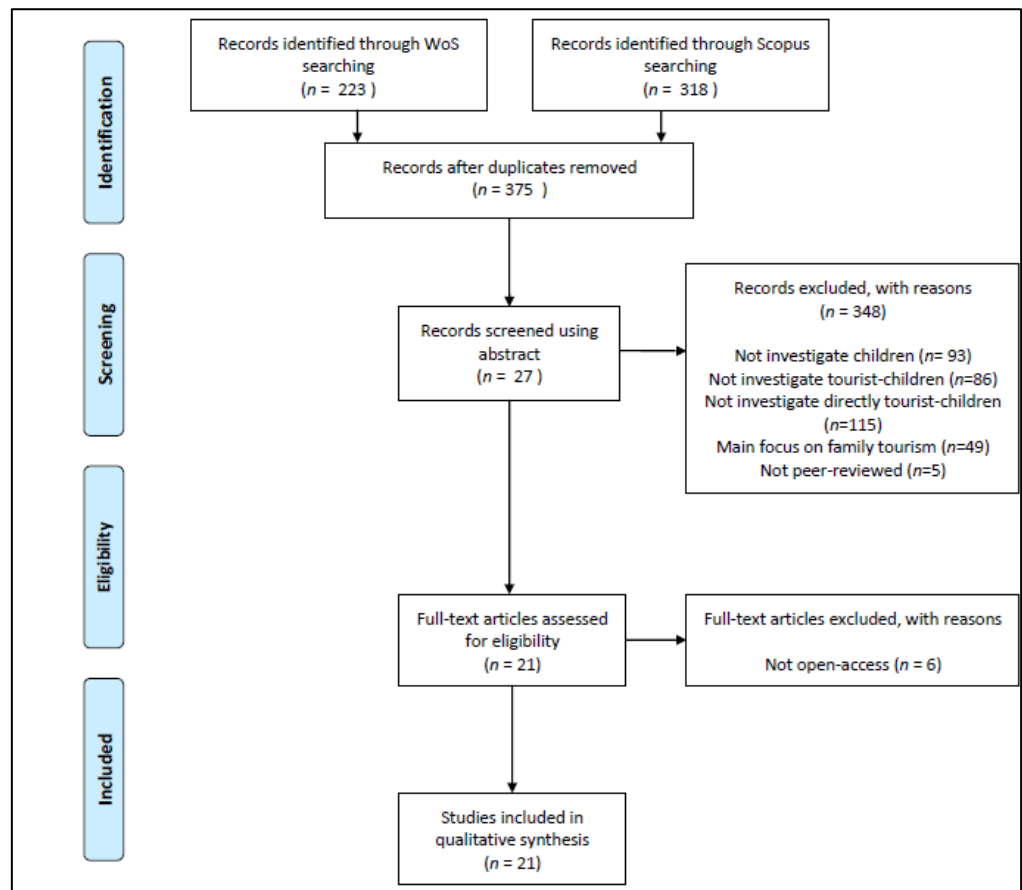


Figura 1. PRISMA flow chart adapted from Moher et al., 2015

### 3.1 Identification

Following indications of PRISMA for review, I searched on two academic databases: Scopus and WoS (Web of Science). The search was conducted on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019, using the following terms on both databases: (child\* OR kid\*) AND (touris\* OR hospitalit\*). The use of wildcard \* allowed us to find all the results that included the plural or derived words of the original term. The terms combination was equal for both databases because wildcards and search operators do not differ and was limited to the databases' section 'title, abstract, keywords'. Both searches were limited to documents written in the English language and to doc-type articles or reviews. Scopus results were limited to sub-area 'Business' because it contains the 'Tourism, Leisure, and Hospitality Management' section, and WoS results were limited to the 'Hospitality, leisure, sport, tourism' category.

The total records identified with these searches were 541: 223 results from WoS with 216 articles and 7 reviews, and 318 documents from Scopus with 304 articles and 14 reviews. Records of each search were exported into

Zotero software, maintaining abstracts where present, then all duplicates have been removed resulting to a final total number of 375 records.

### **3.2 Screening and eligibility**

I exported records in RIF format to Nvivo 12 software, and I did the screening phase reading every abstract to decide if exclude or include in the review, following the indications of PRISMA statement. Each record, included or excluded, was assigned to a specific Node. I developed iteratively exclusion criteria based on the purpose of our study, and I excluded 348 records according to the following criteria. I excluded 93 records for (i) not investigating children, 86 records for (ii) not investigating tourist-children, 115 records for (iii) not investigating directly tourist-children, 49 records for (iv) having the main focus on family as a tourist unit, and 5 records for (v) not being peer-reviewed. I included 27 records.

The risk of bias was high so authors decided to test adopted choices during the abstract screening phase. I decided to test the reliability of our selection, proposing a sample of abstract to 3 external reviewers. The accordance between the authors' choices and the external's choices proved that the selection of articles works appropriately and validate the final choice of selected articles.

### **3.3 Included articles**

I then included 21 full-text articles in our analysis, excluding 6 records because they were not open-access. Inclusion criteria were (i) having a primary focus on tourist-children and (ii) being open-access documents. The choice to include just open-access documents was made by the author due to the impossibility to have the full-text version of those articles, these type of changes are commonly permitted by the PRISMA guidelines for systematic review if they are reported and explained with appropriate reasons (Moher et al., 2015).

I identified 21 articles according to our inclusion and exclusion criteria. This number is valid since some systematic reviews concerning children have the same amount of articles in their analysis, both in communication research (Smits et al., 2015) with the analysis of 15 studies, and in medical research concerning food marketing advertising's effects on children (Jenkin et al., 2014; Galbraith-Emami & Lobstein, 2013; Carter et al., 2012), with respectively the analysis of 38, 21 and 14 documents.

I extracted information from each one of the articles, examined in the study and elaborate the Table n. 1. The main objective of this phase was to have a clear idea of articles' content, knowing the typology of the article, aims, research approach, research methods/study settings (if applicable),

sample (if applicable), data collection (if applicable) and key findings. I also excluded 3 articles about tourist-children with disabilities during the screening phase, because the primary purpose of these articles was to analyze all the problems that a family have to front when plans or do a holiday with a child with disabilities (Kim & Lehto, 2013; Nyman et al., 2017; Sedgley et al., 2017).



Article	Type	Purpose	Approach	Methods	Sample	Data collection/ Recruiting	Key findings
Blichfeldt, Bodil Stilling; Pedersen, Bettina Møller; Johansen, Anders; Hansen, Line (2011)	Research	To uncover tweens' perspectives on in-situ decision-making processes during a family holiday	Qualitative	Duo interviews Focus groups	89 tweens (ages 8 to 12)	School	Tweens are active and proactive members during in-situ decision-making processes.  The extant research underestimates tweens' role in the holiday's choices
Bos, Lilian; McCabe, Scott; Johnson, Sarah (2015)	Research	To explore the potential of the holiday as an experience of learning for UK children using ELT (experiential learning theory), in a social tourism context	Qualitative	Semi-structured Interviews	Nine mothers 14 children (ages 6 to 11 and 11 to 15)  Two learning mentors and social tourism providers	FHA (Family Holiday Association)  School	Experiential learning and tourism experiences are useful, especially in a social tourism perspective.  The holiday can be a useful context for children's educational achievement,

							especially in low-income families
Canosa, Antonia; Graham, Anne (2016)	Research note (Review)	To resume the state of tourism research involving children and to give some ethical advice about this	NA	NA	NA	NA	Shows neglected areas of tourism research involving not tourist-children and suggested areas for future research
Cullingford, Cedric (1995)	Research	To discover children's attitudes to travel's experiences and perceptions of different holiday destinations	Qualitative	Semi-structured Interviews	160 children (ages 7 to 11)	School	Children have significant expectations of holidays, and they have defined ideas of countries, with stereotypes and prejudices
Frost, Warwick; Laing, Jennifer H. (2017)	Review	Explore the ways in which children and families engage with and make sense of	NA	NA	NA	NA	Suggest areas for future research

		heritage in a tourism perspective					
Gaines, Barbara L.; Hubbard, Susan S.; Witte, James E.; O'Neill, Martin A. (2004)	Research	To analyze children's programs in the hotels' and resort's industry	Quantitative	Surveys	100 workers in children's program at various hotels and resorts in the USA	Random choice of hotels and resorts through 2002 Hotel and Travel Index's list	Children's programs are an essential and growing part of the resort and hotel industry.  Program's composition depends on the structure's size, type, and location
Hilbrecht, Margo; Shaw, Susan M.; Delamere, Fern M.; Havitz, Mark E. (2008)	Research	To understand children's perspective on activities and experiences during a family holiday	Qualitative	In-depth interviews	24 children (ages 5 to 16, predominant range age 10 to 12)	School	Children think that the primary purpose of a family holiday is having fun, the child's age affect positive attitude during the holiday, they want to do new things, but they also

							search 'regular' activities
Israfilova, Firangiz; Khoo-Lattimore, Catheryn (2019)	Research	To explore the educational importance of dark tourism experiences for young tourists in The Guba Genocide Memorial Complex	Qualitative	Focus groups Drawings Writings Semi-structured interviews with adults	25 young visitors (ages 14 to 17) 8 Schools' adult members (principals and teachers)	School	Children's visit to this dark tourism site fills their knowledge gap and motivates them to study history, and creates patriotism. Adolescents also see the visit as an emotional and entertainment moment
Kerr, Mary Margaret; Price, Rebecca H. (2016)	Research Note (Review)	To review the existing literature about research on children in dark tourism	NA	NA	NA	NA	Identifies risks and problems of research on children in dark tourism, explains the scarcity of research in this area. States why it is essential to research these issues

Khoo-Lattimore, Catheryn (2015)	Research/ Methodological	To discuss how to conduct research with children with the right methodology, with the example of a real study	Qualitative	Focus group Drawings	18 children (ages 5 to 6)	(Pre)School	Give the foundations for a qualitative methodological framework for research with children
Poria, Yaniv; Atzaba-Poria, Naama; Barrett, Martyn (2005)	Research note/ Exploratory study	To explore the link between children's demographic characteristics, travel experience, and geographical knowledge	Quantitative	Interviews Questionnaire with parents	261 children (ages 6 to 13) Parents	School	Find a direct link between social class, age, and travel experience. No link between travel experience and geographical knowledge.
Poria, Yaniv; Timothy, Dallen J. (2014)	Research note (Review)	To discuss the critical gap of tourism literature that concerns children's travels and their perspectives and	NA	NA	NA	NA	Shows motivations of why children's experiences should be studied to have a comprehensible and responsible tourism research

		experiences as tourists					
Radic, Aleksandar (2019)	Research	To study children's cruise experience in all the phases of the cruise (decision and planning, the on-board engagement, reinterpretation and evaluation)	Qualitative	Interviews (3 sets; face to face and video call)  Drawings	12 children (ages 4 to 14)	Known by the author	Gives strategic guidelines to structure a better supply that includes children's desires and needs during the cruise experience
Rhoden, Steven; Hunter-Jones, Philippa; Miller, Amanda (2016)	Research	To know how children live and perceive the holiday's experience	Qualitative	Drawings (holiday scrapbook)  Interviews	39 children (ages 9 to 10)	Schools	It states how children live a holiday, what children like and what they do not like. A holiday represents an escape from the daily routine as single and time spent with family as a member of a group

Schänzel, Heike A.; Smith, Karen A. (2011)	Research note	To provide insights regarding the use of auto-driven photo-elicitation to study children's tourist behavior and experience during a family holiday	Qualitative	Photo-elicitation Interviews	20 parents 20 children (ages 6 to 16)	NP	Photos are associated with negative or positive experiences and memories for children. This research reveals that the photo-elicitation method, combined with interviews, is a valuable method to work with children in tourism research
Seraphin, Hugues; Yallop, Anca (2019)	Research	To discover how to maximize the competitive advantage of a resort that has a mini-club, examining current products and services offered to children and analyses the	Qualitative	Multi-case and content analysis	Six resort mini-clubs from four different resorts	NP	Activities of different mini-clubs are similar in all cases and are different according to age groups. There are new dimensions of fun like 'advertainment fun play' and

		dimensions of fun used					'edutainment fun play.'
Shavanddasht, Mercedes; Schänzel, Heike A. (2017)	Research	To investigate if perceived parenting styles have an influence on adolescents' motivations in a tourism context, especially during a visit to the National Museum of Iran in September 2016	Quantitative	Self-administered surveys	100 adolescents (ages 13 to 17)	On-site	<p>Authoritative style influences more adolescents than other parental styles, and it is strictly related to an adolescent's intrinsic motivation. The authoritarian parenting style causes less self-determined motivation generating amotivation.</p> <p>The permissive parenting style was positively associated with introjected motivation</p>



Shavanddasht, Mercedes; Schänzel, Heike A. (2019)	Research	To research the relationship between parental style and adolescents' needs satisfaction and mood during the visit of Ali Sadir cave in November 2016	Quantitative	Self-administered survey	360 adolescents (ages 11 to 18)	On-site	<p>Satisfaction or dissatisfaction of an adolescent's basic needs has an impact on his positive or negative mood during the visit.</p> <p>Authoritativeness in parental style has a strong and positive influence on children's satisfaction.</p> <p>Adolescent's basic needs satisfaction and positive mood are positively associated with the authoritative parental style</p>
Small, Jennie (2008)	Research	To examine memories of childhood holidays (at age 12) of	Qualitative	Writings Focus-groups	86 women present-day girls (12 years)	NP	Some activities are collective positive memories of childhood holidays

		Australian women and girls concerning their gender and life stage		(Memory-works)	old), young women (aged early 20s), middle-aged women (aged 40s), and older women (aged 65+)		across the generations. At the same time, women had to behave responsibly and appropriately during the holiday, and this constrained their freedom
Thornton, Paul R; Shaw, Gareth; Williams, Allan M (1997)	Research	To discover how the presence of one or more child/ren in a tourist group can influence the behavior during a holiday, in terms of activities and choices	Quantitative	Self-administered diary surveys Interviews	143 tourist groups (85 with at least one child between aged 0-16, and 58 with no children) staying in Cornwall (UK) for at least one week 13 respondents with interviews	On-site	Having children or not in the tourist group has an impact on the type of activities chosen and on time spent on specific activities. The influence through the presence of a child on tourist parties' behaviour declines with the increasing age of the child. The influence concerning negotiation acts

							increases with the increasing age of the child.
Wu, Mao-Ying; Wall, Geoffrey; Zu, Yujie; Ying, Tianyu (2019)	Research	To discover children's views of family tourism and experiences in Chinese children	Qualitative	Drawing Interviews	134 children (ages 8 to 11)	School	Chinese children do not differ so much from western children. Children see the holiday as a positive experience spent with family. Six main themes emerged: appreciating natural landscapes, appreciating the built environment, mountain and water-based activities, observing wildlife, tasting local cuisines, and having fun.

Table 1. Selected articles' details

NA: Not Applicable, NP: Not present

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Year of included articles

I reported selected articles' years of publication in the Figure 2. Included articles have been published between 1995 and 2019. The review shows that there is an increasing interest in studying tourist-children, especially in 2016 and 2019. The oldest article was published in 1995, and this is logical because, before the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) of 1989, children were not studied deeply.

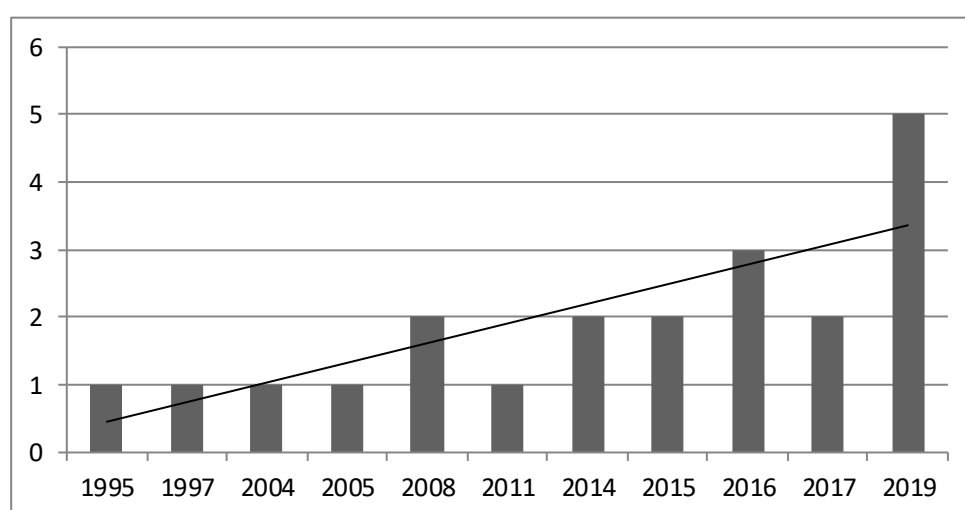


Figure 2. Year of articles

### 4.2 SCImago Journal Rank of included articles

Regarding the quality of the articles, I decided to use the Scimago Journal Rank to understand what is the quality level of the research that focuses mainly on tourist-children. I report in table 2, the list of journals in which included articles are published, assigning for each one of these journals, the relative quartile in 'tourism, leisure, hospitality, and management' category. A total of 7 journals has a Q1 evaluation in SCImago JR Rank, with a total of 12 articles of our selection. A total of 3 journals have a Q2 evaluation in SCImago JR Rank, with a total of 5 articles of our selection. 17 articles of 21 of this review are published in high-quality journals. Anatolia journal is not classified in the category of 'tourism, leisure,

hospitality, and management’, so it has not an assigned quartile in this section, but it has a Q2 evaluation in ‘geography, planning, and development’ category.

This analysis explicit the high quality of research that concern tourist-children since the majority of our articles are published in high-quality journal according to SCImago JR Rank.

Journal	N. articles	Quartile in scimago jr 2018 list (tourism, leisure, hospitality, and management)
Anatolia	1	NA
Annals of leisure research	1	Q2
Annals of tourism research	3	Q1
Current issues in tourism	3	Q1
International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration	1	Q3
Journal of heritage tourism	2	Q2
Leisure/Loisir	1	Q3
Scandinavian journal of hospitality and tourism	1	Q1
Tourism and Hospitality Research	2	Q2
Tourism Geographies	1	Q1
Tourism Management	2	Q1
Tourism Management Perspectives	1	Q1
Tourism Recreation Research	1	Q1
World Leisure Journal	1	Q4

Table 2. SCImago Journal Rank of included articles

### 4.3 Research approaches

Conducting research involving children is relevant because, despite all difficulties that could emerge during the study settings for ethics (Canosa & Graham, 2016) and the sample's cognitive capabilities (Piaget et al., 1982), we can collect much new information for the strategic management of tourism entities.

In the section of the included articles, we have 17 research articles with studies that, for the most part, include observation and analysis directly come from children. The research approach differs in study purposes. In most cases, the research approach is qualitative, especially when there are interviews to conduct directly with children. Twelve research articles have a qualitative approach, and five have a quantitative one. The qualitative approach emerged as the major research approach because of its versatility to discover and analyze children's perceptions and thoughts, also the article *Where are the children in tourism research?* (Poria & Timothy, 2014) recommend the use of this approach. The quantitative approach is adopted when subjects are adolescents (Shavanddasht & Schänzel, 2019, 2017) or when the study's purpose is to analyze products or services dedicated to children (Gaines et al., 2004; Seraphin & Yallop, 2019).

