



MSTourHer
master in sustainable
tourism development:
cultural heritage,
environment, society



School of Environmental Studies, Geography and Applied Economics
School of Digital Technology



Department of School of Management Science



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“Approaching Sustainability in the area of Nemea, following an alternative tourism path”

Master Thesis

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"One's destination is never a place but a new way of seeing things."

Henry Miller

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract in Greek	7
Abstract in English	8
List of Figures.....	9
List of Tables	10
List of Illustrations	11
Abbreviations.....	12
Introduction.....	13
Objectives	16
Literature Review	17
Methodology	19
1.Sustainable Tourism	21
1.1 From Nature- Based tourism to Sustainable Tourism	21
1.2 The Global Sustainable Tourism Council	22
1.3 Tourism Packages	24
Sustainable Tourism Packages.....	24
1.3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility	25
1.3.2 Sustainability labels and certifications in the tourism industry	26
International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).....	27
TourCert.....	27
EU Ecolabel	28
Travelife	29
Green Globe.....	29
EMAS.....	30
Green Key	30
2. Tourism in Greece.....	31
2.1 From Mass Tourism to Sustainable Tourism	32
2.2 Strategic weaknesses of the Greek tourism and limiting factors for achieving sustainability	34

2.3 Rural Tourism in Greece	35
3. Nemea as a tourism destination.....	36
3.1 Facts and Figures	37
3.2 Destination Analysis	38
3.3 SWOT analysis of the area of Nemea	45
4. Primary research.....	47
4.1 Introduction.....	47
4.2 Research objectives	47
4.3 Quantitative Research – Defining target population- sampling frame	48
4.4 Qualitative research	58
5. Conclusions and suggestions for further research	65
5.1 Analysis of the results of the qualitative and quantitative research.....	65
5.2 Suggestions	67
5.3 Suggestions for further future research	67

Abstract in Greek

Λόγω της συνεχούς ανάπτυξής του, ο τουρισμός εξελίσσεται σε μια από τις μεγαλύτερες βιομηχανίες στον κόσμο. Οι επιπτώσεις του τουρισμού και ιδιαίτερα του μαζικού τουρισμού έχουν αποδειχθεί επιβλαβείς τόσο για το φυσικό περιβάλλον όσο και για τους ντόπιους κατοίκους των περιοχών που επισκέπτονται. Αυτό οδηγεί στην ανάγκη ανάπτυξης εναλλακτικών μορφών τουρισμού που θα εξασφαλίσουν μια παγκόσμια βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη. Η παρούσα εργασία ερευνά τη δυνατότητα ανάπτυξης ενός τουριστικού πακέτου που θα είναι υπεύθυνο και θα ανταποκρίνεται σε αυτό το παγκόσμιο ζήτημα. Οι αγροτικές περιοχές στην Ελλάδα είναι μέρη στα οποία η αειφορία μπορεί να ριζώσει στη διαχείριση και τις δραστηριότητες του τουρισμού. Στη συνέχεια, η παρούσα εργασία στοχεύει στο σχεδιασμό μιας υπεύθυνης ταξιδιωτικής προσφοράς στις αγροτικές περιοχές της Ελλάδας και πιο συγκεκριμένα, εξετάζοντας την περίπτωση της Νεμέας. Η έρευνα εξηγεί τι ακριβώς σημαίνει βιώσιμη τουριστική ανάπτυξη στις αγροτικές περιοχές μέσω μιας βιβλιογραφικής ανασκόπησης. Η προσφορά της περιοχής της Νεμέας και οι δυνατότητές της ως βιώσιμου προορισμού θα διερευνηθούν με τη βοήθεια ποιοτικών συνεντεύξεων με ειδικούς του χώρου και με ενδεδειγμένη έρευνα γραφείου καθώς και με ποσοτικά ερωτηματολόγια που προωθήθηκαν στους κατοίκους και τους επισκέπτες της περιοχής. Το πακέτο θα δημιουργηθεί ακολουθώντας τις αρχές της αειφορίας και τις κατευθυντήριες γραμμές του εγχειριδίου για τη δημιουργία ενός τουριστικού προϊόντος που περιλαμβάνει τόσο τη φύση όσο και τον πολιτισμό.

Η ιδέα αυτής της έρευνας είναι να διαπιστωθεί αν είναι δυνατόν να δημιουργηθεί μια ταξιδιωτική προσφορά που να ανταποκρίνεται και στις δύο προκλήσεις του μάρκετινγκ και της βιωσιμότητας. Μπορεί ένα πλήρως υπεύθυνο ταξιδιωτικό προϊόν, που σημαίνει ότι το ταξίδι θα πραγματοποιηθεί με βιώσιμο τρόπο από τη στιγμή που θα φύγει κανείς από το σπίτι μέχρι να επιστρέψει, να είναι ελκυστικό και προσίτο για τον γενικό καταναλωτή; Και κυρίως, είναι δυνατόν να αναπτυχθεί μια τουριστική προσφορά που θα είναι 100% βιώσιμη;

Λέξεις κλειδιά: βιώσιμη τουριστική ανάπτυξη, εναλλακτικές μορφές τουρισμού, αγροτικές περιοχές, οινοτουρισμός, περιβάλλον, κοινωνία, οικονομία

Abstract in English

Because of its continuous growth, tourism is becoming one of the largest industries in the world. The impacts of tourism and especially of mass tourism have proven to be harmful for both the natural environment and the local inhabitants of the visited areas. This leads to the necessity to develop alternative forms of tourism that will ensure a global sustainable development. This paper researches the possibility to develop a tourism package that would be responsible and respond to this global issue. Rural areas in Greece are places in which sustainability can be rooted in the tourism management and activities. Subsequently, this paper aims at designing a responsible travel offer to the rural areas of Greece and more specifically, examining the case of Nemea. The research explains what is meant exactly sustainable tourism development in rural areas through a literature review. The offer of the area of Nemea and its potential as a sustainable destination will be researched with the help of qualitative interviews with specialists of the field and with a thorough desktop research as well as quantitative questionnaires forwarded to the residents and the visitors of the area. The package will be created following the principles of sustainability and the guidelines of the manual for the creation of a tourism product that includes both nature and culture.

The idea of this research is to find out whether it is possible to create a travel offer that answers both challenges of marketing and sustainability. Can a fully responsible travel product, meaning that the journey will be conducted in a sustainable manner from the moment one leaves the house until one gets back, be attractive and accessible for the general consumer? And most importantly, is it possible to develop a touristic offer that would be 100% sustainable?

Key words : sustainable tourism, alternative forms of tourism, rural areas, wine tourism, society, economy, environment

List of Figures

Figure 1	12
Figure 2 why tourism matters (UNTWO,2013)	13
Figure 3 Magic Triangle of Sustainable development (Source: Serageldin 1996:23)	20
Figure 4The triangle of corporate social responsibility	22
Figure 5 representation of the business recycling	24
Figure 6the thirteen criteria of the Green Key program	26
Figure 7 map of Nemea municipality (source: wikipedia)	31
Figure 8 What is your age?	42
Figure 9 what is your education level	43
Figure 10 when did you last visit the area of Nemea	43
Figure 11how satisfied are you from your visit to the area	44
Figure 12 to what extent did the area meet your needs	44
Figure 13 In your opinion what was the quality of the tourism product	44
Figure 14 how would you rate the hospitality in the area	45
Figure 15 how likely are you to visit the area again	46
Figure 16 how did you get informed for the area	46
Figure 17 Are you aware of the concept of sustainability	47
Figure 18 Do you believe that protecting the natural resources and tourism are interrelated	47
Figure 19 Do you believe that protecting the cultural resources and tourism are interrelated	48
Figure 20 would you visit the area again	49
Figure 21 would you visit the area again if it became more sustainable	49

List of Tables

Table 1 permanent residents based on sex and education level (source, Municipality ,2011)	30
Table 2 occupation in the area of Nemea	31

List of Illustrations

Map pf Nemea Municipality.....	31
--------------------------------	----

Abbreviations

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council
UNTWO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UN	United Nations
TIP	Territorial Intensive Product
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
EC	European Commission
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
EMAS	EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
MTD	Ministry of Tourism Development
VQPRD	quality wine produced in specified regions, wine-growing regions

Introduction

On the 25th September 2015, the United Nations (UN) reached a common agreement and created a new sustainable development agenda for 2030. They have adopted 17 sustainable development goals with the main aim “to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all” (UN, 2018). Although actions towards a global sustainable development have grown in the past decade, the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017 states that “the pace of progress observed in previous years is insufficient to fully meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets by 2030” (UN, 2017, p. 3). The travel and tourism sector is a key sector in the global economic development. World travel and tourism council’s latest annual research shows the Travel & Tourism sector experienced 3.5% growth in 2019, outpacing the global economy growth of 2.5% for the ninth consecutive year. Over the past five years, one in four new jobs were created by the sector, making Travel & Tourism the best partner for governments to generate employment (World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], 2019).

FIGURE 1: WORLD'S TRAVEL & TOURISM GDP GROWTH VS. ECONOMY GDP GROWTH, 2011-19

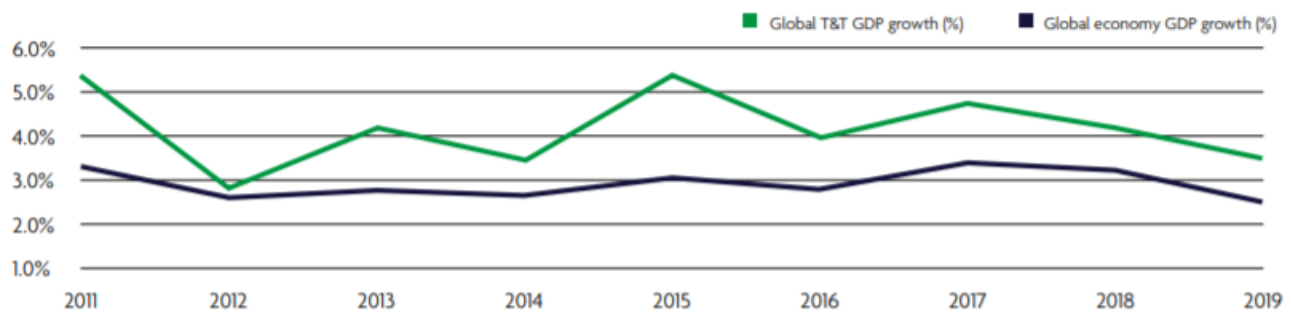


FIGURE 1

This highlights the necessity for sustainable tourism in global development. Indeed, the travel and tourism sector accounts for one in ten jobs in the global workforce. And it is anticipated that by 2027, 380 million jobs will be supported by the tourism sector (WTTC, 2017). The environmental impact of the tourism sector is also to be taken into consideration. In 2007, the travel and tourism sector was responsible for 4.6% of global warming. The transport sector generates the largest proportion of CO₂ emissions and accounts for 75% of all emissions coming from the tourism sector (United Nations Environmental Program [UNEP] and World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2008). Another fact that illustrates the importance of this evolution is the number of European flights that increased by 80% from 1990 to 2014 (European Commission, European Aviation Safety Agency, European Environment Agency and EUROCONTROL, 2016, p. 6).

The UNWTO has drawn attention to the fact that the tourism industry will continue to grow reaching 1.8 billion global arrivals in 2030. This growth trend is estimated to be higher in the emerging economies and developing countries (UNWTO, 2013, p.16). Tourism in developing and least developed countries has been put as a priority in the national development policies. Sustainable tourism should be regarded

as the only way to develop tourism, because it encompasses all major issues that economic development addresses.



FIGURE 2 WHY TOURISM MATTERS (UNTWO,2013)

The definition of sustainable tourism given by the UNTWO is: “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNWTO, 2013, p.17). While great actions are encouraged by the UNWTO and with the agenda 2030, there is still a very unbalanced development: inequalities between regions, sexes, ages and social status are still very present. Moreover, the use of geographical resources is not balanced either and there is still an urge to transform the way things are being processed on a global scale (UN, 2017, p. 3). Tourism not only can but also has to be a lever for global sustainable development.

