

# COMPETITIVENESS AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS FOR OUTDOOR HOSPITALITY PARK BUSINESSES: FOCUSING ON RESOURCE AND CAPABILITY STRATEGIES

**Kévin Grande**

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FOR OUTDOOR HOSPITALITY PARK BUSINESSES:  
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**Kévin Grande**





DOCTORAL THESIS

**COMPETITIVENESS AND  
PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS  
FOR OUTDOOR HOSPITALITY PARK  
BUSINESSES:**

**FOCUSING ON RESOURCE AND  
CAPABILITY STRATEGIES**

**Kévin Grande**

2022

Universitat de Girona



DOCTORAL THESIS

COMPETITIVENESS AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS  
FOR OUTDOOR HOSPITALITY PARK BUSINESSES:  
FOCUSING ON RESOURCE AND CAPABILITY STRATEGIES

**Compendium of publications**

**Kévin Grande**

**Department of Organization, Business Management and Product Design**

2022

JOINT DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN TOURISM

**Supervised by: Dra. Raquel Camprubi & Dr. Laurent Botti**

**Doctoral Thesis submitted to the University of Girona for the  
degree of Doctor**



Dra. Raquel Camprubi Subirana, of the University of Girona, and Dr. Laurent Botti, of the University of Perpignan Via Domitia,

WE DECLARE:

That the thesis titles "Competitiveness and performance measurements for outdoor hospitality park businesses: Focusing on resource and capability strategies", presented by Kévin Grande to obtain the doctoral degree, has been completed under our supervision and meets the requirements to opt for an International Doctorate.

For all intents and purposes, I hereby sign this document.

Signature:

Dra. Raquel Camprubi

Dr. Laurent Botti

Girona, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022





## List of publications derived from the doctoral thesis

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**Title:** An exploratory analysis of the camping industry as a provider of attractive resources. The case of outdoor hospitality parks (OHPs) in unattractive regions.

**Author:** Grande, K.

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### Article 2. Under-review

**Title:** Measuring the competitiveness of Outdoor Hospitality Parks: A multi-criteria sorting methodology.

**Authors:** Grande, K., Botti, L.

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## **List of conferences, colloquiums and workshops**

Besides the preceding publications, the research carried out provided other outcomes presented in the various conferences, colloquiums and workshops listed below.

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- Grande., K. (2021). 8th SHU-UdG - Tourism PhD Research Colloquium. collaboration between the University of Girona and the Sheffield Hallam University. Lecture “Business model canvas: An application to the camping sector”, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (Girona, Spain).
- ATLAS Annual conference - Tourism PhD Research Colloquium (2019). Digital transformation and transforming business models. Lecture “Measuring competitiveness in French outdoor hospitality parks (OHP)”, 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 (Girona, Spain).
- AFMAT Annual conference - Tourism Management PhD Research Colloquium (2019). Doctoral workshop. Lecture “Measuring performance in French outdoor hospitality parks (OHP)”, 22<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

### **International conferences, colloquiums and workshops**

- Grande., K, Botti, L. (2022). 9th AFMAT Annual conference. Angers University Tourism Management Research Colloquium. Lecture “In the perspective of performance measurement in the camping sector: Proposing homogenous typologies and profiles of camping attractiveness”, 12th May 2022 (Angers, France).
- Grande., K, Rios, M. (2021). 8th AFMAT Annual conference. Lyon Paul Bocuse Institute - Tourism Management Research Colloquium. Lecture “From strategic marketing to performance. Analysis of the strategy of the Camping Quality organization (Camping Qualité)”, 28th May 2021 (Lyon, France).

- Grande., K, Camprubi, R. (2020). 8th AFMAT Annual conference. Lyon Paul Bocuse Institute - Tourism Management Research Colloquium. Lecture “Business model canvas applied to camping industry”, 27th May 2020 (Lyon, France).
- Grande., K. (2020). 5th SSTD. Spring Symposium on Challenges in Tourism Development Annual conference. Lecture “Campsite segmentation by multiple criteria decision aiding method (MCDA). A benchmarking perspective ”, Conference accepted and cancelled for Covid19. 4th June 2020 (Maspalomas, Gran Canaria Island, Spain).
- Grande., K, Botti, L. (2020). 7th AFMAT Annual conference. Tourism Management Research Colloquium. Lecture “An exploratory analysis of outdoor hospitality as provider of goods and services. The case of rural campsites in unattractive region”, 28th - 29th May 2020 (Montreal, Canada).
- Grande., K, Camprubi., R, Botti., L. (2020). European TTRA Conference (2020). Lecture. “Competitiveness index of campsites. A methodological and systemic approach based on physical resources”. Conference accepted and cancelled for Covid19. 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 (Innsbruck, Austria).
- Grande., K, Rios, M. (2019). 12<sup>th</sup> Conference on Management Control. Strasbourg Business School "digitalization and management control". Lecture "Impact of the digitalization of management control on the management of Outdoor Hospitality Parks". ACCRA magazine. 16 March 2020 (Strasbourg, France).
- Grande., K, Camprubi., R, Botti., L. (2019). ATLAS Annual conference. Tourism Research Colloquium. Digital transformation and transforming business models. Lecture “Measuring competitiveness using composite indicators in French outdoor hospitality parks (OHP)”, 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 (Girona, Spain).
- Grande., K, Camprubi., R, Botti., L. (2019). 6th AFMAT Annual conference (2019). Tourism Management Research Colloquium. Session 3. Lecture “Measuring overall performance of outdoor hospitality parks (OHP): the contribution of resource-based segmentation indicators”, 23th May 2019 (Perpignan, France).

