

OLIVE TREE CIVILISATION & TOURISM

Olive Tourism Practice in Italy



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¹ Gaildrau, Jules. "Image: Olive Harvesting." *L'Illustration Journal Universel*, Paris, 1857.

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Introduction

Olive trees represent everything that roots us, anchors us, identifies us and locates us in this world - whether it be belonging to a family, a community, a tribe, a nation, a religion or, most of all, a place called home. (...). You can be a rich person alone. You can be a smart person alone. But you cannot be a complete person alone. For that you must be part of, and rooted in, an olive grove. (Friedman 2000: 31)

Tourism has rapidly developed throughout the world and generated a turnover of approximately 6,500 billion euro (accounting for 10% of global GDP) and its employment has directly covered around 108 million jobs (accounting for 5% of global employment) in 2015. The international growth is estimated to increase upwardly 4% per year on average until 2030 (MiBACT 2017). Each country and every region has its own strengths and typical features contributing to this growing development of the tourism sector. The promotion of tourism is usually based on these features. Located in the centre of the Mediterranean region, Italy is a country with numerous potentials for tourism development. In 2015, tourism contributed 171 billion euro to the Italian economy, accounting for up to 11.8% of GDP and covering 12.8% of the national employment (MiBACT 2017). According to data from the World Tourism Organization (WTO), Italy was host to 52.4 million international tourists in 2016 and was the fifth most visited country in the world.²

Travelers have multiple reasons to visit or spend their holidays in Italy; not only because of the reputation of the country, but also because of its history, culture, art, architecture, cuisine, fashion as well as the beautiful beaches, islands and landscapes. Italy owns the most UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the world with 54 entries and is the birthplace of the Roman Empire and of the Renaissance.^{3,4} Historically, the Italian peninsula is known as the indispensable destination

² UNWTO World Tourism Organization. "Tourism Highlight." 2017. www2.unwto.org/ca/node/49151. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

³ UNESCO. World Heritage Convention. "Italy: Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List." whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/it. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

⁴ Italian History 101. "The Roman Empire, Italian Renaissance, Fighting over Italy." www.italy101.com/page/italian-history. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

of the Grand Tour in the 17-18th century, mostly for upper-class intellectuals. These Grand Tourists were attracted by the Italian cities and culture, the picturesque landscapes and the warm weather.⁵ Nowadays, while travelling to Italy, visitors might think of expressions, such as “La dolce vita” (the sweet life) or “Dolce far niente” (the sweetness of doing nothing), which were inspired in world-famous movies, such as *La dolce vita* (1960) and *Eat Pray Love* (2010). Italy has appeared as a fascinating tourist destination in many other popular movies since the 1950s. It can be a peaceful and immense countryside of Verona in *Letters to Juliet* (2010); romantic Italy and a beautiful Venice via *Only You* (1994) and *The Tourist* (2010); vibrant Florence and a gorgeous Tuscan countryside in *A Room With a View* (1985) and *Under The Tuscan Sun* (2003); ancient and charming Rome with its ruins, vibrant life and sophisticated gastronomy via *Roman Holiday* (1953) and *Eat Pray Love* (2010); and romantic and picturesque sea and islands of Sicily and Naples in *It Started in Naples* (1960) and *Il Postino* (1994).⁶

Italy is the central point of the olive production in the Mediterranean area because of its history and favourable environmental conditions. It is the second largest olive oil producer in the European Union (EU) and in the world after Spain, and accounts for approximately one-quarter of the EU-28 olive acreage (Bettini 2017). Olive production has started in Italy since the VIII–VII century BC.⁷ The olive tree is considered as one of the oldest cultivated trees in the world and wild olive trees have existed for millions of years. Olive trees and olive oil (Liquid Gold) have a close relation and are the essence of history, culture, cuisine, landscapes, cultivating and producing habits, and daily lives of people living in the Mediterranean region, especially in Italy (Clodoveo et al. 2014).⁸ Being considered as a “mythical and sacred tree” and having important influences on every aspect of the Mediterranean and Italian society, the olive tree creates a “specific ancient civilisation” called the “olive tree civilisation” or the “olive cultural heritage.”⁹ The olive tree civilisation represents the important relationship between the olive tree and human civilisation of

⁵ University of Oregon. “18th Century Rome and the Grand Tour.” 2008. vasi.uoregon.edu/grandtour.html. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

⁶ Ciprietti, Elena. “10 of the best movies on Italy.” *Walks of Italy*, 16 Jan. 2014. www.walksofitaly.com/blog/all-around-italy/movies-on-italy. Accessed 3 August 2018.

⁷ FAO. “Importance of olive-oil production in Italy.” fao.org/tempref/docrep/fao/009/A0007E/A0007e01.pdf. Accessed 4 Aug. 2018.

⁸ Council of Europe. “Routes of the Olive Tree.” coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-the-olive-tree. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

⁹ Council of Europe. “Routes of the Olive Tree.” coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-the-olive-tree. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

Mediterranean countries in general and of Italy in particular.¹⁰ In this context, civilisation means the society, culture, and way of life of a particular area.¹¹ Particularly, the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” has been certified since 2005, which asserts the importance of the olive tree civilisation and its values. Here, the Routes of the Olive Tree spread along the olive tree civilisation, from Greece towards the Spanish Peninsula, including Italy. The traveller who follows these routes can experience the olive tree civilisation with its immense olive groves and landscapes, its pure fresh extra-virgin olive oil, its sophisticated cuisine, and its rich culture and traditions. Besides, many other activities are also organized, such as exhibitions, concerts and product tasting events along these routes.¹²

Although Italian tourism can claim a solid position on the world’s tourism map, several research studies showed that the Italian tourism is gradually losing its leading position.¹³ According to Romano and Natilli (2009), Italy lacks a global promotion for its tourism products, especially during this crucial period when the nature of tourism demand changed globally, due to the abolishment of the Ministry of Tourism in 1993. This shortcoming became a weak point of the Italian tourism with the far more limited capacity in comparison to Spain and France. Furthermore, the globalization and many emerging tourist attractions attract a large number of tourists to other countries and regions, such as South-East Asia, South Africa, etc. In order to retain its competitiveness, Italy might need to renew and diversify its tourism products by taking advantage of its world's second-largest olive producer position. Moreover, the olive tree civilisation or the olive cultural heritage and its valuable assets have a solid potential for the development of olive tourism and sustainable tourism of Italy. This civilisation is the pride of not only the Mediterranean people in general but also the Italian in particular and might need to be preserved and promoted. Loumou & Giourga (2003) pointed out the important influences of the olive oil culture on the landscapes, architecture and cultural characteristics of people in olive cultivating regions (cited in

¹⁰ Council of Europe. “Routes of the Olive Tree.” coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-the-olive-tree. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

¹¹ English Oxford Living Dictionaries. “Civilization.” en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/civilization. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

¹² Council of Europe. “Routes of the Olive Tree.” coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-the-olive-tree. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

¹³ Ministry for Regional Affairs, Tourism and Sport. “Tourism Italia 2020. Leadership, Work, South.” *Strategic Plan for the Development of Tourism in Italy*, Rome, 18 Jan. 2013.

Campón-Cerro et al. 2014). According to Campón-Cerro et al. (2014), the olive cultural heritage is an important opportunity to diversify tourism products especially in Spain and Italy. Millán et al. (2010) also asserted that, the network of infrastructure in combination with the fascinating landscapes around the olive groves and the local gastronomy, is capable of becoming an important factor for the diversification of tourism in the these areas (cited in Campón-Cerro et al. 2014).

Much literature has written about olive trees and their important influences on Italian people, culture, history and cuisine. However, no comprehensive research have been conducted on Italian contemporary olive tourism practices and revolving issues, including popular olive tourism activities promoted on websites in English language, and reflections of tourists on olive tourism activities in Italy. More importantly, the practice of tourism based on the olive cultural heritage firmly contributes to the sustainable tourism development, which goes along with common contemporary tourism trends. Therefore, analyses related to the contemporary olive tourism practice in Italy and its effectiveness bring practical meanings. This thesis might support Italian authorities, tour operators, travel companies and academics to have a comprehensive view of strengths and weaknesses and several recommendations to develop olive tourism and to find solutions for existing problems. Other countries with similar olive producing conditions and socio-cultural characteristics can also learn from Italy's experiences. This thesis also aims to contribute to fill the gap in literature of this topic and can be a starting point for further research in the future.

The results of this study are expected to address an important question “How has the olive tourism practice in Italy been promoted on websites in English language to international tourists in 2017 - 2018?” and its sub-questions, including:

1. What is the relation between heritage preservation and tourism development? How has the olive cultural heritage been preserved in Italy?
2. What kind of olive tourism related activities are offered in Italy, based on websites that are available in English, in 2017 - 2018? Which groups of promoters participate in the olive tourism practice in Italy? What are the types, average length and price of each type of tours offered on those websites? Which places in Italy are the strongest and weakest areas of olive tourism promotion?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the olive tourism practice in Italy? What are the reflections of tourists on the Italian olive tourism activities? What is the relation

between the olive tourism practice and the development of sustainable tourism in Mediterranean countries and in Italy? What are the possible solutions for existing challenges to strengthen the olive tourism practice in Italy?

This thesis includes three chapters and each of them gives a comprehensive understanding of the different important aspects related to the above mentioned research questions. The first chapter consists of three parts. The first part is the literature review of olive tourism and its relevant discussions in the world and in Italy. Subsequently, the theoretical framework part provides definitions, analyses, and several discussions of the important concepts used throughout this thesis and several related issues, including: Heritage and Cultural Heritage, Olive Heritage, Olive Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Promotion - Digital Advertising and Publicity, Tourism Promotion, Heritage Preservation and Conservation. The third part situates this research in the context of the olive heritage preservation in Italy and its origins, stresses the important relation between heritage preservation and tourism development, and analyses the ways that the olive heritage has been preserved and promoted in Italy.

The second chapter includes three main parts. In the first part, explanations and reflections on the primary sources and methodology of this chapter are provided. The second part presents the general findings and analyses of the division of the websites, the types, average length and price of each type of tours offered on the researched websites, the strongest and weakest places in Italy in olive tourism promotion, and the actual people who promote olive tourism activities in Italy. The third part gives a comprehensive overview and analyses about tourism activities related to the olive heritage in Italy in 2017 – 2018, which were promoted on websites in English language, and comparison with Spanish olive tourism activities in 2011. In this chapter, due to the growing importance of digital promotion (including digital advertising and publicity), especially websites, an analysis was conducted to analyse 124 entries belonging to 124 different websites related to olive tourism activities in Italy based on preliminary criteria. This analysis can eventually address the main research question and the third sub-question.

Finally, chapter 3 consists of three parts. The first part summarizes and discusses the interactive relation between the olive tourism practice and the development of sustainable tourism in Mediterranean countries and in Italy. The second part clarifies the strengths and weaknesses in the development of olive tourism in combination with sustainable tourism in Italy general, and

Puglia and Sicily in particular. More importantly, research was conducted, based on 23 review pages belonging to the TripAdvisor website to have an overview of how tourists perceive and reflect on the Italian olive tourism activities, especially international tourists. Finally, the last part gives several solutions for the challenges and recommendations for sustainable tourism development based on olive tourism in Italy and its regions of Puglia and Sicily.

CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK. THE OLIVE HERITAGE PRESERVATION & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ITALY

This chapter consists of three parts: Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, and the Olive Heritage Preservation and its Potentials in Tourism Development in Italy. This is an important chapter, which provides an understanding of concepts, relevant issues and the current context revolving around the research topic. Here, the literature review part offers an overview of available literature, including previous studies related to olive tourism and the olive heritage in the world and in Italy. In the theoretical framework part, the most important concepts and related issues in this thesis are defined and analysed. The final part offers detailed analyses of the relation between heritage preservation and tourism development, and the state of the olive heritage preservation in Italy and its potential in the olive tourism development.

I. Literature Review: Olive Tourism

By this moment, there has not been much scientific research on olive tourism, neither in the world in general, nor in Italy in particular. In 2010 and 2013, Alonso and Northcote (2010) and Murgado (2013) all agreed that olive tourism was still in the early stages of development. At those times, they both claimed that scientific research dealing with the olive tourism concept was almost non-existent.

In other olive cultivating countries in the world, several studies related to olive tourism have been conducted. In Western Australia, Alonso and Northcote (2010) stated that an olive is a cultural feature and its impacts on tourism is a natural process. Their research results indicate that the participation in olive tourism and hospitality of 23 small olive-growing operations in the region can bring significant benefits to visitors travelling to rural areas. This can become a complementary and alternative solution to other tourism activities. However, in order to exploit this potential to develop tourism in timely, strong and sustainable ways, olive growers rely heavily on the cooperation, support and promotion from different related parties. This development can also better identify the regional culinary tradition and identity, and minimize the competitive threats from outside (Alonso and Northcote 2010). In Europe, Campón-Cerro et al. (2014) highlighted the enormous potential for the tourism development of olive oil, especially in the rural areas. They

also proposed a tourism management model that can be applied to the olive groves areas of southern Europe.

According to contemporary study, Spain is the largest olive cultivating country and most research related to olive tourism in the world are focused on it. In 2013, Murgado took interviews with gastronomic and olive oil tourism experts. Their answers provided a series of suggestions to improve the olive tourism products and support the creation of other tourism related products. In another study, Salvo and his colleagues concluded that even though Spain is one of the leading countries in olive production and the quality of olive oil, its government has not effectively made use of this potential for the development of tourism and economy (Salvo et al. 2013). Three years later, López-Guzmán et al. (2016) analysed different aspects of tourists travelling to destinations to learn about the production of olive oil, and to understand the influence of olive oil in tourism. The study revealed several important assessments of visitors on this agricultural activity, their satisfaction of this travel experience, and their relationship with rural activities and culture. In the next year, Torre et al. (2017) analysed the effective development strategies for olive tourism in Andalusia (Southern Spain). The research was based on the companies in the olive-oil culinary route and their designations of origin to assess their involvement degree in the development of olive-oil tourism products. In 2018, Millán and her team conducted a random survey, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, and used the ARIMA (autoregressive integrated moving average) model. The findings indicated that the olive trees have favourable advantages to attract businesses and local authorities to invest in promoting and developing their products. Additionally, olive tourism is both an alternative and complementation to the agricultural income and job creation (Millán et al. 2018).

In Italy, not many studies have been done about the olive tree civilisation, the olive heritage and olive tourism. Trunfio et al. (2006) pointed out that besides favorable conditions, such as coastal location and diverse cultural products, alternative natural resources and culinary influence the choices of foreign tourists traveling to Southern Italy. This analysis supports the author to firmly assert the potentials of the available alternative assets to renew and diversify the tourism products to meet the increasing demands of visitors to Italy. Salvo et al. (2013) claimed that Italy is one of the major olive oil producers in the world with excellent quality. The study also revealed that pure olive oil is a great potential for the development of new tourism practices, such as culinary

tourism. Notably, this is the first study comparing the strategies to develop and promote pure olive oil in Italy and Spain, and to examine its possible links with local tourism development.

Overall, the studies above displayed the enormous potentials and benefits of olive tourism to the world tourism industry in general and Italian tourism industry in particular. They are the key clues for the author to find the answers to the research questions. Significantly, because of the lack of literature related to olive tourism in the world and in Italy, it is crucial to conduct more research studies about this topic. Therefore, the author hopes this thesis would partly contribute to fulfill this missing field of literature.

II. Theoretical framework

This part discussed the key concepts and related issues, which are used throughout the thesis. They create an important foundation to understand the context of the research topic and the analyses of the whole thesis. The concepts and issues include: Heritage and Cultural Heritage, Olive (Cultural) Heritage, Olive Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Promotion, the definition of Tourism Promotion in general, and a critical analysis and overview of tourism promotion in the Italian context, and the definitions of Heritage Preservation and Conservation.