Stetic underlines the key role that rural areas play in the tourism sector, not only because of their special position as areas of excellence, but also as ecological oases combined with the ability to preserve traditional culture and ethno-cultural heritage (Stetic,2012). Therefore, Vazques et al. appreciate the importance of rural tourism as a key factor for proper socio-economic development (Vazquez et al, 2005), while Giannakis highlights the importance of rural areas within the European Union from the point of view of their vast territory held (91%) and the population involved (59%) (Giannakis,2014).

These rural areas can be strengthened and revitalized only through proper and viable tourism based on sustainable development (Garau,2015). Because of the high importance of the tourism sector, the newest Tourism Action Framework at the European level mentions among its main priorities the stimulation of long-term competitiveness and the promotion of sustainable development (Iunius, Cismary,2015). The main advantages of the sustainable approach in tourism are related to good practices and improvements, especially regarding the environment; however, at the same time, the concepts' incapacity for a proper implementation in practice has been observed (Mihalic,2014).

Objectives

The main objective of this research is to study the trends in terms of tourism travel behavior, especially of responsible tourism, so that the visitors in the area of Nemea will satisfy their needs according to their interests in terms of different forms of tourism. A secondary objective is to understand the needs of the market in order to create a product that corresponds to it and deliver a product that will be attractive which will take into account the three pillars of sustainable development. Also, the main problems of the tourism field in the area are going to be examined which are a handicap for the further development of the tourism industry in the area of Nemea. Additionally, an effort will be made in order to come in touch with people in charge and they are engaged with the tourism field so as to understand their point of view, the situation they have to deal with, the improvements that have been made and the things that need to be done for the further development of the area.

The main goal is to design something new that suits the desire to experience it, something different while at the same time opening a path for sustainable tourism development in rural areas both for the final user and for all the stakeholders involved.

The offer of sustainable tourism in Nemea will be analyzed. The objective is to get an overview of the touristic offer in Nemea in terms of sustainable tourism. Meaning to find out which tourism services exist and under which certifications as well as what policies towards sustainability the tourism services have put in place.

Overall, the main aim of the study is to create a travel package that addresses the needs of the Greek market at first and then the European, while respecting the three pillars of sustainability and to assess its viability regarding today's tourism supply and demand in these specific countries.

Literature Review

The concept of sustainable development first emerged in the early 70's elaborated by D. Meadows on the limits of growth on the on-going economic development (Diaconu, Stancu, Stoian, & Zaharia, 2010). Nowadays sustainable development has become a global issue and it can be better understood as "an all-embracing concept which involves all aspects of human activity" (Diaconu et al., 2010). The early 90's is when sustainable development was linked to tourism and then the idea of sustainable tourism development emerged (Corbos & Zamfir, 2015). Sustainable tourism development has received many definitions by scholars but the main criticism towards these definitions is that they remain blur as they include very broad concepts. Moreover, a research on the evolution of management concepts of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the regions from the state university of management in Moscow (2015) claims that all the research done in the area is underutilised and that there is a necessity to create a clearer management method (Bunakov et al., 2015). The research also claims that oftentimes research done on sustainable tourism development focuses only on one aspect of sustainability, for example the impact on the economy, and that this enhances the lack of methodology for sustainable tourism development that involves all aspects of sustainability (Bunakov et al, 2015). Another malfunction of the research done on sustainable tourism development , as it is claimed in the research mentioned above, is that it focuses only on one aspect of sustainability, for example the impact on the economy, and it consequently endorses the lack of methodology for sustainable tourism development that includes all the three aspects of sustainability (Bunakov et al, 2015). A. Budeanu (2003, p.96) claims that global sustainable development cannot be achieved without involving tourism in all activities, as it is one of the most important economic industries of our times. She also emphasizes the fact that tour operators could play a much bigger role than they do in promoting and involving sustainable development in all of their activities and to all their stakeholders.

Another main issue that needs to be considered is the involvement of the traveller in sustainable tourism development. Isabelle D. Wolf, Gillian B. Ainsworth and Jane Crowley (2017) have researched the question of transformative travel and its connection with sustainable tourism development.

The necessity to engage transformation towards sustainable development in all aspects of tourism - hotels, experiences, places, transport, and communication – is argued by Jeremy Smith in his book *Transforming Travel: realizing the potential of sustainable tourism* (2017). Consequently, sustainable tourism development cannot be achieved unless all stakeholders are involved.

In terms of rural tourism, it needs to be mentioned that the historic term “agriculture” to describe both an economic activity and a lifestyle in rural areas is in decline. The more current term, “rural” is a more generalized term used globally, encompassing a wide range of diverse production processes. This diversification should be in accordance with the cultural identity of the local area and should also preserve their environmental, cultural, historic, and heritage values (Bianchi, 2018).

In the last decade, the studies on the tourism theme have been studied on the different optics and areas of knowledge. In this perspective, the state of the art and the concepts that define tourism are numerous and it is important to highlight the concern with the development of tourism, as it operates in various sectors such as social, economic, cultural and environmental.

Wine as a cultural product has become a main theme in tourism development. As suggested by Asero and Patti (2009), wine, like many regionally typical products, can be defined as a “territorial intensive product” (TIP) since it contains a strong reference to the identity of the territory in which it is produced. Wine regions provide the consummate “destination branding” through their designation of appellation and claims of terroir. Hall defines wine tourism as travel with the purpose of visiting vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, wine trails and wine shows. Wine tourism, or oenotourisme, is an important form of rural tourism that provides opportunities for horizontal and vertical linkages within the rural tourism environment. In Europe, wine tourism has largely been developed in the form of official wine roads or wine routes. Wine tourism can be viewed as a regional development tool, which allows for the integration of primary (agriculture), secondary (wine industry) and tertiary (tourism) sectors, highlighting the respective wine territory’s landscape attributes and the uniqueness of its regional “touristic terroir” (Nella A, Christou E.,2014).

Methodology

In order to investigate to what extent alternative tourism development could be applied in rural areas both quantitative and qualitative research is going to take place. Quantitative research will be useful as quantitative positivist epistemology postulates that facts can be separated from values. Therefore, investigators can achieve truth to the extent that their work corresponds to facts or how things really are. As a result, dualist perspective regards truth as a matter of validity and views validity as correspondence between the data and the independently existing reality the data reflect (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The aim of scientific investigation through quantitative research is to measure and analyze causal relationships among phenomena within a value-free framework with a purpose of generalization (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Quantitative methodology can be described as experimental or manipulative: questions and hypotheses are proposed, then, tested and verified while ensuring confounding conditions to prevent outcomes from being improperly influenced (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Given that objectivity and generalization are underlying methodological principles, the quantitative positivist approach calls for methods grounded in statistical analysis and include such techniques as inferential statistics, hypothesis testing, mathematical analysis, experimental and quasi-experimental design randomization, blinding, structured protocols, and questionnaires with limited range of predetermined responses (Lee, 1999). Sample size is critical in quantitative research. Large sample ensures better representativeness and generalizability of findings as well as proper use of statistical tools. Based on these, a questionnaire has been distributed to a target group of tourists that have visited the area of Nemea, in order to create an opinion of the way tourists see this place and what needs to be done for its improvement.

Apart from quantitative research, qualitative has also been applied for the needs of the research. The qualitative tradition is based on interpretivism and constructivism, both of which stem from the idealist outlook (Deshpande, 1983; Sale et al., 2002). Idealism is an ontological view asserting that reality depends on one's mental structure and activity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The idealism standpoint emphasizes that there is no single reality, but multiple realities based on one's construction or interpretation of reality (Smith, 1983). As a result of being socially and psychologically constructed, reality is viewed as an intersubjective creation. Reality is continuously recreated by its participants based on their intersubjective understanding of it (Hellström, 2008). Moreover, reality has no existence

prior to the moment when investigators begin its examination and ceases to exist when investigators no longer focus on it (Smith, 1983). In contrast to quantitative epistemological perspective, things cannot be described as they really are but only how we perceive or interpret them (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). That is why qualitative epistemology is described as subjectivist: facts cannot be separated from values, absolute objectivity is viewed as unattainable and truth as a matter of socially and historically conditioned agreement (Smith, 1983; Smith & Heshusius, 1986). From the subjectivist perspective, truth is a matter of credibility. Truth can be achieved to the extent that an inquirer's statements correspond to how people out there really interpret or construct their realities. Validity, therefore, refers to the degree a description is credible or to the level of agreement with one's interpretation (Sale et al., 2002).

Given all the previous facts the qualitative approach is a useful tool in order to understand the perceptions of the entrepreneurs in the area of Nemea regarding the tourism market, the sustainable tourism development and the alternative tourism packages that could be applied in the area. Based on their views, conclusions can be reached on what could be done in order to create a more sustainable tourism product that will satisfy both the needs of the visitor and the ones of the entrepreneurs.

For the present research, firstly a secondary research took place through which the basic elements of sustainability, sustainable tourism development, rural tourism in general and rural tourism in Greece were analyzed. For the preliminary research a questionnaire was distributed to visitors of the area of Nemea in order to investigate the needs of the tourism market, the improvements that need to be made in order to make the area a competitive tourism destination and the potential of the area from the point of view of the visitors to become more sustainable in terms of tourism. Accordingly, interviews were held with people who are involved with tourism in the area of Nemea, the President of the City Council, some winemakers, the President of the Nemean sports races, the President of the archaeological sites in the area, the representative of the accommodation services. In this way a clearer picture of what is happening in the field of tourism in the area was created and conclusions about the weaknesses and the opportunities that the area has were made.

1.Sustainable Tourism

1.1 From Nature- Based tourism to Sustainable Tourism

First of all, in order to reach the objectives of the study, it is important to clarify what is meant by responsible tourism and sustainable tourism development. Nowadays, there is a tendency towards all kinds of forms of alternative tourism, such as ecotourism, green-tourism, voluntary-tourism, nature-based tourism and so on. It is essential to understand that responsible tourism operates on a greater scale of action. Responsible tourism can be understood as an evolution through time from nature-based tourism to today's care and necessity for sustainable tourism development.

Nature-based tourism is undoubtedly one of the most significant areas of research in tourism studies. Nature-based tourism includes tourism in natural settings (e.g., adventure tourism), tourism that focuses on specific elements of the natural environment (e.g., safari and wildlife tourism, nature tourism, marine tourism) and tourism that is developed in order to conserve or protect natural areas (e.g., ecotourism, national parks). Nature-based tourism has emerged from the increased awareness of people for ecology (Mehmetoglu, 2007, p. 112). Valentine (1992) defines nature-based tourism as "primarily concerned with the direct enjoyment of some relatively undisturbed phenomenon of nature". Indeed, nature-based tourism as it states, happens in relatively untouched natural areas. According to Mehmetoglu (2007, pp.112-113), the motivations for people to do nature-based tourism are changes in consumption, mass-tourism and also the contrast to everyday life. Although it has often been compared to ecotourism, nature-based tourism does not necessarily involve socioeconomic benefits for local host communities, but is mainly intended to enjoy natural areas.

Ecotourism is defined by the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) as: "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of local people, and involves interpretation and education" (The International Ecotourism Society [TIES], 2015). The main principles of ecotourism are: "to minimize impact; to build an environmental and cultural awareness and respect; to provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts; to provide direct benefits for conservation; to provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people; and to raise sensitivity to host countries political, environmental, and social climate" (TIES, 2007).

The following characteristics of tourism are declared to ecotourism by the UNTWO: "all forms of nature-based tourism, where the tourists' main objective is the appreciation of nature and the traditional cultural heritages of such natural areas; [that] it contains educational and interpretation features; [that] it is generally, but not exclusively, organized for small groups by specialized and small locally-owned businesses. Foreign operators of varying size also organize and operate and/or market ecotourism tours, generally for small groups; [that] it minimizes negative impacts on the natural and sociocultural environment; [and that] it supports the protection of the natural environment [...]" (WTO, 2002, pp. 4-5).

The necessity to promote sustainable tourism including ecotourism as a tool for sustainable development is underlined by the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2014 "Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection" (A/RES/69/233). The resolution encourages national policies and guidelines to follow such direction and financial institutions to support such tourism projects (UNWTO, 2018)

Responsible tourism has been explained as about "making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit" (Fabricius & Goodwin, 2002). Goodwin explains that responsible tourism and sustainable tourism are different in the sense that sustainability is the goal and responsible tourism is the tool to achieve the goal. Responsible tourism is about people taking responsibility by engaging with each other in order to make sustainable tourism happen (Goodwin, 2018).