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## **Abstract**

This doctoral thesis studies competitiveness and performance as complementary but distinct elements in strategic management. From the point of view of the literature review in hospitality management, this research shows that camping businesses have been poorly analyzed. Thus, the challenge of this research is to remove this lack of investigation by a set of three complementary academic contributions in order to shed light on the particularities of the camping businesses, otherwise known as the outdoor hospitality sector. In this perspective, this research proposes strategic analysis models adapted to the particularities of the sector.

From a contextual point of view, this research focuses on a growing phenomenon, the hyper-competition in the camping sector. Academic research has revealed the race to the lodging amenities and recreational facilities of a large number of camping businesses. This intensive mutation refers to the transformation of a nature-based camping business into an outdoor hospitality business. This research is innovative since hospitality management research has never made a distinction between the terminologies of camping and outdoor hospitality businesses. In this context, studying the boundaries between what constitutes a camping park and an outdoor hospitality park is an important issue in order to better distinguish the economic behavior of these businesses. Thus, this research explores how independent and municipal camping organizations are involved in a resource-intensive strategy (lodging and recreational resources) and how they develop their economic activities. In doing so, the field of research concerns independent and municipal camping businesses and the focus of the research is on competitiveness and performance measurements.

With this in mind, the first article of this doctoral thesis focuses on identifying the characteristics of the independent and municipal camping businesses. This research uses a content analysis method to explore the websites of the camping businesses. From this perspective, the results reveal a large set of resources that are physically attractive in the sense of their assets in lodging services and leisure facilities offered to tourists. The results point to a set of potential market opportunities. However, this research does not accurately indicate the potential of each business.

In this sense, the second article focuses on measuring the competitiveness of camping businesses through their comparative advantages. This research uses the determinants identified in the first contribution and aims to measure the competitive potential of each company. To do

so, this research deploy a multi-criteria decision support tool based on non-compensatory methods. The results propose groups of firms that are homogeneous in terms of their accommodation and leisure facilities. However, this research does not indicate whether the quality of resources is a factor of competitive advantage. Therefore, the step of measuring competitive advantage is recommended.

Thus, the third article focuses on measuring the competitive advantage of independent and municipal camping parks. This research adopts the theoretical point of view of the dynamic resources and capabilities of the company applied to the development of the business model of the firm. Thus, this article explores the determinants of business models and then applies the statistical method of cluster analysis to create groups of homogeneous businesses. The results express several typologies of business models and specify the profiles of these firms. Thus, decision-makers have tools to manage their competitive positioning with regard to the resources and capacities at their disposal.

The overall observation supported by this thesis indicates that the independent non-affiliated and municipal camping parks are significantly lagging behind the camping chains. While the chains have identified relevant and robust business models that are now their strength and their DNA, this is not the case for the vast majority of independent and municipal camping businesses that have contributed to this research. Thus, the overall analysis highlights that many independent and municipal camping establishments present characteristics of precarious activity and a lack of competitiveness. In this way, only a few small independent camping businesses have found a value proposition that reflects their intrinsic characteristics. In doing so, this compendium of articles focused on the development of strategic tools for supporting owner-managers in making the best choices for their business. From this position, intuitive management has no longer a place in this fast-growing business sector.



## Résumé

Cette thèse de doctorat étudie la compétitivité et la performance comme éléments complémentaires mais distincts du management stratégique. Du point de vue de la revue de littérature en management de l'hôtellerie, cette recherche montre que les entreprises d'exploitation des terrains de camping ont été peu analysées. Ainsi, l'enjeu de cette recherche est de lever ce manque d'investigation par un ensemble de trois contributions académiques complémentaires afin de mettre en lumière les particularités des entreprises qui exploitent des terrains de camping, autrement appelées entreprises d'hôtellerie de plein air. Dans cette perspective, cette recherche propose des modèles d'analyse stratégique adaptés aux particularités de ce secteur.