Regarding other types of articles, we have four reviews/research notes. Each one of them focuses on critical gaps in tourism research involving children and expose reasons why children's issue as a tourist should be considered by researchers, giving new directions for research in this field. Especially 2 of them focus on making sense of heritage for children and families (Frost & Laing, 2017) and the relationship between children and dark tourism (Kerr & Price, 2016).

The majority of our articles include children in the sample; in some cases, the sample is formed just by children, and in other cases is formed by children and parents, by tourist groups, or by staff members of hospitalities. When children are present, preferred ages are between 8 and 12 years old because this is the age range in which a child can process information, express and talk about an opinion or about an experience, being an independent consumer accordingly to McNeal (2007) and being in the analytical stage accordingly to Roedder-John (1999). In this age range, researchers define children as tweens (Blichfeldt et al., 2011). Very few articles try to research with younger children between 4 and 7 years old, and two articles focus on adolescents (Shavanddasht & Schänzel, 2019, 2017). There are few articles that not directly include children but focus on tourist groups (Thornton et al., 1997), hospitalities staff members (Gaines et al., 2004), or children's programs composition (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019). Other adults whom researchers include in the studies are parents and teachers; usually interviewed to have much more detailed information about things that children said, for example, the activities done during the holiday (Schänzel &

Smith, 2011) or the school visit to a site (Israfilova & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019) or the visited countries (Poria et al., 2005).

#### **4.4 Research methods and purposes**

The research methodology is predominantly qualitative, as I mentioned earlier, because doing research among children adopting qualitative methods is likely to be more ethical and more adequate, knowing the fragile and in the developmental nature of the subject (Poria & Timothy, 2014). In our selection, there are a lot of different methods; usually, they are combined to reach the best result. Interviews, during or after the holiday, are preferred mainly because are more flexible and permit to the researcher to have the best interaction with the child (Cullingford, 1995; Hilbrecht et al., 2008; Radic, 2019) and because the topic is usually a holiday experience and, for this reason, it is more appropriate to use an interview (Bos et al., 2015).

Another method used is the focus group. Focus groups are useful, especially with children, because usually, children are more comfortable if they front a topic with other peers presents (Blichfeldt et al., 2011). Furthermore, it is usual to choose a young interviewer because, in this way, children cannot feel so much age difference and can be more spontaneous and open to questions, excluding even every other adult and talking with humor and spontaneity (Blichfeldt et al., 2011).

Other methods used are creative methods (Canosa & Graham, 2016) that include the use of drawings and photography. Drawings are used as prompts to build a conversation with the child; researchers usually ask to the children to draw some moment of the holiday and use these as starting point to conduct the interviews (Israfilova & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019; Khoo-Lattimore, 2015; Rhoden et al., 2016; Schänzel & Smith, 2011; Wu et al., 2019). In the article *Tourism experiences through the eyes of a child* of Rhoden et al. (2016), a holiday scrapbook was given to the children to be completed during the summer vacation period to have materials and memories that came immediately from holiday moments. Scrapbooks were used as prompts for interviews after the holidays. Even photography is a methodological instrument used in tourism research with children. In the article *Photography and Children: Auto-driven Photoelicitation* (2011) of Schänzel, researchers asked children to provide a set of photographs to describe their holidays, giving disposable cameras to children. Later photographs are used ad prompts to talk about the holiday, and chosen photographs represent all the themes that emerged through usual children interviews like entertaining activities, emotional places, negative and positive memories.

Articles of Shavanddasht and Schänzel (2019, 2017) used quantitative surveys to discover impressions of adolescents during some visits to Iranian museums. Researchers made this choice because of the age of subjects (13 to 17, and 11 to 18), which assume the complete autonomy in responding to a self-administered survey.



## 4.5 Research characteristics and findings

Included articles have different characteristics. The article *Learning never goes on holiday: an exploration of social tourism as a context for experiential learning* (Bos et al., 2015) explores the educational meaning of tourism activities for the disadvantaged families, which means to investigate how family travel experiences can affect the child in his learning inside the school. Bos et al. (2015) explore how social tourism programs can affect a child's learning skills. Thanks to FHA (Family Holiday Association), researchers recruited families and conduct the research, discovering that participating in family travel experiences has a positive impact on children learning capabilities. Concerning the educational meaning of tourism experiences, Frost et al. (2017), in their research note, explore how the sense of heritage is perceived and approached by children and families, analyzing a list of articles that fronts this theme deeply.

The social dimension is significant in tourism research with children because it affects these subjects in different ways. The socialization of the child depends on parents, family, school, peers, and all contexts in which the child learns and creates relationships, as I previously exposed. The articles of Shavanddasht et al. (2017, 2019) investigate how Iranian parental styles of communication affects adolescents' basic needs satisfaction and how this impacts the tourist's experience. Parental style affects child perception of the world and, especially during tourism experiences, affects children's satisfaction and perception even if children are living these experiences without parents. The research note of Poria et al. (2005) investigate if a relationship between European children's geographical knowledge, social class, nationality, and travel experiences exist, it emerged that there are no links between travel experiences and geographical knowledge but children showed a deep knowledge of stereotypes and typical ideas associated to a specific country.

In our selection, more articles treat the child him/herself and not his/her influence on the family's choices during a holiday or another tourism activity. On one side, there are some articles, like one of Blichfeld et al. (2011), that focuses on a child's perception of in-situ family decision-making dynamics, giving indirect information regarding how children influence parents choices during a holiday. On the other side, in the article *Tourist group holiday decision-making and behaviour: the influence of children* of Thornton et al. (1997) decided to analyze this issue asking tourist adult members of groups, and they discovered that having a child or not in a tourist group has a profound impact on the type and on time spent on specific activities and then in the choice of them.

The focus of studies of our review is more on children's experiences, attitudes, and memories during a holiday or a tourism experience. There are some articles in our selection that focus on studying children's holiday memories and how they live these experiences as time spent with family and

as autonomous tourist-child. In general, children have high and various expectations regarding the holiday. The common idea is that holiday for children means doing fun activities and escape from the daily routine (Hilbrecht et al., 2008). Usually, children have memories about seasonal physical activities (Wu et al., 2019), sites, restaurants, museums: these memories are fundamentals during the reconstruction of the vacation for a child because they are real and extraordinary memories that help the child to have a clear vision of what the holiday has been (Hilbrecht et al., 2008). The idea of fun during holidays is also related to doing things that a child cannot do at home (Blichfeldt, 2007) and the more a holiday is fun the more this holiday and its related activities will be memorable (Rhoden et al., 2016; Schänzel & Smith, 2011). Fun decreases when children feel parental control (Hilbrecht et al., 2008). Instead, autonomy is very positive and allows children to feel autonomous and engage in activities even as individuals and not as members of the family group: Rhoden et al. (2016) state the fun perceived by children increases in fact if they can carry out activities ‘in their own world’, feeling protected by parents. Sometimes the presence of strangers is seen as negative, other times as positive when the child can share activities with peers or staff members and make new friends (Rhoden et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2019). On the contrary, Blichfeldt (2007) finds out that a teenager as a tourist feels the need for autonomy, especially in the activities during the holiday.

Another children’s thought is that holiday means time spent with family (Blichfeldt et al., 2011; Rhoden et al., 2016; Schänzel & Smith, 2011; Wu et al., 2019). During the holiday children are active and proactive in every family decision-making process (Blichfeldt et al., 2011), this emerged in the analysis of children’s memories; usually, families choose places because of child’s preferences or needs. With the analysis of children’s memories, it emerged that these are strictly related to the general idea with all stereotypes that the child has of a country (Cullingford, 1995). Through a consumer socialization perspective, family, media, and marketing operators as agents have a profound impact on building the idea of a country in children’s imagination. The article of Wu et al. (2019) *Chinese children's family tourism experiences* shows that even Chinese children have the same holiday’s perceptions of western children, and the main factors that are significant in the remember of the memorable experiences concern funnies activities, local food, landscapes and physical activities in general. Schänzel and Smith (2011) confirm this tendency by asking children to bring some photos of their holidays; in most cases, they choose photos of particular activities or particular sites and foods.

Another article typology that has emerged in our review is the one that set to be useful under a managerial perspective. Two studies analyze programs and services that are offered in hotels and resorts especially dedicated to children. In *An analysis of children’s play in resort mini-clubs: potential strategic implications for the hospitality and tourism industry* (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019) researchers have analyzed the programs and related activities of six resort mini-club, and it appears that there is a new dimension of fun that are developed in these sites to satisfy children’s needs as tourists. This finding reinforces what I found in the other articles: the significant interest of building an offer for children in which fun has a central

role. Even the article *An Analysis of Children's Programs in the Hotel and Resort Industry Market Segment* (Gaines et al., 2004) reinforces findings of our review: outdoor children's activities are largely present and are many activities are shared in groups with peers of similar age. Even the food proposal in these structures has an interest in proposing something dedicated to tourist-children.

#### 4.6 Five emergent dimensions of tourist-child research

From this scoping review, it emerges that there are five main dimensions concerning the topic of tourist-child in tourism research: experiential and memorable dimension, educational and cultural dimension, familiar dimension, strategic dimension, and ethical dimension are showed in figure 3.

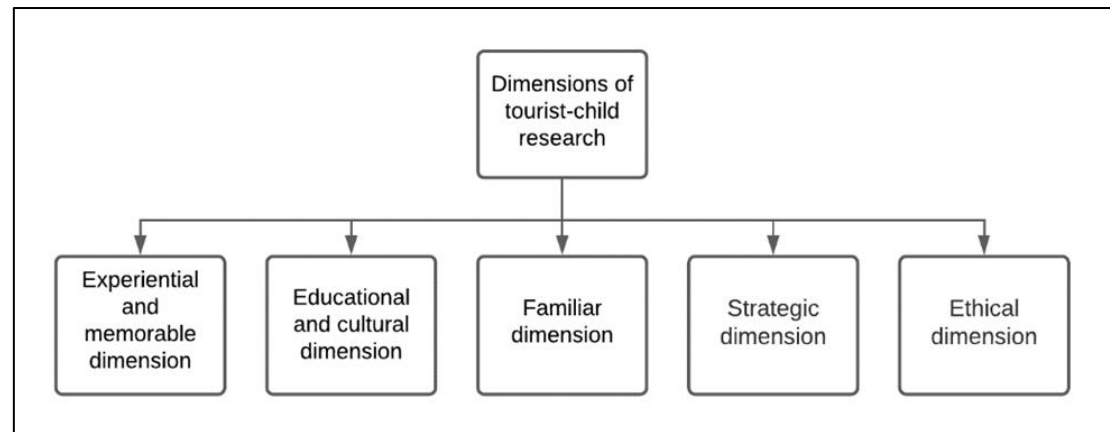


Figure 3. Five dimensions of tourist-children research

The experiential and memorable dimension concerns studying how children perceive decision-making dynamics before, during, and after holidays and it includes studies that focus on perceived experiences and memories about the holiday (Blichfeldt et al., 2011; Cullingford, 1995; Hilbrecht et al., 2008; Radic, 2019; Rhoden et al., 2016; Schänzel & Smith, 2011; Small, 2008; Thornton et al., 1997; Wu et al., 2019). This field of research focuses on perceptions and memories of a particular holiday that the child has experienced. Usually, researchers conduct the study after the holiday, relatively near to the past experience. In some cases, there is a face-to-face interaction between children and researchers during the holiday through video-calls. This dimension is the main developed area of research, where the perception of the holiday is strongly studied to give insights about what children remember about holidays.

The educational and cultural dimension explores the meaning of tourism experiences for children in terms of heritage, culture, and learning

(Bos et al., 2015; Frost & Laing, 2017; Israfilova & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019; Kerr & Price, 2016; Poria et al., 2005) . The main characteristic of this field of research is exploring how travel, holidays, and tourism experiences impact on child's knowledge and learning skills. Social tourism research considers that point as a priority, not only for children but for all tourists that are in a weak economic situation. Tourism has a significant value in terms of transmission of culture, heritage, and knowledge. In tourism and management research is easy to forget the cultural dimension in which most of the tourism attractions develop their marketing plan, intentionally or not. Be aware of the cultural heritage and its all dimensions should be the key in the tourism supply's construction, and it should play an essential role in the segmentation of consumers, in this case, tourists. The cultural purpose of tourism is an interesting research area, especially talking about tourist-children. Giving to the tourist-child the right relevance in terms of supply implies various considerations about the relationship between learning and fun, opening a lot of different scenarios spacing from education, culture, marketing, and others.

The familiar dimension focus on the influence of parental style communication on the fruition of tourism experiences for children. I could potentially include in this dimension studies that have a 'main focus on family tourism' that I excluded in the screening phase because of the importance of the family in this dimension, but this should not be correct because of the lack of focus on the child himself. This dimension emerged in detail due to the articles of Shavanddasht and Schänzel (2017, 2019). In fact, in this specific dimension, the purpose is to analyse how tourist-children, in this specific case adolescents, approach and live a tourist experience differently based on the parental communication style. This emergent field of research is full of potential because it gives a complementary perspective on the popular studies that have a main focus on the family perceptions, adding the plus to differentiate families basing on particular characteristics. Considering the existing multiple different types of families, the evolution of social class differentiation, and the different cultural characteristics of each family, this field appears extremely interesting and full of possibilities.

The strategic dimension concerns studies that explore the strategic plans in hotels and resorts involving children and families (Gaines et al., 2004; Poria & Timothy, 2014; Seraphin & Yallop, 2019). Characteristics of studies of this dimension are analysing hotels and resorts programs for children and families, even interviewing hospitalities' staff members (Gaines et al., 2004).

The ethical dimension includes the main interest to protect children when they are involved in research as a direct sample (Canosa & Graham, 2016; Khoo-Lattimore, 2015) . This field aims to show that researching with children is important because of the need to give a voice to them, especially in tourism research, in which children have an essential influence on the family's decisions (Canosa & Graham, 2016). Ethical implications and guidelines are necessary for a study that involves children as direct participants, and there is a need for explicitly in articles because it is an essential part of the method used.

## 5. Conclusion and future research

With this scoping review, I studied tourist-child in tourism research, giving a detailed answer to the general question of this research that is: how is the child studied as tourist in tourism research?. Following and answering some specific research questions I analysed the main approaches used (i), exposed purposes and methods (ii), investigated main characteristics and findings of the studies (iii), and identified five emergent dimensions in this field of research (iv), giving a clear idea of what has been done in the tourism research field to study tourist-child and exposing findings in details in the above sections.

It emerged that the interest regarding this field of research is growing in the last years, giving a voice for children's needs, desires and perceptions as tourist-children because the focus on studying directly tourist-children's perspectives gave a new direction for tourism research. I made a clear choice excluding studies that treated family as a tourist group, avoiding to quit the focus on the tourist-children as an individual and not as a simple member of a family group. The purpose of the review has been reached: I made order into extant literature concerning tourist-children, giving to the academy an organized source for future research and also to hospitality system since the studies of this field are growing, especially in the last years.

I aimed to provide a theoretical framework of extent tourism literature to highlight the dimensions of research that have addressed tourist-children until now by the scholars. This review is a base for the following step of research due to the necessity to understand if other relevant dimensions investigating tourist-children exist, both for academy and businesses. Thanks to this work, I also aimed to give a useful framework for all the tourism organizations that are interested in intercepting this strategic demand segment, giving insights for the optimal strategic organization of management and marketing issues.

The same review can also be conducted on other databases and considering other fields of research, increasing the completeness of state of the art's knowledge. Especially from a management perspective, some studies that are not strictly about tourism research, for example, businesses and communications studies, could give a relevant contribution to this topic and could be an essential tool for the hospitality system.

Five dimensions emerge from this review: tourist-children in tourism research are studied in different ways depending also on these dimensions. We noticed that the major dimensions are the 'experiential and memorable' one and 'educational and cultural' one. Instead, research dedicates less importance to the 'familiar dimension' and the 'strategic dimension'. Especially there is a prominent gap concerning the 'strategic dimension' of tourism research; this scoping literature review does not identify so many studies that explore the tourism supply for tourist-children.

Future research should consider these findings, having a clear awareness: studying tourist-children in a family group view or considering tourist-child as a real and single consumer with special needs and desires, admitting that he/she has not just a passive/active influence on family choices, following also the consumer socialization research. Measuring the role of tourist-child as an active member has to be considered not just for managerial implication but also to give real and right protection to these growing consumers and tourists. Also, mixing various dimensions, and do not focus just on one, can give a new impulse to tourism research: for example, a study can mix 'educational and cultural dimension' with the 'strategic dimension' to analyze cultural supply for tourist-children to have advices for museums. The educational purpose of tourism research for children has to be considered as an urgent issue to address because, most of all, it is necessary to give a voice for tourist-children. Hospitality system and other tourist sites' have to be improved and modified in this sense to understand how to protect and how to build a fair supply for tourist-children and their families. Another example of future research is that it could also be useful for hospitality system is knowing how to structure more effective services for children and their families. With the analysis of the subject's satisfaction during and after the holiday, hospitality businesses can deeply understand the real perceptions of customers. This type of study can cover the gap in the 'strategic dimension'. Another typology of study that could cover this gap lies in the analysis of how social media generate comments and memories about a destination, hotels, or other, and how the extracted information can play a strategic role in the optimal proposal of tourism services and experiences, under a marketing management perspective, both for communicated images and tourism activities.

This study sheds light on a new field and provides a clear guide for future research, resuming, and making order into the previous studies. We understand the complexity of researching with children, but we also believe that it is crucial to develop some ethical guidelines that could help researcher in conducting studies with these little tourists since this topic is becoming popular in tourism research and growing in the last years, as proved by the current study. Especially tourism, cultural, and social industries should embrace the importance of children in their strategic plans, investigating more on these subjects and their particular needs.

This review is a useful instrument for researchers or businesses that want to conduct a study in this specific growing field of research and contributes to enriching the extant tourism literature concerning tourist-children.

## **6. Limitations**

This study obviously has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. The first limit of this review is that during the research on Scopus and Web Of Science, I respectively limited the selection to categories 'Tourism, Leisure, and Hospitality Management' on Scopus and the

'Hospitality, leisure, sport, tourism' category on WoS. The scoping review using PRISMA Protocol could have excluded relevant articles because of this choice, even if this was done accordingly to our research aim. This review included only articles specifically related to tourism research, excluded automatically other articles that could contribute to research.

Furthermore, the focus on tourist-children is not always made clear and expressed in the abstract, which increases the risk of excluding some relevant articles during the screening of abstracts phase. Another limit is the fact that I just analyzed open-access articles even if this is explained and appropriate choice for this review, reasons of this choice were already exposed in the previous sections. The choice to limit the research only on articles and review, excluding books and other types of documents, like the one to select just English language documents, is another limit explained by previous research (Koseoglu et al., 2016).

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## **Chapter 3 (Paper 2)**

### **Systematic literature review: main procedures and guidelines for interpreting the results**

#### **Abstract**

This paper wants to study how and why children are studied by hospitality management research. In doing this, a systematic literature review is conducted, building an explicit search equation and selecting the final sample based on the research questions. Results show a growing interest in considering children by the hospitality management research, often going through a direction that considers sustainable tourism and education for tourists. These results are of undoubted importance for future research.

