

# MARKETING WORKS

## MSc International Marketing



### **Understanding the youth tourist market for Loch Lomond: the supply-side perspective**

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## *Executive summary*

This paper reports the research project undertaken for Love Loch Lomond, a local Scottish destination marketing organisation, helping the businesses it represents by marketing the Loch Lomond, Trossachs and Clyde Sea lochs areas, providing networking opportunities and representing the interests of the local touristic areas to different local and international bodies.

The need for tourism businesses to find new growth and development opportunities has put the focus on a target market still not very considered: young tourists. However, youth tourism has specific characteristics which businesses need to know in order to align their offering to the target's expectations and thus become appealing and attracting. This is this knowledge gap that led to the creation of this research project, which conducted secondary and primary research to answer to four distinct objectives. Different but complementary, their ultimate goal was to give tourism businesses in the Loch Lomond areas key attitudes and perspectives to adopt as well as recommendations on the shaping of their product and service offering to eventually become more attractive for the youth tourists market.

Through a mixed-methods approach, the research combined field observations and in-depth interviews of tourism businesses operating in the Loch Lomond areas to gather different insights, which were thematically analysed to draw findings.

Among the key insights, the research has found cooperation between businesses and networking to be positively perceived as a way to enhance the area and provide a better offering. Several businesses have indeed shared their will to work together with other companies.

Interviews have also allowed to discover the greatly beneficial role of events for tourism and how they are able to draw in a big number of visitors, despite any unfavourable weather. Unfortunately, it contrasts with the fact that several successful were not renewed in the area.

Regarding young tourists, it has been found that defining this target market remains difficult for business owners, as the definitions given were sometimes really far from what is actually considered youth tourism. Nevertheless, the research confirmed the

desire from business to attract young tourists, who are seen as a target representing potential and future.

Further in the findings is addressed the good practices undertaken by observed and interviewed businesses about the use of technology, like offering free Wi-Fi or being present online through social media and own and review websites.

The last important finding concerns customer experience and the massive consideration given to it by businesses, which definitely see it as a central factor in the offering.

Thanks to the different findings, the research was able to address the different objectives and propose several recommendations, whose aim is to be applicable by any tourism business covered by Love Loch Lomond, regardless of their current attractiveness for youth tourism.

Therefore, the first recommendation is for Love Loch Lomond to promote and encourage the creation of businesses networks, to create synergies, share knowledge and help to shape a uniform attractive area to young tourists.

Moreover, it is suggested for Love Loch Lomond and the businesses to work on creating or bringing back events to build visibility for the area, attract tourists and benefit from all the direct or indirect advantages events bring with them.

Thirdly, it appeared essential to suggest to organisations like Love Loch Lomond to make efforts to explain and define clearly to businesses the youth tourism market, with its demographical and behavioural characteristics, to avoid any unnecessary misunderstanding.

Another recommendation coming from this project is to devote time and commitment into the management of businesses' online presence (e.g. social media, website, online reviews) as it is where young tourists will primarily look for them.

The last recommendation this research makes is to work on enhancing as much as possible the customer experience offered by businesses, as, products and services on their own, no matter their quality, cannot represent by themselves an appeal strong enough to young tourists.

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## **1. Introduction**

Love Loch Lomond (LLL) is a Scottish publicly funded destination marketing organisation operating in the Loch Lomond, Trossachs and Clyde Sea lochs areas. Through a business membership, the organisation promotes the area by undertaking marketing activities, providing customer service to enhance customer experience and participating in a range of local and national tradeshow, conferences and facilitating business networking.

The businesses represented by Love Loch Lomond target a wide range of customers, from local people to international tourists, from day visitors to overnight stayers. Nevertheless, they are looking to grow their activity, something which comes from proposing an offering which meets customers' expectations. In their desire for growth, businesses see young tourists as an opportunity, hence comes the need to identify if the current offering respects young customers' needs.

Youth tourism indeed seems to represent a target market with a lot of potential and growth rate, as, it is forecasted, there will be about 300 million young people travelling worldwide in 2020 (Ghete, 2015). In Scotland only, millennials represent 3,8 million tourists, 18 million overnight stays and about £1,3 billion (VisitScotland, 2017b).

Yet, youth tourism does not share the same characteristics as their traditional counterparts, and their needs differ from what is currently offered by the different businesses represented by Love Loch Lomond. Lack of Wi-Fi, poor mobile signal, inadequate infrastructures, not enough transportations or attractions added to a product and service offering failing to meet expectations (Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park, 2016), can be factors negatively impacting the areas' attractiveness.

Therefore, in order to provide businesses recommendations and suggestions to transform their offering into a young-tourist-friendly one so that all businesses could benefit from the findings and help the Loch Lomond, Trossachs and Clyde Sea lochs to thrive, this research project needs to address objectives set by Love Loch Lomond. Consequently, this research project's goal is to achieve four objectives. The first is to explore and benchmark through secondary research how similar destinations, together with destination marketing organisations, reach out to this youth tourist demographic and what form it takes. The second purpose of this research is to explore the

experiences of tourism-related businesses in Loch Lomond, as well as those that bring tourists into the area, with regard to the attractiveness and relevance of their product offering to youth tourists. Additionally, another objective to achieve is to explore the perspectives, attitudes and future plans of businesses/organisations that contribute to the youth tourism product offering of Loch Lomond. Finally, the last objective that this research project aims at reaching is to propose how the tourism product offering of Loch Lomond could be best shaped and configured to appeal to the youth tourist market.

This report's structure continues with a presentation of the background research, which gives an understanding of the youth tourism in Scotland and presents Loch Lomond. A literature review follows to give a comprehensive insight of the target market: young tourists. It discusses the characteristics that define this type of customer, the behaviours related and the different recommendations coming from the literature to attract young tourists. It also addresses theoretical businesses requirements to provide a satisfactory and successful experience to customers.

Before approaching the project itself, with the analysis and the findings of the research, the methodology explains how the different primary researches were conducted.

Afterwards, the conclusions and recommendations are given to answer the different objectives and help businesses grow their activity through youth tourism.

## **2. Background Research**

At the origin of this research project is the need for tourism businesses to look for new growth and development opportunities. This is notably a wish and a perception coming from Love Loch Lomond and the businesses it represents. As such, one apparent target market that lacks attention but which does not lack potential is youth tourism, nowadays captivating all businesses' attention. Hence, since youth tourism and the Loch Lomond areas are at the core of this research, it appears significant to present them and give some characteristics, firstly about young tourists in Scotland, and then about Loch Lomond tourism in a second time.

### **2.1. Youth tourism in Scotland**

Since the study addresses young tourists, it seems relevant to detail their specific behaviours and attitudes.

For instance, young adults (aged 16-24), along with the internet, consider social media websites to play an important role in trip planning (VisitScotland, 2017d). An essential point is that they combine different sources to make their decisions: they take some information from a Facebook page, some information from a destination organisation website and also can gather information from user-generated-content (UGC).

Indeed, UGC is another key source for trip planning, as young people look for reviews and ratings, but also pictures and videos taken by previous visitors or professionals.

It does not mean however that they do not make use of printed material like brochures (34% of young Europeans use them) (VisitScotland, 2017d).

Nevertheless, if word-of-mouth is a principal source of influence for all tourists in terms of trip planning, this statement takes another dimension when it comes to young visitors. Indeed, 65% of the 16-44 years use it as a source of information (VisitScotland, 2017d).

Even during the trip, the behaviour of young tourists is similar. For instance, when they are looking for an information (primarily related to things to do and transportation), 56% of 16-24 and 51% of 25-34 will talk to someone face-to-face, but even a greater proportion will use their smartphone, with respectively 83% and 91%



for each age range (VisitScotland, 2017d). Would they be looking for information on Loch Lomond, youth tourists would tend to look up on the internet to find it rather than asking locals.

## **2.2. Tourism in the Loch Lomond areas**

Loch Lomond is Scotland's largest freshwater loch and is located not far from Glasgow, near the Trossachs, with its southern shore beginning in Balloch. With a length of 23 miles, Loch Lomond comprises 30 islands, of which Inchmurrin is the biggest (visit-lochlomond.com, 2018). The Loch Lomond area covers a wide range of tourist-appreciated locations, with 72% of visitors going to Balloch, Luss, Balmaha and the South Loch Lomond area (Bowers, 2018). Moreover, 38% of visitors visit Aberfoyle, Callander, Strathyre, Killin and Port of Menteith, and a smaller amount (24%) go to Helensburgh, Tyndrum and Crianlarich (Bowers, 2018).

With the different landscapes offered in the area, Loch Lomond attracts numerous tourists who take profit of nature and quiet and enjoy activities such as sightseeing, walking and hiking (VisitScotland, 2017c).

The Loch Lomond, Stirling, Trossachs and Argyll area counts a majority of middle-aged tourists, as almost 70% are at least 35 years old. It is mainly a one-day destination since 62% are day-visitors (Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, 2016). For the overnight visitors, the preferred accommodations are self-catering, hotels and B&Bs, and 41% of them search for information online before the trip to choose their accommodation (VisitScotland, 2017c).

Because the South of Loch Lomond is easily accessible from Glasgow and other cities, the principal mode of transportation are cars (85%), but tourists also use water transportation (26%) to travel there since it is available (Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, 2016). Indeed, waterbuses and cruises represent an excellent experience for tourists.

Further, a VisitScotland survey shows that the Loch Lomond and Trossachs areas provide a good overall satisfaction, with a mean of 9/10, although a few points could be improved. Indeed, the satisfaction with the availability of free Wi-Fi at the

accommodations is just above average (6,8/10), and tourists do not find that the eating-out offering is of great value (7,5/10).

This is something confirmed with a study from Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority (2016), where better Wi-Fi is the third most suggested improvement, alongside with the number of public toilets and litter bins and the impact of the weather.

Moreover, other weaknesses and threats are identified in the SWOT analysis of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park (2016). Visitor infrastructure, the lack of public transport, the lack of new offering and an underdeveloped cultural offer are seen as weaknesses, and the threats identified are the quality of infrastructure, the gap between the branded and the actual visitor experience and the inability to invest as much as the competition.

### **3. Literature review**

Although the research focuses on tourism businesses, the central element of the project remains youth tourism. Thus, it appears important to gain an understanding of what has been already said on young tourists in the academic literature to help shape the research.

Indeed, young tourists are a particular target market and cannot be considered like other regular tourists. They have specificities and characteristics that businesses must take into account in order to appear relevant and exciting to them.

Academic literature on tourism is broad and young tourists have been the subject of different studies for different purposes. Nonetheless, the addition of these papers gives insightful information for this target, which recovers more realities than solely “they are young people with low budgets and are not big spenders”.

Consequently, this literature review aims at providing a comprehensive understanding of youth tourism.

Nevertheless, it remains essential to address how tourism businesses attract tourists and can be attractive through their servicescape. Thus, in a second time are discussed the different aspects of tourism business that can be shaped to increase their appeal and customer satisfaction.

#### **3.1. Youth tourism**

Firstly, the elements helping to define who young tourists are will be approached, before tackling the different behaviours inherent to this target market. Lastly, recommendations and suggestions given by studies to rightfully approach youth tourism are summarised.

### **3.1.1. Definition of youth tourism**

If tourism businesses want to be more attractive towards youth tourism, it is essential to clearly define what stands behind it. It is even more relevant as, according to forecasts, by 2020 there will be 300 million young tourists travelling in a year (Ghete, 2015). The problem is that, according to the source, youth tourism will not be defined the same way.