D'un point de vue contextuel, cette recherche se concentre sur un phénomène croissant, l'hyperconcurrence dans le secteur des campings. La recherche académique a révélé la course à la mutation capitalistique d'un grand nombre d'entreprises de camping. Cette mutation capitalistique fait référence à la dotation de ressources d'hébergement et de loisirs impliquées dans les entreprises de camping et à leur intégration dans des modèles économiques. En d'autres termes, la transformation d'une entreprise de camping basée sur la nature en une entreprise d'hôtellerie de plein air. Cette recherche est innovante puisque la recherche en management de l'hôtellerie n'a jamais distingué les terminologies campings et hôtels de plein air. En ce sens, étudier les frontières entre ce que représente un camping et un parc d'hôtellerie de plein air est un sujet important afin de mieux comprendre le comportement économique de ses entreprises. Ainsi, cette recherche explore comment les organisations de camping indépendantes et municipales sont impliquées dans cette stratégie capitalistique et comment elles y développent leurs activités économiques. Ce faisant, le champ de recherche concerne les entreprises de camping indépendantes et municipales et l'objet de recherche se concentre sur les mesures de la compétitivité et de la performance.

Dans cette optique, le premier article de cette thèse de doctorat s'attache à identifier les caractéristiques des entreprises de camping indépendantes et municipales. Cette recherche utilise une méthode d'analyse de contenu pour explorer les sites web des entreprises de camping. Dans cette perspective, les résultats révèlent un large ensemble de ressources physiquement attractives au sens de leurs atouts en matière de services d'hébergement et de loisirs offerts aux

touristes. Les résultats mettent en évidence un ensemble d'opportunités potentielles de marché. Cependant, cette recherche n'indique pas avec précision le potentiel de chaque entreprise.

En ce sens, le deuxième article s'attache à mesurer la compétitivité des entreprises de camping à travers leurs avantages comparatifs. Cette recherche utilise les déterminants identifiés dans la première contribution et vise à mesurer le potentiel concurrentiel de chaque entreprise. Pour ce faire, cette recherche déploie un outil d'aide à la décision multicritères basé sur des méthodes non compensatoires. Les résultats proposent des groupes d'entreprises homogènes en termes d'équipements d'hébergement et de loisirs. Cependant, cette recherche n'indique pas si la qualité des ressources est un facteur d'avantage concurrentiel. Par conséquent, l'étape de la mesure de l'avantage concurrentiel est recommandée.

Ainsi, le troisième article se concentre sur la mesure de l'avantage concurrentiel des parcs de camping indépendants et municipaux. Cette recherche adopte le point de vue théorique des ressources et capacités dynamiques de l'entreprise appliqué au développement du modèle économique de l'entreprise. Ainsi, cet article explore les déterminants des modèles d'affaires et applique ensuite la méthode statistique de l'analyse en typologies pour créer des groupes d'entreprises homogènes. Les résultats expriment plusieurs typologies de modèles économiques et précisent les profils de ces entreprises. Ce faisant, les décideurs disposent d'outils pour gérer leur positionnement concurrentiel au regard des ressources et capacités dont ils disposent.

Le constat global soutenu par cette thèse indique que les parcs de camping indépendants non affiliés et municipaux accusent un retard significatif par rapport aux chaînes de camping. Si les chaînes ont identifié des modèles d'affaires pertinents et robustes qui constituent aujourd'hui leur force et leur ADN, ce n'est pas le cas de la grande majorité des entreprises de camping indépendantes et municipales qui ont contribué à cette recherche. Ainsi, l'analyse globale souligne que de nombreux établissements de camping indépendants et municipaux présentent des caractéristiques de précarité de l'activité et un manque de compétitivité. Ainsi, seules quelques petites entreprises de camping indépendantes ont trouvé une proposition de valeur qui reflète leurs caractéristiques intrinsèques. Ce recueil d'articles s'est donc concentré sur le développement d'outils stratégiques pour aider les propriétaires-gestionnaires à faire les meilleurs choix pour leur entreprise. De ce point de vue, la gestion intuitive n'a plus sa place dans ce secteur d'activité en pleine expansion.

## Resum

Aquesta tesi doctoral estudia la competitivitat i el rendiment com a elements complementaris però diferents en la direcció estratègica. Des del punt de vista de la revisió de la literatura sobre la gestió hotelera, aquesta recerca mostra que el negoci dels càmpings ha estat poc analitzat. Per tant, aquest estudi se centra en millorar aquesta falta d'investigació amb un conjunt de tres aportacions acadèmiques complementàries entre elles, que tenen l'objectiu de destacar les particularitats del mercat del càmping, també conegut com allotjament a l'aire lliure.