1. Heritage – Cultural Heritage

Depending on the context, the term “heritage” is defined differently. Literally, “heritage” is the “features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, which come from the past and are still important.”¹⁴ Graham et al. (2016) considered heritage as “the provision of goods and services that comes from or relates to the past in some ways; or a feeling of generalized quality, continuity or simply familiarity and well-being.” For UNESCO, the concept of “heritage” is specifically referred to “cultural heritage,” which is “the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.”¹⁵

Regardless of how it is defined, heritage, especially cultural heritage, plays a significant role in society and the tourism industry. While natural resources have been exploited for tourism development for a long time now, heritage tourism has become one of the new trends, and is still

¹⁴ Cambridge Dictionary. “Heritage.” dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/heritage. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

¹⁵ UNESCO. “Cultural Heritage definition.” en.unesco.org/. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

an open and promising market. According to Orbasli and Woodward (2009), cultural heritage is “the inheritance of humankind.” Park (2014) also affirmed the importance of heritage for not only tourism but also the identification of cultural identity and ethnicity. It is engaged in a considerable part of our everyday experiences. For example, 2018 is the European Year of Cultural Heritage, which shows the importance of cultural heritage.¹⁶ The European Commission’s Cultural Heritage Report (2017) stated that cultural heritage not only plays an important role in developing economy and tourism, and providing employment, but also enriches the lives of the people, and contributes to build a better and more cohesive society. The report also shows that 84-91% of 1000 candidates throughout all the European countries consider cultural heritage as important to themselves, their community, region, country and the European Union as a whole (European Commission 2017).

2. Olive Heritage

In general Mediterranean countries, including Italy, “Olive Heritage” has been created, developed and preserved. It can be said that the olive heritage belongs to the cultural heritage. Olives and olive oil are highly significant to almost all aspects of inhabitants' daily life. Olives treasure both tangible and intangible values. Tangible values include landscapes and olive farms, museums, oil mills, olive specialty shops, fairs and popular festivals. On the contrary, intangible values encompass the historical, spiritual, cultural, social and national-identity values of olive trees and the olive oil industry in the Mediterranean countries and Italy. There have been many authors asserting the aforementioned ideas in their works. According to Luengo (2011), the landscape of the olive grove is “a paradigmatic cultural landscape, which perfectly integrates the tangible and intangible” (Luengo 2011). Particularly, he stated that because olive groves are an excellent witness to the cultivation history, customs, habits, living style and environment throughout several millennia of the Greco-Roman culture, which was born in the Mediterranean. These olive cultivation techniques and traditions have been preserved until today in many regions. He also affirmed the important intangible heritage values of the olive tree as a source of wealth, trade, and exchange. Especially, the olive tree has been a symbol of civilisation, peace and reconciliation and is further reflected in the logo of the United Nations Organization with the meaning of “the world between the branches of olive tree of peace” (Luengo 2011). Salvo et al. (2013) also stated that

¹⁶ Europa. “The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.” europa.eu/cultural-heritage/about. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

olive cultivation and extra virgin olive oil are an indispensable part of social capital, indigenous culture and identity. Additionally, Ruiz Guerra considered olive oil as “a product with great presence in the historical becoming of a particular geographical area (the Mediterranean) since the tertiary era.” Olive oil is also one of the key ingredients of the Mediterranean Diet, which was nominated by UNESCO as an Immaterial Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010. Besides, the cultural importance of olive oil is represented in many works, such as archeological evidences, literary, pictorial, and plastic or craft of many artists over the centuries.¹⁷

More importantly, as mentioned in previous part, the “Routes of the Olive Tree” was officially established in 2005, with a network of 18 member countries, including Italy. It was certified as a “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” and formally awarded the title of “Major European Cultural Route” in 2005.¹⁸ Previously, in 2003, UNESCO nominated the “Olive Tree Routes” as the “2nd World Cultural Itinerary” (Luengo 2011). Briedehhann and Wickens (2003) defined routes as “the creation of a cluster of activities and attractions to encourage cooperation between different areas and serve as a vehicle to stimulate economic development through tourism” (cited in Murgado 2013). This definition demonstrates the importance of olive routes in cooperation and boosting economic development among member countries and regions belonging to the network. Moreover, according to the Council of Europe, olive trees have profound influences on human civilisation and contribute to the rich and dynamic cultural heritage associated with the daily habits of people living in the Mediterranean region. The influential areas focus on cuisine with the important influences of olive oil.¹⁹

3. Olive Tourism

According to Hjalager and Richards (2001), olive tourism originated from the enlargement of the Law No. 268/1999 where the wine tourism was extended to make use of the other high quality regional products, especially olive oil, in tourism development. The exploitation of the olive tree civilisation in tourism is generalized into a kind of tourism called by different terms, such as “olive

¹⁷ Ruiz Guerra, Ignacio. “Olive oil as a tourist resource: conceptual framing.” *Olivae*, International Olive Council (COI), 1 Jun. 2017. magazine.6tour.com/en/2017/06/turismo-dell-olio/. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018

¹⁸ Council of Europe. “Routes of the Olive Tree.” coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-the-olive-tree. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

¹⁹ Council of Europe. “Routes of the Olive Tree.” coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-the-olive-tree. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

tourism,” “olive oil tourism,” “olive-based agritourism,” “oleotourism” and “olive oil based tourism.” Murgado (2013) defined that “Oleotourism is a set of activities that revolve around oil.” These activities include visiting olive groves and mills, harvesting, tasting olive oil and typical local dishes whose main ingredients are olive products, etc. Besides, olive oil tourism also includes cultural activities related to nature, where visitors can immerse themselves in the indigenous environment and culture (Murgado 2013).

4. Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable development is a fairly recent phenomenon which has its origins in Europe and America since the 19th century, with the advent of agencies and legislation of laws to protect valuable natural and cultural resources (Park 2014: 153). Sustainable tourism is an important element in the whole picture of sustainable development in general. Many authors agreed that “sustainable tourism seeks to meet three overarching goals that are: to improve the quality of life for host communities; to achieve visitor satisfaction; and to protect natural resources in destination countries” (Ahn et al. 2002, Hunter and Green 1995, cited in Mbaiwa and Stronza 2009), (Nasser 2003, cited in Park 2014). Crouch and Ritchie considered that the definition of Swarbrooke (1999: 13) is the most complete one: sustainable tourism is “tourism that is “economically viable, but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment, and the social fabric of the host community” (cited in Crouch and Ritchie 2003). According to the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism is “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, and the environment and host communities.”²⁰ In general, sustainable tourism consists of three dimensions, which are the physical environment, economic viability, and social justice and equity. According to the United Nations Environment Program and the World Tourism Organization (2005), there are twelve aims for sustainable tourism development which are: 1. Economic viability, 2. Local prosperity, 3. Employment quality, 4. Social equity, 5. Visitor fulfilment, 6. Local control, 7. Community well-being, 8. Cultural richness, 9. Physical integrity, 10. Biological diversity, 11. Resource efficiency, 12. Environmental purity.

²⁰ World Tourism Organization. “Sustainable Development of Tourism: Definition.” sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5. Accessed 2 Aug. 2018.

5. Promotion - Digital Advertising and Publicity

The term “promotion” is defined as “the advancement of a product, idea, or point of view through publicity and/or advertising.”²¹ Promotion introduces products, services, ideas and/or viewpoints to potential customers and stimulates their demands through advertising and/or publicity.²² Many people might be confused by the differences between the concepts of “promotion” and “marketing,” as these terms are often used interchangeably.²³ However, it should be noted that they can be significantly different. Marketing means “the management process through which goods and services move from concept to the customer. It includes the coordination of four elements called the 4 P's of marketing, including product, price, place, and promotional strategy.”²⁴ Therefore, promotion is only a part in four main components of marketing.

According to Carol White, promotion consists of two types. Paid promotion uses advertising to tell the stories of the products.²⁵ According to *The Economic Times*, advertising appears anywhere, and sometimes people do not even notice it. It is used in every possible media to convey messages, for example through television, print (newspapers, magazines, journals, etc.), radio, press, internet, websites, direct selling, hoardings, mailers, contests, sponsorships, posters, clothes, events, colours, sounds, visuals and even people (endorsements).²⁶ Publicity is another type of promotion, which is demonstrated via print, broadcast, or internet.²⁷ In general, digital advertising and publicity indicate the promotion, which is digitally displayed. Digital advertising and publicity

²¹ Business Dictionary. “Promotion.” www.businessdictionary.com/definition/promotion.html. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

²² Free Management Library. “Basic Definitions: Advertising, Marketing, Promotion, Public Relations and Publicity, and Sales.” managementhelp.org/marketing/advertising/defined.htm. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

²³ Free Management Library. “Basic Definitions: Advertising, Marketing, Promotion, Public Relations and Publicity, and Sales.” managementhelp.org/marketing/advertising/defined.htm. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

²⁴ Business Dictionary. “Marketing.” www.businessdictionary.com/definition/promotion.html. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

²⁵ White, Carol. “What is the difference between marketing and promotion?” *Carol White: marketing maven*. www.carolwhitemarketing.com/what-is-the-difference-between-marketing-and-promotion. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

²⁶ The Economic Times. “Definition of Advertising.” economictimes.indiatimes.com/definition/advertising. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

²⁷ White, Carol. “What is the difference between marketing and promotion?” www.carolwhitemarketing.com/what-is-the-difference-between-marketing-and-promotion. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

exist on multiple platforms, which are both on online and offline devices, such as on the Internet, smart phone and hand-held media devices, and even on automobiles and billboards, etc.²⁸

6. Tourism Promotion in General and in Italy. Its Challenges and Several Solutions

In the tourism context, promotion is selling “a place and all the things it has to offer.”²⁹ According to Baldemoro, tourism promotion is “stimulating sales through the dissemination of information. It means trying to encourage actual and potential customers to travel.”³⁰ He also mentioned Salah Wahab who identified that tourism promotion aims at “making the tourist product widely known, making it attractive, and making the messages attractive without being dishonest.”³¹ Baldemoro and Buhalis (2000) both asserted that tourism promotion is also a major part of tourism marketing activities using communication to make potential customers and stakeholders aware of and purchase tourist products.³²

Tourism promotion has increasingly required close cooperation and is more and more competitive. Crouch (1994) pointed out that although many countries had significantly invested in tourism promotion, the results were still unstable. In addition, Buhalis (2000) also agreed that destination marketing becomes extremely competitive, difficult and complex all over the world. Here, the destination marketing supports the achievement of tourism policy, optimises tourism impacts and maximises benefits of tourism for the region. He explained that tourists want to experience the whole region, but they often overlook that a large number of tourism products and services are produced individually (Buhalis 2000). In addition, Angeloni (2013) confirmed that the tourism industry today is more complex than in the past because globalization has increased

²⁸ Chron. “Examples of Digital Advertising.” 29 Jun. 2018. smallbusiness.chron.com/examples-digital-advertising-10662.html. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

²⁹ Chron. “Tourism Promotion and Marketing.” 30. Jun. 2018. smallbusiness.chron.com/tourism-promotion-marketing-57157.html. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

³⁰ Baldemoro, Jerome. “Tourism Promotion.” Ateneo de Naga University, 19 Nov. 2013. www.slideshare.net/JHBlue/tourism-promotion-28432196. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

³¹ Baldemoro, Jerome. “Tourism Promotion.” Ateneo de Naga University, 19 Nov. 2013. www.slideshare.net/JHBlue/tourism-promotion-28432196. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

³² Baldemoro, Jerome. “Tourism Promotion.” Ateneo de Naga University, 19 Nov. 2013. www.slideshare.net/JHBlue/tourism-promotion-28432196. Accessed 12 Aug. 2018.

competitiveness on the supply side and has provided more information and better understanding on the demand side.

Italy has also encountered many difficulties in tourism development due to the impact of globalization with its strong competition, and the lack of close cooperation among the stakeholders. Formica and Uysal (1996) and Angeloni (2013) agreed that although the Italian tourism still plays an important role in the Italian economy, recent data shows that Italy has gradually lost its competitiveness in attracting international visitors and has fallen behind its neighbouring countries, such as France and Spain since 1987, in comparison to its leading position in the 1980s. Angeloni also pointed out in her study in 2012 that this was due to the lack of synchronous cooperation among different bodies of destinations, among public and private stakeholders, especially among the central government and local authorities (Angeloni 2012: 113, cited in Angeloni 2013). Therefore, to deal with the challenges and strengthen its competition in regional and international markets, and to take back its leading position, Italy issued the first official document called the National Strategic Plan in 2013 (Angeloni 2013).

In general, to solve the challenges and effectively promote tourism, many authors offered different solutions. In the research on among 1,100 respondents from all over the world, Govers et al. (2007) concluded that tourism promotion is dependent on numerous external factors. In addition, Buhalis (2000) expressed that destination promotion needs a tight collaboration between all local authorities and suppliers. He also stated that a wide range of methods is used in promotional campaigns, including advertising on television, radio, and press. Furthermore, using poster campaigns and annually participating in national and international travel fairs are also effective options to promote tourism (Buhalis 2000). In Italy, Web 2.0 and word of mouth marketing generate many inspiring opportunities and values in tourism promotion (McCarthy et al. 2010). Klimová also asserted Internet as an important tool in the Italian tourism promotion. It functions as information providers like guidebooks and as advertising tools like brochures and leaflets. Additionally, according to the Italian Strategic Plan for Tourism 2017 - 2022, in the web marketing section, the digital tools must be prioritized in tourism marketing approach to promote the brand and local areas and to market shared products (MiBACT 2017). Furthermore, online sources, especially websites, can be considered as the most important means in the tourism promotion and practice for both the demand and supply side. According to the Italian Strategic Plan for Tourism 2017 – 2022, in the total of people browsing the web, up to 91% have booked

online at least one product or service in 2015 and have their holidays planned based on the primary source on the internet, 58% use online sources to look up activities and services during their trips (or at the consumption stage) (MiBACT 2017).

7. Heritage Preservation and Conservation

According to Viñas (2005), preservation means “to keep something as it is, without changing it in any way: retaining its shape, status, ownership, use, etc.” This definition of preservation can be interpreted as an activity that avoids the change of something over time. Both Guillemard (1992) and Viñas (2005) expressed that preservation “has the goal of extending the life expectancy of cultural heritage” (cited in Viñas 2005). On the other hand, Orbasli and Woodward (2009) defined conservation as “the process of understanding, safeguarding and, where necessary, maintaining, repairing, restoring, and adapting historic property to preserve its cultural significance. Conservation is the sustainable management of change, not simply an architecture deliberation but also an economic and social concern” (Orbasli and Woodward 2009: 316). The meanings of the “conservation” and “preservation” are diverse and depends on many factors, such as contexts, languages and cultures. In some cases, conservation has a broader and more comprehensive meaning than preservation. However, in most of cases, they are used interchangeably (Park 2014: 42).

III. The Olive Heritage Preservation & Olive Tourism Development in Italy

This part provides an overview of the important roles of heritage preservation and a historical overview of heritage preservation of Italy. Next, a detailed analysis gives an understanding of the close relation between heritage preservation and tourism development. Subsequently, the last section provides a closer look at the ways in which Italy preserves and develops its olive cultural heritage, and answers the question of whether the Italian olive heritage preservation could be a strength to support the development of olive tourism in Italy.

1. The origin of Heritage Preservation in Italy

Due to the significance of heritage, its preservation should be paid due attention. Park (2014) asserted that heritage preservation is crucial as a driving force in tourism development. She also pointed out that heritage preservation in Europe originated from the need to preserve and protect important art works and historic monuments from the influences of the strong development of the Grand Tour (Park 2014: 44).