#### **Highlights**

- A systematic literature review was conducted following PRISMA protocol
- A search equation was built on the basis on the research questions, using also the Thesaurus Eurovoc and UNESCO Thesaurus
- A sample of Hospitality management literature was selected, according to inclusion and exclusion criteria
- Main methods, methodologies and approaches in doing research with children in Hospitality management research were studied

#### **Key points**

systematic review

research question

PRISMA original protocol

search equation, inclusion and exclusion criteria, screening phase

results' interpretation

Hospitality Management

Tourism

Children

## **1. Introduction**

Through the previous chapter, I identified the most neglected dimensions in researching with tourist children in tourism research, conducting a scoping review. One of these identified dimensions is the strategic dimension. It is not usual to find studies of the tourism field of research focusing on tourist children from a managerial point of view. For this reason, with this paper, I want to analyse the Hospitality Management (HM) literature to understand how, when, and why this specific field of research studies children. In doing so, I decided to conduct a systematic literature review (SLR). The SLR is an innovative technique to conduct the first phase of the research. This methodology helps map the state-of-the-art of the existing literature, allowing the researchers to organize and explore topics and results that will be the starting-point of their future research.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 Origins, typologies, and goals of the SLR**

Systematic literature review (SLR) is a bibliographic analysis initially adopted by health research, which had the main objective of comparing many different clinical trials and study results. John and Evans say that a SLR is “a scientific investigation with pre-planned methods that summarizes, synthesizes and communicates the results of multiple previous studies” (Jones & Evans, 2000). During the years, many other research branches started to use this kind of methodology to conduct their literature review, adapting the method to their research goals and questions. For example, the possible adoption of the SLR in the management field is exposed in the article of Tranfield et al. (2003), which argues that the management research could take advantage of this method due to its ‘pragmatical’ essence. However, management research is different from the health-care/medical research due to the fragmented and interdisciplinarity nature of the first one, so it is necessary to adapt the SLR considering these characteristics (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009). For this reason the Cochrane and the Campbell Collaboration networks work jointly as Economics Method Group (C-CEMG) to ‘facilitate the inclusion of economic evidence into Cochrane and Campbell systematic reviews of interventions, in order to enhance the usefulness of review findings as a component for decision-making’<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://methods.cochrane.org/economics/about-us>

Furthermore, among other the Management Review Quarterly (Fisch & Block, 2018), the Journal of supply chain management (Durach et al., 2017), the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (Palmatier et al., 2018) and the Journal of Business Research (Snyder, 2019), published indications for conducting a SLR, this demonstrates the interest of business and management research on the use of systematic reviews in this research area. The SLR adoption has several advantages, especially when the topic is specific and well-defined in the research bonds. With the use of transparent methods, of a defined search strategy and a critical approach in the drawn of the conclusions, the SLR could be a useful tool both for researchers and practitioners (Briner & Denyer, 2012). It allows the researcher to avoid irrelevant topics/papers/research, screening and selecting what is useful for the literature review of the specific work/research without losing the way into the extant literature's extensive amount of data.

The SLR can also be a double-edged weapon for new researchers or students because, not having a wide knowledge of the topic, they could base the search on questions not enough specific and invalidate the whole review. In this case, Tranfield et al. (2003) recommend to conduct a scoping review before the SLR with the aim to be more comfortable with the topic, and understand what is known about the topic. A scoping review is generally helpful to evaluate if a SLR is suitable for the research purpose, being a precursor of systematic review (Munn et al., 2018). Conducting a scoping review with a systematic search is also recommended due the opportunity to know the topic, the methods used, the major authors and it can also be helpful in the future choice of the search equation's terms.

## **2.2 Contribution of SLR in the exam of the state-of-the-art and main approaches**

A researcher can adopt different systematic literature reviews to analyse the state-of-the-art of interest: the systematic quantitative literature review, the systematic qualitative literature review, also referred to as systematic synthesis, and the mixed one. The researcher will choose between these different typologies according to the objectives of the analysis.

The quantitative systematic literature review is a statistical analysis of results or other data extracted from the identified records, and it could end with a meta-analysis. This type of review combines results of multiple studies, analyzing them with statistical methods to provide evidence from multiple studies with a unique broader sample. The qualitative systematic literature review is adopted when the researcher needs to conduct a thematic analysis to identify specific theories and concepts of a particular topic, systematically identifying the studies and synthesizing information. This type of review is also adopted when the aim is to compare results of qualitative studies, coding the data and searching for the themes that emerge as prominent. The use of grounded theory principles is often adopted in this case,

Saini and Shlonsky (2012) proposed 11 steps to follow for conducting systematic synthesis of qualitative studies. There could also be some reviews that use both approaches, generating mixed systematic reviews.

For example, if the study's objective is to compare the multiple effects of adopting a specific business intervention, maybe the systematic quantitative review could be the right option to map its effects. Besides, it often happens that the quantitative SLR results in a meta-analysis<sup>16</sup>, which is a statistical analysis of the quantitative data founded with the SLR; this option will be addressed in the following chapters/sections. The choice to conduct a meta-analysis after a SLR depends on the typology of data: if the data are homogeneous, it is possible to do a meta-analysis. Instead, if the data are heterogeneous, it is not easy to do a meta-analysis. However, suppose the study's objective is to compare different theories and concepts that emerged about a specific theme, such as influencer marketing. In that case, the qualitative systematic literature review could be more appropriate. The qualitative SLR is the optimal choice if the goal is to resume state-of-the-art a specific topic, analyse and compare concepts and theories, and compare different qualitative studies results.

### **2.3 Formulate the research question**

The formulation of the research question is significant for the success of the entire SLR. According to research goals, the definition of the research question permits the researcher to avoid mistakes, generating a specific and well postulated question (Fink, 2019).

For these reasons, Bryner & Denyer (2012) summarize some suggestions to keep in mind while elaborating on the research question. First of all, it is helpful to have a group of experts that can define the question on the basis of the following keywords that could be used for the practical search because, when researchers are also experts in the topic, it is easier to know precisely what is necessary to include or exclude in the formulation of the question, and consequently including or excluding keywords in the search equation. Another suggestion is to test the question's logical integrity and evaluate appropriateness according to the research goals. Finally, it is worthwhile to split the question into some little questions to improve the main one. This particular strategy will also be useful in the definition of inclusion or exclusion criteria.

In health-care research, there are some helpful indications to construct the research question that are the PICO and the PICO, which stands for Population or Problem', 'Intervention or Exposure', 'Comparison' and 'Outcome', and for 'Population or Problem', 'Interest' and 'Context'. PICO is adopted when conducting a systematic quantitative review. Instead, PICO is

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<sup>16</sup> 'Whereas systematic review identifies key scientific contributions to a field or question, meta-analysis offers a statistical procedure for synthesizing findings in order to obtain overall reliability unavailable from any single study alone' (Tranfield et al., 2003)



adopted in doing a qualitative review or qualitative synthesis. Along the same line, Denyer et al. (2008) developed the CIMO-logic, a helpful guide to construct the systematic review questions defining precisely the Context (C), Intervention (I), Mechanism (M), and Outcome (O). The objective is to define the inclusion/exclusion criteria following these specific components. CIMO-logic is especially helpful when doing a quantitative SLR to compare various effects of a specific intervention.

Let do an example of a systematic qualitative review since the quantitative SLR will be partly covered in the chapter on meta-analysis. in this case, the goal is to understand whether and how the hospitality management literature effectively considers children.

RQ: Which is the role of children in the hospitality management literature?

Q1. What are the characteristics of studies on HM and children?

Q2. What implications may the findings have for tourist facilities?

Q3. How the HM addresses the special needs of children?

Q4. Different perspectives, future directions, and gaps

## **2.4PRISMA original protocol**

The PRISMA protocol is the primary guiding framework that a researcher could follow when conducting a systematic literature review. This protocol has been developed by Moher et al. (Moher, 2009; 2015) due to the necessity to provide to the academy some guidelines for systematic reviews. It is a proposal to improve the publication of systematic reviews and meta-analysis. Figure 1 presents the PRISMA flow diagram.

As discussed above, the PRISMA guidelines are useful for following a general systematic work process in management research. Each study must be adapted to the objectives of each research.

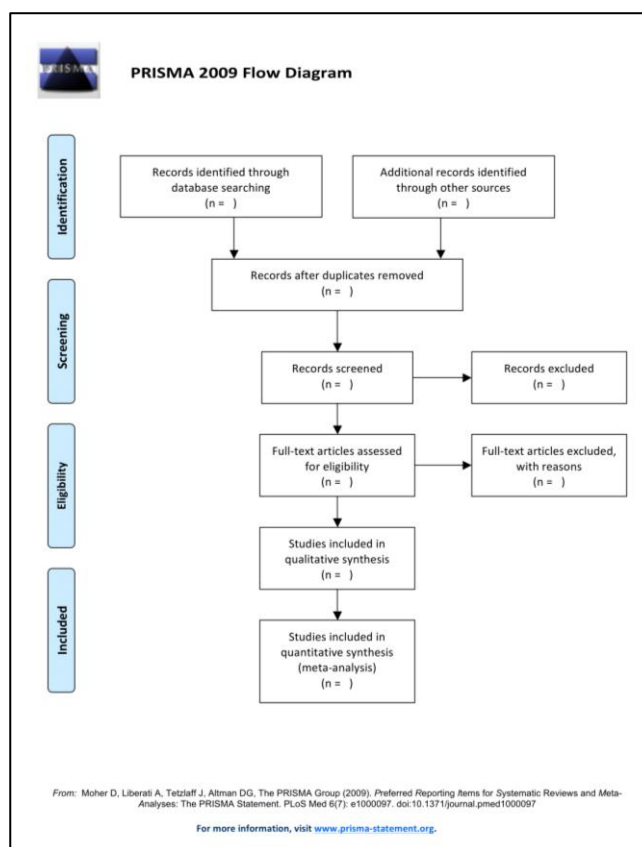


Figure 3. PRISMA Flow Diagram

The researcher can manually compile the flow diagram or use the online PRISMA Flow Diagram Generator via the link <http://prisma.thetacollaborative.ca/>, last accessed on January 19th 2021.

Several steps guide the SLR path:

1. Identification.

In this phase, the researcher collects all the records from databases and other sources. He will remove duplicates before the screening phase.

2. Screening.

In this phase, the researcher examines each record, usually looking at abstracts, keywords, or document types, excluding those that do not fill with the literature review's aim.

3. Eligibility.

In this phase, the researcher proceeds to screen full-text documents, excluding records that do not agree with the inclusion criteria.

4. Included articles.

The researcher now has the full number of articles for his review, having the necessary amount to conduct the qualitative synthesis and, if needed, the related meta-analysis.

### 3. Organizing the search (databases, operators and keywords list)

Organizing the research with a SLR is necessarily associated with well-defined step-by-step planning. The researcher has to choose the databases that he/she wants to use carefully. A researcher could opt for a specific database like PubMed or decide to search on the most popular databases like Scopus or Web Of Science, or Google Scholar. However, while WoS and Scopus are trustworthy databases, Google Scholar could be a dangerous tool due to the large volume of documents containing, due to the quality of these records, and the limited selection of filters. With WoS and Scopus, the researcher can use multiple filters depending on the goals of his research. In WoS, for example, the researcher can refine the search for Publication Years, WoS Categories, Document Types, Authors, or Funding Agencies. For these reasons, WoS and Scopus are more reliable and complete databases for a SLR. If the researcher can use specific thematic databases, this can also enhance the study. For example, many universities have access to general databases like ProQuest and EBSCOhost, or specific databases like Communication Source, Humanities Source, or ERIC databases. However, the recommendation is to conduct the advanced search on every database, when this option is available, instead of the basic one and use the Booleans Operators.

In any case, the researcher must carefully choose the keywords before starting the real search. Every choice of keywords has to be built based on the rules of the database. A significant role in identifying the most appropriate keywords is given by "thesaurus", which can be defined as structured lists in which words are grouped by semantic similarity<sup>17</sup>. In this regard, there are many online Thesaurus as UNESCO Thesaurus and Eurovoc, and sometimes the database itself has the associated Thesaurus like ERIC. For example, EBSCOhost has different Thesaurus depending on the topic: Business Thesaurus, Communications Thesaurus, Sociology Thesaurus, and others. Before choosing the keywords, it will help check on Thesaurus to choose the search equation accurately.

For the practical example, the Thesaurus Eurovoc has been used to identify all the terms that can replace and be referred as 'hospitality management', under the term 'tourism'<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> According to the ISO definition, the thesaurus is "a vocabulary of an indexing language controlled in a formalized way so that the a priori relationships between concepts are made explicit" (ISO 2788-1986)

<sup>18</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-vocabularies/th-concept//resource/eurovoc/4470?target=Browse>



Figure 4. Eurovoc, associated results to ‘hospitality management’ under the term ‘tourism’

Furthermore, by searching the term ‘tourism’ in the UNESCO Thesaurus, the results<sup>19</sup> in the figure 3 are obtained. The terms ‘tourist facilities’ and ‘tourism industry’ are helpful for our purpose and consistent with the research questions.



Figure 5. UNESCO Thesaurus, associated results under the term 'tourism'

The use of various Booleans Operators will also cover a helpful role in defining the search strategy. Therefore, the researcher must schedule every search based on the search equation and the specific database.

Here have some basic operators that are helpful for the search:

- \*. The researcher could use the wildcard \* at the end of one term when there is the willingness to include the plural, similar concepts, or derived words.

Ex. child\* AND adolescent\*

<sup>19</sup> : [thesaurus: Tourism \(unesco.org\)](https://thesaurus.unesco.org)

For example, for child\*, the database will find child, children, childhood, and others.

For adolescent\*, the database will find adolescent and adolescents.

- ?. The researcher could use this wildcard to replace a letter within the word.
- “ ”. The researcher could use the quotation marks (“ ”) to search an exact terms’ combination. The use of quotation marks (“ ”) allows the exact search of the typed phrase. This trick allows the researcher to narrow the results considerably and is useful when looking for expressions and concepts that are commonly expressed with a set of words.

Ex. hospitality management’

For example, the database will find all the records that have hospitality management as a set of words.

- Parenthesis (). Researchers must use the parenthesis to close terms’ combination with OR when using both OR and AND in the equation.

Ex. (child\* OR adolescent\*) AND ('hospitality management' OR 'tourism industry' OR 'tourism management' OR 'tourism planning' OR 'tourist facilities' OR 'hotel industry' OR 'tourist industry')

Here there is a list of the most used Boolean operators that are common to every database:

- AND. When researchers want to have results that include a term AND another term.

Ex. child AND adolescent\*

- OR. When researchers want to search documents that contain at least one of specific terms.

Ex. (child OR adolescent) AND (tourist OR visitors)

- NOT. When researchers want to have results containing one term but NOT another term.

Ex. (child\*) NOT (adult)

- NEAR. When the researchers want to search a word that is near to another word, this is called proximity operator. The proximity (number of words near the word) depends on the database, but in WoS you can define the proximity by yourself (NEAR/x).

Ex. (child NEAR/5 tourist)

The researcher also has to care in selecting where the words’ list has to be applied: the optimal choice is to search for the topic, that searches in the title, abstract, author, and keywords. In WoS, researchers can apply this choice by writing TS= before the keywords combination.

Before launching the search, it is essential to refine the search criteria, like the language of studies, research area, or the document's typology, considering each sub-group meeting the study's goals. In WoS, each journal is categorized into a thematic area, and each one of these has sub-areas inside. So, if researchers adopt a multidisciplinary approach, there is no need to work on this specific possibility. However, if the goal is to search for a specific theme, researchers could take advantage of this option. In this case, this choice will be clarified in the final paper. Some databases give the option to refine the search even after the launch, but the recommendation is to apply all the possible filters before the launch.

After the search's launch, the researcher has to export the articles' list for a more practical analysis of each abstract to finally decide which articles have to be included in the study. The results list can be exported in many formats for the most used bibliographic Software as EndNote and Refworks, or in the BibTex format that runs on Zotero. In this phase, the most important thing is to export the list containing the abstracts and the citation details if needed. Note that, for example, in WoS, there is a limit to export 500 records at once so, if there are more than 500 records, the export must be in two or more rounds.

### **3.1 Building and meeting the criteria of inclusion/exclusion**

Defining the inclusion and exclusion criteria is going to be one of the most relevant things to do.

With the formulation of the search equation and the keywords, the researcher should already have some logical inclusion or exclusion criteria.

Before starting the abstract screening phase, researchers should define inclusion and exclusion criteria in a general way. For example, suppose researchers want to include just studies with a sample of managers in the review. In that case, this should be placed as inclusion criterion, allowing researchers to include only the studies that meet this criterion. An example of exclusion criterion could be the study's approach, if researchers want to map just qualitative or quantitative studies, for example. The definition of the exclusion criteria could also be developed during the analysis: deciding that having studies focusing on social dynamics does not meet the review's goals. However, the definition of the inclusion and exclusion criteria often goes hand in hand with the analysis, where the continuous discussion between authors/researchers plays an important role.

The researcher also has to consider which documents are relevant for the study, deciding to limit the research on English language documents, papers, or materials published in a defined period, or papers with special keywords, everything based on the SLR's objectives.

With the example of our systematic qualitative review there already is a search equation, based on the thesauri's research terms and on the research questions, that is:

((child\* OR adolescent\*) AND ('hospitality management' OR 'tourism industry' OR 'tourism management' OR 'tourism planning' OR 'tourist facilities' OR 'hotel industry' OR 'tourist industry'))

Launching this search equation on WoS results in 203 records, on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2021.

The objective is to investigate the tourism management research, so we decided to limit the search to the category 'hospitality leisure sport tourism', resulting in 81 records. This choice results to be an inclusion criterion.

The search was refined with filters by document type (article) and by language (English).

In the table n. 3, there is an example of the inclusion and exclusion criteria of this search.

Inclusion criteria
Language: English Type: article Topic: every topic that may answer the study's research goals and questions Management studies CATEGORIES WoS: limit to (hospitality leisure sport tourism)
Exclusion criteria
Not meeting inclusion criteria Health-care studies Workforce studies Tourism's managers life issues Host-families and host-children studies Child-sex tourism studies Orphanage tourism studies Volunteer tourism studies

Table 3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Export the final list through the button 'export', choosing the file format and the record content, as shown in figure 4. We exported the list with 'other reference software due to the fact that we are going to work with Zotero and selecting 'Author, Title, Source, Abstract' file format.

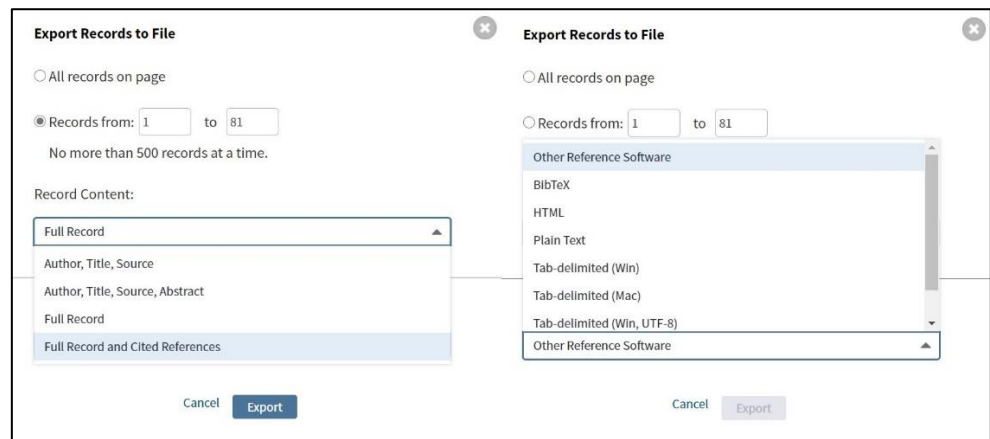


Figure 6. Export from WoS

If the search has been conducted on several databases, duplicates have to be removed. This could be done using a bibliographic software like Zotero or Mendeley, and then regenerating the list to start the screening phase manually or with other Softwares. It is effortless to find the resources to do this phase, for example, at the link [https://www.zotero.org/support/duplicate\\_detection](https://www.zotero.org/support/duplicate_detection) it shown how to remove duplicates with Zotero.