Sustainability refers to three different pillars: the economy, the environment and the social aspect. Sustainable tourism considers all stakeholders involved in the process and sets as a priority a better social, economic and environmental development and this research tries to take into account all the three pillars in order to come to conclusions regarding sustainability in the area of Nemea.

1.2 The Global Sustainable Tourism Council

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) gives criteria for a global baseline in terms of tourism and travel. These criteria are the result of a worldwide effort to understand sustainable tourism development. The GSTC have created four pillars for those criteria: "[1] Sustainable management; [2]

Socioeconomic impacts; [3] Cultural impacts; [4] Environmental impacts (including consumption of resources, reduction of pollution, and conservation of biodiversity and landscapes)” (Global Sustainable Tourism Council [GSTC], 2017).

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) establishes and manages global sustainable standards, known as the GSTC Criteria. There are two sets: Destination Criteria for public policymakers and destination managers, and Industry Criteria for hotels and tour operators. These are the guiding principles and minimum requirements that any tourism business or destination should aspire to reach in order to protect and sustain the world’s natural and cultural resources, while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for conservation and poverty alleviation.

The GSTC gives certifications to hotels, tour operators and destinations. They also recognize other certifications as meeting sustainable tourism standards according to the GSTC criteria (GSTC, 2017). This organization is seen as the most reliable organisation regarding sustainability in the tourism industry. They have a holistic approach and set standards for other certifications in the industry. It can be said that if a label or certification stands under the umbrella of the GSTC it can be trusted regarding sustainability. The GSTC could contribute to the improvement of the area of research, Nemea, as it could provide the guidelines for the enterprises and the services provided to become more sustainable and in accordance with the needs of sustainability.

1.3 Tourism Packages

Sustainable Tourism Packages

Package means the comprehensive services provided by a travel company for the tourists based on one or several themes (or topics). One travel package usually consists of many landscapes located in one or more areas as well as some related services such as the transportation, the price, etc. (Liu, Q., Ge, Y., Li, Z., Chen, E., & Xiong, H., 2011)

A sustainable tourism package has to take the sustainability triangle into consideration.

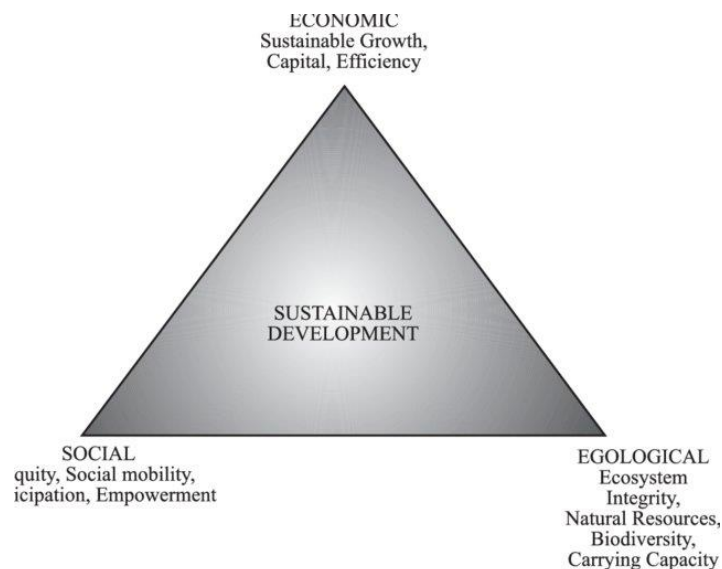


FIGURE 3 MAGIC TRIANGLE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SOURCE: SERAGELDIN 1996:23)

In order for the customer to take into consideration the sustainability triangle he has to look at a few things when preparing a holiday and when looking at different service providers. First of all, the relational aspect is to be considered. Is the enterprise respecting human rights standards? Examples of these standards are: a signature to the child protection code, or activities offered with host communities on spot. These things can assure that there is a fair relation between the enterprise and their stakeholders. Furthermore, it is also important to find out what is being done about climate change issues. Either by compensation opportunities, sometimes already included in the price, or by an infrastructure that follows the right standards in terms of environmental protection. Examples would be to have good water and waste solutions, to use solar panels for electricity, but also to raise awareness about such issues amongst the clients and the business itself. A good local public transportation system is also an aspect to take into consideration (Fairunterwegs, 2018).

1.3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

When considering the sustainable development of a business it is important to include the business' corporate social responsibility (CSR). The European Commission (EC) defines CSR as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society" (European Commission [EC], 2018). They say that a company can become socially responsible by "following the law, and integrating social, environmental, ethical, consumer and human rights concerns into their business strategy and operations" (EC, 2018). In this way the risk of having to deal with discriminating approaches against religion, gender or ethnic backgrounds and beliefs can be reduced. It is also important to realize whether the business has stability in terms of its employees. If the enterprise offers a stable environment to its employees, an opportunity for developing their career, and a fair wage, it shows a good corporate social responsibility.

The four most important categories of CSR were presented by Archie B. Carroll in a pyramid, explaining which category represents the base of a business' CSR and which categories are built upon the others. The four categories are the economic responsibilities, the legal responsibilities, the ethical responsibilities and the philanthropic responsibilities. The economic responsibility represents the importance for a business to make profit and to be economically viable. The legal responsibility speaks

for itself; it is essential for a business to follow the law. The ethical responsibility represents the obligation to be just, right and fair to all of the company's stakeholders (employees, clients, partners, the environment, citizens and others). And the philanthropic responsibility is the idea that the company is supposed to contribute to the community's wellbeing by putting financial and human resources at disposal (Carroll, 1991, p. 42)



FIGURE 4 THE TRIANGLE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In order to implement CSR in a business' strategy it is important to understand the context in which the business operates as the implementation of CSR depends on the characteristics, values of a company and its perceptions of their social responsibilities towards the society. Still, one thing can be stated as universal to all companies when implementing a CSR development strategy, the management and understanding of the company's stakeholder's expectations (Lund-Durlacher, 2015, pp. 4-5). Professor Kellie A. McElhaney developed the following definition for strategic CSR: "A business strategy that is integrated with core business objectives and core competencies of the firm, and from the outset is designed to create business value and positive social change, and is embedded in day-to-day business cultures and operations" (McElhaney, 2009, p. 35).

1.3.2 Sustainability labels and certifications in the tourism industry

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) organises a contest to encourage businesses to develop their CSR strategy to its best. This contest is called "Tourism for Tomorrow" and the participants who

receive the “Tourism for Tomorrow Award” are designated for their highest ethical standards in the sector and receive the industry’s, the government’s and the international media’s respect. Indeed, the awards aim at recognizing best practices in terms of sustainability in the tourism industry. The awards are divided into five different categories: Community Award, Destination Award, Environment Award, Innovation Award and People Award (WTTC, 2018).

International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO)

The ISO14000 is a family of standards, which provides practical tools for businesses in order to better manage their environmental responsibilities. ISO14001:2015 also stands as a certification. This means that if a business is ISO14001:2015 certified, it states that this business is following the ISO14001 framework and criteria for an effective environmental management system. This ISO certification is recognized worldwide and is present in more than 170 countries (ISO, 2015). The ISO26000:2010 is related to social responsibility. These norms cannot be used as a certification unlike the ISO14001:2015, but they give guidance to businesses on how to be more socially responsible and on what it means to be socially responsible (ISO, 2018).

TourCert

One of the leading sustainable tourism certifications in terms of CSR and sustainability is TourCert. Since 2009, TourCert has issued a mission statement: “Success by Empowerment”. They act as advisors for tourism businesses and destinations towards sustainability. In order to do so, any destination, tour operator or other tourism company can apply to do the “TourCert Check”. This check-up aims at providing the objectives, tools and measurements in terms of sustainability and CSR to the company or destination.

The first step is about sustainability guidelines, it consists of signing a commitment that the company takes for proving the quality of their products and services, the respect of human rights, the protection of the natural resources and fair working conditions for the employees and stakeholders involved. The second step consists of appointing a CSR manager into the company. This manager will be trained and

certified by TourCert with the help of an e-learning course, which provides a test and a certification at the end. The third step is a checklist. The company will be provided a checklist according to their commitment; this will help define the strengths and weaknesses of the business in terms of sustainability and CSR efforts. The results of the checklist lead to the fourth step, which consists of measures for improvements. The assessment of the checklist will give clear measurement tools and indicators for the company to improve their sustainability and CSR performance. And finally, the last and fifth step consists of being awarded the TourCert certificate and becoming a member of the TourCert community. These five steps are adapted to the company, which means there are three types of “TourCert Checks” and certificates: one for tour operators, one for accommodations and one for other tourism companies. The prices for the “TourCert Checks” vary between 225€ and 450€ per year, according to the number of employees (or rooms for accommodation) of the company (TourCert, 2018a).

EU Ecolabel

The EU Ecolabel is a label concerned with the life cycle of a product or service. Indeed, it seeks to certify the environmental impact that a product or service has from the beginning of its life cycle towards the end of it. It goes from the extraction of raw materials to the manufacturing and packaging of the product, leading to its distribution and use and finally ending with the disposal of the product or its recycling (European Commission, 2017a). Indeed, the EU Ecolabel aims at going towards a more circular economy. This means, that they would like the products or services to be reused or recycled so that they stay in the loop instead of being disposed (European Union, 2017)



Source: European Commission, 2017a

FIGURE 5 REPRESENTATION OF THE BUSINESS RECYCLING

Travelife

Travelife is an international sustainability certification scheme, which aims at making holidaying more sustainable. It helps all travel and tourism stakeholders to improve their social, economic and environmental impact. It works with tour operators and travel agencies, but also with hotels and accommodation and holidaymakers. Travelife certified businesses that prove their ability to meet the standards set by Travelife as a sustainable tourism business. This enables these businesses to promote their sustainability efforts to the general public). The main standards for hotels and accommodation are the following: (1) Sustainability management systems, (2) Environmental management and energy, (3) Labour and human rights, (4) Community integration, (5) Suppliers and (6) Customers. All criteria have sub-criteria with specific requirements and indicators (Travelife, 2018c).

Green Globe

Green Globe is a worldwide certification for sustainable tourism and is based in Los Angeles, California (Green Globe, 2018). It provides certification for twelve different tourism industries, such as attractions,

business centres, hotels and resorts, transportation and so on. Green Globe is the one of the oldest set of standards made for travel and tourism. It is more than 20 years old and positions itself as the most reliable certification in terms of sustainability (Green Globe, 2018a). The certification criteria are organized according to four main aspects: (1) Sustainable Management, (2) Social/Economic, (3) Cultural Heritage and (4) Environment.

To become a member, a company has to fill in a form, comply with the standards and pay an annual membership fee. The company has then access to all the help provided by Green Globe, such as the solution centre and auditors and counselling. The certification is valid one year from the date of the payment (Green Globe, 2018c).

EMAS

EMAS stands for the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme. This management instrument is available for all companies and organisations, which want to evaluate, improve or report their environmental performance, but with the willingness to improve their impact. It is available for any type of company and is applicable worldwide. The three key words that EMAS stands for are performance, credibility and transparency (European Commission, 2018a). Indeed, the scheme enables organisations to increase their environmental performance by providing the appropriate tools. It gives those organisations credibility because of the external and neutral audit procedures and it provides information about an organisation's environmental performance publicly.

Green Key

Green Key is part of the Foundation for Environment Education and is dedicated to hotels and other accommodations. 2900 establishments in 59 different countries have the Green Key label. The label awards excellent environmental responsibility and sustainable operation in tourism establishments.

The label helps guests to know that by choosing this establishment, they also help to make a difference on a sustainable but essentially environmental level (Green Key, 2018a).

The three main aims of Green Key are to (1) increase better resource management and responsible operations in tourism establishments, (2) raise awareness about the environmental cause to all stakeholders involved and (3) create fundamental changes in the methods used and overall behaviors, so that they become more environmentally friendly and sustainable (Green Key, 2018a). The Green Key program has six different categories of type of accommodation: (1) hotels and hostels, (2) campsites and holiday parks, (3) small accommodations, (4) conference centers, (5) restaurants and (6) attractions. All six categories are covered by the same 13 criteria themes, but each has their own criteria file (Green Key, 2018b).