In Italy, heritage preservation began in the 19th century, starting from the monument restoration. The government legislation was issued with the initial purpose of protecting the archaeological and artistic heritage from thefts in churches and palaces. Then, the government gradually took the responsibility of the monuments' maintenance, and later the historical urban centres and the natural environment, including landscapes were protected. The two main laws related to the preservation of the built heritage and landscape were passed by the Fascist government in 1939 (Pickard 2001: 184). Since 1993, Italy heritage management has become increasingly chaotic. The conclusive part of this section gives a clear answer to the question of whether this chaotic situation affects the olive heritage preservation of this country.

2. The relation between heritage preservation and tourism development

The relation between heritage preservation and tourism development can be divided into three categories that are opposite, parallel and complementary. Budowski (1976) also classified this relation into three categories which are conflict (where tourism is detrimental to the local environment), coexistence (where tourism has no impact on the area in which it operates), and symbiosis (where preservation values are enhanced by tourism) (cited in Lindsay et al. 2008: 730). Firstly, in terms of both theory and practice, there are cases where tourism development and heritage preservation are against each other. That is because, according to Park (2014), naturally, the primary purpose of heritage organizations is to protect and preserve historic settings and assets, while tourism is commercialized, and its main purpose is to bring back economic benefits (Park 2014: 48). Li (2003) and Park (2014) affirmed that the nature of heritage is the sustainability, the integrity of history and the continuity of culture, while the nature of tourism is a form of modern development and consumption. Park (2014) also argued that, especially in the contemporary tourism, heritage tourism is increasingly popular, making the relationship between tourism development and heritage preservation more complicated.

Secondly, despite the contrast, tourism development and heritage preservation not only exist in paralleling but also interacting, supporting and complementing relationship. Because of its bringing income, tourism is a great financial source to support heritage preservation (Orbasli and Woodward 2009, cited in Park 2014: 43). Tourism development is seen as a major motivation to attract investment to heritage sites, it also helps heritage be better preserved. However, chasing after the tourists' demands, tourism companies may decide what to be protected and how it is protected (Orbasli and Woodward 2009: 323-324). This fact can lead to both positive and negative

effects. A certainly positive effect is the number of heritages, which can in theory be better protected. In contrast, there might be negative consequences in heritage preservation, such as having forgotten, damaged or destroyed heritage. Orbasli and Woodward (2009), and Park (2014) stated that tourism can open up an opportunity for heritage preservation. The reasons are that tourism helps raise the awareness about the values of heritage, and advocates the support from the community for the heritage preservation (Park 2014: 43). This awareness can turn into the need or demand of preserving heritage. Vice versa, Orbasli and Woodward (2009) stressed that heritage preservation in the context of tourism can also create new identities (Orbasli and Woodward 2009: 327).

The relationship between tourism development and heritage preservation is complicated. If the development of tourism lacks the proper heritage preservation, the long-term sustainability of heritage can gradually be damaged and destroyed. On the contrary, focusing too much on preserving heritage will undermine its economic potential, particularly in relation to tourism development. Therefore, the organizers of tourism development and heritage preservation need to cooperate closely to create optimal strategies and keep balance between these two areas to ensure gaining the positive results of tourism development and heritage preservation.

3. Why and how the Olive Heritage is Preserved and Promoted in Italy

Due to the interactive relation between the olive heritage preservation and the olive tourism development, preserving olive heritage means not only protecting a special thousands-year heritage, but also, promoting and renewing tourism products to attract more tourists. Olive trees vary in species and can be easily planted, and good olive genes are well studied and preserved thanks to academic institutions and public associations. However, like other types of heritage, such as historic monuments and buildings, centuries-old olive trees can be vulnerable and subsequently lost. Therefore, it is important to preserve the olive heritage in general, especially ancient olive trees, to maintain the best living conditions for them, prevent illegal commercialization of old olive trees, and raise people's awareness of the important values of ancient olive trees and the olive heritage.

According to Salvo et al. (2013), in Italy, the development and promotion of olive oil and olive tourism depends on three main factors. The first factor includes the establishment of the network of companies, operating in "specific local contexts with the support of local public actors." The

second factor is “the creation of partnerships between public actors to trigger actions and support the local development.” The third factor consists of government agencies; trade associations (olive growers, oil-millers, etc...); research institutes (National Research Council, Institute for experimental olive growing, Universities); the groups of tasters; the National Association of Olive Oil City; and the roads of olive oil. Here, the first and second factors are considered as an important opportunity to promote olive oil and olive tourism as a whole (Salvo et al. 2013). Particularly, Hall et al. (1997) considered the first factor can create a mutual strategic vision in different local areas (cited in Salvo et al. 2013). Salvo et al. (2013) also stated that this shared vision significantly contributes to the effective cooperation based on identity and belonging. In addition, the third factor actually plays a multi-functional role in the olive oil sector.

Among these factors, the current study identifies the government agencies, the roads of olive oil, the National Association of Olive Oil City, and the group of tour operators, farmers, oil mills and olive oil factories, as four of the significant influential actors in the protection of the olive cultural heritage and the development of olive production, and its related tourism activities in Italy. First of all, the contribution of Italian government should be highly emphasized. Since this group has imposed the supportive legal system and policies which have created a favorable environment for the maintenance, preservation and development of olive cultivation and tourism. For example, the law “Save Borghi” was approved by the Italian Parliament, which benefits 175 Cities of Oil with its provision in supporting and enhancing the small Italian municipalities. In 2017, the government allowed to spend 10 million euro for the interventions related to land maintenance and environment protection. Remarkably, a considerable amount of the spending was reserved for the promotion of local products and tourism, the creation of tourist-cultural and enogastronomic (food and wine tourism) itineraries, and the production of brochures to promote extra-virgin olive oil. Enrico Lupi, the president of the National Association of the City of Oil, appreciates the support and the due attention from the Italian government to its most precious heritage.³³

Secondly, the roads of olive oil, being one of the key participators in the world’s biggest olive associations and networks, such as the International Olive Council ³⁴ and the Mediterranean Olive

³³ Associazione Nazionale Città dell’Olio. “There are 175 City Oil “saved” by the law on small towns.” 18 Oct. 2017. www.cittadellolio.it/news/sono-175-le-citta-dell-olio-salvate-dalle-legge-su/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

³⁴ Rete Città dell’Olio del Mediterraneo. www.recomed.eu/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

Oil Cities Network,³⁵ have opened up an invaluable co-operational opportunity to develop olive-related products, including olive tourism for Italy.³⁶ As mentioned before, Italy is one of 18 members in the “Routes of the Olive Tree,” belonging to the “olive tree civilisation,” which was nominated by the Council of Europe. This is a tremendous advantage for Italy to collaborate in developing olive tourism, which otherwise might be isolated and threatened by the current economic crisis.³⁷ To take advantage of this opportunity, creating a national road along the country is essential and useful for the second largest olive production country in the world. However, according to Salvo et al. (2013), the birth of the Oil Road in Italy, belonging to the Italian National Road, was only the extension of the Law no. 38 of 22.12.1999 called “Regulations on the Wine Roads in Umbria” after the success of the wine roads. Nevertheless, the law still aims to enhance quality products, especially olive oil. It has also brought positive results in many aspects like economy, environment, society and culture. In fact, the road is the voluntary non-profit public-private partnership, with the cooperation between numerous public bodies from the centre to local government and the private party represented by olive farms, mills and infrastructure of the region. It is an important bridge for the systematization of olive tourism products, creating a natural environment and landscape and a consistent and unique local cultural space within Italy for visitors (Hall et al. 2000, cited in Salvo et al. 2013).

The third important factor contributing to the olive preservation and promotion in Italy is the Italian National Association of Oil City - “Città dell’Olio.” The association was found in Larino (Campobasso) in December 1994, and is currently located in Villa Parigini in the Municipality of Monteriggioni (Siena).³⁸ With 362 current members, the association is the aggregation of the most of significant bodies and organizations related to olive industry in Italy, such as the Municipalities, the Provinces, the Chambers of Commerce, the LAGs (Local Action Groups), which is the pursuant body of the European legislation, and the olive farms and oil mills, etc. Being an important member of the Mediterranean Olive Oil Cities Network (RECOMED), the association

³⁵ International Olive Council. www.internationaloliveoil.org/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

³⁶ Council of Europe. “Routes of the Olive Tree.” coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-the-olive-tree. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

³⁷ Council of Europe. “Routes of the Olive Tree.” coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-the-olive-tree. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

³⁸ Associazione Nazionale Città dell’Olio. www.cittadellolio.it/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

is the largest, and the most influential and active actor, which was specially established to promote and protect olive culture, olive landscapes, environment, and the olive oil quality, and spread the history of olive growing.³⁹ Additionally, the association gives initiatives to enhance not only the Italian cuisine but also boost the expression of traditions, identities and lifestyles. Specially, it hosts numerous important events, festivals and meetings, implements communication and marketing strategies aimed at the Italian olive oil heritage.⁴⁰ In fact, the increasing number of Italian regions participating in the National Association of Oil city and their commitment to preserve PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication), olive extra-virgin oil has become a real strong engine for the development of economic and olive tourism, and olive landscapes become appealing tourist attractions.⁴¹ According to European Commission, through the logos of PDO and PGI, customers could recognize the origin, the good quality and the authenticity of the traditional olive products. Besides, they also legally protect olive oil producers from imitation and misuse of their product brands.⁴²

Finally yet importantly, the group of tour operators, farmers, oil mills and olive oil factories, plays a significant role in the protection and development of olive production and olive tourism. They usually operate on small, medium or regional scales, and their successes are dependent on many factors, such as policies, economic contexts, and the production, geographical and environmental conditions. Nevertheless, they are an indispensable actor who directly cultivate olive trees and produce olive extra-virgin oil and related products. More importantly, they are one of the most active actors who organize olive tourism activities, which contribute to preserve the olive cultural heritage and directly bring experiences and impression to tourists.

Generally, all of the four main above factors have created a dense and effective network to preserve olive cultural heritage and its traditional production, landscapes, and infrastructure, as well as develop and promote olive products and olive tourism in Italy. Notably, the chaos of the

³⁹ Associazione Nazionale Città dell'Olio. www.cittadellolio.it/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

⁴⁰ Associazione Nazionale Città dell'Olio. www.cittadellolio.it/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

⁴¹ Associazione Nazionale Città dell'Olio. www.cittadellolio.it/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

⁴² European Commission. "EU quality logos." *Agriculture and rural development*. ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/schemes_en. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

Italian heritage management since 1993 as mentioned before does not seem to have considerable negative impacts on the olive cultural heritage preservation of this country.

CHAPTER 2: HOW THE OLIVE TOURISM PRACTICE IN ITALY HAS BEEN PROMOTED ON WEBSITES, IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE, IN 2017 - 2018

The studies and arguments in the previous chapter gave a comprehensive overview of the current state of academic research related to olive tourism in the world in general and in Italy in particular. Those studies also showed the important role of online sources, especially websites in tourism promotion, and the firm potentials of the olive cultural heritage in the development of olive tourism in Italy. Based on those studies and arguments, a research was conducted on 124 entries belonging to 124 websites in English language related to the olive tourism practice in Italy. The analysis was based on the model of an olive oil tourist experience in Spain of Murgado in 2011. This is an important chapter, which helps tourism regulators, tour operators, travel companies or academics have an overview of the overall context of the olive tourism practice in Italy. From this overview, they can see the strengths and weaknesses of the current olive tourism supply chain, and recognize the changes in the market trends to better manage, invest in and develop this type of tourism. It also draws attention of visitors on olive tourism activities and suggests more choices for their vacations in Italy. The results of this research are analysed and discussed to answer the following questions:

1. What kind of olive tourism related activities are offered in Italy, based on websites that are available in English, in 2017 - 2018? What are the most and the least popular activities? How is the olive heritage integrated with other regional assets?
2. What are the types of websites and which languages do they use? What are the divisions of tours offered? What are the average price of each type of tours offered and the average lengths of those types?
3. Which places in Italy are the strongest and weakest areas of olive tourism promotion? Which groups of promoters participate in the olive tourism practice in Italy?

This chapter consists of three main parts. The first part explains the uses of the primary sources and methodology of this research. The second part presents, analyses and discusses the general findings of the research. These findings include the division of the websites; the types, an average length and price of each type of tours offered; the strongest and weakest places in Italy in olive

tourism promotion; and groups of promoters providing olive tourism activities in Italy on the researched websites. The final part provides the findings, analyses and discussions of the olive tourism activities in Italy on websites in English language in 2017 - 2018, and a comparison with the case of Spain in 2011.

I. Primary sources - Methodology

1. Primary source

There are numerous primary sources belonging to digital promotion (digital advertising and publicity) that were mentioned in the first chapter, such as online videos and publications, websites, online magazines and journals, online mailers and posters, online travel guides and brochures, and blogs, promoting olive tourism in Italy in both the demand and supply side. The author had chosen websites that promote the olive tourism practice in Italy as the primary source. This selection was based on the important potentials of the Internet, especially websites, in tourism promotion, which were discussed in the first chapter. More importantly, throughout the initial research, websites and pages related to olive tourism activities in Italy from the supply side have been found to be the most popular source of information. They are a practical tool for tourism promoters (the supply side) to provide information and send messages to their prospective customers. Those websites are also a comprehensive data source, which shows latest necessary information to answer the above presented questions.

2. Methodology

The author used Google as the searching tool and used the same key words to look up websites or pages, related to the olive tourism in Italy. Then, the author collected from 20 to 40 first entries belonging to the corresponding websites, which were found by each key word. The key words used are: *Olive tour Italy* (40 first entries were collected), *Olive oil tour Italy* (40 first entries), *Olive oil taste Italy* (40 first entries), *Olive tourism* (20 first entries), *Olive oil tasting tours Italy* (40 first entries), *Visiting olive farm Italy* (40 first entries), *Visit olive groves Italy* (40 first entries), *Olive pick up Italy* (40 first entries), *Olive oil mill tour Italy* (40 first entries). To ensure the precision of the research findings, the entries belonging to the corresponding websites had to meet the following requirements to be selected. Firstly, the contents of the entries belonging to the websites are related to the Italian olive heritage and the olive tourism practice of this country. Secondly, the websites are in English language published in the year of 2017 and 2018. Thirdly,

the information, the content and the tours offered are still valid at the time of writing (August 2018). As a result, 32 out of 156 entries did not meet the requirements, leaving us with the aforementioned 124 entries (or websites). Then, the analysis of the selected entries was based on the following categories: olive tourism activities, promotion of places, addresses of the websites' owners, lengths of the tours offered, purposes of the entries or websites, prices of tours offered, target groups/languages of the websites. Notably, each website was counted only one time on every matched category. However, a website could belong to more than one category.

Importantly, to find the answer for the question of the olive tourism activities in Italy, the author used the model of Murgado (2011) (See Figure 1) as the foundation, and then compared and confronted his model of the Spanish olive tourism to the case of Italy. Murgado divided the model of an olive oil tourist experience in Spain into 5 layers with their different activities. The popularity of these olive tourism activities gradually decrease, starting from the inner layers, which is from 1. Visiting oil mills, 2. Tasting oil, 3. Purchasing olive oil, 4. Visiting specialty shops, visiting museums, attending fairs and festivals related to olives and olive oil, enjoying the local cuisine, to 5. Visiting landscapes and olive farms, staying in places associated with the olive heritage and the product.