Young tourists can be defined as corresponding to generation Y, which means people born between 1980 and 2000 (Vukic, Kuzmanovic and Kostic Stankovic, 2014). Youth tourism applies then to people aged 18-38. Compared to other tourists, they stay longer on vacation, travel several times every year and spend more (Ghete, 2015). It is explained by the fact that they have more free time and thus can go on longer (and more expensive) travels (Debski and Nasierowski, 2017). Moreover, young tourists are the kind that is booking more on the internet, willing to experience new things, information-driven and intrepid (Vukic, Kuzmanovic and Kostic Stankovic, 2014).

If the stereotype of the young tourist is something like “the young student with little money to travel, looking for cheap products and accommodations”, the reality is now quite different. For Chen, Johnson and Gherissi-Laben (2013), social structure has changed and, nowadays, an increasing number of young people consider themselves belonging to the middle class and have thus higher expectations and standards for their life, whom travel is part.

However, because the age range is relatively broad, it is important to notice that young tourists do not necessarily share the same profiles, characteristics or motives (Vukic, Kuzmanovic and Kostic Stankovic, 2014). A first-year student will not have the same expectations and means of travel as an individual in their thirties; however, they are both categorised as young tourists.

Moreover, youth tourism is a term that covers several types of travellers. According to Demeter and Bratucu (2014), there are six different types of young tourists.

There is educational tourism, which comprises everything related to ecotourism, heritage tourism but also the student exchanges between two countries (ex: Erasmus programme). Here, the purpose of the travel is to gain knowledge and visit enriching cultural places.

There are also volunteering tourists. It is the “practice of individuals going on a working holiday, volunteering their labour for worthy causes in an organised way”. They take advantage of the time they have during their volunteering to visit nearby places. Numerous organisations exist to facilitate the process and, according to the project, the length of stay varies.

Young tourists also travel through work and travel programmes, which are programmes where young people travel to a country to work during a few months but also to visit the country, learn the language, discover the culture etc.

Cultural exchange is another way for young people to travel and discover another country. A cultural exchange is the fact, for two individuals, to go visit the other’s home for a specified period (a week, a month...) before doing the opposite later.

Sports and adventure tourism involves the observation or participation in a sporting activity, like the football world cup.

Finally, the last type of tourism practiced by young tourists is leisure tourism, which occurs on holiday, to visit friends or family, and has relaxation as only purpose.

It exists then a variety of different young tourists, and only one definition cannot apply to the entire youth tourism. If that can be considered as a negative point because there are too many segments within the target market, it can also be considered as an advantage since it allows to target specific young customers according to the type of business being run.

### **3.1.2. Behaviour of young tourists**

Young tourists do not resemble any other target market because their behaviour tends to differ from traditional tourists, which forces businesses to adapt.

Indeed, identifying consumer behaviours is key to propose an offering and a customer experience that fits expectations and consumption profile of youth.

A first fact that might appear interesting is that a study found that most students favour hotels and guesthouses as accommodation and just a minor part would prefer tents (Tugulea et al., 2013).

It is important to notice that there are motives pushing and motives pulling young tourists to choose a destination (Vukici, Kuzmanovic and Kostic Stankovic, 2015).

Pushing factors come from “non-materialistic inner desires” (Vukici, Kuzmanovic and Kostic Stankovic, 2015) like the will to escape, to experience adventures, to make dreams come true, whereas pulling factors are based on a destination’s attractive features like events, the places the destination is known for, the food etc.

Nevertheless, young tourists’ behaviour is impacted by other factors than motives, like the feeling of being welcomed, the ease to access the destination and attractions, the cost of activities etc. (Vukici, Kuzmanovic and Kostic Stankovic, 2015).

However, in order to make their decision and to actually travel to a destination, young customers need to gather information on the different destinations. For instance, internet plays a central role in the decision making of young people, as well as reviews and opinions from peers and even from unknown people. In a study conducted by Tugulea and al (2013), it has been found that most preferred sources of information for young people are, in order, reviews on the internet, the opinions of peers (friends, family, colleagues) and specialised sites of tourism. They prefer to make their opinions by sources they trust rather than traditional sources like travel agencies, whose material and personal account for the least preferred sources of information in the study. It is confirmed by Ghete (2015), who says that “the Internet is used by young people for references, reviews, rankings or recommendations and for travel planning” and by Bizirgianni and Dionysospoulou (2013), ranking internet as the first option of youth tourism for trip planning. It can be in part explained, except for the presence from review sites like TripAdvisor, by the fact that tourists want to see the pictures of the destination they are planning to visit on social media platforms (Bizirgianni and Dionysospoulou, 2013).

Nevertheless, other criteria are used by young tourists to select the tourism destination they will visit. According to Debski and Nasierowski (2017), the three first are the quality of catering, the easy access to attractions and the quality and accessibility of shops (See Table 1).

1	Quality of catering/restaurants facilities
2	Easy access to attractions
3	Quality and accessibility of shops
4	Variety of leisure and recreation offered
5	Quality and efficiency of local transport
6	Quality of accommodation and facilities
7	Journey costs
8	Easy access
9	Entertainment
10	Destination brand (known, popular)

Table 1. Top 10 of Criteria for the selection of tourism destinations (from Debski and Nasierowski, 2017, p.325).

### **3.2. Tourism businesses: servicescape and customer satisfaction**

Although young tourists have certain behaviours and characteristics which require special attention from businesses so that they can align their offering, it exists nevertheless different aspects that can be found in a tourism business offering, which are not primarily focusing youth tourists but remain essential in attracting them and other customers. Indeed, regardless of the target, if businesses want to be competitive they need to put the emphasis on tourist satisfaction (Tan et al., 2015). For instance, the servicescape, which is “the physical environment in which the experience is created” (Fernandes and Neves, 2014) is an element playing on customers’ outcome. As such, further is discussed the importance of servicescape in the service delivery, then is reminded how crucial is the customer experience before addressing, in the same fashion than the youth tourism section, the recommendations academics concluded for businesses.

### **3.2.1. The servicescape in the service delivery**

In any consumption encounter, tourists and customers pay attention to the physical cues present in the shopping environment: this is the servicescape. Servicescape refers precisely to how the service environment is manipulated to engender customer satisfaction (Tan et al., 2015) and corresponds to a wide range of possibilities: the cleanliness of the environment, having tables and chairs rightfully aligned, the presence of signs to inform people, etc. All of these little and seemingly insignificant cues, consumers look at them and assess a company's quality, which eventually influences their ultimate satisfaction (Abubakar and Mavondo, 2014).

Fernandes and Neves (2014) for instance found that the most important physical details perceived by customers are comfort and layout accessibility, cleanliness, electronic equipment and aesthetic dimension.

However, if the servicescape is key for consumers, it is as much important for employees and their behaviour, who interact with customers and are part of the customer experience (Abubakar and Mavondo, 2014).

Consequently, servicescape must be considered as a resource playing a primary role in the experience delivery that must be understood and developed to be monitored and managed in order to obtain competitive advantage (Fernandes and Neves, 2014).

On the contrary, a poor servicescape can negatively impact tourists' satisfaction, which then has to be boosted by a harder work of employees if they want to provide an exceptional customer experience (Tan et al., 2015).

### **3.2.2. Importance of customer experience**

Indeed, customer satisfaction is closely related to the capacity of businesses to provide a good and exciting customer experience (Abubakar and Mavondo, 2014).

Over the years, customer experience has taken a great importance and nowadays, the experience related with the consumption is as much if not more important than the product or service consumed: the experience economy has taken over the service economy (Thakor, Suri and Saleh, 2014). People consume with a will to achieve a certain outcome, and if this outcome is achieved, the satisfaction will emerge



(Abubakar and Mavondo, 2014). For instance, a tourist might want to eat a traditional Scottish meal, not for the sake of eating haggis, but to experience local food.

The stake of customer experience is vital because the experience of an individual will reflect on another client's experience when they will be interacting (Abubakar and Mavondo, 2014) so providing a good customer experience to everyone is key. An angry customer yelling or complaining in a store will impact others' experience although the person might not even realise it.

However, it is important to consider that the customer experience also comes from sources that are not directly linked to businesses. For instance with e-word-of-mouth (i.e. online reviews), which customers increasingly rely on (as much as a personal recommendation) and use to set their expectations when coming to consume (Duan et al., 2015).

Because customer experience is the result of many things and result in many others, there are several recommendations and implications for businesses.

### **3.2.3. Implication for businesses**

Considering the different essential aspects addressed earlier that businesses must consider if they want to be attractive and competitive, rises from the literature some recommendations and suggestions to assist businesses achieving their goal.

The first one concerns the importance of online reviews and e-word-of-mouth. As such, Duan et al. (2015) recommend to collect feedback both on a business's competition and products to understand expectations and perceive new opportunities. In order to add value and enhance customer experience, Thakor, Suri and Saleh (2008) propose to stage the customer experience. Precisely, it means to split the experience into the different buying process stages and work on how to improve the experience at each stage. For instance, a business can focus on the welcoming experience for when customers enter the shop, or work on how employees thank the customers once they have paid.

As previously explained, customers rarely consume without being surrounded by other customers and as such, Abubakar and Mavondo (2014) suggest businesses to include

in their service delivery design the possible interaction between customers, but also between employees, who perform numerous tasks involving directly the customer (e.g. answering questions, giving indication to tourists, speaking their language...).

A lot of these recommendations and other practices tourism business have to undertake to appeal to tourists and survive require them to have, to a certain extent, a strategical approach in their operations. Yet, a lot of tourism companies are SMEs and do not have the resources to design a service delivery which integrates a staged customer experience and considers online reviews. To overcome this deficit in strategy, academics recommend business cooperation and networking as it allows to gain knowledge, ideas (Pikkemaat and Zehrer, 2016) and synergies to achieve durable competitiveness (Zehrer, 2009).

Although current academic literature on youth tourism is wide in terms of topics approached, the different works undertaken allow to capture a global understanding of what is youth tourism. Young tourists are people aged between 18 and 38 years old who love to travel everywhere to fulfil their will of experience. They have different motives to travel and thus there are different attitudes to approach them. Their behaviour differs from general tourists in that they are technology savvy, keen to use internet and technology to gather the maximum of information to organise their trip. They rely on the sources they trust to make their decision, which makes traditional advertising not as effective as on other target markets, forcing businesses to be innovative and up to date in their means of communication.

Regarding how tourism businesses operate, the literature highlights the stake of businesses' servicescape, which is the way the physical space is organised to provide the customer experience. Business owners need to consider every little cue and turn them into attractive touchpoints or otherwise the experience customers live is negative. Yet, customer experience is primordial as this is what customers actually look for rather than simple product and services in this experience economy.

Nonetheless, recommendations emerged from the literature and could constitute the basis of this research for Love Loch Lomond. However, the current literature fails to address properly the situation of the project since the research focuses on a specific region of Scotland that has not been subject to research. Indeed, the project's aim is to

make recommendations for businesses located in the Loch Lomond, Clyde Sea lochs and Helensburgh area, which can have their own specificities. Nevertheless, the literature's recommendations provide a basis to this report, allowing to compare any similarities or differences between them and the ones drawn from this research. Thus, primary research was needed to bring fitted recommendations based on the actual perceptions and practices of local businesses. The methodology the researchers employed to conduct this primary research is detailed in the next section to allow to understand how researchers have approached the problem.