Source: Green Key, 2018b

FIGURE 6 THE THIRTEEN CRITERIA OF THE GREEN KEY PROGRAM

These certificates have great projects and they have created great education potentials for all kinds of communities. It is hard to say whether this is the best solution for compensation – this is a broader question and discussion – but they offer great opportunities to support projects that work on better sustainable approaches on various levels. This being said, these labels offer a potential for compensation that can be used in the effort to make the enterprises and the whole area of Nemea a sustainable tourism destination.

2. Tourism in Greece

Tourism and hospitality constitute a long tradition in Greece mainly due to its history and ancient civilization. Foreigners were considered sacred in ancient Greece. Xenius Zeus, the father of gods, also became the god of hospitality to protect foreigners and inspire locals to look after their visitors. Greece was a country with rich economic, religious and intellectual activity for more than three and a half millennia; geographically spread on an archipelago of more than 2500 islands; it is located at the south-eastern corner of Europe, on a crossroad to Africa and Asia, inevitably stimulated travel activity since the beginning of recorded history (Briassoulis, 1993: 285; Skoulas, 1985: 2; EIU, 1986: 45). In modern history, after the Second World War the scientific documentation of tourism in Greece started, while major tourism development started in the mid-1970s, because of the unpopularity of Spanish resorts which stimulated demand for alternative Mediterranean destinations. A dramatic increase of tourism flows to Greece in the late 1970s and 1980s was experienced, facilitated by plenty of natural, cultural and environmental resources, existing airport infrastructure in major islands, and lower cost of living in comparison with most of Europe (EIU, 1990: 49). Greek resorts have different product and market profiles making them capable of satisfying a great diversity of tourism demand (Buhalis, 1991; Ottaway, 1993; Boniface & Cooper, 1994: 140; Wickers, 1993). The tourism industry grew rapidly, especially on island destinations and regions with historical monuments, as demonstrated in the spatial analysis of tourism distribution (Komilis, 1987; Leontidou, 1991; Papadopoulos, 1989: 297–300).

2.1 From Mass Tourism to Sustainable Tourism

Since the first organized attempts to promote tourism in the beginning of the twentieth century and especially following the adoption of mass tourism models in the 1970s, Greece has relied heavily on a “sun-sea-antiquities” tourism product.

Mass tourism is characterized by rapid growth, with a strong emphasis on short-term economic returns and less sensitivity to environmental and social impacts. Historically, mass tourism leads to unplanned and uncontrolled development and growth. The focal center is more rapid increase than the correct and durable development. Mass tourism is characterized by teamwork involving tourists in the various phases of tourism. The collective team character refers to the organization and conduct of the movement (travel) and the concentration of tourists in the places of residence of the recipient country.

The person falls, coincident or not, in groups more or less with similar needs and desires, and complies with certain behavior patterns, so while ensuring a minimum satisfaction offered by good organization and execution of the trip by the tour-operators (Page, 2006).

However, since 1980 the unsustainable character of mass tourism manifested itself in seasonal and geographical concentrations of tourists mainly during summer and at seaside resorts, due to the deterioration of socio-cultural and environmental resources, and the leakage of profits to international agents. Additionally, the rise of more economic competitors underscored the need to diversify and customize the Greek tourism product so as to target upmarket tourists and render Greece a year-round destination (Ikkos 2003, 3; Papadopoulos 1989, 305; WTTC 2006, 4).

Subsequently, Greece proceeded in the exploitation of its rich environmental and cultural resources to develop diverse forms of alternative tourism, including cultural tourism. The concept of alternative tourism in recent years has dominated as a counterweight to the unpleasant consequences that brought mass tourism. The communities in an effort to preserve their cultural heritage and to enable them to protect their natural resources have turned to sustainable development and alternative tourism. Butler (1999) gives a series of definitions in relation to the concept of alternative - sustainable tourism. Of the various definitions exist in the literature we can conclude that the alternative tourism can be analyzed from four different perspectives, which are:

- alternative tourism is treated as an economic activity related with sustainable development
- from the ecological perspective that emphasizes the need for environmental protection
- from the perspective of long-term benefits from tourism on the creation of competitive advantages over alternative tourism
- and finally, from the point of acceptance of tourism as part of the strategy for sustainable development through the development that takes into account the natural and human environment (Butler, 1999).

Indeed, the temperate climate, varied landscape, and international image of ancient Greece as the cradle of modern Western civilization, supported by numerous cultural heritage resources, are consistently reflected in positively evaluated indexes, highlighting opportunities for the tourism

industry (Buhalis 2001, 449; Country Brand Index 2005, 2006, 2007, Future Brand, and “Anholt” Nation Brands Index Q2 2007). Nevertheless, state policymakers have largely depended on the country’s environmental diversity, putting little effort into developing targeted cultural tourism products. As available data indicate, Greece is still perceived as a summer sea-and-sun destination, while culture has not yet developed into a primary tourism motivator (Buhalis 2001, 461; Kalogeropoulou 1996, 142; Papadopoulos 1989, 308; WTTC 2006, 4–5).

2.2 Strategic weaknesses of the Greek tourism and limiting factors for achieving sustainability

The disability of Greece to develop sustainable tourism also results from the diachronically weak institutional support of tourism, even if the latter is significant to the Greek economy. Contributing 16.4 percent to the country’s GDP and accounting for almost 20 percent of total employment, tourism is indeed Greece’s second vital industry after shipping (WTTC 2006, 3). Nonetheless, since the beginning of the twentieth century, tourism jurisdictions are erratically dispersed among various bodies, while the Ministry of Tourism, first founded in 1989, undergoes continuous abolition, reinstitution, and mergers. Furthermore, the tourism sector is burdened by many weaknesses, including the exploitation of tourism by political agendas; the unsuccessful cooperation between public and private agents; the authorities’ neglect of academic research; and the absence of systematic planning processes, of targeted, consistent, and long-term policies, and of ongoing, reliable research regarding tourism’s economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impact (Buhalis 2001, 457–59, 473; Papadopoulos 1989, 311–12; WTTC 2006, 3, 65).

Tourism as a “national aim” was proclaimed during 2005 by the governing party which also reestablished the Ministry of Tourism Development (MTD) with the dual mandate to attract the creative classes and develop year-round tourism by investing more consistently in alternative tourism. In this way, the Greek tourism product was intensively communicated; institutional frameworks for tourism development were designed; efforts to modernize infrastructure, services, and tourism education were made in cooperation with private tourism agents; and measures were adopted to uphold social tourism, support tourism businesses, and shield Greece from the effects of the

international financial crisis. Synergies between tourism and culture were sought (i.e., “Cultural Year of Greece in China,” 2007–2008), and classic/traditional and contemporary aspects of the country were jointly promoted, as exemplified by the triptych “Environment-Culture-Development” of the 2005 tourism campaign, which advertised Greece as a safe, year-round tourism destination with diverse natural and cultural resources as well as modern infrastructure and services.

2.3 Rural Tourism in Greece

Concerning the demand for rural tourism, it must be stressed that during the 1970s and the early 1980s, in Greece, a Mediterranean country with a long tradition in seaside tourism, rural tourism was not very popular. In this respect, it is important to point out three important facts:

- ❑ In the Mediterranean countries, the dominant trend has always been the seaside tourism even though the past few years there is a trend for rural tourism to flourish in some of these countries. There appears to have been a consistent pattern of growth in rural tourism in Spain since the mid-1990s — 83% between 1996 and 1999 (Canoves and Villarino Pérez, 2002) and 93% between 1999 and 2003. The international tourist agents who polarized the interest of tourists, whether local or foreigners, towards the coastal regions rather than the interior rural areas (Bazin and Roux, 1997), further reinforced this trend.
- ❑ The strong desire of urban populations to "return to nature" and "discover a place" emerged only in the 1990s; thus, until the late 1980s, such a tourism stream, which could favor interior rural areas, had not been developed.
- ❑ Given that the rural exodus has taken place recently in Greece (after the 2nd World War), to date the city dwellers have not cut the painter with their hometowns and always go back to their villages on holidays. Therefore, they have never felt a strong need "to go back to their roots" or seek "the authenticity of the rural world".

From the late 1980s onwards, within the emerging framework of integrated rural development, many local experts were convinced that there was a need to start planning new forms of tourism in Greece. This was mainly due to the fact that mass tourism had already reached saturation point, and new forms

of tourism were increasingly in demand. Social interest was aroused in safeguarding threatened landscapes and helping them reveal their identity through their cultural values. Such an interest spurred the Greek agencies to start planning the development of rural tourism in Greece. The authorities viewed rural tourism as a local or regional activity to secure supplementary income for rural families, improve their standard of living and maintain rural population. In addition, it was considered to be a local or regional activity aimed at revitalizing the rural environment and reducing desertification. Such an activity was also maintained to offer an alternative solution to the severe social and economic problems affecting less favored regions, whose resources were mainly exploited in the primary sector of the economy (Iakovidou, 1992).

3. Nemea as a tourism destination

One of the major components of tourist experience is the set of activities offered by a destination to its visitors (Buhalis, 2000). The satisfaction that visitors derive from these activities depends on their experience during their stay at the destination, and significantly affects their overall evaluation of the destination (Woodside and Dubelaar, 2002). Thus, the extent to which the destination is able to offer the activities that visitors prefer, finally determines its competitiveness and success (Ryan 1995).

Tourism activities, because of their great significance for any destination, are often divided and investigated at different levels. Among others, tourism activities are associated with tourists' shopping preferences (Paige and Littrell, 2003), environmental impact and sustainability (Castellani and Sala, 2012; Li et al., 2014), technology (Jolly and Dimanche, 2009), taxation (Gago et al., 2009), leisure satisfaction and well-being (Lee and Chun, 2005), and cultural characteristics (Pizam and Fleischer, 2005).

Nemea region offers a diverse set of tourism activities. The indications are that the Peloponnese, where Nemea is located, is a very promising region regarding sustainable wine tourism development if focused on and if corrective interventions are made in winery operational processes” because of the vineyards that surround the area and the landscape that reminds of the French city. Greece’s Tuscan as it has been named mainly this is the reason it was chosen for the specific research It provides various tourist attractions as a cultural destination, which generally are divided in two categories: archaeological sites

(i.e. the Temple of Zeus; the Ancient Stadium; the Temple of Hercules), and wineries offering wine tasting, since Nemea produces the famous Greek wine "Agiorgitiko". Knowledge development is another activity offered in Nemea, based on the rich cultural as well as archeological heritage of the region, with references to Greek mythology (i.e. the first labor of Hercules took place in Ancient Nemea), while at the same time it is one of the oldest wine regions of Europe. Furthermore, Nemea hosts interesting exhibitions and festivals, such as the "Great Days of Nemea" and the revival of the "Ancient Nemean Games". The region can also be explored by hiking tours as there are beautiful paths both through the vineyards and along the bed of the river Asopos. Some additional activities that can be named for Nemea are the outdoor sports activities (i.e., mountain cycling and archery), agrotourism, physical and mental relaxation, entertainment, and contact with residents.



FIGURE 7 MAP OF NEMEA MUNICIPALITY (SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA)

The main subject of the study is the overall incorporation of these activities in the tourism package that the area of Nemea has to offer as well as their contribution towards the sustainability of Nemea as a tourism destination.

3.1 Facts and Figures

Nemea has 6,853 residents and its location, very close to the capital of Greece, Athens, and other urban areas, Korinthos, Argos, Nafplio, makes it an accessible destination for anyone who wants a quick city

break. Nemea is surrounded by 13 villages which consist of lush vineyards and they all belong to the municipality of Nemea. The residents of the area are mainly occupied with agriculture as the place has, apart from vineyards, olive groves that produce extra virgin olive oil. It is significant that only 40% of the residents of Nemea are financially active, something that reveals that the area presents an increased unemployment level possibly because of the low educational level that characterizes the majority of the local people making the existence of initiatives regarding tourism development more difficult. It is noticeable that 8 % of the residents are PhD or master holders, 3% of them are college graduates, 18% are high school graduates, 36% of the total of residents are graduates of primary school, 13% has not finished primary school but they know how to read and write and 6% are people with no expertise born after 2005.