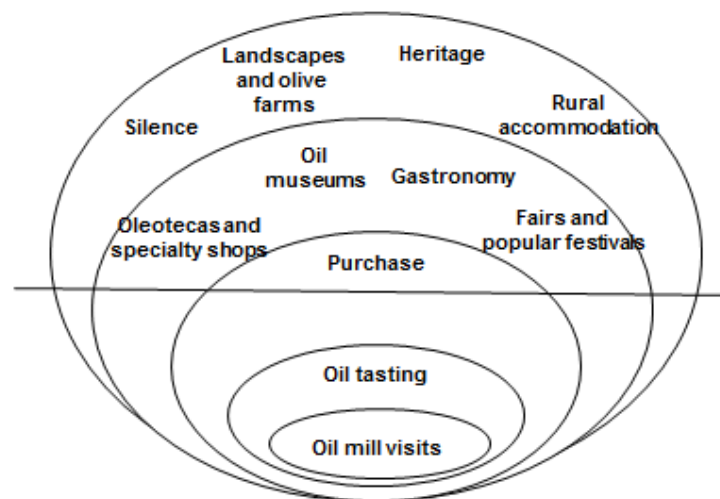


Figure 1: Components of an olive oil tourist experience (Murgado et al. 2011: 202)

II. General findings

Based on 6 categories from 2 to 7 in the methodological part, the author analysed 124 entries belonging to 124 websites, with each website counted only once in each corresponding category. The analyses of the findings answer the questions about the division of the websites, based on their purposes and contents, the types, the average length and price of each type of the tours offered, the languages used in the websites, the most and the least promoted areas in Italy, and the division of tourism organizations and businesses participating in the olive tourism practice in Italy, according to their locations. This section gives a comprehensive overview of the challenges revolving around the olive tourism practice in Italy in 2017 - 2018.

1. The division of the websites

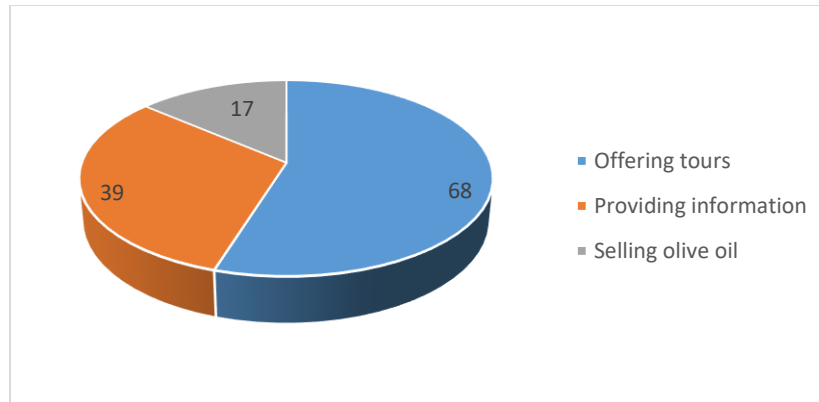


Chart 1: The division of the researched websites

The research findings show that 68 out of 124 websites (55%) offer tours related to olive tourism activities. These websites belong to big, medium or small Italian or international tourism companies, travel agencies, tour operators, olive producers, family run businesses and individuals, etc. Besides, 17 out of 124 websites (14%) are businesses and olive producers that sell extra virgin olive oil, olives and other local products. Additionally, 39 out 124 websites (31%) are blogs, magazines, travel guides and travel review pages, etc. (See Chart 1)

Despite the challenges of tourism promotion in Italy, as mentioned in the first chapter, a large amount of websites (55%) offering olive tours shows that the olive tourism practice in Italy is strong and exciting. This proportion is also in line with the anticipation of the Italian Strategic Plan for Tourism 2017 - 2022, according to which 1 out of 10 international tourists participates in an organized tour (MiBACT 2017). Notably, 31% is a considerable amount of websites that offers

information about olive tourism practices in Italy. These websites do not directly provide tourism services. However, they play an important part in giving recommendations, introducing and providing information about different destinations, regions, producers and olive heritage. Several websites discuss about personal experiences, travel tips and reviews about accommodations, entertainment spots, popular sites, popular activities, or famous restaurants, etc. Specifically, these websites usually put the olive cultivation and production practices into the bigger theme of the regional and national culture and history, and consider the olive heritage as an indispensable part of the landscapes by telling stories and using the narrative writing style. These features can have positive influences on the awareness and understanding about the destinations, and the travel decision-making process of the tourists. The Italian Strategic Plan for Tourism 2017 - 2022 also confirmed that the travel decision of tourists largely depends on the reviews and information on the internet (MiBACT 2017).

2. The types, average length and price of each type of the tours offered on the 124 researched websites

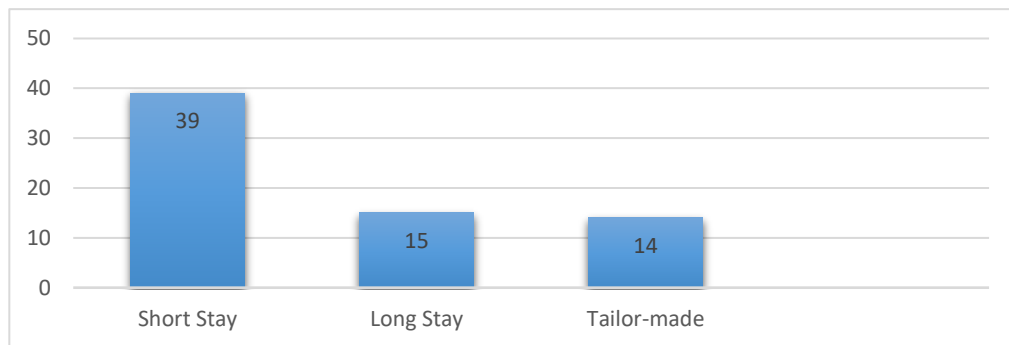


Chart 2: The types and their number of tours on 68 tours offered

Table 1: The average time spent by each type of tours on 68 tours offered

Categories	Short-stay tours (during the day)	Long-stay tours (more than 1 day)
Average time spent	4.67 hours	6.29 days

Table 2: The average price of each type of tours on the 43 websites indicating prices

Categories	Short-stay tours	Long-stay tours
The number of websites offering prices	31	12
The average tour price per person (euro)	118	1983

The findings divide the 68 provided tours into 3 groups based on the length of those tours, including Short-stay Tour, Long-stay Tour, and Tailor-made Tour. Here, 39 out of 68 websites provide short-stay tours, accounting for 57%. These short-stay tours last maximum one day, from 1 hour, to 9-10 hours, with their average time spent of 4.67 hours. Besides, 15 websites offer long-stay tours (22%). These long-stay tours last at least two days, mostly from four to eight days, with an average of 6.29 days. In addition, 14 out of 68 websites (21%) offer tours without giving any details about their length. (See Chart 2 and Table 1)

The findings also show that 43 out of 68 websites (63%) indicate the prices of their tours. The remaining websites (37%) do not indicate their tour prices. Notably, there are 31 out of 43 websites providing short-stay tours that include prices with an average of 118 euro per person per tour, and 12 long-stay tours, including prices with an average personal cost of 1983 euro per tour (See Table 2). Besides, almost all the researched websites are presented in English and Italian. However, 17 out of 124 websites, accounting for 14%, are written in three or more languages. The number ranges from 3 to up to 13 languages in a website. The average number of languages in those 17 websites is about six languages per website.

Throughout the findings, short-stay tour is the most dominant type of tour since it could fit to various tourist groups, even people who travel with limited amount of time or tight budgets. In terms of long-stay tours, the average length of those tours (6.29 days) is much longer than the average length of stay spent by international tourists in Italy in 2015, which is 3.6 days (MiBACT 2017). Notably, with 21% of tours (in the 68 offered tours) not indicating their lengths or prices, tourists need to contact tour operators or travel companies to create detailed traveling plans and estimated costs. The lack of indication of lengths and prices of tours on websites might bring both advantages and disadvantages for tour operators. Some of them are tailor-made tours, which enable

tourists to decide for their trips themselves in terms of time, places, activities and services. At the same time, many tour operators ask tourists to contact them for more information; this can be time-consuming and confusing, and might create a feeling of uncertainty about the costs. On the other hand, customers might not have time to contact and wait for the answers from those tour operators. In particular, with tour operators located in different countries, direct communication can be difficult between tour providers and customers. However, having the fixed prices, tour operators also might take risks due to the fluctuation of prices and/or unexpected costs. Besides, 14% of the websites (in the 124 researched website) are written in multiple languages, which enables website contents to reach different target groups in other countries and regions in the world. Therefore, it helps tourism companies to develop and promote their tourism products in general and traveling packages related to the olive heritage in particular. It also broadens and enhances their influences and reputation on the national and international market.

3. Which places in Italy are the strongest and weakest areas of olive tourism promotion?

In this part, the mentioned times of Italian destinations on 124 websites in olive tours or in the information represented in those websites are carefully counted. A website may mention or promote different places; therefore, the total of the mentioned places can be more than the total of the researched websites. According to the findings, Tuscany is mentioned 48 times, Italy as a whole is mentioned 15 times, Rome (14 times), Puglia (13 times), Florence (11 times), and Umbria (9 times), Abruzzo (6 times), Sicily (5 times). Finally, 29 other mentioned times belong to other places in Italy. (See Chart 3)

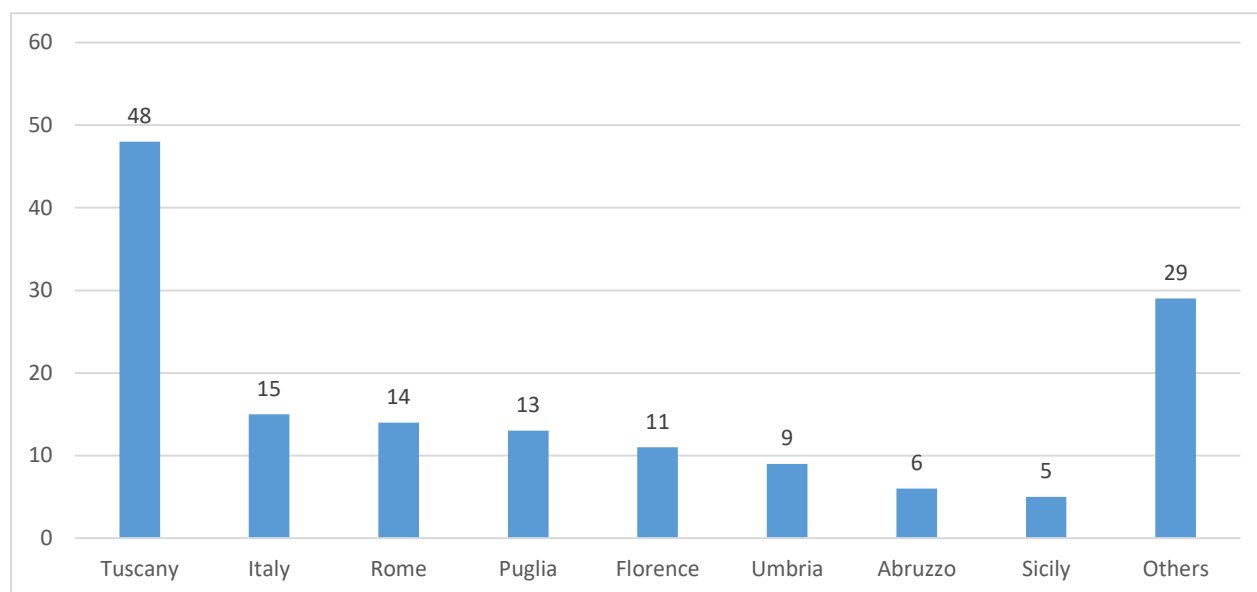


Chart 3: The number of mentions of destinations in Italy



Figure 2: The olive production zones in Italy ⁴³

The findings show the big gap in the promotion of the olive tourism practice among regions in Italy, especially between Tuscany and other regions. Here, Sicily, Abruzzo, Umbria, Florence, Puglia, Rome, and Italy are only mentioned from 10 to 31% in comparison to the mentioned times

⁴³ Frantoi Online. www.frantoionline.it. Accessed 25 Jan. 2018.

of Tuscany. Remarkably, the mentioned times of Puglia (13 times) and Sicily (5 times) on the researched websites are only accounted for 27% and 10% and left far behind the indicated times of Tuscany (48 times). Despite the fact that Puglia and Sicily belong to the largest olive production zone in Italy, which accounts for up to 88% of the national olive production (See Figure 2). Furthermore, Puglia is the largest olive growing and producing region in Italy, with the total area of 370,000 hectares, accounting for up to 37% of the country (1.7 million hectares) (Bettini 2017). On the contrary, Tuscany belongs to the zone where only accounts for 5.5% of the total olive production of the country (See Figure 2). Additionally, the author found little literature related to the olive tourism practice in Puglia. There are only few research and publications mostly focusing on the olive cultivation and production issues of these regions.

Considering the exceptional development of the olive tourism practice and promotion in Tuscany, it is important to note that the tourism development in general, and the tourism practice related to the olive heritage in particular, depend on many other factors, such as the favorable socio-economic and geographical conditions, the effective tourism management and the support from different sources. According to the Italian Strategic Plan for Tourism 2017 - 2022, Tuscany, together with three other Italian destinations, receives more than 60% of international tourist arrivals (MiBACT 2017). Many studies show that Tuscany has its own strengths as well as receiving support to develop its tourism. Lemmi and Tangheroni (2013) asserted the richest of the accommodation system in the Tuscan countryside with the number of about 50.000 beds recorded in 2011, and it is still growing to meet the tourist demand. The widespread presence of farms involved in tourism practices is also sizable, with more than 4.000 farms. Especially, thanks to the EU intervention planning policy for 2000 - 2006, Tuscan rural areas become the selected areas for the alternative development by enhancing local resources (Telleschi 2003, cited in Lemmi and Tangheroni 2013), and benefit from the financial aid to the overall territorial situation, especially to the tourism development. As a result, the agricultural tourism, especially the olive tourism practice had a chance to develop in Tuscany. Specifically, there are three olive oil routes, 31% of the local based companies offer tasting of local products, 27% combine tasting with diverse services, and 24% offer catering in Tuscany (Lemmi and Tangheroni 2013). Therefore, inevitably, Tuscany has multiple favorable conditions to strongly develop and promote olive tourism. Despite Puglia and Sicily having their own strong potentials, these regions face several critical difficulties to develop this type of tourism. Chapter 3 analyses these challenges in more detail.

4. Which groups of promoters participate in the olive tourism practice in Italy?

Based on the official addresses of the 124 websites' owners, the findings show that the travel companies, tour operators or related businesses can be divided into six different groups. 70 out of 124 websites (56%) belong to Italian travel companies and tour operators. Notably, individual Italian tour operators and family run businesses account for up to 26% in the total Italian tourism businesses (18/70). There are 8 international tourism companies and organizations, and 4 tourism companies from Europe. In addition, 19 out of the 124 researched websites (15%) belong to tour operators from the U.S (18) and Canada (1). There is 1 out of 124 websites (0.8%) from Asia (the travel company is based in Hong Kong) offering olive tours to Italy. Besides, 22 website owners are from other regions. (See Chart 4)

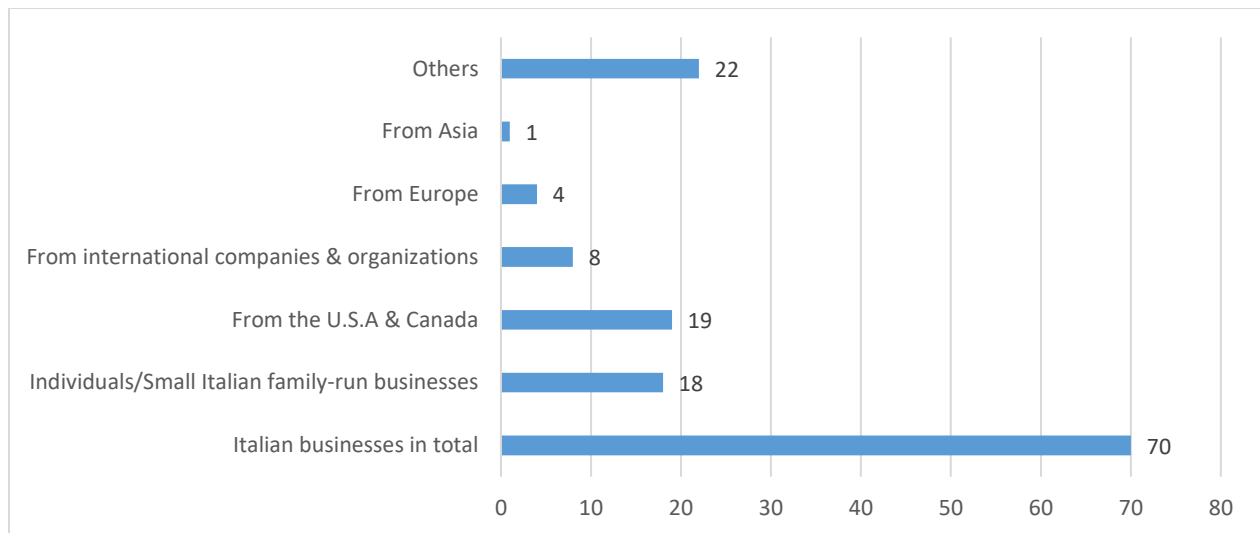


Chart 4: The groups of promoters participating in olive tourism practices in Italy

The findings showed that Italian tourism companies and tour operators are the dominant actors who promote the olive tourism practice in Italy. Notably, individual Italian tour operators and family run businesses take a considerable proportion (26%) in the total of the group of Italian promoters. This fact is an important evidence, which once again proves the important role of the group of small and medium tour operators, individuals, and farmer family businesses, in the preservation and promotion of the olive cultural heritage and olive tourism in Italy (as discussed in the section IV, Chapter 1).