#### 4. Screening phase: Nvivo and Bibliometrix

The next phase is the screening phase. During this phase, researchers have to read each abstract or resume to determine if they fit the inclusion criteria. When researchers are more than one, this phase could be long and is usually done individually by each researcher, measuring the agreement rate between their choices and doing a final confrontation, and deciding which documents are suitable for the study and which are not.

Nowadays there are several software and app that help to do this phase, even Zotero or Mendeley gives the possibility to do this phase. Our advice is to do the screening phase on the bibliographic software, if possible, and only after that, export the list on the other software for the analysis. Also, Zotero allows the researcher to find all the available PDFs automatically. In the automated search, be sure to be connected to the university through VPN to find PDFs, and note that you have to download each document and attach to the particular record for Elsevier documents. Two of the best-known softwares used for SLR are NVivo and the Biblioshiny app, that are briefly mentioned below.

Our screening phase results in 42 final records.

Once you have all the available PDFs you should read fully each document and consider to include or exclude in your final analysis. It could happen that some records does not fit with your goals, even if they contain



the words of the equation search in the title/abstract, this will result in the PRISMA's full-articles excluded category.

## 5. Interpreting and presenting the results

For the analysis, it could be very helpful to use Nvivo software<sup>20</sup>. The exportation of the results list with the associated abstracts on Nvivo allows the researcher to read and study each document quickly. In this case, export the list from Zotero in the format RIS, and import it in Nvivo, naming files by Author and year, as shown in figure 5. You will find each abstract as a single memo.

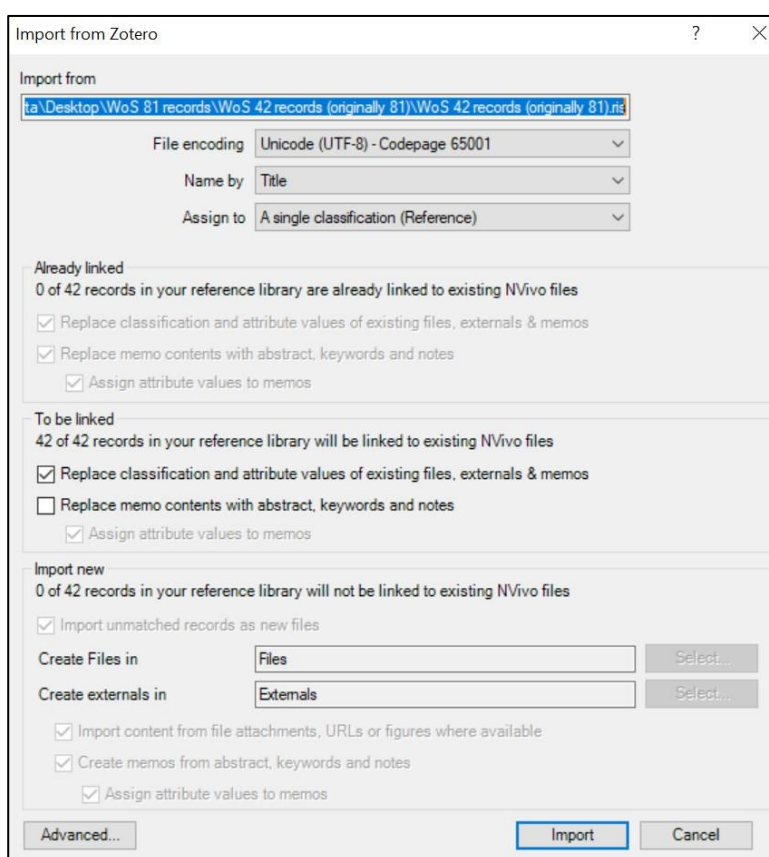


Figure 7. Import data from Zotero to Nvivo

Also, Nvivo is useful because, during the analysis, the researchers can code the articles according to findings, methodologies, and others, having many interesting tools to present the final studies sample graphically, categorizing documents or information into nodes.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home>



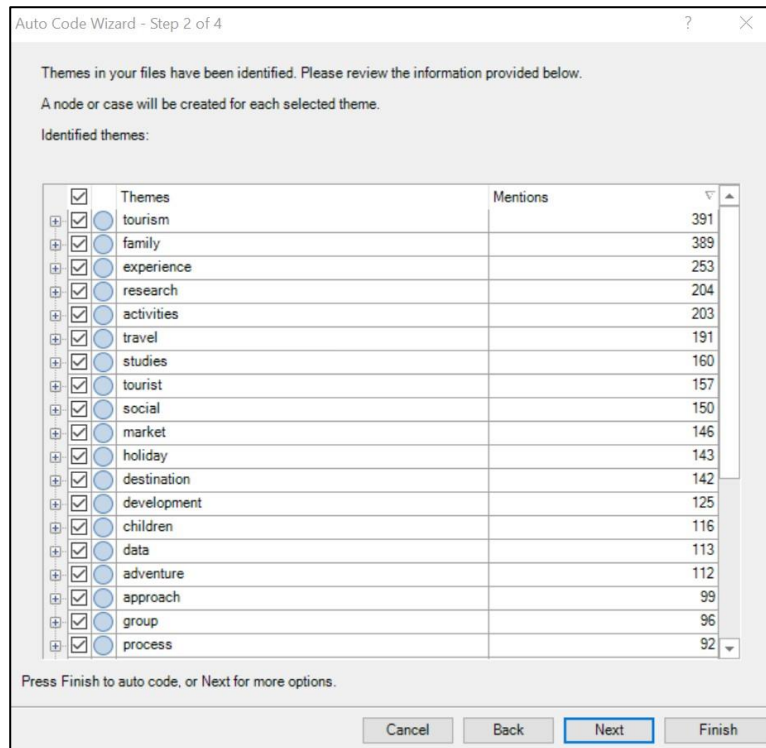


Figure 9. Example of Auto Code

Choosing the interested topic from auto codification, Nvivo allows you to create hierarchy charts, shown in figure 8, and tree maps.

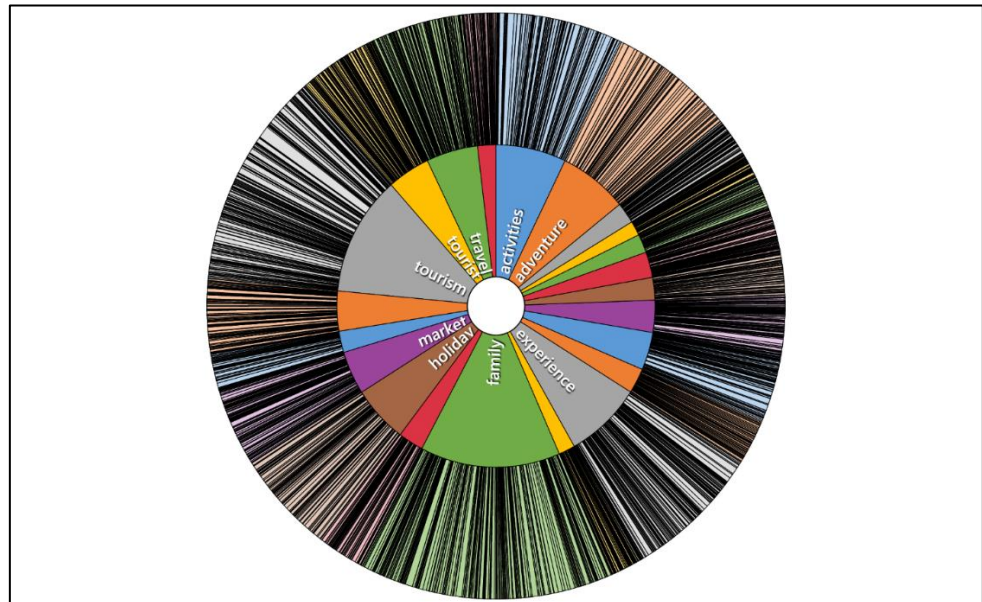


Figure 10. Example of Hierarchy chart with Automated Codification

The Nvivo software website provides many interesting learning resources and tutorials<sup>21</sup>, both for the literature analysis and for the qualitative analysis. Also, the academy has many indications through manuals and articles regarding the use of Nvivo for literature review (Di Gregorio, 2000; Bandara, 2006; Johnston, 2006; Beekhuyzen, 2007; O'Neill et al., 2018). Several tutorials are also available on YouTube website.

Another possibility to conduct the SLR is the use of Bibliometrix through Biblioshiny app<sup>22</sup>. Bibliometrix is a package for the statistic software R that allows the researcher to do a bibliometric analysis on some documents, analyzing metadata from WoS and Scopus' lists.. Biblioshiny app is developed to allow no coders to use Bibliometrix, opening a new tab in the favorite browser, Biblioshiny allows the researcher to analyze obtained data through multiple ways, presenting the search results graphically. The official website provides many tutorials with both videos and slides, under the section 'documents'.

One of the app creators, professor Massimo Aria, has created a playlist on YouTube with many useful indications for the use of the software<sup>23</sup>.

As we already said, such programs as Nvivo and Biblioshiny could help the researcher a lot in interpreting and presenting the results, helping the author to extract information.

There are several ways to presenting the results of a SLR. Researchers can analyze some data regarding the temporal evolution of the research in a specific field, in which journals or countries the articles are published, which are the primary authors, the numbers of citations, and others. Presenting these types of data through graphs and sheets gives the reader an idea of the topic's entity. Both Nvivo and Biblioshiny are suitable for these objectives.

Other Softwares suitable for bibliometric analysis are VosViewer<sup>24</sup>, SciMat<sup>25</sup>, or BibExcel<sup>26</sup>.

## 5.1 Case study's results

It emerged that the majority of the articles adopt a qualitative approach in conducting their studies. When adopting a qualitative study, researchers

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<sup>21</sup><https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/resources/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.bibliometrix.org/>

<sup>23</sup>[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsNFwsLOatY&list=PLvOZfnJZEfino6g\\_tYXzCg8PcdLNxD6sn&ab\\_channel=ResearchHUB](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsNFwsLOatY&list=PLvOZfnJZEfino6g_tYXzCg8PcdLNxD6sn&ab_channel=ResearchHUB)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.vosviewer.com/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://sci2s.ugr.es/scimat/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://homepage.univie.ac.at/juan.gorraiz/bibexcel/>

often use in-depth interviews (Marschall, 2015; Wen, 2020), semi-structured interviews (Lugosi et al., 2016; Yung et al., 2020). Furthermore, when the study includes both parents and children it happens that researchers do two different focus groups, one for parents and one for children (Peattie et al., 2005). Moreover, there is the frequent use of drawings, pictures and activity books when the study includes children (Buzinde & Manuel-Navarrete, 2013; Koscak et al., 2018; Seraphin, 2020).

When adopting a quantitative approach, researchers frequently use structured questionnaires (Nicolau, 2008; Ruddy et al., 2015; Fu et al., 2017; Jamal et al., 2019; Shavanddasht & Schaenzel, 2019). In other cases, researchers use existing statistical data provided by organizations (Hardiman & Burgin, 2017a; Talon-Ballesteros et al., 2018). Some researchers also prefer to conduct qualitative interviews to gain important information and, on the basis of this, building and conducting the questionnaire, adopting a mixed-method approach (Cetinkaya et al., 2018; Wang, 2019).

The sample could be different according to the research's objectives, there are interviews with families with no children (Kim et al., 2010) and families with children (Gustafsson et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2020), note that parents and children can be interviewed jointly or separately. In other cases researchers interview just the parents (Lugosi et al., 2016; Li et al., 2017, 2020; Wen, 2020), others just children (Buzinde & Manuel-Navarrete, 2013; Radic, 2019).

The implications of these studies differ a lot. From a managerial point of view, the most relevant for our analysis is the category of strategic implications. In the final selection, there are many articles providing pieces of advice about children for the tourism industry and hospitality sector (Li et al., 2017; Seraphin & Green, 2019; Li et al., 2020; Papen et al., 2020; Seraphin, 2020), for destinations (Wang, 2019; Yung et al., 2020), for a specific tourism sector (Kim et al., 2010; Ruddy et al., 2015; Guo et al., 2016; Hardiman & Burgin, 2017; Cetinkaya et al., 2018; Jamal et al., 2019; Pomfret, 2019b; Radic, 2019), hotel chain management (Talon-Ballesteros et al., 2018), for accessible tourism (Dickson et al., 2017), for mini-clubs management (Seraphin, 2020), responsible tourism and education of children (Cvelbar, Grün, et al., 2017; Seraphin, 2020), tourist safety (Peattie et al., 2005) and HR management (Lugosi et al., 2016).

Other typologies of implications are families costs optimization while travelling (Gustafsson et al., 2020), families' communication and conflict while travelling (Yang et al., 2020), sustainable tourism development (Chatkaewnapanon & Kelly, 2019), food waste problems (Juvan et al., 2018), tourist sensitivity (Nicolau, 2008), museums' offer to families (Shen et al., 2020), and event planning (Bek et al., 2019).

The Hospitality Management research positively considers children as tourists. The research is going to grow over the last few years, only four articles of the final sample were published before 2015 and 23 articles, more than half of the final selection, are published in 2019 and 2020.

Moreover, these articles confirm that there is a growing interest from the tourism industry for tourist children. These researches try to investigate children's perceptions (Buzinde & Manuel-Navarrete, 2013; Koscak et al.,

2018; Bek et al., 2019; Pomfret, 2019; Radic, 2019; Shavanddasht & Schaenzel, 2019; Gustafsson, 2020; Li et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2020), children's needs and desires (Peattie et al., 2005; Lugosi et al., 2016; Li et al., 2017; Jamal et al., 2019; Ben Lahouel & Montargot, 2020; Seraphin & Yallop, 2020), children's memories (Marschall, 2015; Seraphin & Green, 2019; Gustafsson, 2020; Gustafsson et al., 2020;), and children's potentiality (Lugosi et al., 2016; Seraphin, 2020a, 2020b; Seraphin et al., 2020; Wen, 2020; Yung et al., 2020).

There is a general direction that suggests continuing the research on tourist children, especially in sustainable tourism and educational field (Marschall, 2015; Cvelbar, Grun, et al., 2017; Hardiman & Burgin, 2017; Koscak et al., 2018; Chatkaewnapanon & Kelly, 2019; Jamal et al., 2019; Seraphin et al., 2020; Wang, 2019; Wen, 2020).

## **6. Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have explained the main features of the SLR, explaining in detail the step-by-step procedure and exposing the possible applications in the field of management and business research, both for the qualitative and quantitative SLR. Also, although SLR is a research technique mainly pertaining to health research, we have argued that in some cases, it may be a useful instrument for reviewing the literature.

In order to expose the multiple possibilities of SLR to researchers, the chapter offers specific guidelines that constitute a path to follow in doing a SLR. In this regard, we suggest that the academy carefully consider the use of SLR, according to the specific research goals and questions. However, we suggest to the academy to look for new applications and modifications regarding the use of SLR in this field of research.

## **7. Case study- a systematic literature review of recent research about ecotourism hospitality management**

Imagine the case of a researcher who wants to analyze recent publications in management research concerning ecotourism. He/she is an expert about the topic, but he focused on other topics during the last two years. For this reason, he wants to have a fast update of what is the current situation state-of-art.

Based on his research goals, he develops the following research question:

RQ: What are the latest developments in the Ecotourism management field of research?

Q1: Who are the primary authors?

Q2: In which countries is the topic studied?

He searches on Eurovoc and UNESCO Thesauri all the associated terms that are useful for his search. He searches for all the terms associated to 'Ecotourism' and to 'tourism management' in detail.

Tourism > Ecotourism	
PREFERRED TERM	<b>Ecotourism</b>  <a href="#">Search in UNESDOC</a>
BROADER CONCEPT	Tourism
RELATED CONCEPTS	Biosphere reserves Environmental conservation Natural heritage Nature conservation Sustainable development
ENTRY TERMS	Ecological tourism Green tourism Sustainable tourism
SCOPE NOTE	Environmentally friendly and socially responsible tourism.

Figure 11. Terms under 'Ecortourism' on UNESCO Thesaurus

Once he/she finds the right terms, he/she starts to build the search equation that results in the following combination of Boolean operators and terms:

(TS= ((ecotourism OR 'ecological tourism' OR 'green tourism' OR 'sustainable tourism') AND ('hospitality management' OR 'tourism industry' OR 'tourism management' OR 'tourism planning' OR 'tourist facilities' OR 'hotel industry' OR 'tourist industry'))))

The researcher launches the search on Web Of Science. We already mentioned that he/she aims to know only the articles published articles in the last 2 years and written in English, so he builds inclusion and exclusion criteria. He also decides to limit his/her search to the category 'hospitality leisure sport tourism' because deals mainly with research in the field of tourism.

Inclusion criteria
Language: English Type: article Years: 2020 and 2021 CATEGORIES WoS: limit to (hospitality leisure sport tourism)
Exclusion criteria

Not meeting inclusion criteria  
 Book chapters and conference proceedings  
 Documents not written in English  
 Publication before 2020

Table 4. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The search on WoS results in 351 documents. WoS itself gives us the possibility to answer the researcher’s questions. The researcher proceeds to analyze results and looks at the ‘authors’ section and the ‘countries/region’ section.

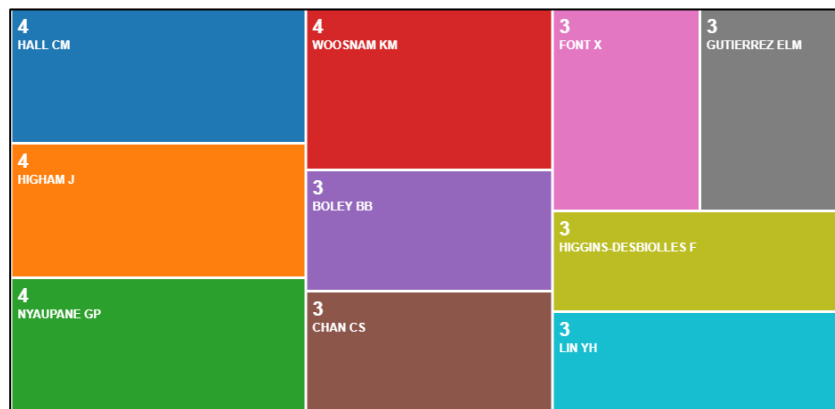


Figure 12. Results in WoS authors section

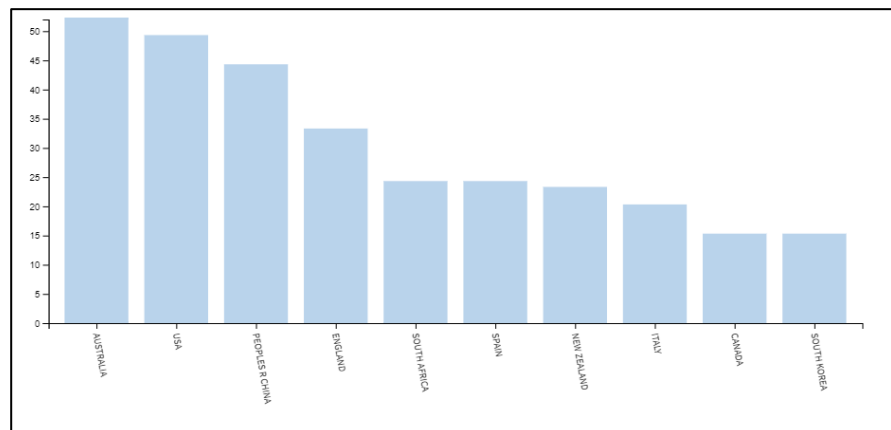


Figure 13. Results in WoS countries/region section

With this method, the researcher has quickly found the answers to his questions, and he also has the opportunity to see the most cited articles and choose which are of interest to complete his update on the subject.