The identity of the area in its total agriculture (43%) as wine-growing has been the main occupation of the area for many years, making it the largest Greek wine-growing area.

It can be noticed that 13% of the total of the population is engaged with the provision of services and the sales and 11 % of it has as main occupation jobs that have to do with the production of wine, their standardization and their packaging., 8% of the residents are professionals/entrepreneurs, 8% is specialized personnel, 5% is dealing with manufacturing, 4% is operational managers, 4% is technicians, 4% is collar workers.

3.2 Destination Analysis

A travel to the area of Nemea is connected with Greek mythology, as the name of the area comes from the daughter of Asopos river, while the reputation of Nemea is surrounded by the first feat of Hercules opposed to the lion of Nemea. Historical center of the area during the ancient days was Ancient Fliounta, the name of which comes from the son of God Dionysos , Flia, while there are reports and researches that reveal that this is where wine growing first appeared with starting point the 'Fliasio Wine' which was offered during the most important sports and religious races, the well-known 'Nemean races'(Paravalou,2017). Historic data reveal that the local red brand 'Agiorgitiko' has been cultivated in the area since the 16th century. Afterwards (1971) both the vineyards and the obtained local wine, the name of which comes from the settlement 'Agios Georgios', belong to the category

VQPRD (quality wine produced in specified regions, wine-growing regions) (Fonte & Papadopoulos, 2016).

While the high quality of the produced wine is identified not only in local but also in national level, worth-mentioning is the fact that the whole area is surrounded by a variety of cultural and natural resources which reinforces the 'place branding' as well as the promotion of the area.

The mixture of the tourist product is the same as that of the tourist destination and consists of the following ingredients (Williams, 2004, Witt & Mutincho, 1995).

- Destination Attractions
- Activities
- Destination facilities
- Access
- Image
- Price

The tourism preference of a destination is closely connected with the perception of the consumer concerning the offering tourism product, and as it is mentioned by Middleton (2013) it consists of five elements, on which the following analysis of the area of Nemea is based:

1) Sites (natural resources, historical and archaeological sites, special geographical elements), local cultural events (customs, traditions, cultural manifestations, festivals) and production of local products.

More specifically:

a) Sites

- The majority of the vineyards are located in mountainous areas. The high summits that surround these areas give a wild beauty which justifies the rich tastes of the Nemean wine. The natural beauty of the area is highlighted by the gigantic plane trees along with fresh water while the existence of Asopos river that runs through the area is really important.
- Moreover, there is a church on a rock which someone meets when entering the area, where a Byzantine monastery has also been built since 1633. These monuments have been characterized as 'landscapes of particular natural beauty'.

- The area of Nemea is surrounded by a variety of cultural and archaeological sites, the most important of them are the museum in Ancient Nemea along with the stadium of Nemean races as well as the Mycenaean graves in Aidonia, a nearby village, which is also one of the most significant graveyards of that period in the wider area of Peloponnese.
- As a result of the excavations in the area, where the graves were found, of the researching team from the Berkeley University in California, the treasures of Aidonia were found (a collection of 312 Mycenaean jewelries and stamps) which are kept in the archaeological museum of the area.
- In this museum which is located in the village of Ancient Nemea the archaeological findings are exhibited while there is also audiovisual infrastructure for the tourists. Today, the archaeological site is dominated by the restored temple of Zeus, as well as by the stadium which lies further to the east and was the venue for the games. The completion of the excavations of the stadium (1974-1991) marked the revival of Nemean races which were performed during the ancient years in honor of Ofeltis (Koumakis,2015).
- In addition, in Ancient Kleones, along the vineyards, the visitor can visit the Ancient Temple of Hercules, which was built in relation to the triumphant victory of Hercules during the fight with the lion of Nemea.
- Finally, it is important to mention the area of Dervenakia where, in the cliff of the village the visitor can admire the statue of the famous Greek commander Theodoros Kolokotronis who played a significant role during the Greek revolution in 1821 (Kallis, 2015)

b) Local culture

The main cultural manifestations that take place in the area of Nemea are the following:

- The Nemean races. This ceremony is a sports and religious event at the same time which was first held in 575 B.C. During the 2nd century the realization of the races took place both in Nemea and Argos. In 1995, after the revealing of the stadium by the American archaeologist Stephen G. Miller the association for the revival of the races was founded aiming at the realization of the Nemean races as an original representation of the ancient races with international participation. Six contemporary races have been held since 1996. (Koumakis.2018)

- The Great Days of Nemea: within the context of the Great Days of Nemea events are organised, which start in the beginning of August signaling the initiation of grapes harvesting, reaching their peak in the beginning of September aiming at the promotion of the local wines and the development of wine tourism in the area. The schedule of the Great Days of Nemea consists of visits in the wineries, wine tasting and different artistic manifestations.
- Agiorgitikos race: it is about a track of 12,3 km which gives the opportunity to the participants to realize a sports activity starting from the city and going through the most significant monuments, rare ecosystems, vineyards, wineries and finishing where they started having gained a unique and at the same time tourism experience.
- Celebration for the Corinthian dried grapes: Within the context of the revival of local customs and traditions the celebration of the Corinthian dried grape is realized in August in Ancient Kleones. More specifically, the celebration includes music manifestations and representation of rural activities while at the same time traditional recipes are created having as main ingredient the dried grape.

c) Local products

- The main local product in the area is the Agiorgitiko wine, however the composition of the land along with the climate allow a diversity of wine varieties throughout the area.
- Additionally, in the vineyard 'Wisdom of Nature' the visitor can find biological products made with grape such as grape molasses,
- while the area of Nemea is widely known for the production of Corinthian dried grapes.
- Olive oil, tea, oregano, honey and traditional liqueur made with wine or tsipouro as well as the local beer 'Karma' are the local products that create the basis for the promotion of the local cuisine of the area.

2) Touristic infrastructure and facilities of the area.

Regarding the hotel infrastructure of the area of Nemea, the region has 100 rooms to let within the limits of the region. (Operational plan of the municipality of Nemea 2015-2019,2015)

Among the hospitality structures are:

- Venikos mansion, which is located in the center of the city. The first floor of the mansion is operated as a place for exhibition of wines along with the room for wine tasting, providing the visitor with the opportunity to experience the relaxation combined with the wine exploration. (Venikos House, 2017).
- Domain Helios mansion, which is located within the facilities of the luxurious winery Semeli in the village of Koutsi, 7klm away from the centre of Nemea. It has eight luxurious suites decorated with unique style while their modern equipment offers comfort to the visitor. (The guest room in the winery Domaine Helios of Semeli in Nemea,2011)
- ‘Nemion Estate’ which apart from its operation as winery, offers six suites, a room for wine tasting and a restaurant while at the same time the visitors can come in touch with the history of wine as there is a museum which operates within the winery. (Nemea: why is it considered as Tuscany of Greece?)
- ‘Lantidis Estate’, which has four elegant guest houses. (Nemea: why is it considered as Tuscany of Greece?)

It is important to mention that the area presents an inability to provide a variety of accommodation services which has to do mainly with the occupation of the local people with the primary sector making any kind of business activity regarding the construction of hotels difficult. This is one of the bitter aspects that deters the visitors from staying in the area for many days making Nemea an escape for daily excursions with the visitors choosing to stay in nearby cities such as Nafplio, Korinth or Loutraki. There are estimates that the visitors passing by are 25.000-30.000 per year with the main intention to visit the vineyards and the archaeological area. However, there is also the Stadium of Nemea which receives positive comments as well as private sports centers. (Business Plan of the municipality of Nemea 2015-2019).

3) Transportation and access to the area

Nemea is easily accessible either through public transport or by private vehicle. The visitor travels through the roadway 'Korinthos-Tripoli-Kalamata' which provides the possibility to connect Arcadia with Korinthia which is one of the main factors through which alternative tourism forms development can be achieved in the area. Moreover, quite satisfying is the rural roadway that connects the surrounding villages of the area that are part of the wine-growing zone of the area. In addition, the

access to the area can be possible through intercity buses. More specifically intercity buses realize daily itineraries from Athens to the city of Nemea and the surrounding villages, however, a negative aspect for now is the nonexistence of connection between the area and surrounding big cities through public transport. (Business Plan of the municipality of Nemea 2015-2019)

4) The image of the area

Even though the area is regarded as one of the most significant winemaking and wine growing regions, the absence of a structured marketing strategy for the promotion of the area and the production of wine, makes the competitiveness and the reaction of consumers insignificant. On the contrary, some individual efforts for the promotion of the area in TV channels, mostly local, have been noticed, during the summer period when manifestations that have to do with wine take place. Moreover, some efforts to reinforce the image of the area through websites or through the creation of accounts in social media have taken place. Here are the websites <http://www.nemeanwines.gr/>, <http://www.nemeawineland.com/>, <http://greentheater.gr/>, <https://nemeangames.org/el/>, and the facebook accounts that aim to the promotion of the area «Nemea Wine Land» and «Nemea history». Some videos that have to do with wine and culture manifestations in the area have been uploaded on Youtube. The participation of the entrepreneurs in national exhibitions play an important role in the promotion and advertisement of the area.

Finally, the magazine 'Oinologia' (<http://www.oinologia.com>), helps the advertisement of the area through the reference to wine growing, the production of wine and the publication of unknown information regarding wine and the winemaking destination that readers want to visit.

However, all the aforementioned are insufficient as for the promotion of the area and in order to make it an autonomous, attractive tourism destination actions of complete advertisement are required which could create economies of scale contributing to the development of alternative tourism forms.

5) Total expenses

The total expenses have to do with the cost that the visitor has to afford for the consumption of the total tourism product, which are affected by factors such as the quality of the services provided and the

activities as well as the distance of the destination, the selection of the means of transport and the time of the year when the visitor chooses to visit the area.

These factors affect the destination as they have an impact on the demand since they determine the cost of the product making it either attractive and affordable for the majority of tourists or forbidden because of the high cost. More specifically, the tourism enterprises that operate in the area implement lower pricing policy. Additionally, the reduced popularity of the area acts as a factor that restrains the cost without sacrificing the quality of the providing product, something that demonstrates that Nemea is considered as a value for money destination.

Public and private management institutions

Constant changes in the construction of the socioeconomic environment that is mainly characterized by wide competitiveness makes that contribution of public and private tourism institutions necessary for the development of alternative tourism forms.

More specifically the on-time realization of the need to create a sustainable balanced tourism development in the area highlights the implication of immediate actions. As it is pointed out by WTTC in order for the tourism development to be succeeded, its proper coordination, the recognition of the active role of the institutions through the provision of funding, the existence of motives, and the promotion of the tourism destination through a marketing strategy, are required. The successful development of a tourism destination will contribute to the better quality of life for the local people and the creation of a particular sustainable experience for the tourists (Stavrinoudis & Parthenis, 2009).

In this particular case, the contribution of the municipality and its networking with national and international institutions is highly important. More specifically, through the participation of the municipality to the network of wine cities of Greece and the European network of wine cities (RECEVIN), it pursues the wine development of the area and the exchange of experiences that lead to the adoption of correct practices. For the implementation of these practices the creation of relations with local institutions of Peloponnese is necessary (Business Plan of the municipality of Nemea 2015-2019).

Additionally, within the context of enrichment of the provided tourism product and in the effort of the extension of the tourism period, the municipality of Nemea has approved an expense of 22,320 € in

order to signify a network of paths for the promotion of walking routes which will allow the hikers to enjoy landscapes with particular natural beauty (Kontogianni, 2018).

Another interesting cooperation is the association of winemakers of Nemea with the local administration with the aim to develop wine tourism. For the attainment of this aim the following actions have taken place

- organization of wine events (Great Days of Nemea)
- participation in wine related exhibitions
- organization of wine tasting
- introduction of signs that lead to the wineries
- presentation and promotion of the area through the media
- training of the professionals and wine producers aiming at the differentiation of the providing product

In 1999 the trade association of Nemea was composed pursuing the promotion of the historic and cultural heritage of the area. With the total cooperation of the trade association with the municipality and the local people, it fulfills a variety of activities such as the organization of exhibitions, and cultural events, historic photography exhibitions, commercial conferences, with local institutions, as well as the publication of leaflets with main subject the promotion of the area and its wine identity.