The findings also show the imbalance of the numbers of tourism companies who offer olive tourism activities based in the U.S (19) and Asia (1). The lack of attention to the Asian market can

be a missed chance for the olive tourism development in Italy. Since, according to the Italian Strategic Plan for Tourism 2017 - 2022, tourists travelling abroad the most are Chinese, Americans and Germans. It also confirms that the Asian market is a positive emerging market, contributing up to 3% of the estimated arrival growth in Italy from 2016 to 2018 (MiBACT 2017). Throughout this research, the Asian market, especially China, is still missing, even though it has the potential to become a strategic market for the olive tourism development of Italy in the near future.

III. Tourism activities related to the olive tree civilisation in Italy in 2017 – 2018. A comparison with the case of Spain in 2011

Based on the research category number 1 as mentioned in the methodological part, the olive tourism activities in Italy on the 124 entries belonging to 124 websites were counted. In this part, the findings give a clear answer to the questions of what olive tourism activities are offered in Italy in the year of 2017 – 2018 in English language, what the most and the least popular activities are, and how the olive heritage is integrated with other regional assets. To have a better overview of the contemporary olive tourism practice in Italy, the author compares the findings of this research to the case study of Spain in 2011. In addition, several interesting popular and newly appeared olive tourism activities in Italy are discussed in this part.

1. Olive tourism activities in Italy: General discussion and comparison with the case of Spain in 2011

There are 19 different sorts of olive tourism activities found in Italy, including: 1. *Oil tasting* (was mentioned in websites and included in olive tours 50 times), 2. *Visiting oil mills and factories* (35 times), 3. *Enjoying the local gastronomy* (34 times), 4. *Visiting landscapes and olive farms* (26 times), 5. *Participating in olive oil tasting tours, which are integrated with other experiences* (25 times), 6. *Taking part in olive heritage educational activities* (24 times), 7. *Purchasing olive products* (17 times), 8. *Harvesting and picking up olives on farms* (16 times), 9. *Staying in places associated with olive products – farmhouses* (12 times), 10. *Visiting souvenir and specialty shops* (7 times), 11. *Participating in events (fairs, workshops, conferences, shows, exhibitions)* (6 times), 12. *Visiting olive oil museums or routes* (5 times), 13. *Going on vacations/holidays, consisting of olive tourism activities* (4 times), 14. *Establishing olive oil quality competition to honor and promote the best producers* (2 times), 15. *Adopting olive trees* (2 times), 16. *Staying in Bed & Breakfast accommodations located in olive farms* (2 times), 17. *Joining volunteer tourism*

programs, staying in the farmhouses, helping with the olive harvest and cultivation and traveling (1 time), 18. Visiting olive groves where the movie was filmed (1 time), 19. Implementing project to develop and preserve the olive heritage (1 time). (See Chart 5)

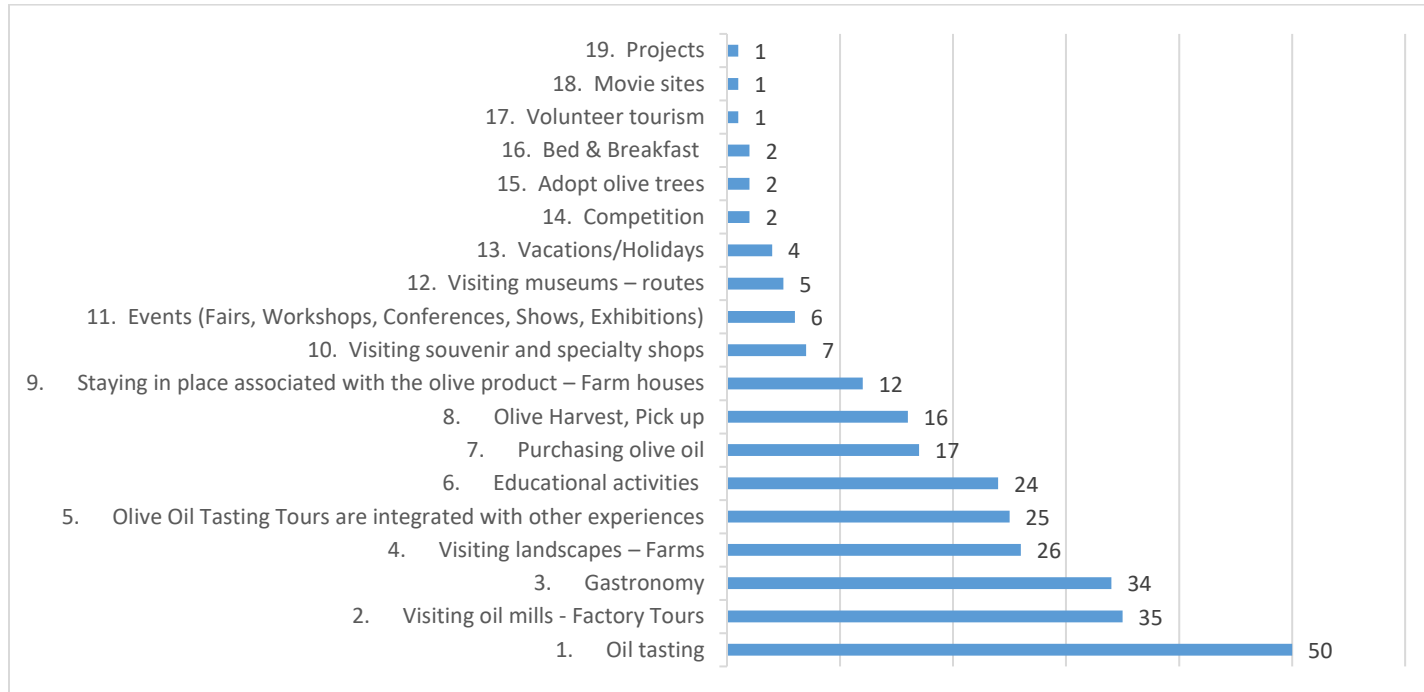


Chart 5: The mentioned times of activities related to olive tourism in Italy in 2017- 2018 on the researched websites

In comparison to the model of an olive oil tourist experience in Spain of Murgado in 2011, the olive tourism practice in Italy in 2017 - 2018 is significantly more diverse and developed (See Figure 1 & Chart 5). In comparison to the 10 olive tourism activities in the model of an olive oil tourist experience in Spain (See Figure 1), consisting of: 1. *Visiting oil mill*, 2. *Oil tasting*, 3. *Purchasing olive products*, 4. *Visiting souvenir and specialty shops*, 5. *Visiting oil museums*, 6. *Enjoying the local gastronomy*, 7. *Participating in fairs and popular festivals*, 8. *Visiting landscapes and olive farms*, 9. *Discovering the olive heritage*, 10. *Staying in rural accommodations*; there are many new activities involved in the olive tourism practice in Italy. These new activities include: 1. *Visiting olive oil production factories*; 2. *Taking part in olive heritage educational activities*, 3. *Participating in olive oil tasting tours integrated with other experiences*, 4. *Harvesting and picking up olive on the farms*, 5. *Participating in more diverse events (workshops, conferences, shows, exhibitions)*, 6. *Going on vacations/holidays related to olive tourism activities*, 7. *Establishing olive oil quality competition to honor and promote the best*

producers, 8. Adopting olive trees, 9. Staying in Bed & Breakfast accommodations located in olive farms, 10. Joining volunteer tourism programs, staying in the farmhouses, helping with the olive harvest and cultivation and traveling, 11. Visiting olive groves where popular movies were filmed, 12. Implementing project to develop and preserve the olive heritage.

Importantly, the order of influential levels of olive tourism activities in Spain and Italy in these two research is significantly different. If “Oil mill visits” is the most influential activity in Spain, it is the second most mentioned activity in Italy. In contrast, “Oil tasting” is the most mentioned activity in Italy. While “Visiting souvenir and specialty shops” is as important as “Gastronomy” in Spain, it only ranks 10th in the total of 19 activities in Italy, and there are only 7 out of 124 websites referring to or including this activity in their olive-related tours in Italy. This might be due to the growing popularity of olive tourism in Italy. Thus, visitors have more choices of activities related to the olive tourism. Even though, in other research, typical local souvenirs and specialties still play a significant role in many tourist destinations. According to Hjalager and Richards (2001), and Lanfranchi et al. (2013), tourism contributes mainly to the export of local products in Italy. Olive oil, together with other local products, such as pasta, mozzarella, cheese, wine, or salami, are accounted up to 69% of the total amount of souvenirs bought by tourists traveling to Italy (AA.VV 1998: 1-22, cited in Hjalager and Richards 2001).

Overall, there are many reasons explaining the differences between the two cases of Italy and Spain. An important reason could be the time of conducting the two research. In 2011, olive tourism in general was still very new and might not have been widely exploited in comparison to the time of carrying out this research in 2018. After 6 - 7 years, the olive tourism practice in general could have been remarkably changed and better developed in both of these two countries. It might also be because of the change in awareness of tourists about the olive heritage and its valuable assets, and/or due to the increasing demand of tourists who want to find new experiences, communicate with the locals, and be part of the nature and countryside. The differences in the two findings also depend on many other factors of the two countries, such as the differences in the development conditions of this type of tourism, their tourist target groups, their cultures and histories, their traditional ways of olive cultivating and producing practices, and the tourism development policies of each country.

2. Several popular olive tourism activities in Italy in 2017 – 2018

This section discusses several interesting popular activities related to the olive tourism practice in Italy, including participating in educational activities, joining olive oil tasting tours integrated with other experiences, harvesting olives, and enjoying the local Italian gastronomy. Together with tasting olive oil, visiting olive oil mills and factories, visiting olive landscapes and farms, these activities are an indispensable part of olive tourism practice in Italy.

There are noticeable educational activities appearing in the Italian olive tourism practice. In this analysis, these activities are mentioned 24 times on the 124 researched websites. They include olive oil tasting tours, cooking classes and schools of olive oil to learn about the olive oil culture; production processes; the ancient art of olive oil making; recognizing different types of olive oil and their health benefits; and how to combine them when cooking, etc. These activities can take from 1.5 hours to 5 days with tour guides or high-qualified instructors in the North of Italy, Florence, Tuscany and Rome.⁴⁴ The cost of these tours (last from 1.5 hours to a half day) ranges from 22 to 100 euro per person.

In fact, the educational tourism is not a new phenomenon; it has been formed since the first days of the Grand Tours in the 18-19th century, when traveling to a number of European countries to learn about culture, history, geography, society and people was the main purpose of the travelers. This activity still keeps its important role in the contemporary tourism and performs as an essential part among the other olive tourism activities in Italy. One common feature of the educational activities revolving around the olive tree civilisation is that they are regularly integrated with other fun activities, such as visiting landscapes, trekking, doing yoga, enjoying food and wine. This combination creates a more relaxed and exciting experiences for the participants, which is perfectly suited to the tourists who want to learn new things while still wanting to enjoy their holidays.

Secondly, olive oil tasting tours integrated with other experiences is noticeably mentioned 25 times in the 124 researched websites. Here, olive tourism activities are integrated with other experiences, such as wine, cheese and chocolate tastings, trekking, biking tours, visiting windmill, experiencing luxury car in Abruzzo, Umbria and Puglia. Tour operators based in Italy offer these

⁴⁴ O'live & Italy. www.oliveitaly.it/info-olive-italy/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

integrated tours, which last from around 1 to 9.5 hours and the costs range from 40 to 189 euro per person. The findings also show that there are 4 out of 25 integrated tours lasting from 7 to 8 days. 3 out of 4 tour operators providing these tours are based in the U.S and Canada. The prices of these combined tours range from 3204 up to 3767 euro per person. In contrast, the cost of the tour (lasting in the same amount of time) provided by the Italy based tourism company is 1395 euro.

Thirdly, olive harvesting is another notable activity (which was mentioned 16 times in this research). Provided by tour operators, based in Italy, the cost of these tours (lasting from 1.5 hours to 5 days) range from 18 up to 940 euro per person each tour. International tourists also can spend from 4 to 7 days staying in the farmhouses, taking part in cultural and production activities, and enjoying the local cuisine. The costs of these tours range from 1462 to 2060 euro for a tour offered by tour operators based in the United States.

These findings show that the costs of these combined and olive harvesting tours are very diverse and dependent on the lengths of the stay, the activities that the tours offer and their locations. Tourists currently staying in Italy pay for those olive tours significantly less than tourists who travel from other countries due to the additional costs of transportation, flight tickets and other extra costs. Notably, integrated tours could be a factor to extend the length of stay of tourists and let them have more experiences and increase amount of money spent on them. Hjalager and Richards (2001) also confirmed that the typical regional raw materials like wine and olive oil with other environmental, cultural and tourist resources are integrated in wine routes or taste paths to meet the demand of more target groups visiting the region.

Finally yet importantly, the activity related to “Gastronomy” or enjoying the local cuisine, which was mentioned 34 times on the researched websites, is one of the most popular activities in the olive tourism practice in Italy. It gives visitors an opportunity to enjoy local cuisine and specialties during the olive tour. This activity is considered as an exciting and indispensable part of many olive tours in this research. Looking at Chart 5 and Figure 1, “Gastronomy” is one of the important activities in olive tourism in both Italy and Spain. That is because gastronomy is one of the key motivators to attract tourists and brings back enormous economic benefits to the destinations. World Tourism Organization (2012) also confirmed the significance of gastronomic tourism activities in developed countries in attracting international visitors, and the desire to enjoy the unique cuisine can be the key motivation to travel. Particularly, tourists can spend up to one

third of their travel expense on food (World Tourism Organization 2012). Moreover, Italian and Spanish cuisines are the important elements to attract tourists to these countries. They are the representative and embodiment of the culture, lifestyles, customs, people and history of each region and nation. Especially, olive oil is an important ingredient in every meal of many people in these two countries. Like the case of wine tourism in the idea of Antonioli Corigliano (1996a: 2), olive tourism also can be considered as a form of cultural tourism. He explained that these kinds of tourism contribute to “preserve and valorize agricultural territories,” and are “the new ways of holidaying.” Hjalager and Richards (2001) also stated that activities related to gastronomy help visitors understand more about the past, the indigenous culture, cultural heritage, history and traditions. They also take part in distinguishing the culture, society, environment, and identity of the location or nation.