#### **4. Methodology**

Following the need to conduct primary research, the choice of qualitative over quantitative method has been made. Indeed, the study had an exploratory perspective: identify businesses' perception of youth tourism, their practices so that we could draw recommendations, which any tourism business could apply. These objectives then called for qualitative research because it is more suited to gather deep insights rather than quantitative tools, which are not designed to go into deep explanations.

The general idea with the design of our primary research was to measure a few but important context-specific factors of tourism business in Loch Lomond.

In order to measure what local businesses had done so far and what they were expecting to do in the future to attract youth market, both observations and in-depth interviews were carried in a mixed-methods research. The purpose of the first method was to observe tourism businesses in their natural atmosphere to assess different aspects related to youth tourism, while interviews of other tourism businesses in the studied area had the goal to collect insights and opinions on youth tourism. Two different methods have been chosen because they have complementary advantages.

Indeed, observations are appealing since some facts can only be revealed in natural settings and that they overcome the potential refusal rate of other techniques and they do not inconvenience participants (Wilson, 2011). Another distinct advantage of observations is that they record actual behaviours, they are exempt of social bias (i.e. responding under social pressure, conditioned answers) (University of Guelph, 2018). However, the con is that they cannot provide any insight into what the person is thinking or what might motivate their behaviour. This is where in-depth interviews come useful.

In-depth interviews allow an unstructured, flexible and evolutionary approach, which is appropriate to gain a deeper understanding of attitudes or behaviours (Wilson, 2011).

The collection of data was carried out over a period of two weeks in May 2018 in the Loch Lomond, Helensburgh and Glasgow areas.

The underlying aim was to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of current businesses in Loch Lomond and indicate suggestions from a managerial perspective.

Nevertheless, before conducting any field work, observations and interviews had to be designed and approved by the client and the research supervisor.

#### **4.1. Research Design**

##### **4.1.1. In-depth Interviews**

The in-depth interviews were organised in the way of either face to face or telephone interviews. Interviewees were selected and discussed by interviewers and the client. Invitation and consent forms were given to interviewees either in person or by e-mail to get approval ahead of interviews.

The in-depth interviews were designed to be executed in 30 to 45 minutes with the aim of understanding overall business performance and business owners' perception of youth tourism. An interview guide was created to help structure the interview and comprised four sections (the complete interview guide can be found in Appendix 2). As mentioned, and since the businesses interviewed are from different kinds, the interview guide only served as a guideline and not as a questionnaire to follow thoroughly. It acted as a support to ensure that interviewers could gather enough data during each interview and avoid discrepancy among different interviewers and interviewees.

The first section introduced the research project to the respondent, with details on the length, structure and aim of the interview. Although every interviewee was given a participant information sheet with a detailed presentation of the project, the introduction enabled to remind the context in which they were asked to participate.

Then, the first set of questions were focused on respondents' business. It was meant to obtain an understanding of the context in which businesses operate and give a background to understand further themes discussed in the interview. As such, information such as the average type of customer, the extent to which the business is online, the strategy adopted etc., were asked.

The third section was more linked to the objective of this research. Indeed, the theme surrounding the questions was youth tourism. Here the goal was to identify respondents' opinion and perception of the target market. It was also to collect insights

on behaviour and practices to compare with what was found with the background research and the literature review. For instance, participants were asked to define youth tourism, to give their opinion of this target, to tell if free Wi-Fi was part of their offering, among other questions.

Finally, the interview was concluded with thanks for the participant. Participants granted us with their time although having a busy schedule and it was important to remind how valued their participation was.

The main role of interviewers was just to control the pace of the interview and gather dynamic response from the interviewees. Thus, interview questions were rather open-ended rather than strictly formatted to allow interviewees to develop their own ideas and generate more diversified data.

#### **4.1.2. Observations**

The observations took place in the Loch Lomond and Helensburgh areas. The aim of those observations was to research the general attractiveness of local businesses to the youth market and thus provide insights from a different perspective than in-depth interviews. Businesses were selected based on the following criteria:

- Businesses had to be an accommodation provider, a food or drink establishment or a recreation/activity business. This way, we could observe different types of businesses with different customers.
- Businesses which had more than 500 followers on Twitter/Instagram/Facebook or more than 500 reviews on TripAdvisor/Booking.com to be sure to observe businesses with a certain level of activity.

The observation methods included both visible & hidden observation, participant & non-participant observation. In order to get more data on the youth market, researchers were required to experience business service as young visitors.

The observation themes were considered according to the secondary research, which indicated that the main challenges of Loch Lomond were the lower percentage of young visitors, poor mobile signal and Wi-Fi coverage, inadequate infrastructures and lack of technology innovation. Combining the fundamental aspect of service quality,

the criteria were developed in an observation guide (full observation guide can be found in Appendix 3).

There were five observation themes, respectively the youth market, technology and infrastructures, service quality and online services.

Observations regarding the youth market consisted of counting the proportion of young tourists, technology and infrastructures observations were on elements such as Wi-Fi, service quality was about analysing the customer experience and the online services part was about probing the online presence of businesses.

## **4.2. Sampling**

To carry the observations as well as the in-depths interviews, researchers used purposive and convenience sampling.

The purposive sampling allowed to collect data only from relevant businesses as youth-attractive businesses only were needed. Indeed, researchers could not interview every tourism business in the areas because they did not all fit the requirements of the project. Purposive sampling allowed to discard in a first time businesses we would not need. Afterwards, convenience sampling facilitated the process, because researchers did not have to respect statistical sampling. Indeed, regarding the observations, the businesses were selected based on their notoriety and activity and interviewees were selected based on recommendations from the client. It ensured to obtain sufficient insights from observations and to gain easier interview invitation approvals for the in-depth interviews.

## **4.3. Data collection**

The interviews were carried either face-to-face or on Skype or phone call. The choice was given to the participant at the same time of the invitation, who chose the most convenient means. In every case, the interview was recorded for the purpose of being converted into a transcript to ease the analysis. Each interview record was stored on a secure computer and all data was destroyed upon completion of the report.

Researchers made sure to seek and gain approval from each participant, which were all contacted by the client in the first place.

Observations occurred at the different businesses' locations and during the beginning of May (it applies as well for interviews). Each observation produced a report to facilitate the coding of the data and its consequent analysis.

#### **4.4. Data analysis**

Both for observations and interviews, the collected data were analysed following a thematic analysis.

A thematic analysis is “relevant qualitative research method” “identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set” (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis has been chosen because it fits the nature of qualitative research: it is flexible, provides rich data and produces insightful findings (Nowell et al., 2017).

With the purpose of conducting a rigorous analysis, the work of Nowell et al. (2017) was followed, which guides researchers with a step-by-step approach to conduct a relevant analysis.

All interviews transcripts were read and recurrences were gathered into common topics. For each theme, few relevant and demonstrative quotes were kept for further support.

Similar process occurred with observations reports, which allowed to compare efficiently the results from the various places observed.

#### **4.5. Limitations**

As any other study, this research knows some limitations that need to be considered and reminded when interpreting the findings and recommendations. Firstly, the generalisability of the findings of this study is limited. This is indeed due to the small sample size used, in link with the method used. Further studies with



quantitative tools would help to verify the results. Moreover, the method used purposive and convenience sampling, which is not a random sampling technique.

Secondly, this study included a majority of businesses from the area of Loch Lomond. Because Love Loch Lomond covers the areas of Loch Lomond but also the Trossachs and the Clyde Sea lochs, more businesses need to be observed and interviewed in order to be able to generalise further.

Lastly, this research was cross-sectional in nature, meaning it was conducted at a specific point in time. To better analyse market trends and collect more reliable results, a longitudinal approach would suit more. Longitudinal studies consider observations and interviews over a period of time, sometimes lasting several years. Such a study would provide better insights into seasonal and non-seasonal offerings and help in eliminating biases. Weather hazard would also be eliminated as conducting an observation on tourism businesses over a period of one or two days gets its results totally relying on the weather as it impacts tourist's attendance.

Nevertheless, the data collected still showed relevance to the project and their analysis permitted to find worthy insights.

## 5. Analysis and findings

This section presents the results of secondary and primary research conducted with regards to the objectives set for the project. As such, each objective is further presented and reminded and serves as a prism through which findings are discussed. The results coming from secondary research originate from different online sources and studies.

The observation researches took place in seven businesses belonging in the Loch Lomond and Helensburgh areas (see Table 2).

<b>Name</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>
Loch Lomond Leisure	Recreation	Luss
Lomond Woods Holiday Park	Accommodation	Balloch
The Queen of the Loch	Restaurant	Alexandria
The Oak Tree Inn	Accommodation	Balmaha
Padrone Pizza	Restaurant	Helensburgh
Luss Seafood Bar	Restaurant	Luss
The Balcony, bar & grill	Restaurant	Balloch

Table 2. List of the businesses observed for the research

As for in-depth interviews, six participants agreed to take part in the research project. They have been selected because they are tourism-related businesses operating in the Loch Lomond, Trossachs and Clyde Sea lochs areas and the final selection of business was accepted by the client, Lesley Judge. A brief detail of each participant is available in Table 3. Results are pseudo-anonymised: the identity of the respondents is only known by the researchers, their supervisor and the client. Each participant has been given a number, which serves as identifying the participants' answers.

Participant number	Business	Function in the business
Participant 1	Accommodation provider	Manager
Participant 2	Recreation / Entertainment	Manager
Participant 3	Accommodation & catering provider	Marketing consultant
Participant 4	Tourism site management business	Manager
Participant 5	Tour operator	Marketing manager
Participant 6	Travel booking website	Market manager

Table 3. Description of participants' businesses and job and identification number.

### **5.1. 1<sup>st</sup> objective: identify how the competition deals with youth tourists**

The first objective set by the research was to conduct secondary research in order to explore and benchmark the Loch Lomond areas competition, and identify how this competition, with their own destination marketing organisations, reaches out to youth tourists.

For this research, the two touristic areas of Lake District and Loch Ness and Inverness were chosen. Their offering appealing to young tourists was non-exhaustively listed and compared on several aspects.

Lake District is England's largest national park consisting of 10 mountain peaks and over 80 water bodies within an area of 2.292 square kilometres (Lake District National Park, 2018). It was announced by UNESCO as one of the World heritage sites in 2017 (UNESCO, 2017). It offers UK's most stunning and ancient landscapes. The location brings 45 million people annually and contributes around £2.72 billion to the economy (Rogers, 2018).

A lot of adventure sports such as canoeing, sailing, windsurfing take place here and in doing so it has rightfully earned the name of the adventure capital of the UK (Lake District National Park, 2018). The body that governs the Lake District National Park aims 'to build a world-class visitor experience attracting vibrant communities to help

in sustaining landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage’ (Lake District National Park, 2018). The governing body along with other animal/environment protection organisations plan and approach activities in and around Lake District with sustainability particularly in mind (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

Loch Ness and Inverness are promoted and reinforced by the Business Improvement District (BID). It is a “geographically defined area where businesses come together and agree to invest collectively in projects and services that the businesses believe will improve their trading environment. Those improvement projects are funded by the money collected through an investment levy agreed to be paid by businesses in the BID area” (Rediscover Peterhead BID, 2017, p.3). The aims for the next five years (2018-2023) planned by the BID are:

1. Marketing the City Centre – attracting people to a vibrant and thriving City Centre through social media and other channels
2. Enhancing the City Centre – enhancing the experience and fabric for visitors & residents alike
3. Engaging & Championing the City Centre – engaging to champion the City Centre & its businesses
4. Safe & Welcoming City Centre – essential that the BID Area is viewed as Safe & Secure

Detailed information on how the BID wishes to achieve the above goals are provided in the business plan on their website (Rediscover Peterhead BID, 2017).