If the researcher wants to make a more in-depth analysis, he would export the results and then analyze them. He exports the records’ list in the



BibTex format and then imports this list on Zotero. Here, he uses the option ‘find available PDFs’ to collect all the available files, as shown in figure 12.

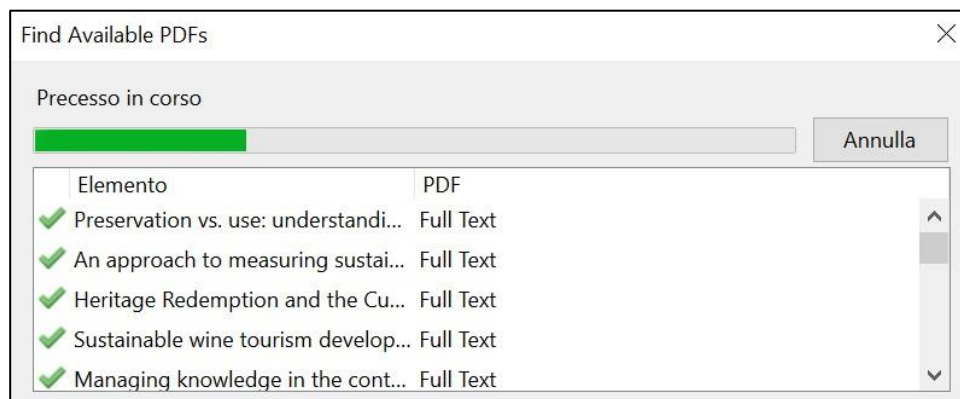


Figure 14. Zotero findings all the available PDFs

The researcher can now manually search for all the missing PDFs, one-by-one, and complete the selection with all available papers. In this case, the researcher will have a substantial amount of data that could be used for a more comprehensive analysis using other softwares.

The next step for more in-depth analysis is to work with a Biblioshiny app. Instead, if the researcher wants to focus on content analysis, he should consider using Nvivo and defining more detailed research questions.

## 8. Case questions

1. Considering the case study, please list the difficulties that the researcher might encounter.
2. How and in which steps do you think the research could be improved?
3. Considering the research goals, what is, in your opinion, the most suitable software for the researcher?

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## Online resources

[schema.elsevier.com/dtds/document/bkapi/search/SCOPUSSearchTips.htm](https://schema.elsevier.com/dtds/document/bkapi/search/SCOPUSSearchTips.htm)

[Web of Science: Order of precedence for Boolean operators \(clarivate.com\)](https://www.clarivate.com/web-of-science/order-of-precedence-for-boolean-operators)

[PRISMA Diagram Generator \(thetacollaborative.ca\)](https://thetacollaborative.ca/prisma-diagram-generator)

[About us | Cochrane Economics](https://www.cochrane.org/about-us)

[: UNESCO Thesaurus](https://www.unesco.org/thesaurus)

[Home - EU Vocabularies - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurodicum/home)

[https://www.zotero.org/support/duplicate\\_detection](https://www.zotero.org/support/duplicate_detection)

<https://www.bibliometrix.org/>

<https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home>

<https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/resources/>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsNFwsLOatY&list=PLvOZfnJZEfino6g\\_tYXzCg8PcdLNxD6sn&ab\\_channel=ResearchHUB](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsNFwsLOatY&list=PLvOZfnJZEfino6g_tYXzCg8PcdLNxD6sn&ab_channel=ResearchHUB)

<https://www.vosviewer.com/>

<https://sci2s.ugr.es/scimat/>

<https://homepage.univie.ac.at/juan.gorraiz/bibexcel/>

## **KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS- Definitions for the key constructs**

**Bibliometric analysis:** A statistical analysis that permits you to evaluate scientific publications according to certain metrics.

**Boolean operators:** Words that are necessary when searching on online databases, they are the glue of the final search equation. Basic Boolean operators are 'AND', 'OR', and 'NOT'.

**Exclusion criteria:** A set of specific criteria that permits to the researcher to exclude the studies that does not fit with the research's questions and goals, excluding them from the final selection.

**Inclusion criteria:** A set of specific criteria that permits to the researcher to include only the studies of interests in the final selection.

**Scoping review:** A type of review that is recommended to carry out in order to have a general knowledge of the research topic that you want to address. This review allows you to know the main authors, countries, theories and others.

**Search equation:** A set of keywords, wildcards, Booleans operators and connectors that the researcher chooses in order to conduct the search on online databases.

**Systematic review:** A specific type of literature review that follows a systematic process of search and analysis. It implies having a clear research question and goals, with defined inclusion and exclusion criteria.



## **Chapter 4 (Paper 3)**

### **Potentiality and weakness of EECs in Sardinia: chances to educate tourist-children and their families to the respect of the destination**

#### **Abstract**

Environmental Education Centres are studied for the ability to raise new awareness in children, generating an increasing change in society's behaviours regarding environmental issues. Moreover, the need to drive tourists, tourism facilities, and countries to a more sustainable tourism emerged also by recent academic research. Keeping in mind these topics, this research wants to analyse the work of ECCs in Sardinia, namely CEAS, as a case study, considering their actions as educators and offer's representants for tourists' education, especially for tourist children and their families. To do this, I conducted 24 qualitative interviews with managers of these CEAS, aiming to identify weaknesses and potentialities of CEAS in Sardinia in EE for tourist children and their families. Moreover, the objective is to provide a path to follow for the region Sardinia, CEAS, and the tourism stakeholders, in line with the development of sustainable tourism that could guarantee the protection and promotion of the tourism destination. The findings proved that there are several chances for Sardinia to develop a new policy. Working on a new positioning for the island as a sustainable island, acting in a sustainable tourism view, in which CEAS would play a key role. This study provides advice for the region Sardinia, CEAS, and all stakeholders involved in the tourist sector. Moreover, it also gives insights to implement a policy based on tourists' environmental education and on the strategy to promote and protect the destination at the same time. Managerial implications and future research directions are suggested.

#### **Highlights**

- This research wants to analyse the work of ECCs in Sardinia, namely CEAS, considering their actions as educators and offer's representants for tourists' education, especially for tourist children and their families.
- An analysis was performed with the help of Nvivo 12 Plus software to study managers' perceptions and opinions.

#### **Keywords**

Environmental education

Tourist children

EECs (CEAS)

Stakeholder marketing and management

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, it is becoming urgent for governments to deal with environmental issues. Climate changes, global warming, and environmental protection are just some of the many issues that society has to care for. For this reason, governments at the global scale are working to develop the societies' sensibility for these topics to guarantee the community's welfare via sustainable practices. It is necessary to adapt human behaviour for a more aware consumption, conducting a more sustainable life.

Sustainability is a crucial goal that needs to be addressed. All over the world, both institutions and businesses are working to adapt themselves to the new sustainable standards, both at international and local levels, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Still, it is not easy to persuade people to adopt pro-environmental practices in everyday life (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011). Institutions have a strategic role in this sense with the promotion of sustainable living practices, pursuing the aim to raise public awareness of these issues. However, sustainable education is growing as an institutional practice of wellbeing: primary resources that governments use in this sense are schools. Many are the programs and activities proposed to children by schools, following institutional guidelines, in an attempt to educate the new generations about sustainability and environmental protection.

Mario Salomone, during the opening speech of the 10<sup>th</sup> World Environmental Education Congress, exposed that 'environmental education must be the pivot, the guide and the beacon of the education for peace, for planetary citizenship, for fair trade, for social and environmental justice, for the global heating mitigation. At the same time, environmental education claims with satisfaction the fruit of decades of awareness-raising, to change consciences, give awareness, change attitudes and therefore behaviors, spread knowledge and above all build competencies of active and responsible citizenship and for change.' (Salomone, 2019)

However, worldwide businesses are trying to adequate to the new standards through a real 'greening' process (Murphy & Price, 2005). Even in the tourism sector, the research about sustainability is gaining attention because reducing tourism's negative impact on the environment becomes increasingly more imperative. It is also correct to say that tourism sells the environment considering it as a product, increasing tourism' interest in sustainability issues (Murphy & Price, 2005, p. 185). UNWTO's Global code of ethics for tourism reinforced sustainable recommendations (Hudson & Miller, 2005). The Article 3 of the code indicates tourism as a factor of sustainable development, adding that 'Tourism practitioners should safeguard the environment and natural heritage, preserve resources, and avoid waste production, ideally by agreeing to limitations on their activities in highly sensitive areas' (UNWTO, 1999).

The efficacy of tourism as a promoter of sustainable practices for protecting the environment and the destination has to be considered, not only as a short-term agent but especially as a long-term agent. Tourism research is giving attention to the tourists' education for the destination's protection, both for the environment and culture, in line with the new trends of sustainable research. For example, Ballantyne et al. (2009) found that for the optimal balance between wildlife and tourists' needs, it is decisive to work on the clear communication to tourists, explaining reasons why certain decisions are taken, emphasizing the fact that rules are needed to protect the environment and the species through conservation actions. Educating tourists to protect the environment during their stay in a tourist destination is crucial, primarily when sustainable learned lessons are employed in everyday life after the holiday through pro-environmental behaviors (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011). In respect of this, such activism forms for people's environmental education became an urgent issue to investigate, especially for tourist-children and families.

Tourist-children are underresearched subjects in tourism research (Small, 2008; Poria & Timothy, 2014). The education of tourists, in general, is not investigated deeply (Falk et al., 2012); moreover, the majority of the tourist initiatives are organized without considering tourist-children as independent and active consumers, thought as members of the tourist-family. Tourism can serve to grow sustainable awareness in a double way: acting on today's adult tourists and thinking about tomorrow's tourists organizing activities to educate tourist-children in the present, considering them as independent consumers. Moreover, tourist-children could help with the transmission of sustainable values and practices not only during the holiday but also later because 'Children, despite their minority status, can act as significant catalysts for environmental attitude and behavior change both in the community and home' (Uzzell, 1994, p. 7).

The Environmental Education Centres educate children worldwide to respect the environment, being essential landmarks for the entire local community. Nevertheless, their role is not always clear, and their actions are mainly dedicated to activities with schools and only in small part to the entire citizenship. Despite this way of action, EECs are significant and have a high potentiality that could help a lot of different sectors. One of these sectors is tourism, which needs help to promote the protection of the destination through marketing and management actions. Adopting responsible education management practices in the hospitality sector, especially targeting children, will assure the destination's respect today and act for the future creating awareness in the tourist of tomorrow (Seraphin & Thanh, 2020). Moreover, experiences and practices of ecotourism help this process of learning (Lee & Moscardo, 2005; Beaumont, 2011) alongside with the process of empowered tourist children (Seraphin et al., 2020).

The objective of this study is to firstly investigate the Environmental Education Centers' work, analyzing the offer's characteristics, the approaches adopted and the activities in their entirety. In doing this, the aim is also to identify problems and potentialities of these centers.

Secondly, I want to investigate if the centers include, in their offer, activities directed to tourist-children and their families, namely exploring if,

how and with which strategies Sardinian CEAS exploit the awareness of sustainability in a holiday context for the present and future protection of the destination. In respect of CEAS managers' knowledge as experts of the topic, another aim is to analyze new emergent topics, opportunities, obstacles and actionable strategies and potentially applicable by all tourism organizations that could be useful for the environmental education of tourists, specifically for tourist-children and their families.

To pursue the above mentioned objectives, an exploratory research design is adopted, conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews with 24 managers of *Centri di Educazione Ambientale e alla Sostenibilità*, namely Environmental Education and Sustainability Centres of Sardinia (Italy), from now on mentioned as CEAS. These centers dedicate themselves to residents and tourists' education, both children and adults, as said in the Sustainable principles Manifesto (*Carta dei Principi.pdf*, s.d.). They are similar to the EECs (Environmental Education Centres) which are primarily studied by the worldwide academy.

This study is highly innovative because it builds a bridge between EECs and the tourism sector, creating a connection in line with sustainable tourism and SDGs. Expressing the willingness and problems of CEAS, this study wants to fill the gap cited above, allowing all the tourism organizations to adapt themselves to some environmental educational strategies which are helpful in following a new path for the entire region of Sardinia.

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Environmental education**

The academy has investigated the topic of environmental education. Many researchers have deepened the relationship between environmental education and the transmission of sustainable habits to children (Ballantyne & Packer, 2006; Gentina & Muratore, 2012; Smith & Parsons, 2012; Busse & Menzel, 2014).

Institutions and governments have an essential role in this sense. Many are the activities organized by the governments to educate citizens of all ages, giving special attention to the education of children. For example, schools all over the world organize travel and trips, usually with a social or environmental purpose, specifically for the environmental education of children. Such types of activities are significant for the development of a real awareness for children, both cultural and environmental, and for establishing a connection between the child and nature or culture (Uzzell, 1999). Individuals can gain knowledge of the real world with activities that are organized out of the diary school context, feeding the curiosity and the learning of children efficiently. For these reasons, institutions and business managers (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005) must consider children and their needs

because, most of all, it is vital to educate children in the present to have a more conscious population in the future.

There is a need to change people's mindset for the protection of the entire world (Tilbury, 2006) because many are the ones who ignore the environment. The change could start especially from the information given to children: teaching them the environmental impact of our actions for the protection of the entire world can generate a change in the oldest generations (Sutherland & Ham, 1992; Uzzell, 1994; Duvall & Zint, 2007). This phenomenon is called intergenerational influence and identify the moment when, after a sustainable education activity done with classmates, the child educates parents or other older persons, transmitting essential knowledge that is necessary to promote environmental protection. Research proved that this kind of system has a positive effect on the adult's awareness, given for sure that should be considered more deeply within his managerial implications (Ballantyne et al., 2001), investigating the similarity between parents' and children's sustainable practices (Leppänen et al., 2012). Otherwise, some researchers have also studied the influence of parents on children's sustainable attitudes discovered that parents' behavior is more important than the established rules for the child's learning, as written by Aghayeeabianeh and Talebi in their research note *Environmentalism in families* (2020). This fact is also consistent with the Consumer Socialization, that indicate parents as primary socialization agents who adopt consumption practices that are further learned by children (Ward, 1974; Moschis, 1985; Roedder John, 1999; McNeal, 2007).

Moreover, according to reverse socialization, also, children influence parents' consumption habits (Ward, 1974). The influence of children on parents' environmental behaviors also changes based on different cultures and parenting styles, according to the type of relationship between parents and children (Aghayeeabianeh & Talebi, 2020). Gentina and Muratore (2012) propose the definition of environmental socialization as 'the process of learning pro-environmental behaviors, through the acquisition of relevant skills, knowledge, and attitudes, referring to every person who has been influenced by other people in changing his/her environmental behaviors. They also propose the definition of ecological resocialization (Gentina & Muratore, 2012; Gentina & Singh, 2015) referring to 'daily pro-environmental practices in which teenagers engage, such as reducing electricity or water consumption, not littering, using modes of transportation other than cars, buying "green" items, dividing garbage into different categories, and recycling'.

The potentiality of children empowerment to generate a change for sustainability and responsible tourism through the education is explained by a recent research (Seraphin et al., 2020) and exposed in the figure 15.

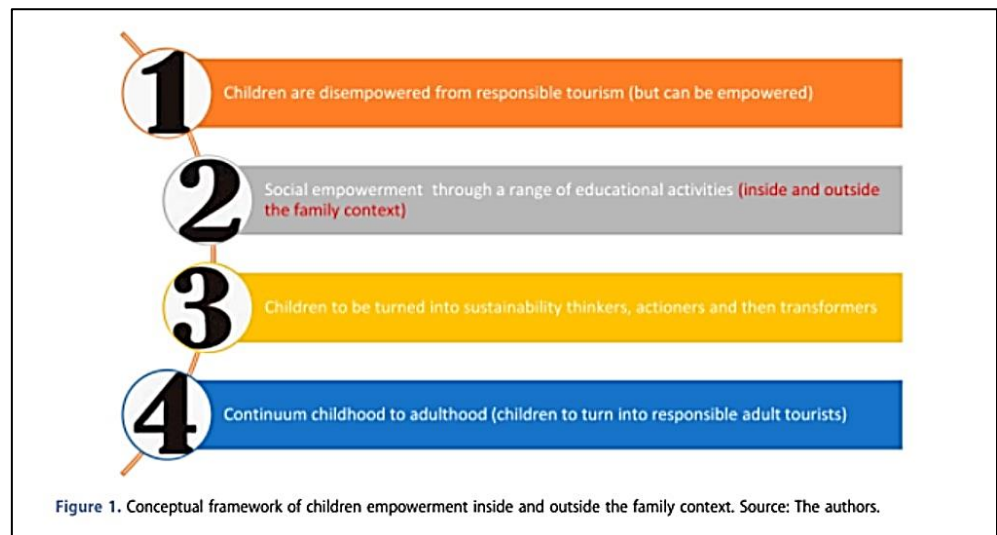


Figure 15. Conceptual framework of children empowerment inside and outside the family context<sup>27</sup>

## 2.2 Environmental Education Centers' activities and tourism

There are some activities of environmental education dedicated to parents and children jointly: these types of activities are commonly organized by EECs, mostly situated in natural sites, dedicated to the environmental education of people, with particular attention on children. EECs frequently collaborate with schools to propose programs and activities of environmental education (Mikami, 1999; Ballantyne & Packer, 2006; Tilbury, 2006), providing a necessary service both for institutions and communities often ensuring some special activities dedicated to the families out of the scholar context.

Italian EECs have also to provide environmental education opportunities to tourists, not only to residents, following the principles and purposes of Principles' Manifesto for environmental education oriented to a conscious and sustainable development (*Carta dei Principi.pdf*, s.d.). Tourism is increasingly considered as an endorser of sustainable practices and education due to the growing sensitivity to sustainability theme and the importance of minimizing its negative impact; this has generated an increase in sustainable tourism supplies (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011). Having active experiences, different from the ones lived during the diary routine, improve

<sup>27</sup> Seraphin, H., Yallop, A. C., Seyfi, S., & Hall, C. M. (2020). Responsible tourism: The 'why' and 'how' of empowering children. *Tourism Recreation Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2020.1819109>

the learning of sustainable principles so this type of learning is better than the one experienced in the classroom (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005). For this reason, experiencing an environmental education activity during a holiday should be very impactful both for the exceptional place of the experience and for the extraordinary moment of the holiday. The cooperation between tourist facilities, institutions, and EECs can generate benefits for all stakeholders, locals, and not only. To illustrate this, the Partnership Model described from Ballantyne and Packer (2006) is a complete model that an EEC could adopt: coordinating activities and similar views with schools guarantee the most successful results in terms of learning of sustainable practices for students, building a 'long-term two-ways relationships' (Ballantyne & Packer, 2006, pg. 7). Tourism facilities, EECs, and all the involved stakeholders in the local and non-local contexts should adopt this type of relationship.