En aquesta perspectiva, aquesta recerca proposa models d'anàlisi i estratègia adaptats a les particularitats i problemes del sector. Des d'un punt de vista contextual, aquest estudi se centra en un fenomen en creixement, la híper-competència. Es descobreix la carrera pel canvi tecnològic d'un gran nombre d'empreses. Dit d'una altra manera, el canvi d'un càmping tradicional en un hotel d'aire lliure.

Aquest canvi tecnològic és impulsat per grups ben consolidats i per cadenes de càmpings. Tanmateix, l'observació és la següent: Els càmpings independents i municipals els hi costa mantenir-se al dia amb aquest canvi tecnològic. Han de seguir les tendències del mercat, o reinventar-se en un model més adequat a les seves particularitats?

Seguint aquesta perspectiva, el primer article d'aquesta tesi doctoral tracta de la identificació de les característiques del mercat de càmpings independents i municipals. Aquesta investigació utilitza l'anàlisi de contingut com a mètode per tal d'explorar els llocs web dels càmpings. Des d'aquest punt de vista, els resultats mostren un gran nombre de recursos físics atractius, en el sentit dels seus actius de serveis d'allotjament i instal·lacions d'oci que s'ofereixen als turistes. Els resultats mostren moltes oportunitats de mercat. No obstant, aquesta investigació no indica amb precisió el potencial de cada empresa.

El segon article se centra en mesurar la competitivitat dels càmpings a través dels seus avantatges comparatius. Aquesta recerca utilitza els determinants identificats en la primera aportació i pretén mesurar-ne el potencial competitiu de cada empresa. Per fer-ho, aquesta investigació ha utilitzat una eina d'ajuda a la decisió multi-criteri basada en mètodes no compensatoris. Els resultats mostren grups d'empreses homogenis mitjançant les seves instal·lacions d'allotjament i oci. Tanmateix, aquesta investigació no indica si la qualitat de

recursos és un factor d'avantatge competitiu. Per tant, es recomana el fet de mesurar l'avantatge competitiu.

El tercer article es focalitza a mesurar l'avantatge competitiu dels càmpings independents i municipals. Aquesta recerca adopta el punt de vista teòric dels recursos i capacitats dinàmiques de l'empresa aplicat al desenvolupament del model de negoci de l'empresa. Així, aquest article explora els determinants dels models econòmics i a continuació aplica el mètode estadístic d'anàlisi de clústers per crear grups d'empreses homogènies. Els resultats expressen diverses tipologies de models econòmics i especifiquen els perfils d'aquestes empreses. Així els que prenen les decisions disposen d'eines per gestionar el seu posicionament competitiu pel que fa als recursos i capacitats que disposen.

L'observació global recolzada per aquesta tesi afirma que un gran nombre de càmpings independents i municipals no disposen dels mitjans per imitar els grans grups i cadenes. Si els grups han identificat models econòmics rellevants i robusts que són avui la seva fortalesa i el seu ADN, no és el cas de la gran majoria de càmpings independents i municipals que van contribuir a aquesta investigació. Així, l'anàlisi en conjunt mostra que molts càmpings independents i municipals tenen característiques de precarietat de l'activitat i manca de competitivitat. D'aquesta manera, pocs petits càmpings independents han trobat una proposta de valor que reflecteix les seves característiques intrínseques.

A partir d'aquí aquest compendi d'articles s'ha focalitzat en el desenvolupament d'eines estratègiques per ajudar als propietaris-operadors a escollir la millor opció per al seu negoci. Des d'aquest punt de vista, la gestió intuïtiva ja no té cabuda en aquest sector de l'activitat en plena expansió.

## Resumen

Esta tesis doctoral investiga la competitividad y el rendimiento como elementos complementarios pero distintos de la gestión estratégica. Desde el punto de vista de la revisión de la literatura sobre gestión hotelera, esta investigación muestra que las empresas de camping han sido poco analizadas. Así, el objetivo de esta investigación es superar esta carencia mediante un conjunto de tres aportaciones académicas complementarias para poner de manifiesto las particularidades de las empresas de camping, también conocidas como empresas hoteleras al aire libre. En esta perspectiva, esta investigación propone modelos de análisis estratégico adaptados a las particularidades del sector.

Desde un punto de vista contextual, esta investigación se centra en un fenómeno creciente, la hipercompetencia en el sector del camping. La investigación académica ha revelado la carrera por la mutación capitalista de un gran número de empresas de camping. Esta transformación del capital se refiere a la dotación de recursos de alojamiento y ocio que implican los negocios de camping y su integración en los modelos de negocio. En otras palabras, la transformación de un negocio de camping basado en la naturaleza en un negocio de hostelería al aire libre. Esta investigación es innovadora porque la investigación sobre la gestión hotelera nunca ha distinguido entre las terminologías de los campings y los hoteles al aire libre. En este sentido, el estudio de las fronteras entre lo que representa un camping y un parque hotelero al aire libre es un tema importante para comprender los comportamientos económicos de estos negocios. Así, esta investigación explora cómo las organizaciones de camping independientes y municipales participan en esta estrategia de capital intensivo y cómo desarrollan sus actividades económicas. Para ello, el área de investigación se refiere a las empresas de camping independientes y municipales y el objeto de investigación se centra en las medidas de competitividad y rendimiento.