A major attraction of this particular location is the myth of the Loch Ness Monster, ‘Nessie’ which is supposed to live in the loch. Enthusiasts come in hope to find and prove the existence of the monster annually which contributes marginally to the economy, by \$80 million each year (Britannica, 2018).

### **5.1.1. Major events**

Both Lake District and the Loch Ness and Inverness (shortened ‘Loch Ness’ further) hold events susceptible to attract young tourists in their respective areas.

One prominent example for Lake District is the Great North Swim, in Brockhole, on Windermere, which attracts people from all over Europe. Indeed, it is the biggest open water swimming event in Europe and has existed for more than ten years. Because it is available to swimmers of any level, for races of different lengths (250 meters to 10.000 kilometres), it knows great success. Indeed, in a decade, the number of participants grew from 3.000 to almost 10.000 (Great Run, 2018).

But there are events of all kinds, such as music events and festivals. In particular, the Keswick jazz and blues festival attracts a lot of people, which contributes positively to the economy and the image of the destination. The town’s theatre by the lake is used commonly for various such events attracting many local people. This particular festival lasts four days celebrating the best of jazz and blues music which provides an opportunity for tourists to stay over 4 days in Lake District (Keswick Jazz & Blues Festival, 2018).

Loch Ness, on its side has, for instance, the Inverness Highland games taking place every year in Inverness as a way of celebrating Scottish and Celtic culture. While the events in the competition are mainly centred on piping and drumming, dancing, and Scottish heavy athletics, the games also include entertainment and exhibits related to other aspects of Scottish and Gaelic culture (Exclusively Highlands, 2018).

The Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival attracts people from around the world to enjoy a two/three days weekend at Belladrum Estate, near Inverness to listen to various artists’ performance. It is usually held at the beginning of August of each year. The festival started in 2004, and its popularity has since then massively grown. The result: the festival has sold out in advance every year since 2008. Famous artists such as Kaiser Chiefs, Ed Sheeran and The Wombats performed here, which explains the rise in popularity.

Loch Ness is also home to one of the best marathons in the UK. The Loch Ness Marathon is the biggest in Scotland and has taken place every autumn since 2004. The entire course is along the countryside which offers a great view to the runners (The

Guardian, 2015). It begins in the Loch Ness area and finishes in Inverness. The event is part of the Festival of Running, held annually at the beginning of October. It attracts around 8000 people annually across various events. The winner of the marathon is awarded £1,400 (Press and Journal, 2017).

### **5.1.2. Activities and attractions of interest for the youth market**

Again, both areas have something to propose to the young target market, however, without the same means.

Lake District has, for instance, the adventure group River Deep Mountain High, which is a special service provider for adventure enthusiasts who visit Lake District (River Deep Mountain High, 2018). They also provide accommodation separately. They cater for groups such as schools/college students who look to understand team and group dynamics through team building and outdoor activities. Other major groups the company targets is the corporate groups that seek to motivate their staff by having them doing team building activities or having a nice day out in Cumbria. Some of the customers for River Deep Mountain High are Carter law, BAE systems, Barclays, University of Manchester and University of Edinburgh. Benefits and incentives are provided for reservations for a large audience, hence the youth population prefer to go there.

The World of Beatrix Potter is a colourful family attraction bringing life to the 23 enhancing stories written by the famous author Beatrix Potter (Hillthwaite, 2018). The exhibition features favourite characters from the famous books including Peter Rabbit and Mrs Tiggly-winkle, and the outdoor Peter Rabbit Garden offers visitors a timeless view of Mr McGregor's vegetable patch. This place is truly special to this location since the author wrote her famous stories here, being inspired by nature and Lake District.

Lakeland Motor Museum exhibits cars ranging from the 1930's to the 80's providing an authentic experience from the past. Car enthusiasts would enjoy the speed/ transport related history through quiz booklets, etc. The entry fee is reasonable, £8.50 for an adult, £5.00 for a child (Lakeland Motor Museum, 2018).

Lake District provides lifetime memories through Predator Experience, where people can indulge in interacting with nature's top predators from wolf packs and hawks to cheetahs (Predator Experience, 2018). This provides the opportunity to see animals which are not found in the UK otherwise.

Lakes Aquarium provides more than 30 spectacular naturally themed habitats to show the rich diversity of fishes and other species found in Lake District (Lakes Aquarium, 2018).

Because Loch Ness is at close proximity from Inverness, the area has the advantage of benefiting from all the youth-appealing activities happening in the city, like bars and clubs.

For thrill seekers, there are plenty of outdoor activities such as canoeing on the Loch, hopping on a boat for a tour or there are plenty of different hiking trails ([walkhighlands.co.uk/lochness/lochness.shtml](http://walkhighlands.co.uk/lochness/lochness.shtml), 2018).

The area suffers from a geographical disadvantage because the Loch is long and it splits the activities available into two sides: east and west. Inverness and Fort Augustus are at each extremity of the Loch, but then visitors have to choose between going towards Drumnadrochit (West side of the Loch) or Inverfarigaig (East side). Once engaged, it takes a long time before reaching the other side.

## **5.2. 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> objectives: Youth tourism in the Loch Lomond areas – present and future**

The next objectives of the research did not require secondary but primary research. Indeed, the second objective was to explore the experiences of tourism-related businesses in Loch Lomond, as well as those that bring tourists into the area, with regard to the attractiveness and relevance of their product offering to youth tourists. The third was to explore the perspectives, attitudes and future plans of businesses/organisations that contribute to the youth tourism product offering of Loch Lomond. Because of the design of the research conducted, these two objectives were combined together to provide a more insightful report.

In fact, the second objective took the form of participatory observations, which served as a ground to build, with the in-depth interviews, findings for the third objective.

Because the observations and in-depth interviews data analysis were carried following a thematic analysis, the findings related to the objectives are presented by themes, with an explanation of how they are linked with the objectives.

As such, the first set of findings addresses the tourism businesses, their operations and experience, which allows to draw perspectives and plans for all businesses. In a second time, youth tourism definition and perception by businesses is discussed.

### **5.2.1. The tourism businesses operations**

The first part of the analysis concerns the businesses, with details on how companies run their business, what kind of customers there is, and their perception of several aspects of business management

#### ***Business opening throughout the year***

Although businesses run their activity throughout the year without discontinuing, the season is rhythmmed with a peak season during the warm months and an offseason during winter.

Generally, respondents start to get busy around May and get the most of their customers until Fall, between September and October.

Nevertheless, on some occasions, the season can be extended a little longer, with for instance Participant 2 who reported to be busy until December last year.

This is a phenomenon that seems to apply to the entire country, as statistics from VisitScotland (2017a) show. Indeed, the May-October period is the one where hotels are the busiest, with an occupancy rate varying between 75% and 87% in 2016 compared to the November-April period, where occupancy is between 51% at its lowest and 68% in April.



*“There is a real peak season starting in May and going through  
September time”*  
(Participant 6)

*“May to September is the peak”*  
(Participant 5)

This finding contributes to the objective because it shows, firstly, that there is a need for businesses to be effective and attractive during this period as it is the one with the most revenue potential, but it also reveals to need to propose an offering that suits the offseason, when the weather is not as welcoming.

Indeed, tourism, recreation and leisure businesses' activity vary according to the weather and climate impacts (Perkins and Debbage, 2016), since a majority of them are outdoor-oriented. On the micro-economical point of view, it affects the actual attendance of visitors and the predictions of businesses (Perkins and Debbage, 2016). It is simply less attractive to get on a boat tour on Loch Lomond when the sky is grey and cloudy than clear and sunny. But tourism businesses are also weather-sensitive on a macro scale, as it affects tourists' arrival in Scotland or in the area. There are chances, other places are more appealing to tourists in winter than Scotland.

It is a phenomenon that could be seen with the observations conducted. During a day with a grey sky, the Padrone Pizza was barely occupied, while during the other day, warmer and sunnier, other restaurants had a lot of visitors.

### ***Strategy and day-to-day tasks***

The research reveals that not all businesses are equal in terms of strategy. Indeed, some of them have a clear idea of what they want to achieve and how to do so, when some others are not as rigorous.

This difference in vision can create gaps and disparities between the businesses, which can impact the image of the whole area.

*“In the activity side of things, we are looking to try different strategies” (Participant 2)*

*“Our aspiration is to be the best destination, we work very hard to not only improve food but drinks, the rooms people sleep in...”*  
(Participant 3)

*“It depends, there are new businesses whom I don’t really know what are their plans”*  
(Participant 4)

Planning and following a strategy can be a hard task for a business, especially for small companies with limited resources and where managers handle several functions (Ates and Bitici, 2009). Since more than 90% of UK businesses are SMEs (Ates and Bitici, 2009), tourism sector does not make an exception and among the interviewees, only one works in a very large group.

Unfortunately, the lack of strategical approach in SMEs is known, and in general, strategies are “managed in SMEs from an informal and intuitive fashion with a firefighting approach, shortterminism” (Ates and Bitici, 2009).

Adopting a strategical approach to businesses’ activities could be one of the perspectives to help having a product offering fitting more the youth tourism expectations.

### ***Cooperation and partnerships between businesses***

One of the key findings of this research is the clear will from businesses to cooperate and gather forces to create unity and benefit from joint efforts and the belief in this system. That is an attitude that could be encouraged throughout all businesses to propose a qualitatively homogeneous product offering.

For the participants, the touristic success of the region comes from partnerships and mutual help. This can take many forms, such as Participants 4's testimony, saying that the business Facebook page would tag other companies onto their posts.

*“We do try to work closely with businesses around us, mainly restaurants because we don't have a restaurant on site... we want to suggest our customers a good place to eat which is close by .... I think this something very important and I think this is something that we can do better in our area”*

*“It is very important, especially for a tourist destination “*

(Participant 1)

*“We all can meet together and have a plan together to promote the area”*

(Participant 2)

*“We all want to raise the game of Loch Lomond, want Loch Lomond to be continuously successful, which is why we all work it together. Instead of competition, we collaborate with lots of businesses. We found very good way to collaborate and that's really beneficial I think.”*

(Participant 3)

The will of cooperation and networking between tourism SMEs is not something new nor isolated and has been studied in the academic literature. Indeed, because of their size, tourism companies might lack resources and knowledge and partnerships can bring these to them.

For Valeri (2016), two principal advantages get tourism businesses to cooperate: economic benefits such as the differentiation of the tourism offer, growth through expansion etc, and benefits of “design and tourist services/products development”. In other words, networks “improve the designing and promotion of tourist initiatives”

and “develop a tourism product of service able to satisfy an ever increasingly demanding consumer” (Valeri, 2016).

### ***The importance of events***

Another insightful finding is how important events are considered to be by businesses. This is truly a determining factor to attract visitors into the area, leading them to consume. The big advantage of events is that their success does not rely on weather conditions. Participant 4, for instance, gives the example of an event occurring last year, during a weekend when it was pouring with rain, which brought 7,000 people nevertheless.

The impact is even more perceived as some events, which took place last year, are not happening this year.