Active awareness for the environmental education of citizens is vital, especially for children, because it impacts on society's future and present behaviors. Stimulating the learning during the activity and maintaining the awareness acting on the knowledge's desire after the activity (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011) are the keys to build a more sustainable future with conscious citizens, and therefore more pro-sustainable behaviors in tourists, based on a long-term view. In respect of this, supplies and communication regarding environmental sensitivity are more efficient if well-structured and directed to specific groups (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005), showing the effects of non-sustainable actions and behaviors. Also, interacting with the environment and species helps visitors and tourists to feel more conscious and involved with environmental issues (Orams, 1997; Tisdell & Wilson, 2005). An example of this dynamic is the case-study analyzed by Wilson and Tsdell (2001), who has investigated the potential of sea-turtle-based tourism in this sense. For these reasons, tourism marketers must build offers aiming to reach both children and parents, directly or indirectly, promoting sustainable pro-environmental behaviors.

### **2.3 Institutional guidelines from governments and organizations**

All over the world, many are the guidelines that governments and organizations provide to the citizens. At the international level, we find an essential contribution in treating this issue in the indications of the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda of 2030<sup>28</sup> (Desa, 2016). The topic of sustainable tourism is well-exposed thanks to goal number 8, dedicated to 'promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'. Tourism's recent growth makes it one of the most developed businesses nowadays: for this reason,

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<sup>28</sup> [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

even if with the pandemic emergency due to the proliferation of the Co-Vid19 caused a decline in the international travels (UNTWO, s.d.), it is urgent to renew this industry, adopting more sustainable standards and habits both for the protection of the destination and for the education of tourists. The UNWTO also consider this issue as crucial because 'destinations require a combination of careful protection and creative initiatives in order to promote the sustainable use and management of ecosystems, from the development and construction stages to guest education' (UNTWO, 2018). Moreover, this could be accomplished by 'seeking ways of raising more direct support for conservation from tourism businesses and tourists and involving travelers and local communities in conservation activities' (*Ibidem*), endorsing the 12<sup>th</sup> SDG - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

We also have some indications at the European level. Europe is an iconic destination for all the tourist communities so protect this destination is crucial. In the publication *Sustainable tourism for development* (UNWTO, 2013), the European Commission gives some indications to measure the critical areas of action necessities to promote the development of sustainable tourism in the European territory through sustainable practices. Moreover, the UNECE published in 2013 the document 'Learning for the future: Competencies for Education for Sustainable Development', giving policy recommendations to the educators, explaining how to improve their competences as learning to be, to do, to know and learning to live together (UNECE, 2013).

At the national level, there are a few documents that face the issue. The *Principles' manifesto for environmental education* (Comitato interministeriale, 1997) oriented to conscious and sustainable development of 1977, signed by the Italian ministry of education and Italian ministry of environment, is the primary reference document for the Italian institutions about the environmental education's topic. This manifesto gives some guidelines and exposes the importance of educating citizens, especially children to sustainable habits, stating that environmental education must guide the institutions' intervention and the mass communication's role. Another Italian document is the Guidelines for environmental education for the sustainable development of 2014 (Gruppo di lavoro interministeriale, 2014) (an updated version of 2009 first document), signed by the same ministries cited above. This document gives specific guidelines to the schools' teachers, providing 8 different educational paths structured according to the school grade.

At the regional level, we must refer to Sardinian policy instructions, which is also our geographical point of view. Sardinia is trying to adapt itself to the greening standards for sustainable development by participating in relaunching INFEAS (Information, Training, Environmental Education and Sustainability) national system, which is the initiative to promote activities and sites involved in the transmission of sustainable knowledge. Being a part of this system, during the NINFEAS conference of 2018 (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2018), emerged that CEAS (centers for environmental and sustainable activities) are crucial in the promotion of edutourism and of every tourist experience that could be related to sustainability and protection of the destination. For this reason, in addition to the CEAS traditional role, it is



necessary to consider this fact as an urgent operation to be carried out. This necessity also emerged in the INFEAS triennial plan 2019-2021 (Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, 2019), indicating educational tourism development, the dissemination of science, and sustainable tourism as opportunities in the SWOT analysis of Sardinia INFEAS system.

### **3. Methodology**

I perform an exploratory single case study, which is suitable for addressing “how” and “why” lines of inquiry (Yin, 2003), adopting the research strategy of theory building (Eisenhardt, 1989). These choices are made consistent with the qualitative imprint of the study, aiming to provide interrelationships and concepts that answer the research questions.

#### **3.1 Research settings**

CEAS are the EECs of Sardinia. Their role is recognised as vital from the region of Sardinia and, especially during the last years, more funds and attention are dedicated to these centres. For these reasons, CEAS are chosen as case studies to analyse in answering our research questions.

Through the interviews, I aimed to:

(a) document managers' perceptions regarding their centres' role in promoting learning for sustainability for environmental education activities for the citizenship and especially for tourist-children and their families;

(b) Identify the factors and the activities that support the CEAS' contribution to sustainable education of tourist, in detail tourist-children and their families; and

(c) Based on the above, draw conclusions regarding the most effective ways in which tourism organizations, in general, might contribute to learning for the sustainability of tourists-children and their families, giving some managerial implications and indications helpful for all the tourism organizations, even on a regional policy possible path.

#### **3.2 Data collection**

For the series of interviews, I decided to consider only the accredited CEAS<sup>29</sup>, as their work has already been positively evaluated by a special committee.

The number of accredited CEAS was 29, following the regional list of 2017. The final sample resulted in 25 interviews because two CEAS were permanently closed, one CEAS was not available for the interview, and one interviewee spoke in the name of two CEAS, being managed by the same cooperative.

I conducted 25 Semi-structured Qualitative interviews with 25 experts, as scientific directors, managers, or staff members, between 21 October 2020 and 12 November 2020. The first contact was made by email and by telephone. It was explained what issues would be addressed in the interview so that the CEAS itself had the opportunity to understand who was best suited to participate. Each interview was conducted via video call (Skype or Google meet) or phone call due to the covid19 situation. Each interview had a duration between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Before the interview, it was explained that the audio would be recorded for future transcripts and that the privacy and protection of the information provided would be guaranteed. Each interviewee provided the release for the recording after the interview. Moreover, the interviewer devoted a few minutes to ease the subject explaining the general topics that would be addressed and clarifying that they could ask questions and speak freely. Some details about the interviews are shown in table 5.

Interview questions covered issues such as how CEAS programs contribute to learning for sustainability; how CEAS programs are integrated with the local tourism stakeholders; elements of success for tourism stakeholders-Centre partnerships; barriers or challenges CEAS and staff face associated with teaching and learning for sustainability; and desired outcomes for tourist-children and families as a result of their participation in the programs.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>CEAS type</b>	<b>Time</b>
A1	Managing	Coastal	38:10
A2	Both	Coastal	52:30
A3	Managing	Coastal	41:55
A4	Managing	Inland	49:19

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<sup>29</sup> Accreditation is as a process aimed to verify the existence of minimum essential requirements in the implementation and management of environmental education activities within the Regional System INFEAS. It is released after confirmation, through moments of visit and verification of the necessary documentation. The consistency of the activities carried out by the requesting centre concerning the supported functions, and the verification of the quality indicator system's parameters are also be assessed.

A5	Managing	Coastal	37:47
A6	Managing	Coastal	40:06
A7	Managing	Inland	41:12
A8	Managing	Coastal	50:32
A9	Support (scientific director)	Coastal	14:18
A10	Managing	Coastal	59:39
A11	Managing	Coastal	48:29
A12	Managing	Coastal	67:00
A13	Managing	Coastal	47:22
A14	Managing	Coastal	54:14
A15	Managing	Inland	34:12
A16	Managing	Coastal	22:24
A17	Holder	Coastal	66:57
A18	Both	Coastal	58:13
A19	Managing	Inland	59:39
A20	Holder	Coastal	36:33
A21	Managing	Coastal	25:33
A22	Managing	Coastal	46:15
A23	Both	Coastal	50:28
A24	Managing	Coastal	32:56
A25	Support	Coastal	64:18

Table 5. Interviews' details

### 3.3 Data analysis

Due to this study's objectives and the research questions, I decided to adopt an Exploratory research design using qualitative semi-structured



### 4.1.1 Typology of activities

The activities proposed by the centres are various, offering many different typologies of activities. The majority of the centres agree that they prefer doing outdoor activities because they want to promote the knowledge of the area's environment. The interaction with the environment is seen as an opportunity to make understand how the planet earth works.

*We have the opportunity to explain to them what kind of value the environment has. We explain that, for example, the prairies of Posidonia, which are considered a boring environment, are not an environment. People usually do not want to see an oceanic prairie. They are not interested in it because it seems much more beautiful to see the rock formations or sites where there is so much fish. That's why it's important to try to make them understand that, in addition to a landscape aspect, there's an impact, there's a whole aspect of ecological value, an ecosystem with an environmental value. We do the same when we do monitoring of the immersed environments, it is done with simple squares, and it shows what is beached on the shoreline. We tell of what's in the sea in front of it, upsetting the impression that people have of the beach.*

[Interviewee A23]

The opportunity to carry out outdoor activities often implies sports activities such as swimming, snorkeling, walking, and hiking. This type of outdoor activity also concerns excursions and nature observation activities.

Outdoor activities can also be carried out in the urban area. In this case, the aim is to show the participants the historical monuments and urban heritage of the city in which the activity is carried out. Outdoor various services for tourists include being info point, providing guided tours, and rental services. Rental services provide different tools to support outdoor activities like kayaks and canoes, bicycles, binoculars, and telescopes.

CEAS also organize conferences, courses, and workshops. Conferences deal with environmental topics or information for the local and non-local community through different modes as scientific aperitifs or book presentations and special courses related to specific arguments as mycology and herb recognition. Workshops are designed differently depending on the participants. For example, workshops dedicated to the schools would have activities related to the project's topic. However, there are workshops dedicated to the adults that ought to be about waste recycling, local gastronomy, handicrafts, watercolours lessons, gardening, nature photography, and birdwatching. These activities often adopt a systemic approach, giving the participants all the tools to understand the deep connections between the world and us.

*We have just ended a project called 'Intreccio'. Well, it's about this word, but it's declined for the stitching, so not only seeing the craftsmen making baskets, but also making the children work, making them try to make baskets and chairs. However, we also did a part of the theoretical explanation to make it clear that these plants were used instead of other parts of plants.*

[Interviewee A9]

Other types of activity carried out by the CEAS are events and competitions. CEAS often support the communities, both helping with the local events and festivals and organizing various competitions like photography contests or agility dog races.

In small part, CEAS organize self-managed camps in collaboration with other associations.

#### **4.1.2 The participants**

As for the participants of CEAS' activities, there is a lot to say. Firstly, it results that CEAS do not always diversify the offer basing on the participants. CEAS activities are, indeed, organized on the basis of the seasonality that consequently has an impact on the participants.

Secondly, there are many types of participants. First of all, many activities are dedicated to local people, both adults and children, with the aim to raise awareness about environmental issues and problems close to them. As mentioned above, there are also useful courses and practical workshops concerning local culture, fauna, and flora. Second, the main target of the CEAS is the child. In this case, most activities with children are organized with the schools, predominantly regional schools, even though it is also relevant the participation of tourist-children during the tourism season. Less relevant is the proposal of specific activities for adolescents. CEAS tend to work more closely with first and second-grade schools, leaving aside collaboration with high schools; this happens both for the low interest expressed by teenagers and for the limited time available. Sometimes CEAS welcome teenagers for work-school programmes, or in general for activities related to working experience. In this case, it is a common opinion that the approach and the relationship created are different if compared to the other participants.

*We contact high schools for the creation of tourist routes or school-work programs. In that case, we work with groups of students from different classes, and they are motivated kids as they are volunteers who already want to be involved. We then propose them various activities and allow them to choose because the best results are obtained in this way.*

[Interviewee A22]

Other types of participants are the families, both local and tourist families. In this case, the aim is to propose constructive activities for both parents and children at the same time, considering the differences between adults and children. CEAS tends to work both with local families and tourist families, depending on the season and the activity type.

Some CEAS also dedicate activities directed to tourists, especially during the summer and the spring. It is a common opinion that not so many tourists are interested in environmental education activities. However, there is substantial participation by them, especially during the cleaning activities of the beaches. In this case, both adult tourists and tourist-children participate with enthusiasm, even though this type of activity is not explicitly directed to tourists. As mentioned above, most services searched by tourists are outdoor activities.

### **4.1.3 The approach**

As for the adopted approaches by the CEAS, it results that there are five main approaches. These approaches have not to be considered autonomous and independents. They are often mixed and matched to obtain the best results in every activity, depending on its typology and on the participants.

The first approach is the systemic approach. The final aim is to make participants understand that we are part of a world and every part is connected to another. Explaining why a particular plant is necessary to the ecosystem is an excellent example of this approach. Also, this approach allows the operators to space a lot on topics, going to touch at the same time local fauna, flora, and culture. This approach is consistent with concepts ad environmental socialization (Gentina & Muratore, 2012) and ecological resocialization (Gentina & Singh, 2015; Essiz & Mandrik, 2021).

*Our methodology is called the systemic approach. That is, everything is seen as part of a system. So, the individual element is not examined without considering its relationship with the other elements, but the most important thing is to make the leap from the naturalistic education, that there's more. The man, the child, the woman, the boy is inserted into the system. That's the point, you're in the environment, and you're the environment.*

[Interviewee A12]

The second approach is the mediator-cooperation approach. In this approach, the CEAS operators refer to themselves as mediators between the environment and the community. In this case, operators act as experts to make participants clear that they connect the environment and the community,

describing them as cooperators whose scope is to connect better people and the environment.

*I think the environmental educator is a mediator. A mediator has to mediate between people and the environment, that is, someone who can convey not only information but also visions and approaches. We think that environmental education is just that: a mediator, a link between the person and the environment, which is not little. I have seen that it is increasingly important, even at a global level, to talk about sustainability education, and I believe that sustainability is the future. I think that sustainability education, environmental education, which is now becoming obsolete as a term because we talk about sustainability education, is the driver of the future.*

[Interviewee A19]

The third approach is the relational and emotional approach. In this case, the point is to create a relationship, be relying on emotions. Here the operators try to be friends of the participants and to use different strategies to connect them, through emotions and the five senses, with the environment and the people. A common idea between all the interviewees is that it is necessary to break down the symbolic barriers of distrust and distance to work jointly with the environment and the world where we live. These beliefs are confirmed by a recent research, finding that emotion discourses are means to help in realizing the pedagogy of EE with effectiveness (Reis & Roth, 2009).

*The aim is to experience memorable and meaningful experiences in nature. Meanwhile, to make contact, simply enjoy nature and the day, not necessarily with a strong and educational meaning. Making them feel good in nature, feel at home is an important aspect for us. However, we also have educational paths. As I was saying before, generating the change in sustainable lifestyle, our way of dealing with them, and we really believe in the fact that when you build an experience, when it's engaging, much more attractive it is the more you get the result, so we try to speak less, to talk as little as possible and we work a lot on setting up areas. We do readings to make them curious about the characters and places in which we are, because, in this way, the identity arrives in the families, at home, at school, and this gives the sense of wonder, discovery, and a hint of magic. There are more important tools to draw them out and make them do something, so in our way of being with them, we always say we should be fun, but it is even more important that they do have fun. Thus, we find the best way to be with the recipients in doing with pleasure, with people in general.*

[Interviewee A15]



*We are mainly concerned with sustainability education and carry out its principles in our projects. We build a relationship with the participant using those characteristics that are not typical of environmental education: empathy. So, people who come to our centers feel welcomed because we are giving value not only to the environment but also to people. Perhaps, there is a need to put people in contact, especially in this period, we put great importance on contacts and relations between people, always in an empathic way so that they feel in the CEAS a garrison of the territory and a social reference.*

[Interviewee A19]

The fourth approach is the playful approach. This approach is adopted when working with children. Presenting a topic through playful modalities guarantees a high level of attention by the children. Moreover, using plays and stories permits the operators to communicate the information they want to give more easily. This approach addresses a characteristic that has already been studied by the academy, which is the use of fun to effectively involve children into activities (Hilbrecht et al., 2008; Seraphin & Yallop, 2019; Wu et al., 2019).

*Even tiny children, who happened often are afraid of stuffed animals, and then you have to tell them a story and, I even put a patch Adams' nose, the red one, a coloured wig. These things are just to try to play down a little bit, and we told them that animals are like in the world of fairy tales, and I had put a magic powder, and so they were asleep, in this sense very young children are more problematic. The most interested and with whom you work best are certainly those of elementary and middle school.*

[Interviewee A13]

The fifth approach is manual and artistic. With this approach, CEAS operators tend to use manual activities and artistic disciplines to stimulate learning. Manual activities are adopted through workshops, artistic disciplines like dance, theatre, and music, generating connections and immediate bonds between the participants and the environment.

*Among other collaborations in the local area, we have people who give us a hand in this type of activity, like artists. However, through theatre, music, bio-dance, activities of this type that allow us to involve kids, and to communicate the environmental education to the kids and, at the same time, make*

*them take in an unusual way. Let's say that we are far from school standard but with an alternative way.*

[Interviewee A10]

*Once, we had an exhibition on nutrition with a whole series of installations related to sustainable nutrition. There was a game named 'the rose in the salad', it was a creative activity from the laboratory of Bruno Munari, an important designer who had invented this activity in which with a horizontal cut of a fruit or a vegetable, for example, lettuce, an artichoke, the rose shape derives from this action. By placing these halves in ink, you can print the shape, having very personal and unique works!*

[Interviewee A12]

#### **4.1.4 The geography**

CEAS tend to work with different partnerships and relations. The majority of the interviewees said that the most contexts in which these relations happen are local and regional. Collaborations with schools, municipalities, businesses, and associations happen primarily in the local context. Other collaborations, as with universities or associations, also can exist at the national or international level. Sometimes CEAS contact experts, even at the national or international level, to participate in events and workshops.

#### **4.1.5 The seasonality**

It is a common opinion among the interviewees that seasonality influences a lot CEAS' work.

During autumn, winter, and spring CEAS's focus is on the activities with schools and local communities. During spring and summer, some CEAS also work with tourists and change the type of activities. Due to the cold weather, CEAS primarily work with school with indoor activities during autumn and winter, decreasing the number of outdoor activities, especially during winter. Outdoor activities are predominant during the spring when there is the opportunity for the operators to show much flora and fauna without problems related to the weather. Especially during the summer, CEAS do not work with schools since they are closed. For this reason, they organize summer activity services both for local and tourist children. Moreover, CEAS supports the local authorities with tourist services like info points or guided tours or excursions during the summer.