En este sentido, el primer artículo de esta tesis doctoral se centra en la identificación de las características de las empresas de camping independientes y municipales. Esta investigación utiliza un método de análisis de contenido para explorar los materiales de comunicación de las empresas de camping. Desde esta perspectiva, los resultados revelan un amplio conjunto de recursos atractivos en el sentido de sus activos en términos de alojamiento y servicios de ocio ofrecidos a los turistas. Los resultados ponen de manifiesto un conjunto de posibles

oportunidades de mercado. Sin embargo, esta investigación no indica con precisión el potencial de cada empresa.

En este sentido, el segundo artículo se centra en medir la competitividad de las empresas de camping a través de sus ventajas comparativas. Esta investigación utiliza los determinantes identificados en la primera contribución y pretende medir el potencial competitivo de cada empresa. Para ello, esta investigación despliega una herramienta de apoyo a la decisión multicriterio basada en métodos no compensatorios. Los resultados proponen grupos homogéneos de empresas en cuanto a alojamiento e instalaciones de ocio. Sin embargo, esta investigación no indica si la calidad de los recursos es un factor de ventaja competitiva. Por lo tanto, se recomienda el paso de medir la ventaja competitiva.

Así, el tercer artículo se centra en la medición de la ventaja competitiva de los campings independientes y municipales. Esta investigación adopta la visión teórica de los recursos y capacidades dinámicas de la empresa aplicada al desarrollo del modelo de negocio de la empresa. Así pues, este documento explora los determinantes de los modelos de negocio y, a continuación, aplica el método estadístico de análisis de tipologías para crear grupos de empresas homogéneas. Los resultados expresan varias tipologías de modelos de negocio y especifican los perfiles de estas empresas. Esto proporciona a los responsables de la toma de decisiones herramientas para gestionar su posicionamiento competitivo con respecto a los recursos y capacidades de que disponen.

La conclusión general apoyada por esta tesis indica que los campings independientes no afiliados y municipales están muy por detrás de las cadenas de campings. Mientras que las cadenas han identificado modelos de negocio relevantes y sólidos que son ahora su fuerza y su ADN, este no es el caso de la gran mayoría de los campings independientes y municipales que han contribuido a esta investigación. Así, el análisis global pone de manifiesto que muchos establecimientos de camping independientes y municipales presentan características de precariedad de la actividad y falta de competitividad. Así, sólo unos pocos pequeños negocios de camping independientes han encontrado una propuesta de valor que refleje sus características intrínsecas. Por ello, esta colección de artículos se ha centrado en el desarrollo de herramientas estratégicas para ayudar a los propietarios-gestores a tomar las mejores decisiones para su negocio. Desde esta perspectiva, la gestión intuitiva ya no tiene cabida en esta industria en crecimiento.





**Universitat de Girona**

## Introduction

This doctoral thesis focuses on the camping sector, an understudied sector in the literature review of hospitality management. This sector is launched in a dynamic business move from nature-based camping businesses to more sophisticated outdoor hospitality parks that are offering a large dotation of resources such as lodgings and recreational facilities. In other words, the transition from a blank site, to a nature-based camping business or to an outdoor hospitality business. However, research in hospitality management has never distinguished the terms camping businesses and outdoor hospitality businesses. As a consequence, studying the boundaries between a camping business and an outdoor hospitality business is an important issue in order to observe the multiple economic behaviors of these businesses. Moreover, this is in line with the work of Chambers and Cifter (2022) who explained that the hospitality industry (hotel, camping and other tourist accommodation sectors) have structural characteristics. Due to its large holdings of real estate, land, buildings and recreational equipment, camping businesses as hotel businesses are involved into a capital-intensive sector (Chambers and Cifter, 2022). In this context, this doctoral thesis has used the term resources in the context of assets to address the capital-intensive aspect of the offered lodging and recreational facilities as the core of any camping business.

The camping context lets appear a strong competitive pressure from powerful camping chains. Meanwhile, some independent and municipal owner-managers are facing major strategic decisions and organizational challenges to compete against chains offers. Thus, camping owners/managers are faced with the need to make decisions based on complex situations (Roy, 1990) such as prioritizing their investments in amenities and facilities or selecting the most efficient distributor. Nevertheless, Peršić et al. (2017) state that research on strategic management and decision aiding in the camping sector is severely lacking in theoretical contributions.