Undoubtedly, the participation of the local authorities that take care of the provision of services with public concern (conservation of the roadway, collection of rubbish etc.), reassuring in this way the sustainability of the area.

The cycling tour of Nemea is a private initiation of T. Nikolettou, who inspired the Cycling4wine and is the ambassador of Greek wine and it is held annually for the lovers of wine who are touring through the vineyards of the area combining activities that have to do with nature and coordinated wine tours.

3.3 SWOT analysis of the area of Nemea

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong wine production identity of the area • experienced wine producers • sufficient percentage of fully equipped wineries • high quality of wine • rich natural, cultural, religious heritage • advantageous geographical location • easily accessible area • appropriate weather conditions • gradual upgrading of infrastructure • existence of wine, cultural, sports manifestations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited opportunities for job occupation because of the low educational level • limited choices for accommodation • lack of tourism infrastructure and services • lack of coordinated promotion and advertisement of the area and the local products • inadequate transportation
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of organic agriculture • possibility of development an alternative tourism product • alliances between wine tourism and local associations • reduction of unemployment through development of tourism activities • exploitation of national and European funding • improvement of public transportation through the railway • exploitation of new technologies and reinforcement of the brand name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High national and international competition • degradation of environmental resources • reduction of permanent citizens • disadvantageous national image of Greece • inadequate holistic strategy for the development of alternative tourism forms

4. Primary research

4.1 Introduction

Taking into consideration the information analyzed in the theoretical part of this paper in coordination with the analysis of the tourism product that the area of Nemea has to offer, primary research was conducted. The main focus of the research is the understanding of the profile and the needs of the tourism market and the tourists themselves who visit the area in order to assess if the product lives up to their expectations or more actions need to take place so as to create an attractive tourism destination capable of providing authentic tourism experiences.

As a result, firstly the research questions are presented while after that the target population is defined and the sampling that will be followed. The methodology which is used as means of quantitative research in order to define the perceptions of the tourists and the factors that make them visit the area, is the questionnaire which is the main tool for the collection of primary information. The methodology that is applied, as a means of the qualitative research, in order to find out the perception of the businessmen and the authorities of the area is the interviews which will shed light in the things that already have taken place in the field of tourism and those that need to be done.

4.2 Research objectives

In this unit, the presentation of the research objectives is necessary as a result of the existing situation but also as a means to find out the possibilities of further development of the alternative forms of tourism in the area of Nemea.

The research objectives are as follows:

- Segmentation of the tourism market: the report of demographic elements contributes to the presentation of information regarding the profile and the typology of tourists.

- Identification of the factors that act as motives of the realization of the visit in Nemea. The motives, according to Tsartas (1996) define the behavior of the consumers while they also constitute the main factor in order to make the correct decisions for the enrichment of the tourism product.
- Questioning regarding the realization of prior visit to the area of Nemea in order for its competitive position to be defined in the area of Peloponnese in combination with the intention to repeat the visit or the intention to recommend the destination to close family and friends.
- Questioning about the strengths and weaknesses of the area. The correlation of these findings with the opportunities and threats of the exterior environment provides the main figure for the assessment of the tourism development and the redefinition of the alternative tourism product, aiming at the attraction of new target-markets throughout the year.
- Defining the consuming behavior relating to tourism.
- Assessment of the total tourism experience after the visit in the area. The collection of data regarding the sights, the existing infrastructure, the access, the cost during the stay, are important clues in order to reach to a conclusion regarding the holistic conception that the visitor creates for the tourism destination.
- Defining the sources of information that act as means of influence for the final selection of Nemea as holiday destination.
- Questioning the possibilities for alternative tourism forms to be created in terms of public and private institutions.

4.3 Quantitative Research – Defining target population- sampling frame

Target population refers to the total of statistical units, with common elements, who are the point of interest for the research. Mainly, the target population is a representative example of the total of the population, excluding groups that are out of the research field of the specific study and they possibly would worsen the result of the study (Rontos & Papanis, 2006).

In this research, the elemental constant is that the participants in the questionnaire are people who have visited Nemea at least once in the past.

Sampling frame refers to the total number of the participants in a target market in which the researcher has access and the references of the participants will be the basis for the reassurance of safe conclusions. In the specific case the collection of data was carried out through random sampling aiming at the avoidance of any bias and at the export of representative conclusions.

Additionally, an important element for the effective realization of the research is that the selection of statistical units takes place in different geographical places and if it is possible in different times.

Within this context, taking into consideration all the above, the sampling frame of the present research consisted of 186 people, both from Greece and from abroad, while the selection of the primary data, was realized through a questionnaire that was uploaded ,a) in the website of the municipality of Nemea targeting tourists, b) in social media , more specifically facebook because it is a commonly used means of communication and via email which is a targeted means of communication, c) was distributed personally to visitors in the archaeological museum of Nemea. Hence, the constant development of technology combined with that constant raising use of the Internet contributes to the more immediate and easier access to information compared to the past (Papageorgiou, 2005).

However, from the total of the 186 participants, 36 of them declared that they had not visited the area, so they were excluded from the procedure. Further conditions were not considered necessary (e.g., occupation) while before the beginning of the questionnaire there was detailed information regarding the purpose of the research and the anonymity of the participants. The questionnaire, written in English, was uploaded online, on facebook, from 1-23/9 while the visit to the archaeological site in order to personally distribute the questionnaire was realized on 25/9 and 2/10.

Results of quantitative research- Statistic Description

In this unit the statistical description is presented in order to reach specific conclusions and find out basic information for the study.

Demographics

The majority (53,5%) of the respondents to the questionnaire were people between 25 and 34 years old, while a significant number (18,8%) of the respondents were 18-24 years old.

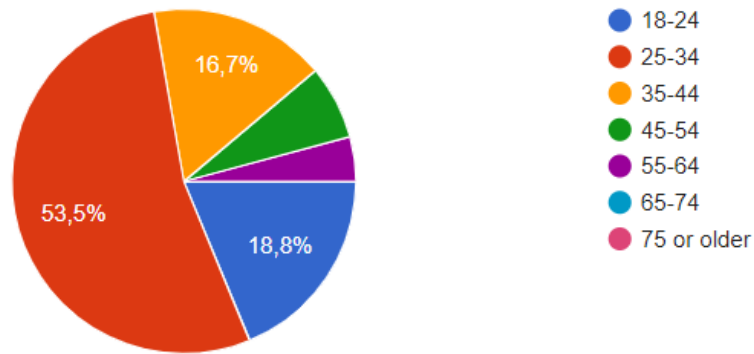


FIGURE 8 WHAT IS YOUR AGE?

From these people the 43,1% are university graduates, a high percentage (38,6%) of them are high school graduates and 18,1% of them are having a master's degree.

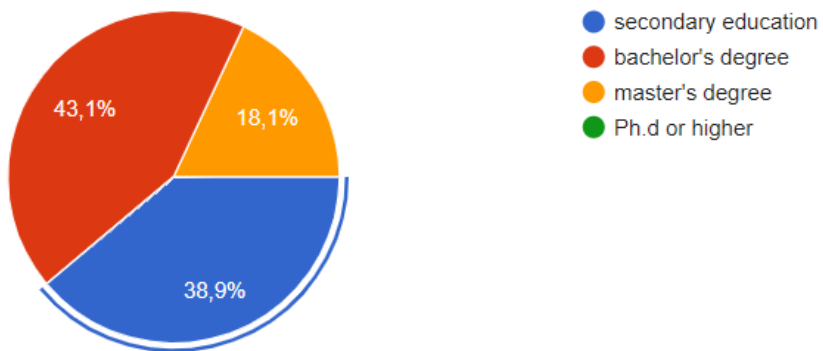
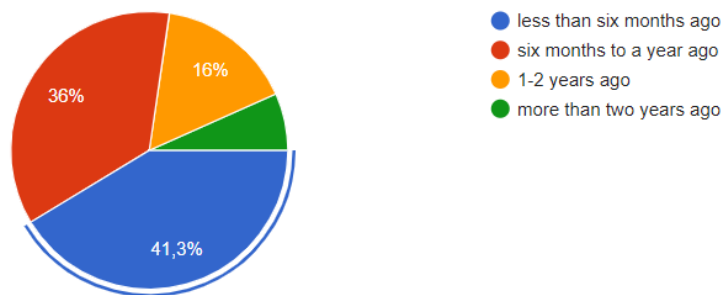


FIGURE 9 WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATION LEVEL

As it can be observed in the following chart the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire (41,3%) visited the area less than six months ago, and 36% of them were in the area six months to a year ago.



Activities and sustainability

Visitors in the area that took part in the research claim that they took part during their stay in Nemea in visits to wineries (70%), local exhibitions and festivals (48%), hiking (32%) and visits to the archaeological sites (29,3%).

The majority of the visitors (64,7%) state that they were somewhat satisfied during their visit in Nemea, and the 22% of them were very satisfied.

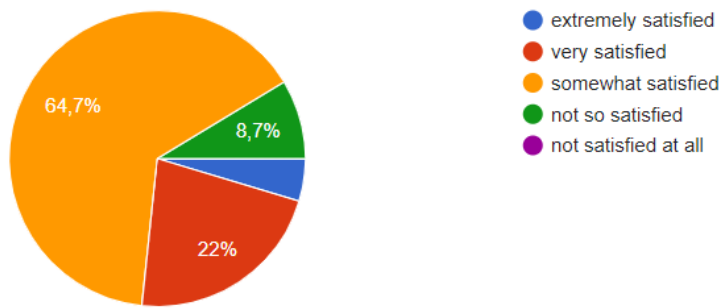


FIGURE 11 HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU FROM YOUR VISIT TO THE AREA

The destination met somewhat well their needs as 68% stated so, while 16,7% stated that their needs were very well satisfied.

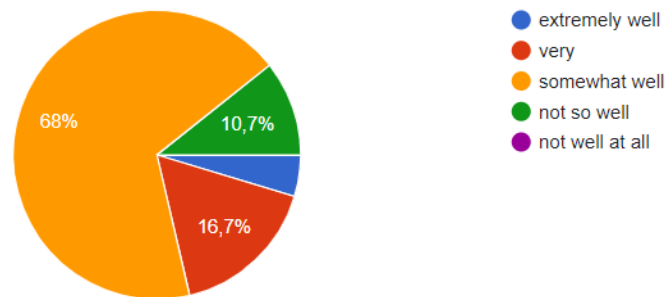
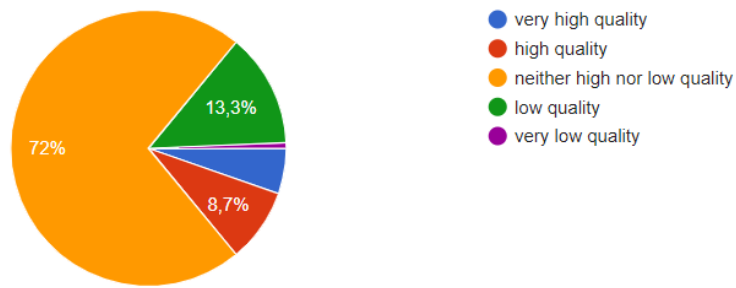


FIGURE 12 TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE AREA MEET YOUR NEEDS

The quality of the provided tourism product was neither high nor low for the majority of the respondents (72%), while 13,3% of the participants in the research found the quality very low.



In terms of hospitality the general comment was that it was average (74%) while the 27% of the respondents stated that it was excellent and 10,7% of them that it was above average.