In conclusion, we can affirm that CEAS is free to dedicate themselves to tourists during the summer, leaving apart the activities with local

communities for a while or working on both typologies of visitors at the same time.

## 4.2 Problems of CEAS

CEAS admit to have many problems that do not help their work. The biggest problem lies in the relationship between the Holder (*titolare*) and Managing (*gestore*). This doubleness creates several problems, especially for small villages' CEAS, where the municipality owns the CEAS being the Holder, and delegates the management to another entity such as an association or a cooperative, which is called Managing. A public procurement usually entrusts CEAS, and the managing body receives the task for 36 months, receiving funds from the municipality and having the opportunity to participate in regional calls through the holder. The Holder is encharged to participate to regional calls, obtaining the funds, and managing these. The managing is encharged to organize all the activities, building and managing relationships with the stakeholders. This administrative division often leads to delays in obtaining funds and the start of the activities. These problems disappear in the CEAS in which Managing and Holder coincide. An example of this case is when the CEAS is located within a nature park where everything is managed autonomously. Moreover, the majority of CEAS admit that the success of the collaboration between the municipality and the managing association also lies in the current administration's interest in respect to environmental education. This relationship is often the fruit of many years of collaboration, and when there is a political change, it is necessary to start again to show what the CEAS can do for the community.

*One major problem is related to the relationship with the Holder. While often the managing and the Holder could be the same, they are different entities in our case. We have been working for twenty years with the same people. However, the Holder is, in any case, a public administration and, like any public administration, could change. As a result, it is often difficult to identify a person as a referee, say, a person who works within the municipality and deals with CEAS procedures.*

[Interviewee A10]

*The management of the centre, as you know, is exactly linked to the public administration because almost any CEAS is hold by an external body, that is materially by the municipality where the CEAS is located. This division creates so many difficulties, the change of administration is a problem, we have suffered this, because every time we have to come back, say who we are, what we have done, and then try to rebuild these little*

*relationships, and this leads to a proficient collaboration. We hope to have luck, because not always the new administration, even if we have good relations with the secretary, is interested in supporting our work.*

[Interviewee A11]

Other problems are related to the relationship Holder-Managing and bureaucratic and financing problems. Being the formal and active Holder of the funds received from the region of Sardinia, it is often difficult for the Managing entity to receive the funds quickly. Moreover, the only support that CEAS have for sure is from regional funds. Most of the time, these funds are not enough to cover all the costs of being open, giving, for example, pay for the Managing's members.

*You can see the differences where Holder and Managing coincide. Here there are important public bodies where the operator is an employee of the region, of the ministry, and not an operator of the non-profit organization, the cooperative. So, they often have another job, and you can do both, even though it's hard to keep open all the time. So, surely the biggest problems are the economic and operational stability of the CEAS.*

[Interviewee A17]

Regarding CEAS staff, there are many problems to be solved. First of all, operators do not always receive proper payment for their work due to the meagre funds that have to be divided into a lot of expenditures. Second, all the interviewees agree that it is important to be passionate about environmental education to do this job correctly. The majority of the people involved in CEAS activities are graduated: bachelor or master degrees in natural sciences, pedagogy, educational sciences, and biology are the most present. It is not uncommon for operators to possess other qualifications such as hiking guides, environmental guides, museum operators, or naturalist operators. Another common problem related to tourist activities lies in the language; this difficulty makes communication harder. In general, female workers are more present in this field, even though many CEAS try to structure the offer with one operator of each gender, especially when working with children.

*Women surely have a more open and imaginative mind, so collaborating with women gives us more results, and this is also reported to us by our male collaborators. Our work leads us to bring out new creations and to create new things. Let's say that women manage to pull out many nice things. While for the age, I do not notice differences between young and old people.*

[Interviewee A24]

It emerged that the personal attitude towards these activities is more relevant than the young age or the level of education. All the interviewees agree that environmental education activities have to be carried on by people who believe in this path's effectiveness.

*I think we need a predisposition, an attitude for this job. We have had many interns, but very few of them remained because they asked us to teach them to do environmental education. Unfortunately, this is not a subject that is possible to teach and learn. You must have the right predisposition to do environmental education. It is something more, an extra strength that you cannot learn, you can know everything about the environment, nature, sustainability, but if you do not have this attitude, you can't do anything. This does not mean raising awareness. If you don't have that, it's something you can't successfully carry on.*

[Interviewee A19]

*In my opinion, it is not about gender or age group, it depends on the passion you have in dealing with these issues, and I am perhaps a bit 'demanding. For example, I was born as a naturalist, I became naturally passionate about these things, so it is difficult to find people incapable. First of all, because it is difficult to make environmental education become a profession, so it's clear that even new graduates try to take this path but then get to do a job becomes difficult, you know. So, if you have a very strong passion, then you can continue, making sacrifices, of course, for example, doing other things meanwhile, as the naturalist worker in a zoo, or something like that. I mean, it's not that easy, but if you have passion and you can do various things, then you can live with that. Otherwise, in my profession and among my colleagues, we have many cases of surrendering to do other things. I think about a naturalist boy, with important professionalism, excellent, he was a bit with us, then he went to work at a supermarket. He got a steady job, and so he preferred that...*

[Interviewee A13]

An important problem that emerged from the analysis is the location and accessibility to the CEAS. CEAS' facilities are usually located outside the urban territory, away from the village, and the location (*sede*) often lacks restructuring and adjustments that could ensure accessibility 365 days a year or even the access to disabled people.

As expected, it has emerged that epidemiological situation due to covid-19 has created many problems for CEAS and their work. On the one hand, it has certainly hindered the activities for the number of meetings and activities with both schools and citizenship. On the other, it has generated different tourism in the island that the CEAS have appreciated.

*I have to say that this year there was beautiful tourism, much more responsible, much more receptive to this type of activity, we had to put the limit because we could not bring too many people, even for the covid regulations. They were mostly local Sardinians and Italians. They were used to go abroad and instead had decided to stay in Italy. Foreigners tourists were missing, they are still very present and sensitive to issues, but yes, it was more responsible and manageable tourism for these topics.*

[Interviewee A22]

Another interesting problem, cited by two interviewees, lies in the perceived confusion of the CEAS' role. It is a common idea that CEAS' role is related to environmental and greening topics as global heating, waste of resources, environmentalism, and others. However, the consciousness that CEAS are dedicated to environmental and sustainability education at 360-degree is still not so clear.

Minor cited problems are related to the activists' warnings or intrusive behaviors, and the difficulties occurred with some participants as non-participation or lack of general interest.

### **4.3 Activities for tourist-children and their families**

Not all the CEAS provide activities especially dedicated to tourists or tourist-children and their families, even if there is an important participation of these users, especially in the CEAS located in tourism destinations. There is no differentiation between activities for local people or tourists in many cases, which often causes positive effects as relationships between locals and non-local people or informal transmission of local knowledge to tourists.

*When we do activities at the beach, the participants are mixed. There is no difference between the tourist and the locals. Indeed, the collaboration is constructive because the local has the 'sense of belonging' that transfers to the tourist. So absolutely yes, there is no differentiation in our activities. We do not provide specific activities in which residents cannot participate.*

[Interviewee A19]

It emerged that for some CEAS there is no differentiation into activities for local or tourists people. In this case, even when the interviewees say that they provide activities for tourists, the topics are borrowed from classical activities dedicated to local people.

*We provide several activities for tourists, as the promotion on the beach to participate in the campaigns of cleaning beaches, but also of towns, the separate collection, the recycling, campaigns on greater attention to the use of cigarettes on beaches, climate awareness campaigns, and other activities involving plastics.*

[Interviewee A5]

The interviewees have a strong consciousness that conducting environmental education activities for tourists is a huge opportunity for the CAES and the entire region of Sardinia. However, there are several emerged difficulties of doing a pure and specific environmental education with tourists.

- A. Most of the time, tourists tend to participate in general activities organized for everybody, like cleaning activities of the beach, because a lot of CEAS do not operate a differentiation between the participants. In other cases, CEAS provide tourists special trips, hiking, excursions, or food and wine itineraries even in the CEAS located in non-touristic locations.

*When there are families with children, our approach is completely different. We have not only, as I said, places of historical memory, but we also have the classrooms, we have an anthological exhibition, we have some paths to follow so we relate differently with children. First of all, we make children understand what our past was. We make clear what a mine is, trying to understand if they'd ever heard of it from their parents, and also the parents are very happy to hear it. This year we had many Italians and foreigners, and they often came by word of mouth.*

[Interviewee A1]

*We do not have activities directed explicitly to tourists, but it could happen; it also happened that a group of people ask for a walk through the territory or that they had contacted us to visit*

*the centre through some tourist structure. Only in that case, we do something with tourists, but we don't actually have that kind of user.*

[Interviewee A10]

In this case, the collaboration between CEAS and local tourist operators plays a crucial role in connecting the tourists with the CEAS. The majority of the interviewees admit that, even when they do not provide specific activities dedicated to tourists, they often receive calls by tourism local stakeholders like hotels, agri-tourism structures, restaurants, and so on. This connection permits the CEAS operators to meet tourists and provide them services and tours packed as original and unique.

*For many years we worked with hotels, they sent us their guests, tourists, to do the activities. We involved the hotels in our work, and we even went to do the activities inside the hotels. We worked not only in their bathing establishments but even in the pool and in their premises for certain activities. [...] We went to the hotels that sent us the guests because many activities were still free, which was a huge opportunity for us. We even have people who, for years now, participate in the events and have the house here, or they stay here for a few days. The question is: is it more important to act on quantity or quality? Right now, we act on the quality of those who participate, then acting on the quantity is difficult and different.*

[Interviewee A25]

The collaboration between CEAS and the tourism sector's stakeholders does not end just with hotel facilities. There is also the involvement of other types of workers who work in contact with tourists and often are very interested in performing their part in the environmental education of the tourist.

*We also worked with boat operators this summer, we worked at the lighthouse, and there was a collaboration with some operators who transported tourists there. Obviously, you cannot do environmental education in the strict sense because you are inside a lighthouse, but the whole visit is based on awareness and sustainable use of the island, with the knowledge of plant and animal species. In short, several operators have boats to carry the tourists and, for this reason, we created a working relationship. [...] This collaboration has been done a lot in the past few years. Especially a long time ago, when there was a nice budget, the Marine Area made available for CEAS operators to stay on the boats. So we did this 1 or 2 times during*



*the summer. However, it was important, instead, now many operators have been trained, participating in some courses, and they are the ones to give the information about the marine area.*

[Interviewee A25]

- B. Another difficulty is that tourists tend to search funny activities. Usually, tourists who search for activities related to the environment are already interested in this topic. For this reason, there is a strong awareness among all the interviewees that it is crucial to propose faster and 'lighter' activities than the typical EE activities proposed by the CEAS. Tourists, and especially families of tourists, go in search of fast activities then the activities have to be adapted on these aspects. Moreover, CEAS operators are aware that it is impossible to do a real environmental education with tourists due to the limited time and occasional activities during the holiday.

This topic is stronger, especially because we are talking about tourist children and their families. In this case, CEAS state that doing activities using playing, craftsmanship, or fun increases communication and engagement during the activity.

*Tourists are often families that carry the children because these are recreational moments for them, combining business with pleasure, in a sense. Therefore, parents carry children in the places like CEAS, obviously with their times. Mainly during the spring and summer, we try to modulate the activities also for a tourist family. For example, the canoe is two-seater so families can have fun together, exploring together. So yes, all activities are calibrated to accommodate even very young children. For example, we consider that the participation of the third child is free, so there is this kind of attention also in this sense.*

[Interviewee A14]

Furthermore, it also emerged the awareness that children are the point of connection with the adult population, as previously mentioned through reverse socialization.

*Yes, we usually care about tourist families and children, perhaps tourist children and families. That's why children are influencers, and adults are hard to convince because they already have the forma mentis, and it is difficult for them to change their mind, I mean it is not impossible, but it is difficult. Children are much more malleable from this point of view, and*

*they are influencers for their parents. We have written projects where we 'use', for lack of a better word, children as operators to help us share the message. We did this because we know that for an adult is boring listening to the message from an older person, even though listening to the message from a child is different and make them good listeners. So, we used this strategy for many projects.*

[Interviewee A20]

Despite this awareness, it is a common opinion that it is necessary to do activities that are, in a sense, able to give some helpful information to the tourist, always considering the activity's characteristics that the tourist is searching for and is willing to do.

*You can involve them with interactive activities, but they are always two and a half hours or two hours because you cannot talk about education to tourists without spaces ad hoc for this aim, with special campaigns aimed to them. Only then you could do it and you could expand the speech. However, I repeat, time is important because environmental education needs a little more time, and with the time, the educational intervention generates an increase of change. With tourists, times are shorter, so you act more on nature education, information, and awareness, but this is not a real educational intervention. Environmental education paths are more complex and longer.*

[Interviewee A14]

It emerged that this type of educational activity could not be compared to classical environmental educational paths due to the limited time and the different contexts in which these activities are carried on.

However, the tourist needs to know the practical rules to protect the destination where he/she is living the holiday experiences. He needs to know how the environment where he is experiencing works and what its characteristics are.

*The activities for tourists are interesting. Obviously, we need to calibrate them in a different form, in the sense that we cannot go and do the environmental education activity that we usually do with students because the tourist comes here as a tourist, then with the intent to learn while having fun. Moreover, the purpose is not to teach but to spend time learning something by seeing new places. We also have to consider that we are in a sea location and the tourist comes here to go to the sea, so I cannot propose in August or July an activity on the territory or observation of nature because it's too hot! I mean, the sea is*

*near, and then you could go for a swim in the fresh water, so the activities that we could propose to tourists, I repeat, have to be calibrated. The educational activity for tourists needs to be lightened under the aspect of fun and leisure. [...] We are working on solutions to provide sustainable packages, considering activities that correspond to the demand with special experiences such as biking, hiking, or snorkeling. We do not provide activities with a too much didactic aspect because that is not what they are asking for. If a tour operator makes a specific request, for example, for environmental education activities aimed at adults, we work on it. We did this for families because they also want calibrated activities for users of different ages satisfying the needs of everyone, without boring or neglecting anyone.*

[Interviewee A18]

- C. As I already said, the main problem remains the language, CEAS admit that it is possible to communicate more or less in English or Spanish, but it becomes difficult with French or German tourists. CEAS agree that a good communication is necessary to transmit information and details of environmental education.

*Unfortunately, this is a problem that we all have because an English tourist could arrive and this is okay because you can discuss some things, but then it becomes difficult with the French tourist or the German tourist, for example. So, what do you say in this case? The main problem is often communication, I mean, verbal communication. You should also have the skill to communicate in that case. For example, if you have a group of tourists knowing that they come from Germany, it should be important having the practical tools for the activities, but at the same time, the communication skill so they could understand what you're saying.*

[Interviewee A10]

For these reasons, environmental education activities have to be organized and offered in a different way to attract and entertain tourists in a proficient way.

There is a strong agreement between the interviewees that the strategy must be organized at the regional level to build an image of Sardinia as a sustainable island and sustainable tourism destination. This change of the image on the market could provide valuable chances for tourism businesses and could also be an opportunity to protect and enhance the tourism destination, acting also on a stakeholder marketing and management view.

Sardinian tourism season is crucial for the island's economy. For this reason, finding a way to use what we have without wasting or damaging the environment is crucial.

#### **4.4 Potential role of CEAS**

As mentioned above, the relationship between CEAS and tourism stakeholders is crucial to provide services to tourists; this is a huge opportunity both for CEAS and hospitality structures due to the possible economic profit, the promotion of the destination, the partnership, and the coherence with the sense of friendly hospitality typical of Sardinian territory.

Many interviewees affirm that there is already an interesting partnership with some local stakeholders. The coherence in the offer's proposition becomes more and more essential, and the CEAS are conscious about this. All the interviewees believe in the potential of CEAS as promoters of a broader vision concerning tourism and environmental education. Topics as environmental education, local culture and products, and sustainability are often cited as a part of a unique offer for tourists.

*There's a restaurant with all the criteria of a sustainable restaurant, and does food education in a sense, because they collaborate with pond fishermen. They use the fish they catch, all with zero miles products. It is a tourist activity, but it also becomes environmental education because they explain that the food was fished in the morning by the fishermen, and that you can find that fish just in that period of the year. Everyone could find something in their environment. If I do a tribute to the local environment is clear that the restaurant is asked to cook sustainable foods, where I cannot find a Coca Cola there. Instead, I find homemade ice cream.*

[Interviewee A12]

*It certainly could be done, for example, with the help of the accommodation facilities in the area, proposing paths and mini-paths, short educational paths for children and for tourist families. In this area, it is possible, and the programs need to be short, so, as I said, hiking, guided tours, this type of activity where it is not needed to come more days.*

[Interviewee A14]

It emerged that CEAS are conscious about the different types of possible EE activity to propose to tourists. As mentioned above, the main barriers regard time, the type of the activity, and communication. Despite these difficulties, all the interviewees agree that it is necessary to work in this direction. First of all, because the tourist would have some knowledge about the environment and the destination, they could appreciate more the culture, the ecosystems, and the territory's characteristics with the knowledge.

*Well, proposing environmental education activities to tourists is also essential for other important reasons. For example, the posidonia is a remnant, let's say a natural one, and the beach is not dirty. This information is essential because the tourist does not understand and says that it stinks, that sucks, that the beach is dirty. Tourist is also who walks around, at the end of the day, with the bag, picking up all the plastic and cigarettes he finds. It is not only thanks to us, but in some cases, the sensitivity is increasing towards these things. Explaining especially to the tourist that the presence of posidonia is not a rejection, but it is also something important for that place and it also helps to choose and evaluate certain areas, because if I think that the beach is dirty maybe the year after I won't go back there for my holiday!*

[Interviewee A13]

It also emerged that EE activities for tourists are helpful to explain regulations and motivations behind them. Sardinia has several regulations to protect the environment, for example, the ban to not take away sand, shells, plants, or rocks or the ban to not step on the dunes. There is also a strong regulation for pets at the beach and the parking of campers and similar. Other rules are related to dangers as not swimming in certain areas.

*I think it's a good idea because most people don't really know even the smallest rules that we have, like the fact that you can't take the sand or can't touch the shells. Maybe they know that there is a ban, but they don't know the reason for that ban, so maybe it would be good to explain to them because you don't have to do that action.*

[Interviewee A21]

The common idea between the interviewees is that educating tourists should be a part of a general strategy at the regional level that points to a new consideration of Sardinia as a sustainable island and destination.

*It is one of the strong points on which the Region of Sardinia should bet. Environmental education paths would be an extraordinary and unique postcard for the island because it brings the tourist to greater awareness and completeness for our historical, archaeological, cultural, and environmental heritage. Environmental education could be a strong way for the institutions to have the right approach in welcoming tourists.*

[Interviewee A5]

Moreover, it emerged that CEAS often acts as the glue between tourists, citizens, and other stakeholders. This fact is an opportunity that needs to be considered by the local and regional administration.