Comparatively to the camping context, there is the hospitality research that has known several contributions. In that perspective, hospitality research can be considered to influence those of the camping sector. However, the camping and hotel sectors differs significantly from its value proposition. As a consequence, this thesis aims to offer strategic tools to measure competitiveness and performance adapted to camping and outdoor hospitality parks. In doing so, the research field of this doctoral thesis concerns independent and municipal camping

businesses and the research object focuses on competitiveness and performance measurements with a perspective to distinguish camping businesses from outdoor hospitality businesses.

### *Performance measurement*

In the 1990s, Kaplan and Norton (1996) or Ittner and Larcker (1997) explain that performance is defined as the achievement of organizational objectives to signify that firms set objectives, regardless of the nature and variety of these objectives. To control these objectives, financial and non-financial data are collected and aggregated to create Key Performance Indicators (KPI). These indicators are organized in normative dashboards, which are systems that allow to synthesize and normalize the information reported (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). In doing so, this achievement can be understood in the strict sense of outcome or in the broad sense of the process that leads to the result. In that perspective, there is the work of Peterson et al. (2003) which confirm that performance principally focused on the capability and ability of an organization to efficiently exploit their specific resources to achieve accomplishments consistent with the set objectives of the company, as well as considering their relevance to its users and customers. Thus, indicators must reflect the specificity of the sector and the businesses. In the camping sector, Hayllar et al. (2006) proposed a few aggregated operational indicators from 18 camping businesses. Since their contribution, camping management research has not explored any more the organizational performance of camping businesses. Despite the evidence of a lack of methodological consistency in the contributions of Hayllar et al. (2006), the camping sector is still increasingly facing the challenge of measuring the performance of their camping businesses.

Comparatively, several authors have measured hospitality performance from an organizational perspective (Assaf and Barros, 2011; Assaf et al., 2012; Hathroubi et al., 2014; Assaf and Tsionas, 2018; Peypoch et al., 2020). In complement to these studies, and to support firms and their decision-makers, numerous authors have contributed to a set of determinants and KPIs in order to characterize and profile the establishments to better explore their issues (Hathroubi et al., 2014; Assaf et al., 2017; Nieto-Garcia et al., 2019). For example, Assaf et al. (2017) and Nieto-Garcia et al. (2019) investigate hotel economic (competitiveness) and financial (profitability) performance from specific determinants only made for this sector, such as the revenue generated per available room “RevPAR” or Occupancy rates.

The concept of firm performance is complex, systemic and multidimensional. Performance implies its relative measurement to be confronted with units of comparison (temporal, financial, non-financial, or comparable typology of firms) in order to identify reference performances (Barros, 2005; Botti et al., 2009; Assaf et al., 2010; Assaf and Agbola, 2011; Assaf and Barros, 2011; Barros et al., 2011). Furthermore, measuring performance aims to promote the learning of the best managerial practices to the less performing units, as a form of performance and benchmarking improvement (Harrington, 1994; Rolstadås, 1994). Therefore, in order to set up comparative studies, parameters must be prepared in order to make the comparison most rigorous. In this context (figure 1), several authors (Phillips, 1990; Barros, 2005) have stated that the segmentation of businesses is an important part of performance measurement. Precisely, since this permit working on homogeneous firms, i.e. having similar characteristics, for appropriate, relevant and robust comparisons (Brotherton and Coyle, 1990; Coyle and Dale, 1993). Thus, to measure performance, several contributions have used segmentation criteria (Botti et al., 2009; Assaf et al., 2012; Assaf et al., 2015; Corne, 2015; Assaf and Tsionas, 2018; or Peypoch et al., 2020).