*“Festival will not be happening this year, this will have a big impact on our business... we definitely have a large number of customers that come those weekends”*

(Participant 1)

*“Definitely they have a positive impact on the business”*

(Participant 2)

*“We had Christmas market on, as well as the normal food markets... We have done different things here, for instance Halloween, Andrew’s Day. We brought people to an event, as opposed to people just coming to shop”*

(Participant 4)

*“Festivals and events will attract younger market. Particularly, if it is music related and comic related, I think that really has big impact”*

(Participant 6)

The hypothetical benefits and impacts of events of all sizes have been the subject of numerous studies to determine if events can actually catalyse economic growth through tourists' appeal (Egresi and Kara, 2014).

Although there are contradicting results, varying on the size of the event and the location of it (i.e. big city or small village), several studies cited by Egresi and Kara (2014) report that "local, small-scale festivals could have strong impacts on the local economy". For instance, Nurse (2001) found that festival tourists spend more on local products and services than traditional tourists. Indeed, when visitors come to events (especially when they are not happening in big cities), they consume the local offering: accommodations, restaurants, shops... (Egresi and Kara, 2014).

The competition seems ahead on this point, with for instance The Great North Swim, at Brockhole, existing for many years, which managed to be the greatest open water swimming in Europe.

Nevertheless, even if critics towards the impact of events on tourism raise the fact that small events can be filled with a majority of locals, even so, the popularity of the event can indirectly promote the area.

### **5.2.2. Youth tourism**

This section aims at providing an understanding of how businesses, in a first time, define what youth tourism is, and secondly, of their perception of this target market.

#### ***Youth tourism defined by businesses***

Although participants were given a definition of what youth tourism is before questioning them on the subject, it was considered interesting to start by asking respondents to tell how themselves define what stands behind "young tourists" in the first place.

It appears that this target market gets a blurry definition. Characteristics and attributes given to young tourists differ from a participant to another.

Indeed, by young tourists, some see the youth in its entirety, meaning they include kids and teenagers as well.

There are different perceptions regarding the behaviour of this target market too. An interesting result is that Participant 6 actually tends to align the behaviour of young and old people.

*“I’d probably say early 20’s?!”*

(Participant 2)

*“We define it as the 18-35. (...)They are hugely tech savvy. This is something that has definitely changed a lot and that continues to change.”*

(Participant 5)

*“We’re finding now is that younger people and younger tourists travel in a very similar way to someone who is older. They also have higher income, generally. There’re behaving in a different way”*

(Participant 6)

*“The young generation we define is having interest of engaging in scenery, like riding in great scenery. There’re also fond of nature adventures”*

(Participant 3)

*“You’ve got 3 categories: very young children (...), teenagers (...) and then the 25 up to 40 year-olds”*

(Participant 4)

Once again this is an interesting finding. It may be a key in introducing youth tourism to businesses. Explaining correctly what is youth tourism might change their approach, how they can adapt their offering to the target.

### ***Businesses' perception of young tourists***

Nevertheless, it does not prevent businesses to perceive young tourists as a target market with a huge potential they want to attract. They know they represent a long-term clientele and that they are key to the development and growth of their activity.

Indeed, for the World Tourism Association (2016), youth travel represents a “resilient market”, helping to stimulate innovation and it builds a future tourism which can have a high lifetime value and softens the effects of seasonality.

*“We do have some plan to attract young people”* (Participant 3)

*“That’s the target we want to come, that’s the target we lack here”*  
(Participant 4)

*“I think it will continue to grow, with the rise of technology, cheap flights, the fact that you can find so much information, that you can connect with people from all over the world”*  
(Participant 5)

*“I think for us obviously, we have an aging population. So it is really important for us to target younger people to be our customers”*  
(Participant 6)

There is indeed an interest in grabbing young tourists’ attention and fidelity as soon as possible as they represent the next-to-come target with a high disposable income.

It is even financially interesting for businesses now since the impact of word of mouth and e-word of mouth on trip planning continues to grow for each age category, and young tourists are the one using intensively social media and review websites to share their idea and influencing their own community.

### ***Youth tourism observed***

Researchers observed each business for one hour to count the total number of consumers and the number of young consumers. The results (see Table 4) show that the percentage of younger generation visiting Loch Lomond was around 40% in general. There were more young consumers in restaurant and accommodation with restaurant/café/bar. Researchers failed to gather enough data on Padrone Pizza since there were only four tables of customers and results cannot be drawn from that. Indeed, the day of the observation was with an unfriendly weather, which might not have helped to bring customers in.

<b>Business</b>	<b>Consumer (Total)</b>	<b>Consumer (Young)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Loch Lomond Leisure	274	110	40%
Lomond Woods Holiday Park	45	10	22%
The Queen of the Loch	151	90	60%
The Oak Tree Inn	72	49	68%
Padrone Pizza	/	/	/
Luss Seafood Bar	35	19	54%
The balcony, bar & grill	80	8	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>44%</b>

Table 4. The presence of young customers varies greatly according to the business

According to the observation results, there were mainly three factors that led to a higher percentage of young consumers.



First, businesses providing a combination of various products or services attracted more young consumers. For instance, the restaurants of The Queen of the Loch and The Oak Tree Inn claimed higher percentages than those only providing food and drinks because they had not only walk-in consumers but also consumers staying overnight.

Secondly, travelling families and groups took a large scale of the young consumer segment. Most young people were seen to be travelling with their friends, there were quite a lot young parents travelling with children as well. This result fell in line with previous research findings (Jang and Cai, 2002) that there was a push factor labelled as "family & friend togetherness" in the tourism industry. People visited family, friends or got away from routine conventions of life to make new friendships with people sharing similar interests.

Thirdly, in terms of activities, young people preferred to choose more exciting activities than other age groups. For instance, the three groups of people taking speedboats to enjoy lake scenery were all very young while people on waterbuses were much older during the observation on Loch Lomond Shore.

### **5.3. 4<sup>th</sup> objective: Turn the region youth-appealing**

The final objective set by the research project is linked with the third, as it was to propose how the tourism product offering of Loch Lomond could be best shaped and configured to appeal to the youth tourist market. As opposed and the third objective, which was more about findings surrounding businesses, this objective asked for findings directly concerning businesses and their activities.

Similarly to the second and third objectives, findings are presented by themes resulting from thematic analysis. Dedicated to the enhancement of the offering, the results discuss firstly the use of technology by businesses and then addresses the perception businesses have of their relationship and work with destination marketing organisations.

### 5.3.1. Use of technology

This part touches the elements businesses can use to provide a better product and service offering to customers. It first addresses technological tools then approaches the relationship with destination marketing organisations such as Love Loch Lomond or VisitScotland.

#### ***Wi-Fi***

Overall, Wi-Fi is a necessity well understood by Participants, who all said they offer free Wi-Fi. The interesting point is that the reasons behind this vary according to the business: it can be the result of a repeated feedback from customers (Participant 1), a way to create a synergy with businesses' social media pages (Participant 3) or even as a simple way to fit with customers' behaviour and thus enhance the customer experience (Participant 5).

*“We actually changed our policy on the Wi-Fi, this is something the park struggles with because there are around 500/600 people (...) so this year is the first time we got fibre”*

*“If one complaint keeps coming up across many feedbacks, we have to do something about it”*

(Participant 1)

*“We invested huge amount of money to handle more Wi-Fi (...) not only in the main building but also cottages as well”*

(Participant 3)

*“We’ve got Wi-Fi on our day tours, we offer free Wi-Fi because we understand that our passengers want to share where they are etc. This is something we’ve introduced this year”*

(Participant 5)

*“You need Wi-Fi, everybody uses it”*

(Participant 4)

Especially for the youth target, it seems that Wi-Fi is a resource that is too valued not to have it.

The Loch Lomond, Trossachs and Clyde Sea lochs areas can sometimes fail to provide good mobile signal and thus, offering free Wi-Fi definitely helps to ensure tourists a good experience.

It might appear crucial to attract young tourists, but the same way this statement is true with regards to their behaviour presented in the academic literature, it is not less true for other age ranges. Indeed, in the VisitScotland study (2017d), among the people aged up until 54, at least two third use a smartphone during their trip to find information (and even 91% for the 25-34). Even more than half of the 55-64 do so.

As mentioned earlier, most businesses observed offered free Wi-Fi, which shows that a good part of the businesses already understands the stake there is in providing customers with a free access to the internet. Nevertheless, it remains important to offer an effortless access to Wi-Fi. If the Queen of the Loch offered a free dessert when connecting to the Wi-Fi, people must register and give personal information as well as an e-mail address, and the researchers could not register because the e-mail address was not recognised.

### ***Online presence***

Interviews show that, despite goodwill and efforts, not all the businesses are at the same level in terms of using online resources. Although there is a general agreement as for how crucial an online presence is with a website and social media, some businesses just start entering this path when some others have been doing it for years.

Online reviews, positive or negative, are clearly valued by participants. They know websites like TripAdvisor are powerful tools that are running whether they want it or not, so monitoring is a frequent practice among respondents. For Participant 6, they

allow to gather a lot of data and they are sometimes the only way to do so, for instance with young travellers who prefer this means to share information.

*“This year we started using social media to promote”  
“Through social media apps such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter  
so we try to target all groups and share the experiences of the  
customers with others. Photos and videos of the customers are  
captured and uploaded on Facebook and YouTube”*

(Participant 2)

*“We do social media, having quite a lot of followers, we take care of  
all kind of customers”*

*“We look very close to the feedback we’ve got”*

(Participant 3)

*“TripAdvisor is probably the biggest place where we get comments  
about the tours, and the reservation team always replies to any  
comment posted on TripAdvisor. Facebook as well. We’re quite active  
on Facebook in general, with guides posting photos of the tours...*

*Instagram as well is big for us”*

(Participant 5)

As for the observations, results were more positive. Most of the observed businesses have an official website and provide online booking except for Luss Seafood bar and the Balcony which are relatively new. Social media are well-used as a tool to lead followers to websites, consumers’ comment and reaction on social media are not very active. On the opposite, official accounts are quite active in sharing consumers’ experiences, for instance, retweeting consumers’ tweets about food and stay in Loch Lomond. Most consumers’ comments and reviews were observed on third-party platforms such as Booking and TripAdvisor. 90% of consumers read online reviews before visiting a business, and 88% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations (Fang et.al, 2016; Saleh, 2018). Thus, these comments

and reviews should be considered and analysed carefully. It is essential for business owners to quickly identify potential helpful reviews and furthermore prepare for an increase of visitors if reviews are positive, or take remedial actions if reviews show some complaints.

Most of the reviews on Loch Lomond Leisure were nice regarding the experience of the boat tour. But there were communication problems on the re-scheduling of the booking. In one case the information was not delivered to the staff at the pier. There were also complaints on customer service such as a refund problem that could not be settled as promised.

Most positive reviews on restaurants were “Lovely place” “Friendly staff” “Delicious” “Good view” “Good food” “Good view” “Good food”, mainly about the environment, food quality and staff service. On the contrary, most negative reviews were about reservation, staff efficiency and service organisation, which fell in line with the observation in the restaurants.

Most positive reviews on accommodations were about accommodation cleanliness, good location, parking area, food quality, while most negative reviews were about attitude of staff on dealing with issues, booking problems (e.g. the booking was cancelled because of incorrect email), old infrastructures, noise problem and long waiting for food delivery. It was interesting that quite a lot of comments were about food in hotels, which indicated the importance of providing high-quality food for accommodation businesses.