*Environmental education centers have to be a fundamental reality, both within the territories and to raise awareness. I want to see the territory in its entirety, from environmental heritage to literary and cultural heritage. This new method could also take advantage of environmental education, playing a fundamental role in the same way as using the association Pro Loco to which very often tourists turn. Tourists search for information asking the Pro Loco but not always the Pro Loco people have the appropriate skills to deal with a tourist.*

[Interviewee A11]

*Yes, there was a particularly active period in which the CEAS worked as a glue with other realities of the territory, which is what they should do because the CEAS is not just an environmental education center; it is a center of environmental education and sustainability, which means many things and is not just environmental sustainability. So even networking is very important, in this way there could be the promotion of the local tourist attractions. I mean, it is not a war; we need to become promoters of the territory identifying the cultural sites of interest nearby. We can't just look at our own backyard.*

[Interviewee A17]

Networking is the right way to improve tourist offers and coordinate a regional policy of tourist environmental education. CEAS are, in this sense, the perfect tool to regenerate the image on the market, both promoting and protecting the island. Approaches as stakeholder marketing and management have to be considered.

*That would be very important. That is, offering a sustainable point of view to the tourist is very positive. Because tourists, most of them, have a lifestyle that is not very environmentally friendly, especially in transport, but there is still a large proportion of tourists who are attentive to these aspects. I will certainly consider it, and I always consider it effective. There is a proverb in Sardinian 'su nudda non tene cumpanzia' that means 'the nothing has not company' and it is the truth, that is, if you offer to these tourists or whoever a single pill, a single concept, a single sentence that leads them to a positive change, is always a well-done action. The nothing has no company.*

[Interviewee A4]

The Sardinian proverb 'su nudda non tene cumpanzia' explains the sense of proposing EE activities to tourists. The proverb 'the nothing has not company' means that 'nothing is nothing', so it is needed to appreciate little things considering that something is better than nothing, which is the perfect view to adopt when talking about tourists and destination preservation.

The idea to give helpful information to the tourist guarantees effectiveness, especially in the long term, both creating a new generation of conscious adult tourists and protecting the destination in the short term.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study met its objective. Firstly, I analysed and exposed CEAS work, describing the offer, investigating activities' characteristics and approaches. Secondly, I investigated the problems and potentialities of these centres. Thirdly, I exposed the relationship between tourists and CEAS, especially addressing the role of tourist-children and their families in the offer proposition.

Remembering the fact the tourism sells the environment (Murphy & Price, 2005), the potentiality in inducting pro-environmental behaviours in tourists is real. Adopting this point of view, tourism should act on the promotion of local products, local culture and so on. The value of tourism lies on its potentiality in the transmission and presentation of the cultural and environmental heritage. However, the strategy has to be unique and well-planned, using a long term view and acting on the stakeholders' relationships, maintaining a cooperation approach, according to stakeholder theory (Freeman et al., 2007; Freeman, 2010).

CEAS have an important role in this sense because, with their multiple relationships and with their approach, they can act to protect the environment through educational activities so they can be the pivot for the change. Nevertheless, it is necessary to build a planned strategy in which every stakeholder of the destination knows for what objective they are working for, that is the protection of the environment and the promotion of the local culture in the short and long term.

These foresights are essential for the realization of a sustainable tourism, which has to be considered the future tourism, aiming to pursue both social and economic sustainability in this sector. Therefore, here lies the crucial role of tourist-children, precisely for their special stakeholder identity (Crane & Kazmi, 2010; Crane & Ruebottom, 2011). As emerged from the results of this study, they have all the potentialities to be the catalysts of the environmental change (Uzzell, 1994), so CEAS's role and offer have to be defined on the base of that, if Sardinia really wants to adopt a policy of environmental protection.

The implementation of this discovered policy has several advantages as:

1. Public expenditure's optimization.
2. Positive consequences on the tourism organizations.
3. Benefits for all the actors in a stakeholder management and marketing approach.
4. Sardinia image's precise consolidation as a tourist destination.

It emerged that the idea of using EE activities aiming to educate tourists about the behaviors needed to respect the destination is welcomed by CEAS. CEAS are conscious about their role as promoters of the territory, and they do not deny networking with other local realities to continue in this direction, especially for the tourism sector. Sardinia should support this willingness, and it should be taken into consideration in a more comprehensive view regarding the image and the tourist positioning of the island.

## **6. Managerial implications**

There are several managerial implications to be considered. In terms of actions, there is a lot that Sardinia could do. The massive presence of tourists, especially during the summer, causes a heavy impact on the environment and guarantees an important economic profit for the region. The solution would be trying to protect the environment without losing economic profit.

According to our results, it emerged that the EEC (CEAS) could be a perfect way to achieve this goal. The solution to the problem lies in the correct positioning of the CEAS, allowing them to approach and learn more about the world of tourism.



The financial investments should be relevant, more in terms of quality than quantity. First of all, the investments should include the time for Sardinia to start this change, recognizing the importance of the CEAS during all the process and guiding them with a stakeholder management and marketing approach to the tourism sector. It is also necessary to understand that there are both long-term and short-term benefits, then it could be challenging to see the results immediately.

Second, the financial investment has to be planned to implement this change of habits, both for CEAS and Sardinia. Sardinia already provides annual funds for the CEAS so, the willingness and the importance of CEAS is not discussed by the region. Moreover, providing funds states the fundamental role that the region recognizes to the CEAS. Financial funds must be provided to adequately train the staff to improve communication with tourists, especially tourist-children and their families, and give them the chance to provide a more differentiated offer to these users. The adjustment of the locations (*sedi*) has also to be considered in providing investments.

Third, non-financial investment is also essential. The efforts of CEAS, municipalities, public administrations, cooperatives, associations, and regional administration have to be considered because this new path could be traveled just with coherence between all the stakeholders.

Financial and non-financial investments have to be considered for the expected return. As for the financial return, there would be a double utility to be considered. First, this policy permits CEAS to work a lot even during the summer, which emerged as an underemployed period for CEAS, obtaining economic revenue from this type of work. At the same time, the CEAS would have additional funds compared to the regional or municipal ones, guaranteeing more autonomy and freedom in work. Second, this policy would be helpful for the image and the local economy of Sardinia, working both on the tourism sector and stakeholder management and marketing approach, renovating the concept of tourism in the island, both protecting and promoting the territory in all aspects. This non-financial return will reposition Sardinia's brand image in the tourism market positively and in line with new developments in the field of tourism and the environment, coherently with SDGs of Agenda 2030.

## **7. Limitations and future research**

As with any study, this research has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, qualitative interviews do not guarantee data and results standardization, but this is coherent with our research goals because I consider only the case study of Sardinian CEAS. Second, some relevant managerial implications are provided, both for the CEAS and the regional administration, without providing specific data or actions, only providing a possible general policy. With these limits in mind, I suggest that a further step in future research should be based on tourists' reactions to EE's CEAS activities.

Another option could be analysing the practical use of financial resources in this sense. This kind of research should provide more information that is helpful to the future path suggested by this research.

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## Conclusion and final remarks

The overall objective of this project was to investigate the potentiality of the environmental education in terms of stakeholder marketing for tourism sector, with a particular focus on tourist children as catalysts of change.

Indeed, the tourism research has often neglected children, leaving them aside (Poria & Timothy, 2014; Koscak et al., 2018; Canosa et al., 2019). Moreover, it has been more frequent to focus on investigate children's thoughts through the parents' perceptions, considering more the household (Schänzel, 2010; Carr, 2011; Khoo-Lattimore, 2015; Canosa et al., 2019). Nevertheless, recent research proposed tourist children as empowered subjects who can generate a change for sustainability and responsible tourism (Seraphin et al., 2020).

In doing so, I had to considered that it was necessary to have a clear background on the development of the child before starting to consider more deeply this subject in the tourism sector, with the along potentiality connected to the environmental education and the stakeholder marketing. For this reason, the first part of the thesis is a literature review focused on explaining the psychological and sociological state of the art, and giving a theoretical contribution reinterpreting the role of the child as stakeholder child. The second part of the thesis is the Paper 1. In this paper, I conducted a scoping review aiming to find the prominent gaps of tourism research regarding tourist children. Paper 2 is the third part of the dissertation and it is partially a part of a chapter of a methodological book, regarding systematic review in business research. In the illustrated case-study I mapped the state of the art of hospitality management research and tourist children. Paper 3, the last part of the thesis, is an analysis of the work of CEAS (EECs) of Sardinia, through a series of qualitative semi-structured interviews, I found main problems, weaknesses and potentialities for adopting strategical actions of stakeholder marketing to educate the tourist of today and the tourist of tomorrow.

The originality of the present dissertation lies in the multidisciplinary approach, which allowed me to have a wide view of the potentialities to work on this topic. Grouping the derived information from each state of the art, I had the possibility to integrate and build a strong a valuable framework, useful for every type of organization, company or government that wants to work following this direction. The practicability of the illustrated path is confirmed by the qualitative data of the last part of the thesis, where CEAS managers exposed their own point of view, being also ready to adopt this type of approach, for the very good of the region in which they operate, that is, the region of Sardinia. Let us look how and through which steps I reached the main objective of the thesis: understand if environmental education could be a path to follow for a more sustainable tourism in the near and far future.

With the first part of the thesis I wanted to know more about the child. In details, it was necessary to resume the state of the art in three particular fields: sociology, psychology and marketing. This need was consequent to the principal decision of the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach. With this part, I could explore the development process of the child, both from a psychological and sociological view and lastly defining various implications and connections with the consumer development theory. With this chapter I studied both main authors of socialization (Vygotskij, 1973; Piaget et al., 1982; Bourdieu, 1984; Corsaro, 2017) and of consumer socialization (Ward, 1974; Moschis & Churchill Jr, 1978; Roedder John, 1999; Valkenburg & Cantor, 2001; McNeal, 2007; Ironico, 2012, 2014). Moreover, I extended the conceptualization with stakeholder marketing and management pillars, obtaining a relevant conceptualization. Along with these types of reasoning, I developed a theoretical conceptualization of the stakeholder child, legitimizing this subject as special and multiple bearer of interests. This study contributed to build an initial framework where information pertaining to different fields of research are connected and integrated to develop a new point of view when talking about the stakeholder child.

The second part of the thesis consist in the paper 1. With this study I conducted a scoping review using systematic methods to analyse the state of the art about tourist children in tourism research, with the objective to identify main existing directions and prominent gaps. Following specific inclusion and exclusion criteria I included 21 papers. Through the analysis of this sample, I identified main methodologies and methods used in doing tourism research with children. Moreover, I found 5 particular areas of research: experiential and memorable dimension, educational and cultural dimension, familiar dimension, strategic dimension, and ethical dimension. Thanks to the finding of this phase, I discovered the most neglected areas of research and I suggest future directions of research.

With paper 2, which correspond to the third part of the dissertation, I wrote a methodological guide to conduct systematic reviews in business and management research. This chapter was accepted to publication and it will be published in 2022 in a book entitled *Research Methods in Business and Management: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives* by Taylor and Francis Group Publishing Limited. Alongside with the methodological guidelines and explications provided by this chapter, I also included a case study useful for my thesis. This systematic literature review aimed to understand whether and how the hospitality management literature effectively considers children. Results integrated the gaps discovered with the scoping review of the second part of the thesis and clarified characteristics of the studies, implications and findings for tourist facilities, children's special needs considered or not by the HM, and future directions, different perspectives and gaps. This analysis served as a link between the first two parts of the thesis and the last, guaranteeing logical and proficient continuation to the entire dissertation, extending the body of knowledge of studying tourist children in the most practical field of tourism research.

With the fourth and last part of the thesis, which correspond to paper 3, I exposed a case study based on the work of CEAS (EECs) in Sardinia. I conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with 24 managers of the



CEAS, aiming to document managers' perceptions regarding their centres' role in promoting learning for sustainability for environmental education activities for the citizenship and especially for tourist-children and their families and to identify the factors and the activities that support the CEAS' contribution to sustainable education of tourist, in detail tourist-children and their families. Based on the above research questions and also considering the body of knowledge provided with the previous phases of the thesis, I draw conclusions regarding the most effective ways in which tourism organizations, in general, might contribute to learning for the sustainability of tourists-children and their families, giving some managerial implications and indications helpful for all the tourism organizations, even on a regional policy possible path.

The implications of the present thesis are of undoubted relevance, both from a theoretical and practical point of view. On the one hand, theoretical implications concerned the new position of the stakeholder child, which is of undisputable importance especially in the last few years and in tourism research, where topics as sustainable tourism, pro-environmental actions and environmental protection are gaining more and more attention. On the other hand, practical implications are relevant, especially from a managerial perspective. Indeed, thanks to this work, many organizations such as governments, facilities, tour operators, and EECs, have a clear idea of what could be done to protect the final destination, building with the appropriate manners the offer, acting on the environmental education of tourists, especially tourist children, adopting a pro-environmental policy and obtaining benefits in the short and long term. This interest is proven by the recent research that focus on multi-stakeholder approach and on sustainable tourism (Byrd, 2007; UNECE, 2011; Waligo et al., 2013; World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2013). Furthermore, both typologies of implications are perfectly consistent with the stakeholder marketing and management approach, which is crucial in the actual market, because inducting pro-environmental knowledge and behaviours between local people can generate an initial change, especially between young people (Canosa et al., 2020).

What I present with the findings of this thesis, in particular with the findings of the paper 3, is of crucial interest for practitioners, managers, politicians and citizens. All these subjects should recognize that this new mindset can be beneficial both for the economy and for the society, according to a stakeholder marketing and management perspective. With this thesis, I provide conceptual and practical guidelines, exposing that the key for a more sustainable tourism lies in the environmental education and its potentiality when applied to tourist children, through a stakeholder marketing and management actions.

The outcomes of this thesis are useful for the previous cited subjects, and they will hopefully helpful in orienting every strategy or action towards an approach to sustainability and the protection of environmental and cultural heritage. Obviously, in this thesis I focused on the tourism sector but this new direction could also be applied to a more general aspect, both at regional, national, or international level. These outcomes are particularly relevant in the European context, where some policies are shared and applied in many

countries, working on a common front for environmental protection and sustainable development, as established in the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda (DESA, 2016).

To summarize, this thesis adopted a multifront and interdisciplinary approach to prove that environmental education, not only has the potentiality to educate the tourists of today and tomorrow, but also has the characteristics to be included in a more width approach that considers all the stakeholders working for a sustainable destination and protecting it in the short and long term, in line with the stakeholder theory (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011; Freeman, 2010; Freeman et al., 2007). Giving theoretical and practical guidelines I give many pieces of advice for every subject who wants to participate in the application of this approach, with a particular focus on the crucial position of tourist-children that has been neglected by the research (Canosa et al., 2016; Canosa & Graham, 2016; Seraphin & Green, 2019; Seraphin, 2020a, 2020b; Seraphin & Thanh, 2020).

In conclusion, this thesis encourages to adopt pro-environmental actions using the potentiality of environmental education to guide tourists towards a more conscious fruition of the destination, highlighting the role of tourist children as catalysts of change, according to reverse and environmental socialization, and as adult and independent tourists of tomorrow. At the same time, this dissertation gives some pieces of advice for local people, who can do raising-awareness actions, giving a strong input to the overall process. This dissertation build a bridge between environmental education, stakeholder marketing e sustainable tourism, implicitly stimulating the reasoning on a crucial issue to front: global warming and the progressive depletion of available natural resources. For these reasons, this thesis is highly innovative in putting the basis for further theoretical and practical studies, providing a strong starting point and generating very important ideas for reflection, especially for companies in the tourism sector, and not only.

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## **Appendix A.**

### **Semi-structured interview protocol**

Before starting with the interview, could you specify:

- Name and surname
- Spokesperson of which CEAS
- Which position do you hold in the CEAS

Part 1. Personal questions about the role in the CEAS.

Q1. How did you become manager/holder/scientific director/operator of the CEAS X?

- How long have you been doing this job?
- What activities do you do as manager/holder/scientific director/operator of the CEAS?
- Do you delegate any activities to others? For example, to organise or perform? To whom?

Q2. Do you cooperate with others?

- At what level? Local, regional, national, international?
- Do you also cooperate with schools? In what way?

Q3. Do you notice any problems?

- What kind of problems? Examples.

Part 2. Questions about the staff.

Q4. How many people collaborate with the centre?

- What do they actively do?
- Are the staff volunteers?
- What level of education do they have? Do they participate in relevant courses?
- What is the average age of the staff? Are men or women predominant?
- Do you find differences in performance by age group or gender?

Part 3. Questions concerning environmental education and activities.

Q5. What is environmental education for you?

- Do you think it is important for the present and the future?

Q6. How does the centre contribute to environmental education?

- With which activities? How often are the activities offered?
- Does seasonality influence programming?

Q7. Who are the participants?

- Adults? Children? Age groups? Families?

Q8. What is the purpose of the centre's activities?

- How are they organised?
- What is the relationship do you create with the participant? Participation, face-to-face lessons? Examples.

Q9. Do you organise activities for tourists?

- If yes, which kind of activities are?
- If not, for what reasons? Examples.
- Do you consider tourist children and families?

Part 4. Questions regarding the potentiality of environmental education activities for tourists.

Q10. How do you consider proposing environmental education activities for tourists?

- How could the centre propose such activities to tourists? With whom could it collaborate? Public, private, tour operators, hotels, resorts, public administrations? Examples.
- Could the same activities dedicated to resident children also be suitable for tourist children?

Q11. How can the CEAS contribute to the strategic promotion of the area and the protection of the tourist destination?

Q12. What problems could arise in promoting activities for children, tourists and families? Examples.

Closure, greetings, questions, further information



## Appendix B.

### Nvivo Graphics

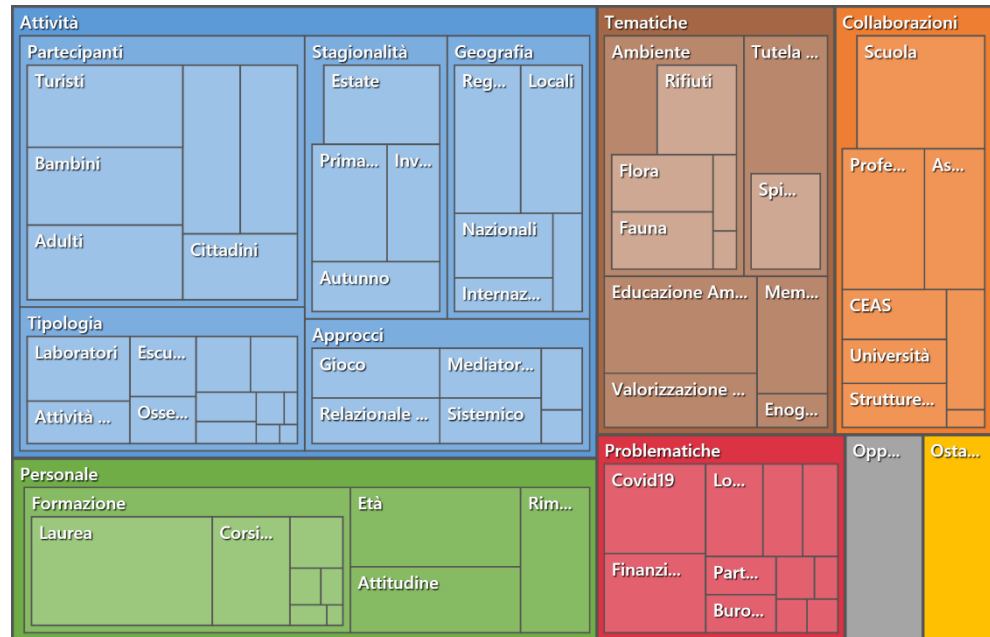


Figure 17. Data compared by number of items coded