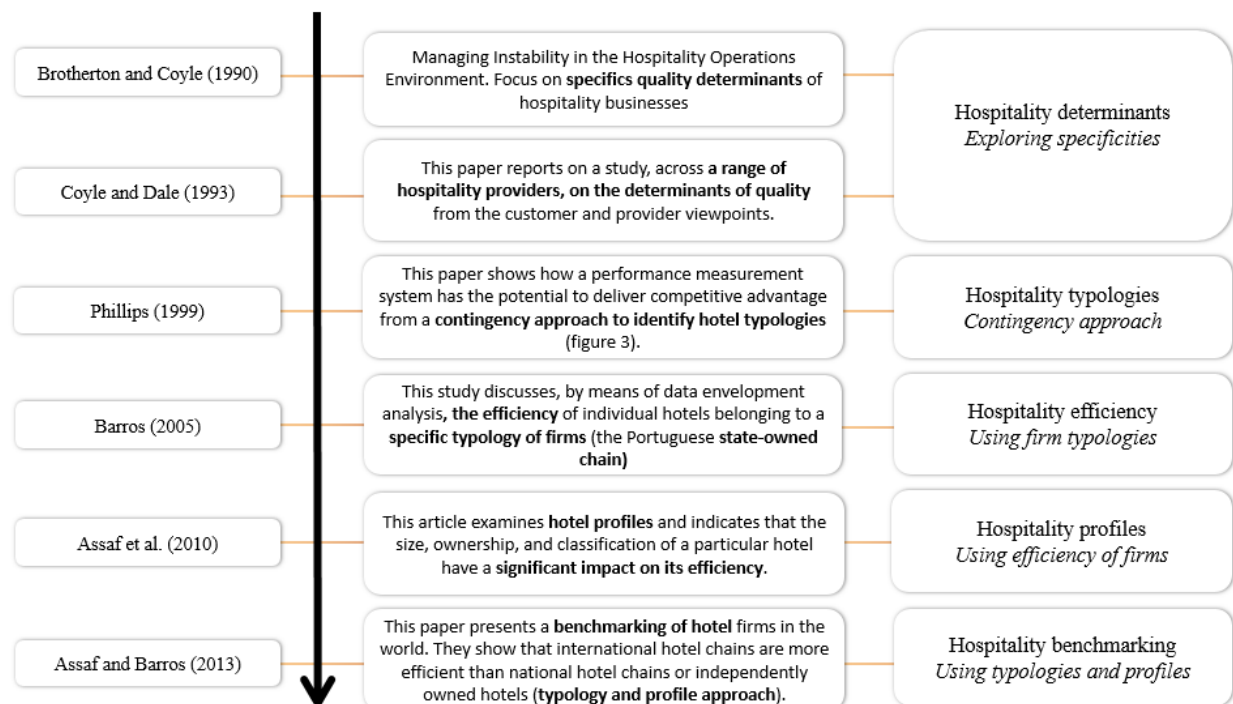


FIGURE 1. TIMELINE OF ARTICLES STUDYING HOSPITALITY PERFORMANCE

In summary (figure 1), performance measurement related to a particular sector can be structured from identifying the key determinants characterizing the specificity of the sector (Brotherton

and Coyle, 1990; Coyle and Dale, 1993), in order to apply a segmentation procedure to propose homogeneous and consistent typologies of competitors (Phillips, 1990). These are the primarily stages to create key indicators related to typologies (figure 1). Finally, the organizational performance can be measured from efficiency methods (Barros, 2005) to explore hotel profiles (Assaf et al., 2010) and benchmarking approaches (Assaf and Barros, 2013).

In camping performance measurement, Bell and Crilley (2002) created a framework to implement benchmarking approaches in the Australian caravan and tourist park sector. Furthermore, Hayllar et al. (2006, table 1, p124) benchmarked firm performance according to customer expectations and then have studied the operational management indicators of 18 camping businesses. However, these articles deploy some theoretical lacks in the perspective of performance measurement. In fact, these contributions have not explored and detailed the core of their camping businesses as made earlier in the hotel sector (Brotherton and Coyle, 1990; Coyle and Dale, 1993). For example, Bell and Crilley (2002) or Hayllar et al. (2006) used financial data such as costs and revenues without giving any details about their camping characteristics. As a consequence, this does not demonstrate if these camping businesses have comparable determinants. In doing so, exploring specific determinants of businesses represents a first gap which need to be considered in the way of measuring the performance of camping businesses.

In addition, there is a second gap which need to be considered in the perspective of measuring camping businesses' performance. This is the typologies of firm as comparatively exposed by Phillips (1999) in the hospitality sector. Given that, Bell and Crilley (2002) and Hayllar et al. (2006) have not provided any segment in their contribution. As a consequence, should we consider the camping sector to be made up of homogeneous businesses? Do we have to understand that camping businesses are relatively similar to each other, in terms of resources, capabilities, and business model? Thus, the KPI provided by Bell and Crilley (2002), or Hayllar et al. (2006) deploy methodological shortcomings that reduce their relevance since they do not consider the specificities of the camping sector. With this regard, the benchmarking analysis could be a vector of inappropriate strategic information which will influence decision-makers (represented by non-adapted KPIs and Dashboards). In addition, in view of the state of the art in the hospitality sector, the comparative analysis of Bell and Crilley (2002) or Hayllar et al. (2006) can be qualified as too rushed since the homogeneity of the camping market was not previously studied through specific determinants and typologies. Currently, this lack of

knowledge persists and represents a lack of consistency in the way of measuring camping performance.