The most-mentioned positive comments revealed how food products can influence tourism industry. Food is not only a product but also a culture which defines the cuisine of a place and can be used in many forms and interactions from a tourism perspective in a place (Ellis et.al, 2018). Hence, using food to represent traditions, stories and symbols is a good way to interact with tourists and create an experience through performance, enquiry and engagement. Both positive and negative comments on staff communication indicated a possibility of lacking service standards. Differences between staffs on the basis of communication competencies appeared to exist, that is why a means of measuring communication competency should be used in evaluating staff as a part of the training process to ensure service quality (Ryan and Dewar, 1995).

Learning from online reviews could be a basis for developing a service standard or staff manual to cope with different consumer issues.

Once again, when looking at what it is said on the importance on social media and online reviews and their impact on young tourists, it seems that maintaining a good online presence is one of the key good practices for tourism businesses. Indeed, it supports academic recommendations saying that businesses need to pay attention to information provided online and that they need to monitor online review websites (Chen, Johnson and Labben, 2013; Gorlevskaya, 2016 and Tugulea et al, 2013).

### ***Customer database and CRM***

The storage and use of a customer database or a customer relationship management is not something equally done among businesses, and not done the same way.

First, some businesses do not make great use of their database. For instance, Participant 5 only uses email addresses to send a newsletter to customers.

There are also businesses who, in a collaborative manner, share their customer information to create a common database which serves to market the entire site (Participant 4) or businesses who just have what is provided by Google Analytics (Participant 2).

However, customer database and CRM are also available to businesses new or inexperienced in the domain, like Participant 1, who pays the services of an external company.

Nonetheless, this finding might reveal the biggest lack of the businesses in terms of performance potential.

Indeed, handling customer data and manage them to help provide a better offering provides too many advantages to be ignored or just not taken care of. Indeed, having a CRM is a way to increase the value for customers, to get longer relationships (something especially crucial when targeting young customers), better satisfaction, retention and sales (Abbas, Chachar and Bilal, 2017).

### 5.3.2. Customer experience

Participants seem to have understood the power of customer experience as a key factor in the product and service offering.

Customer experience, which is “the internal and subjective response customers have to any contact (direct or indirect) with a company” is indeed considered as a factor to achieve a differentiating sustainable competitive advantage (Teixeira et al., 2012).

They agree on the fact that customers are “coming for an experience, they will spend money on an experience” (Participant 4). It is also considered as a way to “cope with the competition” (Participant 6).

*“Our strategy is about the total (...) experience”*

*“The key is the whole experience”*

(Participant 3)

*“Customer service is basically the key of what we do, so we make sure that they feel welcome. At each step of the customer journey, for instance over the phone or on emails, we call customers by their names”* (Participant 5)

Participants reported creating events, animations, an atmosphere linked with the shopping experience in order to bring visitors in. There are indeed different options for businesses to provide a pleasurable consumption experience. For Schmitt (1999), there are five kinds of customer experience: sensory, affective, creative, physical and social-identity experiences. That allows businesses to select which part they can or want to improve in order to gain competitiveness and attractiveness.

Selling only a product or a service, without any context, experience or personalisation is nowadays not enough to attract tourists, who are more interested in what surrounds the consumption of the offering. This is a point the competition has understood too however, with for instance the Lake District National Park, which, as mentioned earlier, wants to provide a “world class visitor experience” (Lake District National Park, 2018).

Nevertheless, some of the businesses observed did provide a pleasurable customer experience, although this experience is not necessarily targeting young tourists.

For instance, most businesses would offer free Wi-Fi; with the particularity of the Queen of the Loch, which has a registration system to get free Wi-Fi but which, in return, offers a free dessert for the next visit.

As to infrastructure, the main road signs were generally clear, but no signs directly to business locations, most businesses made big and eye-catching signs on their main building. Toilets in restaurants and hotels were all quite good and clean, however, there was a great shortage of toilets for outdoor activities. Loch Lomond Leisure was the observing spot with the largest number of visitors, just one sharing toilet on the pier was not enough so travellers had to line up and wait.

The Queen of the Loch provided claw crane machines and two playgrounds for kids – a big area outdoors and a smaller one indoors. Lomond Woods Holiday Park provided an outdoor playground with swings, seesaw, etc. These infrastructures were very family friendly and filled with happy children and parents during the observation. Thus, businesses considering familial concerns such as activities for all family members or special entertainment for children would more likely be the choice of tourists who are parents (Pearce, 2005).

Referring to the model of consumer journey, there were different consumer gaps observed in hotels, restaurants and activities.

The staffs were friendly and willing to help in general, the accommodation businesses - Lomond Woods Holiday Park, The Queen of the Loch, The Oak Tree Inn provided a wide range of travel guides to customers. Researchers asked the staff of The Oak Tree Inn for directions to rail station as a test, and staff provided a detailed bus timetable of Loch Lomond immediately. These enhanced qualities of tourism-related services such as travel information, booking procedures, related transportation services etc could not only improve the accessibility of the destination but also affect tourists' preferences (Truonga and Shimizu, 2017). However, Researchers found no staff at the reception desk in The Oak Tree Inn at first, and when visiting the Queen of the Loch, it turned out that reception was in the restaurant's building instead of hotel



one, which made it confusing and complicated for consumers to ask for reception service.

Since the observation took place on weekends and bank holiday, the service quality of restaurants and café turned out to be influenced by the large number of consumers during peak hours. Consumers had to line up and wait for long time to order. Furthermore, after some consumers leaving, tables were not cleaned up immediately and consumers afterwards had to clean up the cups and plates by themselves for space to eat. Managing customers' waiting appears to have a strong effect on overall satisfaction with the service. According to Pruyn and Smidts (1998), the waiting environment is a stronger determinant of service satisfaction than objective waiting time. Thus, businesses can actually less focus on shortening waiting times, but pay special attention to improve waiting conditions instead.

### **5.3.3. Perception of Destination Marketing Organisations**

What comes out from the interviews is also the fact that businesses give a lot of credit and importance to destination marketing organisations and related organisations, like Love Loch Lomond, VisitScotland or Scottish Enterprise.

Indeed, respondents are all very happy to collaborate with these bodies as they bring visibility and help on various subjects such as marketing, training and networking.

It supports this motivation from businesses to work together and create synergies.

These organisations appear to play a central role in the shaping of the area's offering. Moreover, since they know closely a lot of businesses, they could also serve as the binding element and creator of networks. Indeed, DMOs are perceived to be "coordinating actors and activities and guiding them toward a process of shared development" beside their other activities (Beritelli, Buffa and Martini, 2015).

They could initiate the project and guide "the early stages proactively or reactively by trying to persuade other owners of small and medium-sized firms to join the project" (Valeri, 2016).

*“We work closely to maintain a proper relationship”*

*“Very positive and great for the area”*

(Participant 1)

*“I think we all get support and we should grow on it. We all can meet together and have a plan together to promote the area”*

(Participant 2)

*“I think anything that can be done to promote the destination as a whole is a good thing, anything like PR or marketing can be generated for both individual area within destination in Loch Lomond or all destinations as a whole”*

(Participant 3)

Nevertheless, not the substance but maybe the form of the help provided by these organisations could be changed, or at least adapted. Indeed, Participant 6 noted that one complaint that could be made is that sometimes training and conferences takes owners away from their business.

## **6. Conclusion and recommendations**

### **6.1. 1<sup>st</sup> objective: identify how the competition deals with youth tourists**

This research has started with secondary research with the purpose of satisfying the first objective, which was to explore and benchmark the Loch Lomond areas competition, and identify how this competition, with their own destination marketing organisations, reaches out to youth tourists.

The two areas of Lake District and Loch Ness (combined with Inverness) were then selected and served as the basis of the competition analysis.

In spite of the existence of several other competitive areas, those two were chosen for their image and influence, with one being in England, and the other in Scotland, like the Loch Lomond areas.

Brand image aside, the two areas were found to be offering different experiences that succeed in attracting tourists, and notably young tourists.

Firstly, the two areas hold notorious events of decent sizes, which successfully managed over the year to attract an increasing number of people. Because the nature of the events is varied (e.g. sports, music), it allows to catch different types of tourists, with among them young tourists, who come for the event and then stay in the area for some time. It is interesting as, with primary research, businesses also testified their will to have events happening in Loch Lomond.

They also have other activities to attract young tourists, although the form of the offering differs between the two competitors, with Lake District having several outdoor activities and Loch Ness benefiting from all the advantages of having a developed town just close-by.

## **2.1. 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> objectives: Youth tourism in the Loch Lomond areas – present and future**

The purpose of the second and third objective was to discover general perspectives, attitudes and development plan that tourism businesses in the Loch Lomond, the Trossachs and the Clyde Sea lochs areas could apply to become more appealing to the target market this research focused on: young tourists.

The research's findings for these objectives were primarily revolving around two components: elements related to the businesses and their operations, and elements related to the target market itself, youth tourism.

As for businesses operations, it has been discussed that tourism businesses do need to consider seasonality in their offering as they need to adapt what they propose during the off-season, which corresponds to the winter months. Moreover, it has been seen that businesses tend to lack a strategical approach, which makes them miss long-term opportunities and tactical approaches that would enable them to be more appealing and competitive. The two last insights offered by the interviews are the great potential perceived by businesses regarding cooperation and networking and events. With observations and interview questions relating to youth tourism, they granted understanding on the need to give a clear definition of the target market to businesses and the fact that young tourists are positively perceived by tourism companies. This combination of findings allows to give the first list of recommendations.

### **2.1.1. Promote businesses collaboration and networking**

The way respondents talked and praised businesses networks and how beneficial they are almost makes the recommendation by itself.

Indeed, businesses should not see each other as competition, even if they have the same activity. Instead, they should consider themselves to be part of the same touristic area and thus, the success of one impacts the area's image, which in turn procures beneficial outcomes to the others. Everyone has an interest in the success of everyone else.

Networks and collaborations also exist, nevertheless, for businesses which offer a complementary experience to tourists, like the one given in this research, between an accommodation provider and a restaurant. These provide help and exchange of information and knowledge to better reach objectives (e.g. attract young tourists).

However, recommending businesses to go out and create networks and synergies might be easier said than done. This is why Love Loch Lomond could act as the instigator of such connections. Indeed, numerous are the businesses working with Love Loch Lomond and developing a close relationship which puts LLL in a legitimate position to recommend starting network. Indeed, the success of such operation relies on the capacity of businesses to cooperate and coordinate (Adair and Brett, 2005, in Valeri, 2016). Love Loch Lomond, as the common denominator between all businesses, could be the linking element and promoter of the networks of a certain size. It is important however to remind that collaborations do not have to be made of dozens of businesses, a business partnering with one another is a start.

Although this recommendation does not directly help businesses to attract more young tourists, it might act as a one helping to achieve the other ones.

### **2.1.2. Work on bringing back events**

Events, no matter their size, seem to definitely have a positive impact on tourism, and the fact that some of them, although knowing success, fail to be renewed is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Despite the fact that this problem does not directly relate to actions businesses can act on themselves, they still can influence the decision. Moreover, it is something Love Loch Lomond and other destination marketing organisations could have an influence on. Indeed, LLL is a body that may have the lobbying impact to help change the decision of the stakeholders withholding the existence of the events.