However, comparing Italy and Spain in these two research findings, the olive tourism activities related to the gastronomy in Italy seem to be more dominant than in Spain. It ranks 3rd in the 19 activities, there are 34 out of 124 websites recommending or providing tours including gastronomic experiences in Italy, while it is placed in the 4th layer in the total of 5 layers in Spain. That is because of the change in the Spanish tourism marketing strategies. According to Hjalager and Richards (2001), Spanish gastronomy used to be marketed and sold as a region’s cultural product to tourists. However, this country successfully re-branded itself as a worthwhile cultural destination with its sun, sea and sand. This is a reasonable decision because, according to Hjalager and Richards (2001), the Spanish cuisine remained relatively unknown, and until recently, it has not been a significant element to attract tourists to this country. On the contrary, gastronomy is one of the biggest strengths of the Italian tourism and has been effectively exploited. Antonioli Corigliano asserts that Italian tourism is definitely dependent on cuisine and food ingredients (Cited in Hjalager and Richards 2001). Baloglu and McCleary (1999) also suggested that gastronomy can be considered as a principal resource in Italian tourism. Italy scored significantly higher than many other Mediterranean destinations on “appealing local culinary” in a study of visitor and non-visitor images (Cited in Hjalager and Richards 2001). Being active in introducing and promoting its cuisine in the national and international cultural events is also a reason contributing for the reputation of the food image of Italy (Hjalager and Richards 2001). According to Lanfranchi et al. (2013), in May 2013, 35% of Italians consider the gastronomic riches of their country is an important contributor to the success of holidays in Italy. The result of another

research also shows that Italy has the most favorable food image and is the most promising country in attracting tourists in the future (Karim and Chi 2010).

3. Emerging olive tourism activities in Italy in 2017 - 2018

This section discusses the newly appeared activities related to the olive tourism practice in Italy, including participating in volunteer tourism program in Italian olive farms, adopting olive trees, staying in Bed & Breakfast accommodation located in Italian olive groves, organizing and participating in cultural project focusing on the olive heritage, and visiting olive groves where popular movies were set.

Volunteer tourism is one of the important new emerging olive tourism activities in Italy. According to Wearing and Neil (2001: 241), volunteer tourism has been described as when people “volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve the aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment while furthering knowledge and awareness of these” (cited in Wearing and Pointing 2009). In the research findings, volunteer participants can spend their holidays staying with farmer families in farmhouses for a certain amount of time, be part of the family, help with olive harvesting and cultivation, and take part in daily and cultural activities.

Taking part in volunteer program in Italian olive farms is an interesting activity since it enables participants to experience the lives of farmers, travel and explore regional cultures and cuisines in the most real and authentic ways. Wearing (2001) stated that volunteer tourism builds new friendships and develops deeper understandings of others, and while helping others, they strengthen their own self-identity and worth and those of the communities they interact with. Many authors and researchers also confirmed that volunteer tourism has become a significant and growing form of alternative tourism (Britton and Clarke 1987; Cohen 1987; Dernoï 1981, 1988; Ellis 2003; Halpenny and Caissie 2003; Holden 1984; Pearce 1980; Sorensen 1997; Uriely et al. 2003; Wearing 2001, 2003, 2004; Wearing and Neil 2000, 2001; cited in Wearing and Ponting 2009). As a result, the volunteer tourism, which is established in Italian olive groves, has the high potential to become a new and appealing trend, and can be further developed in the future. It also opens a new direction for sustainable development for Italian farmers; creates valuable benefits and memorable experiences for the participants.

Adopting olive trees is another noticeable activity, which is strongly promoted by the two tourism companies located in the United States and United Kingdom. These companies cooperate with Italian farmers to offer customers the chance to adopt olive trees from the traditional Italian groves in Tuscany and Liguria.^{45;46} According to *Nudo Adopt program*, to adopt an olive tree or make it as a gift for other people, customers need to pay the annual fee from 65, 120 to 225 euro per year. Instead, the customers receive the welcome package and adoption certificate with a personal message, and pure cold pressed seasonal olive oil from the tree that they adopt. They can choose their own trees and are warmly invited to visit their own olive tree in the Italian olive farms.⁴⁷

Additionally, staying in Bed & Breakfasts (B&Bs) located in olive farms is an important new activity included in the Italian olive tourism activities. B&B accommodations originated from the tradition of offering hospitality to strange travelers since “the earliest recorded history for almost all religions and cultures” over the world. Having been popular in England and the eastern United States since the 1700s, “coaching” or “stagecoach” inns offered stabling for horses and lodging for travelers, and “accommodations were extremely modest.” Since the 1980s, B&Bs has significantly developed.⁴⁸ However, in this research, only two tour operators (in the 124 researched websites) provide accommodations including breakfasts in places associated with olive production and cultivation. Here, tourists can stay in farmhouses located in olive groves, visit olive oil mills, learn about the work of the farmers, and experience the feeling of being part of nature. This form of providing accommodations for tourists should be paid more attention to make use of the prospects of the Italian olive farms and generate income for the farmers.

Besides, organizing the cultural project focusing on the olive heritage is also one of the remarkable emerging olive tourism activities in Italy. This activity is established annually for Italian and international visitors, including Bed & Breakfast service. This activity is the perfect combination of different activities of education, introduction, development and preservation of

⁴⁵ Suzie’s Yard. “Adopt an olive tree.” www.suziesyard.com/adopt-olive-tree/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

⁴⁶ Nudo Adopt. “Italian pure, authentic Award Winning Olive Oil straight to your door.” www.nudoadopt.com/olive-oil/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

⁴⁷ Nudo Adopt. “Italian pure, authentic Award Winning Olive Oil straight to your door.” www.nudoadopt.com/olive-oil/. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

⁴⁸ BedandBreakfast.com. “History of BedandBreakfast.com.” www.bedandbreakfast.com/info/about/history. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

olive cultural heritage and its cuisine strongly influenced by the production and use of extra virgin olive oil. Notably, to make the difference, the influences of popular films is also integrated in the olive tourism activities in Italy. Visiting the olive groves with 20,000 olive trees and the villa, where the quintessential Tuscan movies named *A room with a view* and *Tea with Mussolini* were set, is one of the activities included in the tour.⁴⁹ This is a creative combination to make use of positive influences of films; therefore, combine them with the regional available assets, such as olive tourism activities, to create interesting experiences for tourists.

In general, in spite of being promoted only on few websites, these above emerging olive tourism activities in Italy play a significant role in diversifying Italian olive tourism products and bring extra values to the Italian olive tourism. These activities deserve to receive further attention and investment to diversify the Italian olive tourism practice, develop olive tourism, support farmers and bring memorable experiences to tourists.

⁴⁹ Marshall, Nick. USA Today. "Olive Oil Factory Tours Nearest to Florence, Italy." Travel Tips, 27 Mar. 2018. traveltips.usatoday.com/olive-oil-factory-tours-nearest-florence-italy-110686.html. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

CHAPTER 3: OLIVE TOURISM & SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STRONGER DEVELOPMENT OF OLIVE TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN ITALY AND THE REGIONS OF PUGLIA AND SICILY

In the second chapter, the analyses of the studies and research findings provide a complete picture of the characteristics and context of the contemporary olive tourism practice in Italy and its regions. Importantly, the vital role of the development of sustainable tourism was also discussed in section 4, Chapter 1. Besides the strengths, those analyses and discussions arise several critical issues in the development of olive tourism and sustainable tourism in Italy, especially the imbalanced development of the olive tourism practice between Tuscany and the regions of Puglia and Sicily. Therefore, this chapter clarifies the important relation between the development of olive tourism and sustainable tourism; discusses the strengths and weaknesses and gives solid solutions for the better development of olive tourism and sustainable tourism in Italy and the regions of Puglia and Sicily. This chapter consists of three main parts. The first part discusses and analyses the interactive relation between the olive tourism practice and the development of sustainable tourism in Mediterranean countries and in Italy. The second part is the detailed analyses and discussions of the contemporary context, the strengths and weaknesses of the olive tourism practice and the sustainable tourism development based on the olive tourism in Italy and the regions of Puglia and Sicily. In this part, the author carried out a research on 23 review pages all belonging to the TripAdvisor website to seek for reflections of tourists on olive tours in Italy, particularly international tourists. The results were discussed and compared to those of a similar research in Spain. The last part provides specific solutions for the discussed challenges and explanations for those solutions, which might help to stronger boost the olive tourism and sustainable tourism development in Italy, especially for the regions Puglia and Sicily.

I. The interactive relation between the olive tourism practice and the development of sustainable tourism in Mediterranean countries and in Italy

The olive tourism practice and the development of sustainable tourism in Mediterranean countries in general and in Italy in particular, have an interactive relation. They support, complete and benefit each other for their further development. On the one hand, olive tourism has a potential to bring numerous benefits to the sustainable tourism of not only Italy but also other Mediterranean

countries with similar conditions. This observation has been widely accepted by many authors and researchers. In Spain, Millán and his colleagues strongly affirmed that olive tourism plays important roles in sustainable tourism development (Millán et al. 2018). These researchers claimed that even though olive tourism is not considered as the main source of income of many olive production regions, it is an effective tool of economic diversification and complementary means of income, which benefit the economy in both short term and medium term. Olive tourism also creates a favorable environment to efficiently exploit natural and human resources based on ecology, economic and social sustainability. In addition, olive tourism is directly connected to sustainable gastronomic tourism (Millán et al. 2018). In fact, the above mentioned statements are clearly confirmed by the research findings in the chapter 2, which support the importance of the economic benefits of the olive tourism practice in Italy and its strong relationship with the Italian gastronomic tourism. In Greece, Passalis asserted that olive oil does not only have strong potential in promoting Greek destinations besides “Sea and Sun clichés” but it can also be used as a tool of sustainable development (cited in Dimitropoulos 2017).⁵⁰ More importantly, capable of recognizing the potentials for sustainable tourism development of the landscapes of the olive groves, in 2003, UNESCO launched the project which significantly promotes the sustainable development in more than 20 Mediterranean countries. Here, the sustainable tourism based on olive landscapes is developed together with a long-term cultural cooperation and trade among these countries with four main objects that are:

1. To highlight the shared material and spiritual heritage that has linked the people of the Mediterranean since prehistoric times, centered on the olive tree and its many uses; 2. To support efforts to ensure that traditional knowledge is respected and protected and that the environment and natural resources are wisely managed; 3. To guarantee the protection of renewable ecosystems with a view to their sustainable exploitation, this being an essential requirement for the full physical, economic and cultural development of the people concerned; 4. To explore the cultural and symbolic use of the olive tree both within and outside these areas of exploitation. (Luengo 2011)

⁵⁰ Dimitropoulos, Stav. “Route To Sustainable Tourism In Greece Lined With Olive Oil.” *Olive Oil Times*, Apr. 3 2017. www.oliveoiltimes.com/olive-oil-business/route-sustainable-tourism-greece-lined-olive-oil/56082. Accessed 2 August 2018.

On the other hand, the sustainable tourism development supports, completes and benefits the development of olive tourism practices in the Mediterranean countries and Italy. That is because sustainability plays a crucial role in the economy and long-term exploitation, attracts investment, and maintains the competitiveness and the existing values of the tourist destination in general, and of the olive tourist destination in particular. Importantly, sustainability helps to reduce negative impacts of tourism on these tourist destinations. Orbasli and Woodward (2009: 329) indicated that local communities have little influence in the way tourism is generated, marketed, or managed often due to the complexity of tourism supply and demand chains; and the tourism investment and development can have negative consequences, such as marginalization. Galvin et al. (2012) also stated that, in spite of bringing back profits in the short term, tourism could cause negative impact, which puts pressure of socio-culture and environment on tourist destinations. Losing the assets of nature, landscapes or socio-culture, the destination can be no longer an appealing choice for tourists. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain these assets of the destinations in the long run. Moreover, it is essential to develop sustainable tourism in order to keep the influences and benefits equal between local communities and tourist organizers, maintain the competitiveness of the destinations and reduce negative impact of tourism practices on the local communities and environment. Additionally, MiBACT (2017) also noted that sustainability in tourism is a key element of competitiveness and must therefore help to maintain the natural resources and landscape and attract investment for their protection. Furthermore, the research result of Cucculelli and Goffi (2016) also validated the role of sustainability as a crucial determinant of the competitiveness of a tourist destination. Although the above-discussed benefits of sustainable development are tightly linked to the tourist destination in general, they can be definitely applied to the specific cases of olive tourist destinations in Mediterranean countries and Italy.

II. The Contemporary Context of the Olive Tourism Practice & The Sustainable Tourism Development based on Olive Tourism in Italy and the Regions of Puglia and Sicily

1. Reflections of tourists on the Italian olive tourism activities

Besides the strengths of location, cuisine, culture, history, nature and typical products, understanding the thoughts of tourists - especially, how they perceive the olive tours – is crucial for the future development of olive tourism in Italy. Therefore, to search for the reviews of tourists

participating in olive tours in Italy, besides the websites from the previous chapter, the author uses the following keywords to search on Google, including: “olive harvest and pick up tour Italy reviews”; “olive oil tasting tour Italy reviews”; “bed & breakfasts olive grove Italy reviews”; and “adopt olive tree Italy reviews.” Subsequently, 23 out of 37 review pages in total were selected to analyse since they meet the preliminary criteria, including the representation of an olive tour, the features and numbers of all the reviews, the reflection of tourist satisfaction together with the number of languages reviews are written. Notably, all of these 23 pages belong to the TripAdvisor website, which is one of the most popular travel review websites currently. Then, the author summarized these 23 review pages based on the categories of the total number of reviews; the number of tourist reviews on the satisfied levels which are excellent, very good and others; and the number of reviews in English.

As a result, there are 7150 total reviews on the 23 olive tours belonging to 23 review pages. About the levels of tourist satisfaction on olive tours in Italy, 6651 out of 7150 reviews (93%) are “Excellent,” and 407 out of 7150 reviews are “Very good” (5.7 %). Therefore, 7058 out of 7150 reviews (98.7%) in total are positive and very positive about olive tours offered in Italy. In addition, 6276 out of 7150 reviews are in English (88%), and 12% of the reviews are in other languages (See Chart 6 & Chart 7).