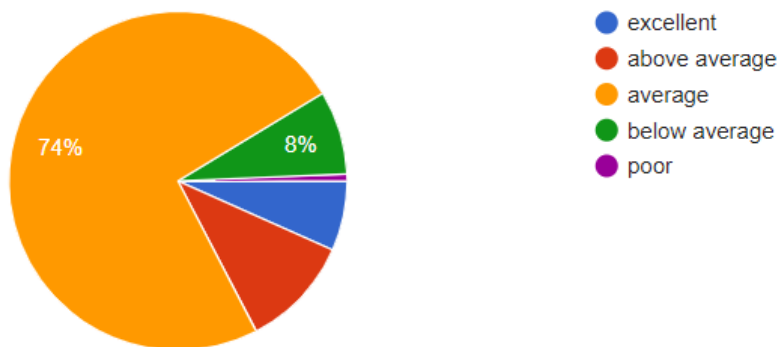
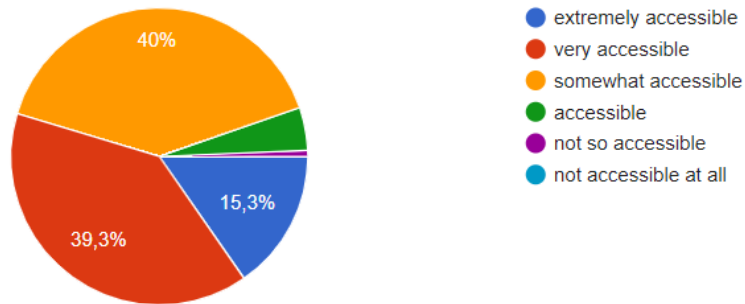


FIGURE 14 HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE HOSPITALITY IN THE AREA

Nemea was characterized as a very accessible destination by the majority of the people who took part in the survey (39,3%) and many of them found it extremely accessible (15,3%).



Most of the respondents to the questionnaire are somewhat likely to visit the area again (39,3%), and a high percentage of them (38,7%) are very likely to do so.

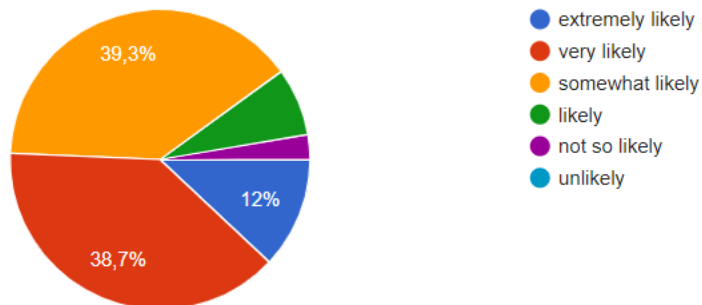


FIGURE 15 HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO VISIT THE AREA AGAIN

The information about the area was for most of the participants through relatives and friends (39,3%), many of them were informed from acquaintances (35,3%) and some of them were informed either by the Internet (16,7%).

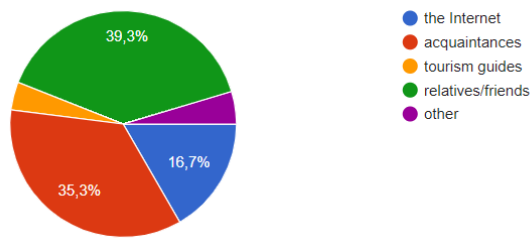


FIGURE 16 HOW DID YOU GET INFORMED FOR THE AREA

In the question that had to do with the reason for which the respondents visited the area most of them answered that they did so in order to meet friends and family (49,7%). More than half of them also stated that they visited Nemea for the natural environment (47,3%) and some of them for the wineries (27,3%).

When asked about the concept of sustainability the respondents answered positively in the most part (74,7%) that they are aware of it and 20% of them are not familiar with it.

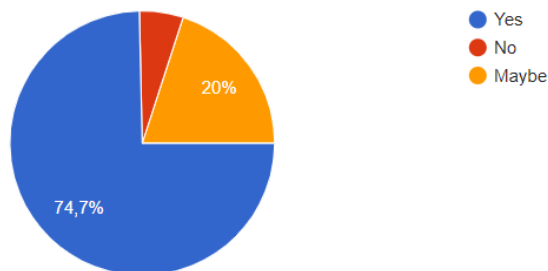


FIGURE 17 ARE YOU AWARE OF THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY

The majority of the respondents (92,7%) believe that protecting the natural resources and tourism are interrelated,

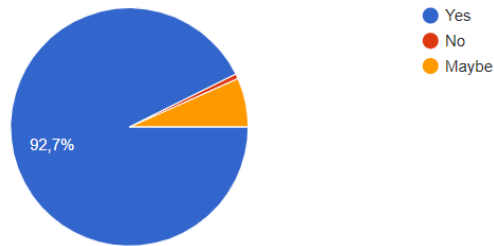


FIGURE 18 DO YOU BELIEVE THAT PROTECTING THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND TOURISM ARE INTERRELATED

while the majority again (91,3%) believe also that protecting cultural resources and tourism are interrelated.

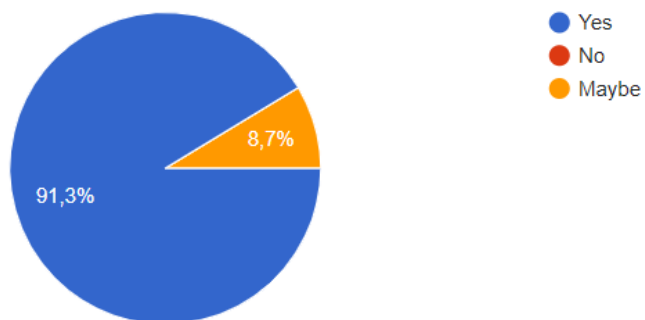


FIGURE 19 DO YOU BELIEVE THAT PROTECTING THE CULTURAL RESOURCES AND TOURISM ARE INTERRELATED

Nemea is not a sustainable tourism destination for the 60,7% of the participants in the survey while there are some (8,3%) who believe that it is.

The local enterprises are in a mediocre way sustainable as this is the answer of the majority of the respondents (64,7%), whereas a significant percentage of them (8%) believe that they are not sustainable.

The area has the potential to become a sustainable tourism destination according to the view of most of the participants in the research (58,7%), while there are few who believe that it does not have the potential (4%).

94,7% of the respondents would visit the area again and 94,7% of them would visit it again if it became more sustainable probably because the majority of the visitors expect the area to evolve and become more environmentally friendly exploiting its potential in order to visit it again.

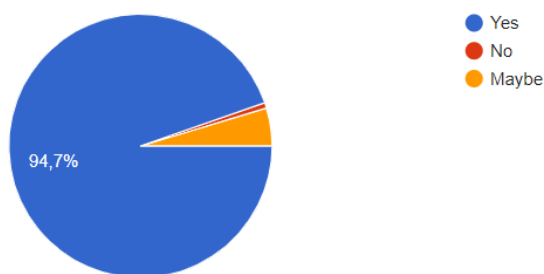


FIGURE 20 WOULD YOU VISIT THE AREA AGAIN

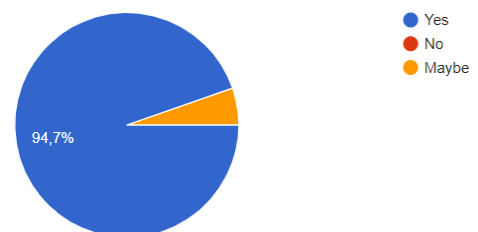


FIGURE 21 WOULD YOU VISIT THE AREA AGAIN IF IT BECAME MORE SUSTAINABLE

What impressed the visitors who took part in the survey the most was the landscape and the archaeological sites equally (44%), many of them were impressed by the enterprises including the wineries (34%), some of them by the hospitality (16,7%).

The main conclusions that arise from the analysis of the questionnaire are that the visitors in the area of Nemea are not quite content with the offered tourism product while they seem to underestimate the organization of the area which means that there is a need for further coordination and a better

management of the tourism industry. Accordingly, the general approval is that the area has the potential to become more sustainable and this is an element that would make it competitive in the tourism market and more attractive for the visitors. Additionally, significant is the fact that a high percentage of the visitors in the area have taken part in hiking activities which is something that is not promoted as an attraction even though the majority again of the respondents to the questionnaire claimed what impressed them most was the natural environment. This is an interesting finding as it means that the area has the potential to become a sports destination and the public is appreciating that kind of activity. The fact that 13,7% of the participants find the quality of the provided product low should be taken into consideration in order to improve it and make it respond to the needs of the customer combined with the fact that 74% of the respondents found the hospitality in the area average which means that they were not pleased with what they were offered and probably a need in investment in infrastructure is declared in this way. Something that should be pointed out is the fact that even though we live in a technological era only the 16,7% of the participants in the survey were informed about it from the Internet which means that the promotion of Nemea online is quite insufficient.

4.4 Qualitative research

After the quantitative research, the qualitative research followed. Interviews are the main tool of qualitative research. The main aim both for the researcher and for the interviewee is the analysis in depth of the subject of the research. Interviews vary along structured, semi- structures and open depending on the structure that is selected. For the implementation of this research, a semi-structured interview was chosen which is characterized by flexibility in the selection of the questions and variety in terms of answers (Rontos & Papanis, 2006). More specifically, six interviews were implemented with the President of the Council, the owner of apartments and restaurants in the area, a winemaker, the President of the association of winemakers in the area, the President of Nemean races, the President of the archaeological museum.

The main aim of the interviews was the awareness regarding the potentials of the area in terms of alternative tourism forms from the perspective of the local authorities, the entrepreneurs and the

people who deal with the basic forms of tourism activities in the area and the understanding of the factors that might function as obstacles in the further development of the area. Additionally, the actions that have taken place in order to promote the tourism product of the area were examined.

As in the present study the alternative forms of tourism are examined, the analysis of the interviews will be divided into the following categories: accommodation- food industry, wine tourism, natural environment- sport tourism, cultural tourism.

Local authorities

On behalf of the local authorities the President of the city council, Anastasios Darsinos, took part in the procedure of the interview. According to his statements the municipality tries to make the area known through the manifestations that are related with the local products of the area, mainly the wine, the dry grapes and the olive oil, and through collaborations with nearby tourism destinations. However, there is lack of initiative in this field as the area does not have the adequate infrastructure to support a more dynamic advertisement yet. The strengths of the area, as mentioned from Mr Darsinos, are mainly the production of wine and the great history that the place has, and the efforts of the municipality are focused on the promotion of these fields. The local authorities of the area contribute to the promotion of the local enterprises mainly by improving the infrastructure. For example, they take care of the road signs that lead to the wineries, the lightning at the streets and the cleaning of the area.

The President of the city council states that the area has fallen a little behind in terms of infrastructure, but the authorities are in the procedure to apply organic cleaning in the area; a practice that has as a result the protection of the environment. As existing environmental policy is recycling in which the area has been involved for many years and the local authorities try to strengthen the natural environment through tree planting.

In terms of local community and since the main occupation of the local people is the agriculture, the local authorities are trying to improve the conditions for the farmers by improving the condition of the streets in order for them to have better access to their land, taking care of the water supply so that it be available to every part of the area.

There is encouragement from the part of the municipality for the young people of the area to take part in the association either cultural or political in order for them to be heard in the area and take action for the improvement of it.

The field of tourism is not a priority for the municipality as the local authorities do not follow specific practices in order to support the tourism from the area apart from those mentioned before. However, a strategic plan for the tourism promotion of the area is composed through which action will be taken in the field of tourism. Emphasis is based on the cultural heritage of the area, as the municipality is trying to promote the museum and the findings that exist in the nearby villages through the creation of a street line that will connect the places that are culturally significant for the area. Besides, sports tourism is promoted through the improvement of the infrastructure of the local stadium which hosts national teams for training and it is also promoted through the Nemean races, bicycle races that are held annually and street races.

In general, there are efforts for the local authorities to upgrade the area and take advantage of the different forms of tourism that the area has to offer but there is a lot to be done in terms of infrastructure, management and financing.

Accommodation services- food industry

For this sector of tourism, the entrepreneur George Sofos, who is the owner of a restaurant and guests' room in the area of Nemea was interviewed. The business he runs is a domestic one where he is the main manager along with some partners and his wife. The main engagement of the business is catering. Regarding the promotion of his business, he mentioned that they focus on social media in order to make their services known, however a significant role plays the advertisement of the business from people who have visited the area and talk about it to others.

In terms of the sustainability of his business in relation to the environment, Mr Sofos mentioned that they have been trying to manage their waste through recycling, however something more than that (e.g., alternative energy sources) has not been attempted mostly because of the cost that need to get installed even though he is positive towards that direction. It is worth mentioning that in order to get these practices into action there is a great need of assistance from the part of the authorities which has not been provided yet. It is obvious that when it comes to the local community ,services like this take

into consideration the common good, and they are interrelated both with the local people as they provide vacancies for them, and with the other enterprises as they manage to promote them to the visitors.