Nevertheless, the interview findings show the strong power events on tourism that is perceived by businesses. They are instigators of a new experience in the area, give a context in which to consume and bring tourists that may never have come by

themselves otherwise, notably young tourists. Indeed, in spite of hosting events that especially target young people (music, entertainment, sports, etc.) being more effective to appeal to the youth target market, holding general events will bring a lot of different kinds of customers, including young visitors. In both cases, youth tourists will perceive it as a pulling factor (Vukici, Kuzmanovic and Kostic Stankovic, 2015).

The other great advantage is that, according to respondents, events do not fear bad weather to be successful and crowded.

This finding calls then for active implications from businesses and Love Loch Lomond to help make the maximum of events in the area.

Love Loch Lomond could, for instance, create a lobbying action in partnership with other DMOs, probe the kind of events successfully working to bring tourism in the world, and show support to current events still being held.

### **2.1.3. Clearly explain and define youth tourism**

If the final objective of this research project is to provide businesses keys to become more appealing for young tourists, it appears that actually the definition itself of the target market is an issue.

With as many definitions, perceptions and explanations on youth tourism as there were interviewees, the key, before undertaking any action, is to set out a clear definition. Indeed, if not all businesses talk about the same customers, things will not be able to move on.

Indeed, each business has its own vision on what is a young tourist, which means that whenever a conversation, a conference or anything relating to young tourists takes place, there is a misunderstanding which can prevent any interest or perception of potential from growing in business owners' minds.

If one is told about a conference on youth tourism but sees it as kids aged 5-15, they will not even show up to the conference.

As such, it is recommended that Love Loch Lomond, when addressing the situation of youth tourism to its members or in any activity they are involved in, makes sure to give the elements of understanding to businesses. Detailing the behaviours, attitudes

and profiles associated with youth tourism will build a basis on which it will be easier to work on.

## **2.2. 4<sup>th</sup> objective: Turn the region youth-appealing**

The fourth and last objective that this research aimed to achieve was to propose how the tourism product offering of Loch Lomond could be best shaped and configured to appeal to the youth tourist market, which is closely related with the third objective. The difference is that this objective is more directly linked to the changes businesses must operate in order to be appealing to the youth target.

It was discussed how the use of different technological tools can assist in giving a better image and appeal to young tourists. Another important aspect found is the crucial role of customer experience accompanying the product and service offering, which is at the heart of customer satisfaction. Lastly, the importance of organisations like Love Loch Lomond is approached to underline how central they are in the lives of many businesses.

### **2.2.1. Create or maintain an online presence**

For the small or traditional businesses who are not used to it, or lack the time to do it, efforts must be made to bring their business online.

It means giving all useful information that young tourists look for when they plan their trip, either (or both) on a website and social media platforms: opening hours, price, pictures, availability, the detail of the offering... It is vital to attracting young people, who, as shown, see the internet as the best source of information (Yugulea et al., 2013). They will not take the time to do extensive research on one particular business but rather skip it and discard it from their consideration if they fail to find what they look for very quickly.

A key point is to keep information updated: again, a website or a Facebook page whose last post is from three years, one year, even six months ago will not appear as relevant and useful as one with regular updates. Businesses lacking skills should be made aware

of the pieces of training provided by Love Loch Lomond, and the ones lacking time or staff should dedicate a weekly or fortnightly slot in their timetable to manage the online presence and stick to it.

Nevertheless, whether they want it or not, businesses have an image online, through online review websites. As the academic literature suggests (Gorlevskaya, 2016), businesses need to monitor these websites and take the time to answer to both positive and negative criticism. Businesses have the right to answer and they should use it: thank the positive reviews to enhance customer satisfaction, and respond calmly to negative reviews, which should be seen as constructive.

The risk of being passive and irresponsible is to give bad critics the last word and a big influential power. Young tourists will not necessarily do the thinking effort to counterweight the critics and only remember them as the absolute truth.

Once again, time-restrained businesses should set and follow a schedule in which they grant a little time to this task.

Love Loch Lomond can help making the decision by highlighting how advantageous these practices are to attract young tourists.

### **2.2.2. Enhance the customer experience**

Offering a satisfying customer experience to attract and keep young tourists represents a determining point businesses should not ignore.

Indeed, both observations and interviews outlined how important a great customer experience is perceived by customers and businesses. Providing a good customer experience is indeed an easy way to increase satisfaction, which is the most important factors for young tourists (Rahman and Shil, 2012). That is for the simple reason that what drives young tourists is not to consume products or services as such, but the whole atmosphere that accompanies them.

It is even more important than a majority of businesses in the Loch Lomond, Trossachs and Clyde Sea lochs areas have a customer experience strategy because that is something the competition is already doing.



The advantage is that customer experience is something that any business can work on, it can take a great variety of forms and at any moment of the buying process: prior, during and after.

An example would be to plan the behaviour and the reaction to adopt when the service of a business is not provided the way it is meant (e.g. the room of a hotel is not ready in time for a new customer), something which occurs inevitably. Having a contingency plan will smoothen the issue and the outcome will be way less negative (e.g. it can be as simple as offering to keep the luggage whilst suggesting an activity to do while the room is getting prepared).

Since Wi-Fi has been proven to be a ‘must have’ in tourism businesses, businesses that do not propose this yet could start with this element to already increase the customer experience they offer.

The risk, if the customer experience is not harmonious in the areas covered by the research, is that businesses will miss a lot of attractiveness and the region will not be as appealing as others, which, notwithstanding the fact that they already have customer experience in their development plan, benefit from a good branded image too (e.g. Loch Ness and Inverness).

### **2.3. Application and further studies**

Based on the findings resulting of the observations and interviews conducted for this research project, recommendations were given for businesses and Love Loch Lomond to follow. Despite being supported by academic literature and a combination of secondary and primary research, these recommendations must be considered with regards to the limitations inherent to the research.

As such, further quantitative research would be necessary to confirm and generalise the findings and consequently affirm the need to implement the recommendations.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – PID

#### Marketing Works Project Project Initiation Document

<b>MWP: Project Initiation Document</b>			
<b>Year:</b> 2018 <b>Date:</b> <b>Distributed to:</b>			
<b>MWP Group Name/Number/ Course</b>	Group 6/MSc International Marketing		
<b>Group Members and Contact Details</b>	<b>Student Name</b>	<b>e-Mail Address</b>	<b>Tel. No.</b>
	CANTIN Romain	romain.cantin.2017@uni.strath.ac.uk	+33698115381
	KUMARAVEL Arvind	kumaravel.senthil-kumar.2017@uni.strath.ac.uk	07949917015
	LU Wenqian	wenqian.lu.2017@uni.strath.ac.uk	07596483934
	HU Yingqiong	skb17118@uni.strath.ac.uk	07546612367
	HUANG Wan Ting	wjb17208@uni.strath.ac.uk	07716620504
<b>Company Name and Contact Details</b>	<b>Company Contacts: Love Loch Lomond</b>		
	<b>Name and Title</b>	<b>e-Mail Address</b>	<b>Tel. No.</b>
	Lesley Judge, Digital Communication Manager	online@lovelochlomond.com	07557144090
<b>Company Profile</b>	<p>Destination organisation operating in the Loch Lomond, Clyde Sea, Strathendrick and West Dunbartonshire area.</p> <p>It promotes the tourism potential through four operations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marketing the area with the LoveLochLomond website</li> <li>2. Providing customer service and project development initiatives to improve overall customer experience</li> <li>3. Representing the interests of the tourism industry to different local and national bodies</li> <li>4. Providing business networking opportunities</li> </ol> <p>The organisation targets a wide range of tourists (national and international, day visitors and overnight visitors...) and has a membership system for businesses for them to be promoted on the website.</p>		
<b>Project Definition</b>			
<b>Project Background</b>	<p>Businesses in the Loch Lomond area are looking to grow their activity and to achieve such growth, they need to have an offering fitting the needs of the customers. With the rise of the youth tourist market as a new target appears the need to conduct research in order to align the tourism offering with this target needs.</p>		
<b>Project Title</b>	Understanding the youth tourist market for Loch Lomond: the supply-side perspective		
<b>Project Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore and benchmark through secondary research how similar destinations, together with destination marketing organisations, reach out to this youth tourist demographic and what form it takes.</li> </ol>		

## Marketing Works Project

### Project Initiation Document

<i>Insert bullet point summary of key project goals and objectives.</i>	2.	Explore the experiences of tourism-related businesses in Loch Lomond, as well as those that bring tourists into the area, with regard to the attractiveness and relevance of their product offering to youth tourists.			
	3.	Explore the perspectives, attitudes and future plans of businesses/organisations that contribute to the youth tourism product offering of Loch Lomond.			
	4.	Propose how the tourism product offering of Loch Lomond could be best shaped and configured to appeal to the youth tourist market.			
<b>Key Deliverables</b>  <i>A clear statement of what the key project outputs and deliverables will be and when these will be delivered</i>	<b>Key Deliverable</b>		<b>Due Date</b>		
	Analysis of the competition's offering to understand the best practices in the attraction of young tourists.		Mid March		
	Analysis of selected Loch Lomond businesses to compare with identified best practices.		2 <sup>nd</sup> half of April		
	Report of general recommendations for Loch Lomond businesses to better attract the target, based on previous findings.		Mid May		
<b>Project Planning</b>					
<b>Project Phases and Key Milestones</b>  <i>List Key Project Phases and Milestone</i>	<b>Project Phase</b>	<b>Key Milestones</b>	<b>Due Date</b>		
	Definition of the objectives	First meeting with client	5 <sup>th</sup> Feb		
	Secondary research	Report on the data given by the client	2 <sup>nd</sup> March		
	Secondary research	Analysis of the different businesses present in Loch Lomond	2 <sup>nd</sup> March		
	Secondary research	Analysis of competition and its best practices	2 <sup>nd</sup> March		
	Interim presentation	Preparation of the primary research plan	9 <sup>th</sup> March		
	Interim presentation	Creation of the PowerPoint presentation	9 <sup>th</sup> March		
	Secondary research report	Creation of a refined report for the client	16 <sup>th</sup> March		
	Primary research	Undertaking of primary research to identify good and bad practices in Loch Lomond	1 <sup>st</sup> May		
	Report	Comparison between secondary and primary research findings to extract best practices recommendations	15 <sup>th</sup> May		
<b>Work Breakdown Structure</b> <i>Provide a detailed breakdown of all key tasks required for successful delivery of the project stating clearly who will be responsible for each task, start and due dates.</i>					
<b>Task ID</b>	<b>Task Description</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	Gather information on competition (who attracts young tourists, with which offering, which practices)	To Be Assigned	23/02	04/03	
2	Analyse the information, identify common actions between the competitors, create a report in consequence	TBA	04/03	06/03	
3	Create a report on the data given	TBA	23/02	04/03	