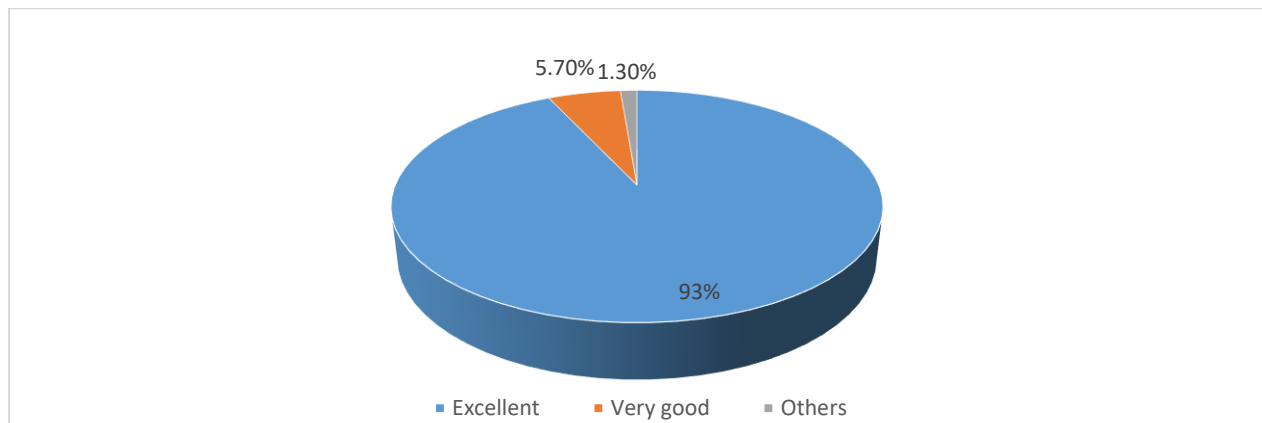


Chart 6: Tourist reviews of 23 tours related to the olive tourism practice in Italy

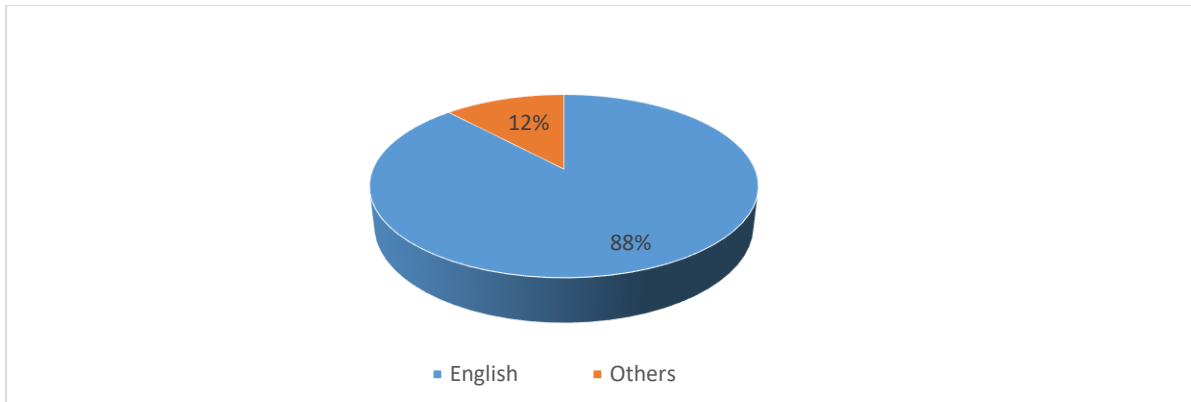


Chart 7: The languages written by the reviewers

Besides, throughout the reviews, multiple olive tourists expressed their special experiences about these olive tours and confirm that these tours are the most memorable experience and the highlight in their entire trip. This is reflected in the dense appearance of positive words in the reviews, such as “incredible, heavenly slice, exceptionally beautiful, absolutely fabulous, perfect location, I can't wait to return, the best gift, great, delicious, tasty food, surprise find, fun and informative, knowledgeable, enjoy, savory, awesome, wonderful, unique, interesting, lovely, unforgettable, favorite, special place, unexpected, generous, gracious, amazing, educational, fantastic, life time of memories, inspiring, heaven on earth, highlight of Rome/Tuscany, etc.” (See Research 2 in the “Primary Sources” section)

This data and the findings reveal that the olive tourism practice in Italy has made a strong impression on tourists and gives them unforgettable experiences. The especially high proportion of positive and very positive reviews (98.7%), and the dominant of tourist reviews in English (88%), show the undeniable strengths and potentials to develop this type of tourism in Italy, not only to domestic tourists but also to a large number of international tourists. The positive degree of satisfaction of olive tourists in Italy in this research is also considerably higher than in Spain with its percentage of 83.2% (Millán et al. 2018). Nevertheless, olive tourism demonstrates its important and positive influences on tourists in both of these countries. Notably, the analyses of this research and of the research of Millán et al. (2018) indicated that many olive tourists travelling to places in both Italy and Spain are willing to return to those destinations.

2. Potentials to develop olive tourism and sustainable tourism in Puglia and Sicily

As discussed in the first chapter, the olive cultural heritage in Italy has been well preserved by the support of multiple parties. Importantly, Puglia and Sicily belong to the largest olive cultivating and producing regions in Italy. These two features are important potentials for the development of olive tourism in Italy and these two regions. Besides, Puglia and Sicily have other valuable assets to develop tourism in general, which bring more tourists to the regions. This, therefore, can create opportunities for more tourists to know about the olive tourism activities of the areas. According to MacCallum et al. (2011), thanks to the “wealth of natural, cultural, environmental, architectural and social resources, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites: Frederick II of Swabia’s imposing *Castel del Monte*, and the town centre of Alberobello with its typical - *trulli*, a unique legacy of local peasant culture,” tourism is “apparently one of the strategic sectors for Puglia and it is considered as a driving force for the local economy.” Here, *Trulli* (very traditional) and *Castel del Monte* (highly sophisticated) are two types of architecture, which reflects the riches of the Puglian heritage (MacCallum et al. 2011). Moreover, MacCallum et al. (2011) expressed that the two UNESCO World Heritage sites of Puglia affirm the visibility and attractiveness of the region on the international scale. According to Cracolici and Nijkamp (2008), the good qualitative performance in terms of the tourist attractiveness value and the positive experience of tourists visiting Sicily and Puglia are the opportunities and strengths to gain new market shares and to develop tourism in these areas. In fact, Puglia has gained a certain number of positive results in tourism development. Thanks to the implementation of a strategy to reinforce and diversify tourism activities and promote the area as a tourist destination, the tourist arrivals to Puglia increased from almost 3 million in 2008 to over 12 million in 2011, accounting for over 3% of the international tourists visiting Italy (MacCallum et al. 2011).

3. Challenges in the development of olive tourism and sustainable tourism in Puglia and Sicily

Despite the remarkable success of Italy in organizing and developing olive tourism activities, there still exists several significant challenges, which might be the missed chances to better develop this type of tourism as well as make use of olive farms to develop sustainable tourism in this country and its regions. According to the analyses of the research results of the second chapter, the first and the most critical challenge is the lack of balance in the olive tourism development

among regions in Italy, specifically between the region of Tuscany and the regions of Puglia and Sicily. Although Puglia and Sicily have abundant potential to develop olive tourism and sustainable tourism, and their governments have implemented strategies to support tourism development, these types of tourism have not yet developed adequately comparing to other regions like Tuscany (Cracolici and Nijkamp 2008). This observation was due to the lack of suitable policies from the local authorities in building a tourist attraction in spite of rich natural and cultural resources. In fact, the competitiveness depends on many other complementary elements of the destination, such as “information and tourist services, cultural events (concerts, art exhibitions, festivals, etc.), quality and variety of products in the shops, hotels and other accommodation, level of prices and living costs, and tourist safety” (Cracolici and Nijkamp 2008).

The second challenge is the shortcoming of the sustainable tourism development policies in Italy before 2017 in spite of the significant roles of sustainable tourism development. In contrast, Spain, which shares the same olive producing condition and is a neighboring country of Italy, has encouraged and strongly integrated the main recommendations of sustainable tourism in the Spanish Plan 2012 – 2015 (Angeloni 2013). In fact, until 2013, the sustainable approaches of tourism development have not included in the Italian Tourism Strategic Plan. Berke (2002) and Angeloni (2013) even claimed that the lack of practical actions for sustainable tourism in Italy is “somewhat strange” and “disappointing”. However, according to MiBACT (2017), sustainability has been one of the guiding principles of the Italian tourism system for the year from 2017 to 2022. Nevertheless, sustainable tourism development is still a new area and requires further efforts from the governments of the different provinces in Italy. The lack of sustainable tourism development in the Italian tourism policy during the years before 2017 might be a reason for the lack of promotion for olive tourism activities based on the sustainable development in Italy until the recent context of 2017 - 2018. In fact, only three out of the 124 researched websites in the chapter 2 make use of sustainable tourism to improve their promotion of the olive tourism activities in Italy. Finally, authentic experiences like being part of the local culture and enjoying activities in the nature are also the important features and the “selling points” to promote olive tourism activities in Italy that many tourist organizers might have missed. In fact, only one out of the 124 researched websites make use of authentic experiences to promote their olive tourism activity via volunteer tourism, which was mentioned in the Chapter 2.

III. Possible solutions for the challenges in the development of olive tourism and sustainable tourism in Italy and its regions of Puglia and Sicily

Having shown the issues concerning the olive tourism development in Italy, the author would like to finally propose several suggestions which might contribute to solving the existing challenges and strengthen the development of olive tourism and sustainable tourism based on the olive tree civilisation and the olive production Italy in general, and in the regions of Puglia and Sicily in particular.

Firstly, current Italian sustainable tourism development policy might need to further encourage the cooperation between the national tourism decision makers and the local tourism authorities, and to empower local communities to make their own decisions in tourism development plans. This suggestion has been proven highly effective by Orbasli and Woodward when they emphasized that the involvement of stakeholders is the foundation of sustainable tourism development. However, to effectively develop sustainable tourism, the involvement of all major industry players and decision makers is also needed. Specifically, to make use of the olive tree civilisation to develop sustainable tourism, Alonso and Northcote (2010) also noted that the cooperation between olive growers and related stakeholders, together with the support of government, contribute not only to the increasing influence of olive tourism but also to the sustainability of olive growing.

Secondly, to bridge the gap of the olive tourism development among different olive production regions, the Italian tourism development plan should create favorable conditions for the olive tourism development and sustainable tourism development of Puglia and Sicily. These favorable conditions consist of the supportive policies for farmers, olive mills and factories, and a favorable environment for tourism investors. According to Cracolici and Nijkamp (2008), tourism managers should focus on the improvement of the complementary elements and create innovative tourism products to effectively boost olive tourism and sustainable tourism in Puglia and Sicily. Initially, olive tour operators in these destinations could provide sufficient necessary information about the important meanings of the olive tree civilisation, the olive heritage, the olive cultivation and the tours provided. Furthermore, they should also improve their tourist services, hotels and other accommodation; organize more events, such as olive oil exhibitions, food festivals, olive oil tasting events, visiting ancient olive groves, etc., finally enhance quality and variety of olive products in the shops; provide more affordable olive tours and related services; and create a safe and

comfortable environment for tourists. Besides the popular olive tourism activities discussed in the Chapter 2, Tourism policy makers and local authorities of Puglia and Sicily could organize several of the Italian emerging olive tourism activities as the findings of Chapter 2 in a special way to distinguish them from the other regions. These emerging olive tourism activities include cooperating with olive cultivators to let tourists have chances to adopt and visit their olive trees on the Italian farms, operating Bed & Breakfast accommodation, organizing volunteer programs for international tourists staying at the Italian olive groves, and making use positive influences of popular movies, etc.

Thirdly, Puglia and Sicily could better make use the positive impacts of sustainable development as discussed above, and authentic experiences like being included in the local natural and cultural landscape, and seeing the real things, to promote olive tourism in these areas. In fact, many olive tourism activities give a chance for tourists to taste original local cuisines, to experience real local cultures, to see, touch, feel and be part of nature and landscapes of the Italian countryside, such as staying in farmhouses and helping farmers as volunteers, taking part in daily and cultural activities, visiting olive farms, harvesting olives, and enjoying the local cuisines and specialties. Notably, the experience of enjoying local gastronomy included in olive tours is a typical example of bringing authentic experiences to tourists since the local cuisines embrace clear territorial typical characteristics (Nocifora et al. 2011, cited in Salvo et al. 2013). Moreover, olive oil is one of the main ingredients and an important element, which make the Italian and Spanish cuisine special and unique worldwide (Salvo et al. 2013). Integrating these authentic experiences in the olive tourism promotion in Puglia and Sicily would partly contribute to the success of the promotion process and bring the values of olive tree civilisation and its tourism activities closer to tourists.

Although the concept of authenticity is still controversial, its important role in tourist experiences and olive tourism promotion is undeniable. MacCannell (1973, 1976) introduced the concept of authenticity the first time in tourist motivations and experiences belonged to sociological studies (cited in Wang 1999). Since then, it has been widely discussed and contested by many authors in tourism studies, such as Cohen (1988); Hughes (1995); Selwyn (1996); Wang (1999); Steiner and Reisinger (2006); Chhabra (2010); Lau (2010); Zhu (2012); Brown (2013); and Park (2014) (cited in Park 2014). According to Park (2014: 75), authenticity is “a relative, subjective and malleable concept focusing on tourist’s existential state in which they consume

cultural objects...” She also showed the necessity of a balanced and flexible approach, in which the authentic evaluation should be based on tourists’ own perceptions and experiences in evaluating authenticity. However, to have a more specific understanding, the concept of authentic experiences in the case of olive tourism can be seen in the definition of Sharpley (Sharpley 1994:130, cited in Wang 1999). Here, the tourism products having similar features with olive tourism products like festivals, cuisine, housing, etc. could be considered as authentic or inauthentic based on “the criterion of whether they are made or enacted by local people according to custom or tradition.” Accordingly, “authenticity connotes traditional culture and origin, a sense of the genuine, the real or the unique” (Sharpley 1994:130, cited in Wang 1999).

Authentic experiences should be part of olive tourism promotion in Italy, especially in Puglia and Sicily since they play a significant role in tourism in general and in olive tourism in particular. MacCannell (1973, 1976) (cited in Park, 2014: 60). Yeoman et al. (2007), and Park (2014: 75) all confirmed the paramount importance of authenticity for tourists, tourism developers and promoters. Contemporary tourists are more and more eager to seek products and experiences in other places and cultures that are original and realistic. Authentic experiences have become a mutual standard for both tourists and tour operators. Since, according to Yeoman et al. (2007) and Park (2014: 75), the ways that tourists perceive the real and authentic of tourism products or services directly influence their decision to purchase. At the same time, tourist attractions and experiences are created and shaped by the tour operators who follow the demand of searching for authentic experiences of contemporary tourists.

Furthermore, besides the authentic experiences, other values of olive tourism should also be included in the olive tourism promotional strategies of not only the regions of Puglia and Sicily but also the whole of Italy. Here, the olive tourism values go beyond offering just amusing experiences for tourists during their trips. Via different related activities, olive tourists could be aware of the health benefits of olive oil, the meanings and values of the olive tree civilisation, and get used to the habit of using olive oil to have a healthy living condition. Consequently, they could bring those habits and spread their knowledge of the Italian olive heritage back to their home countries. Finally, Puglia and Sicily could also learn from experiences and strategies of Tuscany in the development of olive tourism to further develop this type of tourism in these two areas.

Generally, the abundant strengths in terms of nature, landscape, people, tradition, history and culture; the positive reflections of tourists on the Italian olive tourism activities; together with the above presented suggestions about supportive policies and promotional strategies for the olive tourism development in Italy and more specifically in Puglia and Sicily, might contribute to the Italian sustainable tourism development and achieve more balance in olive tourism development in different regions of Italy.

Conclusion

Olive tourism is a relatively new, yet important type of tourism, which has just more strongly developed in the recent decade in olive cultivating countries. This type of tourism originated from the important meanings and influences of the olive tree civilisation and the olive cultural heritage to every aspect of life of Mediterranean people in general and of Italian people in particular. Therefore, this thesis aimed to answer the research question “How has the olive tourism practice in Italy been promoted on websites in English language to international tourists in 2017 -2018?” To have a comprehensive overview of the research topic, the author reviewed the online and offline literature, including studies, research articles, books, papers and documents related to the olive cultural heritage, olive tree civilisation and olive tourism in general and in Italy in particular. This literature overview greatly contributed to the understanding of the current context of olive tourism and contemporary research state of this topic. It enabled the author to utilize previous findings and arguments to better conduct the research of this thesis, especially those of Salvo et al. (2013), Murgado (2013), Campón-Cerro et al. (2014), López-Guzmán et al. (2016), Millán et al. (2018), and the model of an olive oil tourist experience in Spain of Murgado in 2011. In addition, important concepts and issues related to the promotion and development of olive tourism in Italy were discussed. Those concepts consist of *heritage* and *cultural heritage*, *olive cultural heritage*, *olive tourism*, *sustainable tourism*, *promotion and tourism promotion*, *heritage preservation* and *conservation*, and *authenticity* and *authentic experiences* in olive tourism.