The tourism sector in the area, as it was mentioned by Mr Sofos, is based mostly on the individual initiative rather than the communal. Tourism development needs to be further coordinated as much time has been lost. Even though actions regarding tourism take place, they are minor, and they do not bring the desired results in terms of visitors, advertisement, promotion, infrastructure.

As for the potential of the area to become a culinary tourism destination, Mr Sofos pointed out the fact that this potential exists, but the main focus should be placed on the brand of the area, the wine, and along with it gastronomy tourism could flourish. However, the main problem for the area to become more competitive in the tourism industry is the lack of coordination between enterprises and at the local level as well as the involvement of local people in all the aspects of the city.

Cultural tourism

The most important sight that the visitor must see in the area of Nemea is the archaeological museum in Ancient Nemea. The President of the museum, Maria Nikitakou, mentioned that the museum is a place where findings from the excavations in the area are exhibited along with the ancient stadium where the ancient races were taking place and today the revival of the races is held. The visitors in the museum are augmenting each year – excluding 2020 when there was the Covid-19 pandemic- with 40.000 visitors coming by during 2019.

The promotion of the museum is mainly based on the Ministry of Culture. However, as it was mentioned by Mrs Nikitakou, the area where the museum is located surrounded by vineyards, something that could promote both cultural and wine tourism, the inside of the museum that is so well maintained, impress the visitor and it is on its own a successful promotion practice for the whole area. In terms of the assistance of the municipality, the President of the museum pointed out the fact that the local authorities are always responding to their needs and take care of the cleaning and the maintenance of the museum. However, she claimed that there is not an advertising policy from the municipality as they do not make efforts to promote the archaeological site.

It is obvious and it was also mentioned by Mrs Nikitakou, the fact that cultural tourism is closely related to the promotion of the area and the promotion of other enterprises in the area as visitors coming to the museum are willing to stay in the area and visit other places too. The museum is a destination that is chosen by visitors exclusively, but it can be combined with the visits to the wineries or the festivals that are held in the area.

In terms of the problems that the area and consequently the cultural tourism faces so that it can become a competitive tourism destination, Mrs Nikitakou supported that even though there is infrastructure in the area, there is not an adequate cooperation between people and the local authorities and there is a lack of initiatives.

Wine tourism

In order to acquire information about the field of wine tourism in the area of Nemea, Mr Paraskeuopoulos, the owner of Gaia winery, who is also a Professor in the department of wine ,vine and beverage science in the university of Western Attica, as well as Mr Vlachos the President of wine association in Nemea took part in the interview.

According to Mr Paraskeuopoulos, the area of Nemea wine tourism is opportunistic, and it is an activity explored exclusively by the wine lovers. In order to make their services known to the wide audience, Gaia wineries, have adopted specific marketing policies such as a website, collaboration with a marketing company that promotes the winery, collaboration with tourist providers throughout Greece.

In terms of practices that the specific winery has adopted in order to protect the environment, the interviewee stated that they follow some state-of – the- art practices such as use of organic fertilizers, measures for the installment of Net-Metering for the reduction of the CO2 footprint. In terms of tourism, sustainable agriculture could encourage visitors to visit an area where wine is made with natural ways without chemical process and could make the area unique for the production of that kind of wine. This winery has been involved in the procedure for the solid waste management while it was pointed out that this practice is compulsory by the law even though most of the wineries in the area are not in compliance with it. As for sustainable certificates, the company is already applying two quality check certificates, ISO 22000 / 2005 & HACCP.

According to Mr Paraskeuopoulos, Gaia wineries are willing to become even more environmentally friendly in the future by replantations that will be more resilient and will not need constant fertilizing or using packaging more environmentally friendly, but they are also waiting for the municipality to take some action in this field by creating biological waste treatment where wineries could channel their liquid waste as well as constant compliance check.

Gaia wineries support the local economy by providing vacancies to local people but also in a more indirect way by promoting the whole area through the winery.

To the question about the potential of the area to become a destination for wine tourism the interviewees answered that the area can definitely become one such destination because of the many advantages that it has to offer which however have remained unexploited. Those advantages are the reputation of the wine in the area, the great number of the wineries, the neighboring central areas, the neighboring archaeological and tourist areas.

In order for the promotion of wine tourism in the area of Nemea, both interviewees agreed that there is a need for advertising practices, improvement of the road signs, compliance of the wineries with the law regarding visiting wineries.

Finally, in order to make the area of Nemea more competitive in the tourism field, Mr Paraskeuopoulos recommended that there is a need for a 10 year long strategic tourism plan and he also pointed out the need for investments in the area.

Mr Vlachos who represented the total of the wineries in the area, also pointed out the inadequate infrastructure, such as guest rooms, wine bars, restaurants, of the area as a malfunction for the promotion of tourism.

He claimed that in terms of the environment, the waste of the wine production is the main problem however some steps have been made for the management of the fertilizers and the water and he revealed that during the past few years a research plan is realized in collaboration with the Agricultural University of Athens which will reinforce the environmentally friendly activities of the wineries.

The challenges that the local wineries have to deal with, according to Mr Vlachos, have to do mainly with the attraction of the audience, the specialized human resources, and the investments in the field of tourism.

Sports tourism

Regarding sports tourism, as in Nemea Nemean races are held that can support the sports tourism alternative tourism model, Mr Kyriakos the President of the association of Nemean races took part in the procedure of the interview.

According to Mr Kyriakos, Nemean races were held for the first time in 1970 and they take place along with the Olympic Games every 4 years in the ancient stadium of Ancient Nemea. During the period when Nemean races are held, apart from the races that include running within the stadium as well as a race from the ancient temple of Hercules in Ancient Kleones to the stadium, other events such as cultural and musical events take place as well. The Nemean races have strong bonds with the history and the mythology of the area and have started mainly because of the excavations of the archaeologist Steven Miller who is until today a supporter of the association.

The promotion of the event is mainly achieved through the website of the Nemean races, which is the means for someone to gather information and register in the races either as an athlete or as a volunteer, as the races are highly based on the action of the volunteers. Mr Kyriakos claimed that there is both financial and practical support from the municipality which is very helpful for the conduction of the races.

In terms of the local community, the institution of Nemean races accepts the involvement of the volunteers as it was mentioned above which is very active. The environmental impact of the races has to do mainly with the protection of the environment and the effort to follow practices that will not harm it.

It comes without saying that the organization of the races contributes to the reinforcement of the local economy as the visitors that come by during the 3-days manifestation stay in the area and spend time in the local shops, restaurants, and accommodation services. A significant fact about the races is the number of people who attend them both as athletes, volunteers and viewers as in the previous

organization 1300 athletes from 40 countries took part in the races and the number of the viewers was more than 5.000.

As Mr Kyriakos stated the event of Nemean races is capable of transforming the area to a sports tourism destination and the vision of the association is to create a school of Ancient Greek sports in the area which will host people who are athletes interested in sports and culture.

However, in order for the area to be able to host and promote sports tourism, investments and appropriate management will be needed.

5. Conclusions and suggestions for further research

Aiming at the fulfillment of the present research, in this chapter the main results of the qualitative and quantitative research that affect the development of alternative tourism forms in the area of Nemea are analyzed, while at the same time suggestions are made for further research.

5.1 Analysis of the results of the qualitative and quantitative research

As it was mentioned in the previous unit, most of the visitors in the area of Nemea that responded to the questionnaire are between 24 and 35 years old which means that it is a choice for young people. The fact that the main source of information for the area are friends and family, as mentioned by the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire (62,2%), points out the need for a strategic plan for the promotion and management of the area, which was something that was stressed out by the entrepreneurs that took part in the interviews, Mr Paraskeuopoulos and Mr Vlachos. As Mr Sofos also pointed out the promotion of the area is mainly based on the visitors who advertise the place to their acquaintances, so it is urgent for the better advertisement of the area to develop a present profile online.

Another significant finding from the qualitative research was the fact that most of the respondents had as main purpose of their visit to Nemea the visit to friends and family, neglecting the other activities that the area has to offer. That fact combined with the fact that the visitors assessed the hospitality of Nemea as average (74%), shows that the area needs improvement in its infrastructure, something that

was also admitted by the President of the City Council, Mr Darsinos who also stated that the infrastructure and the strategic plan of the area has been neglected for years and they have fallen a little behind in terms of organization. After all, the visitors speak for themselves when they claim that they are somewhat likely to visit the area again in high percentage (39,3%) which means that they were not that pleased with their visit in the area.

The majority of the visitors of Nemea who answered the questionnaire claimed also that the place covered somewhat their needs (68%) and that the quality of the tourism product is neither good nor bad (72%) which questions the quality of the services provided in Nemea, and as Mr Sofos, the owner of the restaurant in the area claimed, it is a matter of coordination and cooperation between the entrepreneurs and the local authorities. Moreover, based on what Mr Darsinos also pointed out, the area has fallen a little behind in terms of tourism development so this could explain the neutral reactions of the visitors but also indicate the action that needs to be taken immediately in order for the area to acquire a better image and respond to the needs of the visitors.

However, the fact that most of the participants in the questionnaire found the area of Nemea a very accessible destination (39,3%) should be taken into account for the necessary actions to be taken so as to take advantage of the position and create a touristic destination that could act as a city break destination or a weekend vacation. The strategic position of Nemea was a key to the responses of all the interviewees who recognized the accessibility of the area and stated that this is a perk that should be made good use of.

The positive thing is that most of the participants in the survey would visit the area again (38,7%) which means that the visitors would like to find out the changes that the area would have to offer in the future. Also, the visitors were impressed by the landscape which shows that the natural beauty of the area could make it a competitive destination on its own even if many of them were also impressed by the other activities that the area has to offer in terms of the alternative tourism forms, such as the monuments, the sports manifestations and the gastronomy. This also highlights the potential that the area has and declares that there are many ways for the area to be positively exploited in terms of tourism. Mrs Nikitakou, the President of the museum of Ancient Nemea supported that the area could combine different forms of tourism because of the potential that it has and more specifically, she

stressed out the co-existence of the archaeological sites with the vineyards something that on its own makes the visitor willing to explore both touristic activities.

In terms of sustainability, the visitors (40,5%) claimed that Nemea is not that much of a sustainable tourism destination even though the majority of them (43,2%) believe that the area has the potential to become more sustainable. This can be confirmed by what Mr Paraskeuopoulos said. He explained the ways through which the vineyards can become more friendly to the environment, how the local people can get involved directly and indirectly in the production of wine and the benefits that the production of wine has for the local community. Mr Darsinos also supported that the area could further evolve to a sustainable tourism destination as he pointed out the action that is being taken in order to make the area more friendly to the environment through biological waste treatment and Mr Sofos was in favor of that scenario for his services as a restaurant with composting of the unnecessary food.

Significant is the fact that the organization of the city impressed the visitors the least (5,4%); something that sets the need for action from the part of the municipality as a priority for the improvement of the image of the area. This need was also supported by the majority of the interviewees who stated that the municipality should have a more active role in order to promote the area and the products that it has to offer and try to highlight all the aspects of tourism that can be offered besides wine tourism. As the President of the local council mentioned, the strategic plan for the management and the promotion of the area is already processed and will be reinforced in the near future.

5.2 Suggestions

5.3 Suggestions for further future research

The present thesis assignment focused on the defining of the area of Nemea as a tourism destination, the potential to become more sustainable and the existing forms of tourism that could be further developed in order to become more attractive.

More specifically the research focused on

- the identification of existing bibliography regarding sustainable tourism and rural tourism both globally and nationally

- the analysis of the tourism product in the area of Nemea and the existing tourism development
- the defining of the sources of information that will make the area an attractive tourism destination
- the defining of the factors that will contribute to the further tourism development of the area.

The results of the research could be the starting point in order to differentiate the offering tourism product in a way that corresponds to the contemporary consumers' needs. However future research could focus on the detailed role of those engaged with the alternative forms of tourism and the control on the operation of the relating tourism facilities or even the factors that deter the potential visitors to choose the destination for alternative tourism.

Further research along with the present findings could be the means in order to make Nemea the major tourism destination capable of attracting visitors both at a national and international level.

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