## Marketing Works Project

### Project Initiation Document

	by the client				
4	Literature review related to the topic: tourism, destination marketing, youth tourism...	TBA	23/02	05/03	
5	Review of the different types of businesses in Loch Lomond to identify the offering	TBA	23/02	04/03	
6	Summarise and analyse all secondary research information	TBA	04/03	06/03	
7	Create the PowerPoint presentation	TBA	04/03	08/03	
8	Create the refined report for the client	TBA	10/03	14/03	
9	Select the businesses to analyse with the client	TBA	19/03	26/03	
10	Conduct in-depth interviews of the businesses	TBA	02/04	27/04	
11	Observe the offering and experiences proposed in regards to their attractiveness to the target	TBA	02/04	24/04	
12	Create a report on the primary data information	TBA	25/04	01/05	
13	Compare the findings between secondary and primary research	TBA	02/05	07/05	
14	Create the report and a refined report for the client	TBA	08/05	16/05	
Group Responsibilities	Group Member	Roles and Responsibilities			
Please list clearly the Project Management roles and responsibilities of each Group Member	Romain	Leader, spokesman, analyst and researcher			
	Arvind	Coordinator, researcher and analyst			
	Janelle	Researcher, analyst and editing advisor			
	Wan-Ting	Researcher, analyst and planning supervisor			
	Queenie	Researcher, analyst and internal communication supervisor			
Group Communications					
A clear statement of how the group will communicate/ frequency of meetings/ when etc.	Regular text communication through WhatsApp (for coordination etc) and MyPlace (for information exchange etc) Minimum one meeting each week, depending on the time period.				
Estimated Time Commitment					
For each key task listed earlier, estimate the number of person-hours required to complete the task. Estimate Total Project Person-Hours adding 25 hours for Project Management/Admin etc Total Project Person-Hours should be approximately 250 hours per Semester.					
Task ID	Task Description			Estimated Hours to Complete Task	
1	Gather information on competition (who attracts young tourists, with which offering, which practices)			15	
2	Analyse the information, identify common actions between the competitors, create a report in consequence			20	
3	Create a report on the data given by the client			2	
4	Literature review related to the topic: tourism, destination marketing, youth tourism...			18	
5	Review of the different types of businesses in Loch			10	

## Marketing Works Project Project Initiation Document

	Lomond to identify the offering	
6	Summarise and analyse all secondary research information	15
7	Create the PowerPoint presentation	5
8	Create the refined report for the client	5
9	Select the businesses to analyse with the client	5
10	Conduct in-depth interviews of the businesses	30
11	Observe the offering and experiences proposed in regards to their attractiveness to the target	30
12	Create a report on the primary data information	10
13	Compare the findings between secondary and primary research	15
14	Create the report and a refined report for the client	25
	Sub Total	205
	Plus	25
	Total Project Person-Hours	230

This Document should be signed by ALL Group Members and returned to your Project Supervisor for their signature. The PID should also be sent to your client for 'sign-off'.

Group Member (Name)	Signature
Romain	
Arvind	
Janelle	
Queenie	
Wan Ting	

Date: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018

Company Sign Off Signature and Date:

Approved by Lesley Judge, Love Loch Lomond, Thursday 22 February 2018.

## *Appendix 2 – Interview guide*

Introduction (3 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome and explain nature of the interview</li><li>• Explanation of research project and objectives</li><li>• Explain why he has been selected</li><li>• Detail the format of the session</li></ul>
Business 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who are the typical customers (age, gender, location) – any change over the years?</li><li>• Rather domestic or international customers?</li><li>• Who is the main target?</li><li>• When is the period of the year with the most customers?</li><li>• Any consumer behavioural change over the years?</li><li>• How does the business identify/target/communicate with new or potential new markets?</li><li>• Any market research or monitoring to keep up with trends, customers etc.?</li><li>• Any development plan for the upcoming years? (Offering...)</li><li>• What information on the business is available? On which platforms (social media, website...), is it considered important...</li><li>• Collection of data on customers (CRM)? Yes: since how long? No: why?</li><li>• Has the business changed over the years? Operations, strategy, approach... -&gt; Based on what information?</li><li>• Change of practices? New practices? -&gt; Based on what information?</li><li>• Examples of customer-related issues that were successfully dealt with?</li><li>• Does the business engage with the tourism industry e.g. via destination groups like Love Loch Lomond, Visit Scotland,</li></ul>

	<p>industry groups, collaboration with other businesses, trade missions, industry activities etc.?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opinion about tourism organisations like LLL? Useful? Provides good training/conference? Indifferent?</li> <li>• Do you read/monitor online customer reviews? Take it into account?</li> <li>• Open all year round? Activity in shoulder months?</li> <li>• Any opportunity, threat, competition perceived? Evidence of this?</li> </ul>
<p>Young tourists 20 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to define young tourists? Which characteristics?</li> <li>• -Youth, also called Millennials = 18-35 years old. It means that it includes different groups with different values, behaviours and disposable income (e.g. 18-24 / 25-35). They are price sensitive, technology savvy and demanding, willing to spend on experiences rather than possessions. The sharing economy is a popular phenomenon for this generation.</li> <li>• Young tourists/Millennials as a target?</li> <li>• Perception on this segment, how it will evolve, potential...</li> <li>• If not interested in young tourists, why?</li> <li>• Definitive decision or could it evolve (e.g. with support, training)?</li> <li>• Current part of customers that are young tourists</li> <li>• Young tourists' behaviour compared to other segments</li> <li>• Technology Integration (Wi-Fi, others)</li> <li>• Examples of practices which, on purpose or not, brought more young people</li> <li>• -Millennials are passionate and want to live great experiences, especially when they travel.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think your offer provides a special experience that differs from competition? Any there anything undertaken towards this experiential consumption path?</li> <li>• Comments on Festivals and Events which attracts young population</li> <li>• Thoughts on personalisation of the offering?</li> </ul>
Conclusion 2 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank for the participation</li> <li>• Remind the anonymity of the response</li> </ul>

### *Appendix 3 – Observation guide*

Target	Objectives	How to observe
Youth market	The percentage of young visitors	Counting and auditing on the basis of one-hour period in each business
	Visitors' satisfaction	Noting the facial expressions or randomly chatting with 1-2 visitors if required
Technology and infrastructures	Wi-Fi and mobile signals quality	How strong the signal is; whether the Wi-Fi is free; testing the speed of internet
	Technology innovation	Noting if there is new technology involved
	Infrastructures quality	Whether there is road sign to business location; testing the cleanness of toilet
Service quality	Travelling helpfulness	Calling business at train/bus stop for direction to test the helpfulness
		Whether there are travelling instructions/guides/booklets provided
	Staff behaviours	Noting the facial expressions and body languages when interacting with young visitors

	Add-value service	Noting if there are other services which give good experience
Online service	Online reviews	Summarizing the most mentioned positive/negative visitor reviews
	Online booking	Finding whether there is a channel
	Engagement	Auditing how long did it take to answer/react to visitor comment on twitter/instagram



## Appendix 4 – Ethics Form

OFFICE USE ONLY  
DEC – Marketing



# Ethics Application Form (UG/PG Students)

All questions **MUST** be answered otherwise your application will be rejected

All boxes can be expanded

Project details	
Title of investigation:	Businesses approach towards the youth tourism: attitude and practices
Objectives of the research:	Identify best practices conducted by businesses to attract young tourists.
Supervisor's details	
Supervisor's name:	Thomas McAlinden
Department:	Marketing
Telephone:	0141 548 3249
E-mail:	thomasmcalinden@strath.ac.uk
Your details	
Your name:	Romain Cantin
Degree programme:	MSc International Marketing
Department:	Marketing
Telephone:	+33 6 98 11 53 81
E-mail:	romain.cantin.2017@uni.strath.ac.uk
Location of investigation	
At what place(s) will the investigation be conducted	-SEC Centre during the VisitScotland Expo; or -At the client's office; or -At the businesses' location
If this is not on University of Strathclyde premises, how have you satisfied yourself that adequate Health and Safety arrangements are in place to prevent injury or harm?	All interviews will be conducted with the client within a safe setting (convention, client's office or businesses' location)
Length of investigation	
How long will the project take (Years/ Months)?	1 month
Start date (dd/mm/yy):	01/05/2018
End date (dd/mm/yy):	30/05/2018
Ethical issues	
Describe the main ethical issues and how you propose to address them.	Confidentiality – the group will ensure all information provided by the participants is treated confidentially
Describe the potential risks and hazards associated with the investigation:	No potential risk

Participants	
Who are your participants?	Tourism businesses operating in the Loch Lomond, Clyde sea lochs and Helensburgh area
How many?	4 to 6
Age?	18+
Please detail any inclusion/exclusion criteria:	Businesses must work in the tourism industry
Nature: Are there any particularly sensitive issues relating to your participants?	There are no sensitive topics to be discussed
Method of Recruitment	
How will you recruit participants? Include any information regarding payments, expenses or other incentives.	The participants will be recruited with the help of the client based on the sector they work in (2 businesses from tourism sector A (e.g. restauration), 2 businesses from sector B etc) No incentives will be provided
Participant consent	
How will you obtain consent from your participants? <i>Include any PIS and Consent forms as an attachment to this application.</i>	Participants will be asked to read a participant information sheet (attached to this application), and sign a consent form indicating they are happy to proceed with the research.
Methodology	
Describe the research methodology and procedure, providing a timeline of activities where possible. Please use plain English.	We will conduct in-depths interviews. Interviews will be the main part of our qualitative research; however observations will also be conducted to add complementary findings.
Data collection, storage and security	
How and where are data handled? Please specify whether it will be fully anonymous (i.e. the identity unknown even to the researchers) or pseudo-anonymised (i.e. the raw data is anonymised and given a code name, with the key for code names being stored in a separate location from the raw data) - if neither please justify.	As interviews will be face-to-face, the identity of respondents will be known, which induces the data will be pseudo-anonymised. The data from observations will also be pseudo-anonymised.
Explain how and where it will be stored, who has access to it, how long it	Data will be stored securely on a locked PC, and will be destroyed once results are returned for the dissertation. Only the student and supervisor will have access to this data.

will be stored and whether it will be securely destroyed after use:	
Will anyone other than the named investigators have access to the data? <i>Indicate 'Yes' or 'No'. If yes, please explain.</i>	No.
<b>Outcomes</b>	
What method will you use to communicate the outcomes and any additional relevant details of the study to the participants?	Participants will not receive a summary of the results.
How will the outcomes of the study be disseminated (e.g. will you seek to publish the results and, if relevant, how will you protect the identities of your participants in said dissemination)?	Participant identities will be kept anonymous. Outcomes will be disseminated through a Marketing Works report.

<b>Insurance</b>	
<i>The questionnaire below <b>must</b> be completed</i>	
<b>Public Liability</b>	
Does the proposed research involve :	
a) aircraft or any aerial device	No
b) hovercraft or any water borne craft	No
c) ionising radiation	No
d) asbestos	No
e) participants under 5 years of age	No
f) participants known to be pregnant	No
g) pharmaceutical product/appliance designed or manufactured by the institution?	No
h) work outside the United Kingdom?	No



Checklist	Enclosed	N/A
Participant Information Sheet(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consent Form(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other documents (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Supervisor and Student Declaration

Please note that unsigned applications will not be accepted and both signatures are required

I have read the University's Code of Practice on Investigations involving Human Beings and have completed this application accordingly. By signing below, I acknowledge that I am aware of and accept my responsibilities as Investigator under Clauses 3.11 – 3.13 of the [Research Governance Framework](#) and that this investigation cannot proceed before all approvals required have been obtained.

Signature of student

Romain Cantin

Please also type name here:

Romain Cantin

I confirm I have read this application, I am happy that the study is consistent with departmental strategy, that the staff and/or students involved have the appropriate expertise to undertake the study and that adequate arrangements are in place to supervise any students that might be acting as investigators, that the study has access to the resources needed to conduct the proposed research successfully, and that there are no other departmental-specific issues relating to the study of which I am aware.

Signature of Supervisor (Chief Investigator)

Please also type name here

Date:

/ /

Signature of Ethics Committee

Please also type name here

Date:

/ /