Importantly, the analyses and discussions of significant related issues in this thesis provide a multi-dimensional view on the current context of the olive tourism in Italy. Here, the challenges of tourism promotion in general, especially in Italy with the impact of globalization and the strong competitiveness from its neighbouring countries, and the lack of close cooperation among the stakeholders, seems not to have significant influences on the development of olive tourism in Italy. In contrast, due to the parallel and complementary relation between the olive heritage preservation and olive tourism development, the well-preserved state of olive cultural heritage is a key strength for the development of olive tourism in Italy. Besides, due to the interactive relation between the olive tourism practice and the development of sustainable tourism in Mediterranean countries and

in Italy, Italy and its regions of Puglia and Sicily have significant potential to stronger develop sustainable tourism based on the development of olive tourism and vice versa.

Especially, two major issues were analysed in this thesis. The first research analysed 124 entries belonging to 124 different websites in English language related to the olive tourism practice and the olive heritage in Italy based on the model of the Spanish olive tourism practice of Murgado in 2011. The second research analysed 23 travel review pages belonging to the TripAdvisor website. Both analyses were based on the preliminary categories (or criteria) as mentioned in previous chapters. The results of these two analyses gave not only a clear answer to the research question of how the olive tourism practice in Italy has been promoted on websites in English language to international tourists in 2017 – 2018, but also an overview of reflections of tourists on olive tours.

The findings of the first analysis provide important information, including the division of the websites, the types, average length and price of each type of tours offered, and popular places in Italy in olive tourism promotion. Remarkably, the olive tourism activities in Italy in 2017 - 2018 are divided into 19 sorts, which are much more diverse and exciting in comparison to the model of the Spanish olive tourism practice of Murgado in 2011. Many appealing olive tourism activities emerge in Italy, such as taking part in educational activities like cooking or olive oil tasting classes, adopting olive trees, staying in Bed and Breakfast accommodations located in olive groves, and participating in Volunteer Tourism programs in Italian olive farms. Notably, besides the Italian business group with its dominant role in olive tourism promotion, there are many tourist organizers from other five groups participating in this tourism practice, such as those from the U.S and Canada, with its role of being the second promoter, who provides olive tours to Italy. Additionally, the findings of the second research show the very positive evaluation of tourists on the Italian olive tourism activities with the exceptional high percentage of 98.7% (for excellent and very good reviews), and the proportion of international tourist reviews takes up to 88% of the total reviews. This is an important strength of the olive tourism practice in Italy, which partly shows the firm potential of this type of tourism that contributes to the development of the Italian tourism in general.

Based on the results of the studies and research findings in this thesis, the author critically analyses and discusses the contemporary state of the olive tourism practice and sustainable tourism

development based on olive tourism in Italy and the regions of Puglia and Sicily. The abundant strengths include nature, landscape, people, tradition, history and culture, sophisticated cuisine, the well-preserved state of the olive heritage, the very positive reflections of tourists on the Italian olive tourism activities, and the important relation between olive tourism and sustainable tourism development. Despite having strong potentials and the initial impressive achievements, olive tourism and sustainable tourism development are still new areas and might require special efforts in Italy. The findings reveal a critical issue, which is the imbalance of the development and promotion of olive tourism among Italian regions, especially between Tuscany and the regions of Puglia and Sicily. Although Puglia and Sicily belong to the largest olive cultivating and producing region in Italy and have many other valuable assets to develop olive tourism, these regions have been left far behind Tuscany in the development and promotion of olive tourism. The given reasons are the shortcoming of the sustainable tourism development policies in Italy before 2017, the lack of suitable policies from the local authorities of Puglia and Sicily in building tourist attractions, and the misusing of complementary elements in these two regions in olive tourism promotion and practice. Therefore, to better develop olive tourism and sustainable tourism in Italy and the regions of Puglia and Sicily, the current Italian sustainable tourism development policy might need to further support and encourage the cooperation among the national tourism decision makers and the local tourism authorities, and to empower local communities to make their own decisions in tourism development plans. Besides, the Italian tourism development plan could create favorable conditions (such as supportive policies for farmers, olive mills and factories, and a favorable environment for tourism investors) for the olive tourism development and sustainable tourism development of Puglia and Sicily. More importantly, it highly recommends the improvement of the complementary elements and the creation of innovative tourism products to effectively boost olive tourism and sustainable tourism in Italy, especially the regions of Puglia and Sicily.

Overall, olive tourism has gained an increasingly important position in the Italian tourism, steadily developing and gaining remarkable initial achievements. The development of both olive tourism and sustainable tourism enables Italy and its regions to effectively make use of their abundant resources to bring back economic benefits to the nation and its locals in the long term, especially for the group of farmers, small and medium tourist organizers and olive producers. Therefore, they can be more committed and dedicated to the development of olive cultivation, production and promotion. Thus, the olive heritage and civilisation can be better preserved and

promoted to national and international tourists. Importantly, developing olive tourism creates a chance to spread the Italian culture, the meanings and values of the olive tree civilisation or the olive cultural heritage, and the healthy habit of using Italian pure fresh extra-virgin olive oil. Olive tourism also helps to diversify tourism products, bring unforgettable experiences to tourists and make the Italian tourism more competitive. The findings and arguments of this thesis could bring important benefits and practical considerations to multiple parties. Specifically, this thesis could support tour operators, travel companies, Italian tourism authorities or academics to have an overview of the olive tourism practice, their strengths, weaknesses, and several solutions for the challenges of the development of olive tourism and sustainable tourism in Italy and its regions. The case study of Italy and the regions of Puglia and Sicily in this thesis could be a model for other tourist destinations with similar conditions and contexts of olive production, and natural, culinary and socio-cultural features. This thesis also partly contributes to fill the gap in literature and is the foundation for further research in the future.

Because of the limitation of time, and the lack of practical living experiences in Italy of the writer, this thesis could not avoid several limitations in evaluating and analyzing the current socio-economic and cultural context, and several issues related to the olive tourism development of this country. However, this thesis is the result of the hard work of the writer in 9 months with all the passion and interest in this topic. Furthermore, the author ensures the precision and trustworthiness of most of the materials and secondary literature used in the research and the studies to support for the analyses and arguments of this thesis. The secondary source is all from the trusted online searching tools, including Google Scholar, Web of Science, and the online and offline materials of the Radboud University libraries. The secondary literature consists of books, popular journal articles, official documents and papers of the Italian tourism development plans, Italian tourism authorities and of many reputation tourism organizations and associations in the world. Importantly, the primary source used in the two analyses of this thesis are entries belonging to the websites, which directly provide olive tours and olive products, and promote olive tourism and the olive cultural heritage in Italy. Additionally, the travel review pages used in the second analysis belong to TripAdvisor, one of the influential travel websites nowadays. These websites represent information and messages that tourism promoters directly provide and convey to their prospective tourists, and are the regularly updated source of information. Furthermore, all research was conducted based on the preliminary questions and criteria to ensure the precision of the research

results. Therefore, the author is positive about the precision and objectivity of the research findings, the analyses, discussions and arguments of this thesis.

Since the time of doing this thesis was limited, several primary sources in the English language reflecting the olive tourism practice and the reviews of tourists on olive tours in Italy were left out, such as travel guides, notably is the source of online videos on the YouTube channel from both the supply and demand sides, and on several travel websites. The olive tourism promotion and practice represented in the Italian language are also a great source of information. Besides, the operation and contribution of olive museums to the general development of olive tourism, and the research on sites with advice and support of local authorities, olive tour operators, olive producers and farmers, and direct reviews of tourists on the locations could be feasible and interesting for later studies and research.

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2. Terredi Puglia. www.terredipuglia.it/en/ Note: Promote olive oil to international market.
3. Domenica. “Where the bounty begins.” www.domenicafiore.com/company/
4. Candor AGS. “Nurturing the Path of Authentic Extra Virgin Olive Oil.” candor-ags.com/bellucci-extra-virgin-olive-oil/. Note: Promote olive extra-virgin oil
5. Messori. messori.com/about/
6. Olioleferre. “100% Italian extra virgin olive oil. Cold extraction according to the best olive oil traditions.” www.olioleferre.com/en/

Note: “Le Ferre is an Apulian company leader in production, packaging and marketing of extra virgin olive oils in Italy and worldwide. Dynamism, productive and sensory research, elasticity in process management, characterize our daily work around the product and the customers.”

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Research 2: The reflection of tourists on olive tours in Italy on 23 review pages

(The reviews pages were accessed the last times on 15 August 2018)

Websites	Excellent	Very good	In English	Total reviews	Several positive reviews
1. Trip Advisor. "Montestigliano Farm Holidays in Tuscany." www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g678032-d292988-Reviews-Montestigliano_Farm_Holidays_in_Tuscany-Sovicille_Tuscany.html#REVIEWS	85		82	85	Heavenly slice, exceptionally beautiful, absolutely fabulous, perfect location, I can't wait to return!, the best gift, etc.
2. Trip Advisor. "Olive Oil Tasting." www.tripadvisor.co.nz/ShowUserReviews-g194843-d2157393-r404325232-Bartolomei_L_olio_Orvieto-Orvieto_Province_of_Terni_Umbria.html	87	55	32	154	Great, delicious, tasty food, surprise find, fun and informative, etc.
3. Trip Advisor. "Olive Oil Tasting." www.tripadvisor.co.za/ShowUserReviews-g187902-d1727883-r190327037-Tuscan_Wine_School-Siena_Tuscany.html	848	76	933	955	Fun, knowledgeable and personable, enjoy, savour, awesome, very good, great, etc.
4. Trip Advisor. "Best farmhouse/B&B in Tuscany." www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g14081230-d195454-r118813411-Villa_Lucia-Montevettolini_Monsummano_Terme_Province_of_Pistoia_Tuscany.html	38	2	41	43	The best, great, fun, wonderful, unique, interesting, will return, lovely, unforgettable, etc.
5. Trip Advisor. "Interesting Olive Oil Tour." www.tripadvisor.co.za/ShowUserReviews-g1457359-d3696558-r372847095-Antico_Frantoio_Nunzi-Cantalupo_Bevagna_Province_of_Pergugia_Umbria.html#REVIEWS	35	3	13	38	Interesting, favorite, wonderful, special place, etc.

6. Trip Advisor. "Olive oil factory tour." www.tripadvisor.co.za/ShowUserReviews-g194907-d1987650-r416235814-Frantoio_Gargiulo-Sant_Agnello_Province_of_Naples_Campania.html	244	16	243	261	Knowledgeable, great, wonderful, unexpected, WOW, etc.
7. Trip Advisor. "Excellent tour and olive oil tasting." www.tripadvisor.ie/ShowUserReviews-g2436275-d5598353-r295244613-Frantoio_Bonamini-Illasi_Province_of_Verona_Veneto.html	18	5	7	25	Excellent, informative and fun, love this place, etc.
8. Trip Advisor. "Visiting an Olive Oil Mill & Winery near Montefalco." www.tripadvisor.co.nz/ShowUserReviews-g608939-d2257497-r322679364-Montioni_Frantoio_e_Cantina-Montefalco_Province_of_Perugia_Umbria.html	311	22	216	335	Great place, knowledgeable, generous, delicious, informative, nice, interesting, modern, clean, and well appointed, gracious, etc.
9. Trip Advisor. "Amazing Excursion to Olive Grove & Olive Oil Mill." www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g194791-d1021519-r321593170-Stile_Mediterraneo_Food_and_Lifestyle_Academy-Lecce_Province_of_Lecce_Puglia.html	120	1	121	121	Amazing, beautiful, educational and fun, fantastic, life time of memories, inspiring, etc.
10. Trip Advisor. "Wine tasting & Olive Oil Farm in Tuscany." www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g644276-d2304417-r273146515-Scenic_wine_tours_in_Tuscany-Loro_Ciuffenna_Province_of_Arezzo_Tuscany.html	176	3	179	180	A highlight of our trip!, "we stopped for lunch in a village that used to be a castle, and we all agree that it was our favorite meal of our entire 11-day trip to Italy", etc.
11. Trip Advisor. "Group tour - wine, cheese and olive oil tasting." www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187895-d1738781-r464728984-	2671	134	2767	2822	Amazing, awesome, great, informative, unforgettable, etc.

Tuscan_Wine_Tours_by_Grape_Tour s-Florence_Tuscany.html					
12. Trip Advisor. “Awesome Olive Oil Tasting Tour!” www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g194934-d4355469-r165931699- Discovering_Umbria_Wine_Food_Day_Tours- Todi_Province_of_Perugia_Umbria.html	56	2	53	59	Awesome, wonderful, perfect, “taught me so much about Umbria's history, language, customs, flora and fauna, food, and people.” “Highly recommended!”, etc.
13. Trip Advisor. “Do this Olive Oil Tour!” www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g642178-d2390691-r285742561- Masseria_Brancati-Ostuni_Province_of_Brindisi_Puglia.html	483	37	185	529	Great, historic olive grove, etc.
14. Trip Advisor. “Olive Grove Tour.” www.tripadvisor.co.nz/ShowUserReviews-g187791-d6023959-r472652039- Convivio_Rome_Olive_Oil_Tour-Rome_Lazio.html	34	1	35	35	Informative, beautiful, delicious, great, incredible, etc.
15. Trip Advisor. “Olive Oil tasting and tour of the olivetto (olive grove).” www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g659317-d7055029-r332951476- Paolo_Bonomelli_Boutique_Olive_Farm- Torri_del_Benaco_Province_of_Verona_Veneto.html	40	6	19	46	Unforgettable, great, etc.
16. Trip Advisor. “Olive Oil Mill Tour and Tasting with Francesco.” www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g642184-d3224880-r320540376- Ravagni_since_1421- Anghiari_Province_of_Arezzo_Tuscany.html	193	6	185	207	Heaven on earth, highlight of Tuscany, fantastic experience, etc.

17. Trip Advisor. "An oil mill close to the SE corner of Lake Garda." www.tripadvisor.co.za/ShowUserReviews-g1053395-d7213581-r239052279-Turri_Oil_Mill-Cavaion_Veronese_Province_of_Verona_Veneto.html	2	3	1	6	
18. Trip Advisor. "Olive Oil Tour." www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g194863-d2480900-r441401740-Private_Day_Tours-Positano_Amalfi_Coast_Campania.html	761	9	733	771	Great, amazing, so much fun, etc.
19. Trip Advisor. "Olive Oil Tasting." en.tripadvisor.com.hk/ShowUserReviews-g1079945-d12275771-r469863563-Oleificio_Gulino-Chiaramonte_Gulfi_Province_of_Ragusa_Sicily.html	39	1	14	40	
20. Trip Advisor. "The Real Italy IT Very Unique!" www.tripadvisor.com.ph/ShowUserReviews-g187791-d1592525-r501867765-Johnny_Madge_Olive_Oil_Tour-Rome_Lazio.html	136	1	135	137	Highlight of Italy trip!, incredible, Savor the Savory, wonderful day, not to be missed!, BEST THING I HAVE EVER DONE ON A HOLIDAY!, etc.
21. Trip Advisor. "Wine, cheese and Olive oil tasting." www.tripadvisor.co.nz/ShowUserReviews-g187895-d1105970-r315881143-Italy_City_Tours-Florence_Tuscany.html	198	19	213	219	Great, fantastic, etc.
22. Trip Advisor. "Awesome Olive Oil Tasting Tour!" www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g194934-d4355469-r165931699-Discovering_Umbria_Wine_Food_Day_Tours-	56	2	55	59	Awesome, wonderful, perfect, etc.

Todi_Province_of_Perugia_Umbria.html					
23. Trip Advisor. “Olive Oil Tour and Tasting.” www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g3213378-d8458250-r323614112-Pruneti-San_Polo_in_Chianti_Greve_in_Chianti_Tuscany.html	20	3	14	23	Informative, cool experience, great, etc.
Total	6651	407	6276	7150	
Percentage in comparison to the total reviews	93%	5.7%	88%	100%	