Despite this, ten years later, Peršić et al. (2017) described the performance measurement process for benchmarking firms. In their contribution, they listed performance indicators in their figure 2 and calculate performance indicators (PIs) in result part (occupancy rate, revenue share of secondary services, revenue share of cabins). Interestingly, these KPIs refer to the specificity of the camping business that has been lacking consideration in recent decades. Furthermore, they proposed an average calculation based on specific typologies, using the star-rating categories. However, Peršić et al. (2017) do not detail any characteristics and profiles of these camping businesses. In fact, from an identical star-rating category, how many are located in coastal, rural or mountain areas? What types of facilities are proposed? Do they have scarce and non-imitable resources? Do they have non-substitutable resources (to influence revenues, costs and product differentiation)?

In that way, firm's characteristics can be seen as the existence of an intense level of competition, the absence of barriers to entry into the sector, strong competition on ever lower prices, a high level of fixed costs and substitutable services make the hospitality sector more competitive than other industries. All of these structural characteristics make these hospitality sectors different from others (Chambers and Cifter, 2022). In this context, typologies and profiles based on firms' characteristics represent a consistent gap that has not yet been addressed in camping management literature.

Therefore, in benchmarking studies the term performance is deeply related to competitors (Assaf and Barros, 2013, Corne, 2015). In fact, two businesses are competing when their degree of proximity on several characteristics are closest. This implies determining a degree of proximity between enterprises. However, in order to identify this degree of proximity between enterprises, researchers must inventory all the existing characteristics belonging to their specific market. Then, researchers will be able to focus on the individual characteristics of the firms (Costa et al, 2018). Accordingly, measuring the degree of proximity between businesses allows to explore the competitive potential of each business. In other words, identifying the closest competitors to each business unit to better explore their performance. Thus, benchmarking and performance involve studying the competition to create typologies of closest firms to gain relevance in measurements. Thanks to this, businesses will compare their performance with

competitors that are in closer proximity. This means that competitiveness and performance are complementary but different concepts.

### *Competitiveness measurement*

Measuring the competitiveness of a company refers to Porter (1985, 2001). In order to measure the competitiveness of firms, it is necessary to distinguish the two theoretical currents that make it up. On the one hand, there is a literature on comparative advantage (Hunt and Morgan, 1995), and on the other, a literature on competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2010). These two advantages allow to identify, characterize and categorize the types of competition, the strategies applied, the levels of performance of the sector and the companies. In doing so, the following sections explain in more detail competitiveness advantages (comparative and competitive advantages) and their employability in the social sciences, particularly in the hotel and camping sectors.

### *Comparative advantage measurement*

In the hotel sector, comparative advantages have been rarely studied. However, Yeh et al. (2012) have contributed to this literature by measuring the comparative advantage of the hospitality sector. Interestingly, they explore the specific determinants affecting hotel revenue structure. In this context, F&B and Lodging departments were selected as an asset that potentially earn revenues. For Yeh et al. (2012), a hotel's comparative advantage refers to the highest amount of profit or quality, measured on one to several criteria and relative to other competing hotels. In that way, Yeh et al. (2012) assumes that a hotel's comparative advantage depends for a part, on measuring its main assets generating profits, which in this study involves to compare revenue from the F&B department and the lodging department. In terms of contribution, Yeh et al. (2012) demonstrated that measuring the comparative advantage of hotels leads to examining the strategies applied by these firms. In this article, the authors investigate whether and how hotels are diversifying their operations. The objective of this study was to give the keys to hotel managers in order that they can allocate their resources to promote a more attractive and competitive activity in terms of revenue. To conclude their approach, Yeh et al. (2012) have explored determinants composing comparative advantage on financial and non-financial data. In this way, they confirmed that attracting customers is a crucial objective

of any hotel. They explain that hotel managers need to understand what determinants influence their revenue structures. In other words, hotels can offer more space and additional accommodation services, including event services such as F&B, as long as they contribute to the firm's profitability.

Comparatively to the camping sector, academic literature has measured comparative advantage based on financial indicators (Arimond and Lethlean, 1996; Bell and Crilley, 2002; Hayllar et al., 2006). However, these authors did not explain any word about competitiveness or comparative advantage and has not integrated any non-financial data. In measuring competitiveness, camping-specific lodging and recreational facilities are the essential core for exploring non-financial comparative advantages based on capital intensive. This is especially true in the camping sector, as there are many forms of camping trends and offerings (Brooker et al., 2012). However, the limitation of all these comparative studies is that none of them indicated whether the firm has the capabilities to make the most of its resources. This opens the way to measuring the competitive advantage of firms.

### *Competitive advantage measurement*

Competitive advantage is what allows a company to do better than its competitors by creating more value for its customers or by having lower production costs for a comparable offer (Nayak et al., 2022). The competitive advantage is built by the implementation of a set of factors specific to the firm and difficult to imitate by the competition. From a general perspective, the intellectual structure of the competitive advantage has been recently mapped by Nayak et al. (2022). They show how competitive advantage have been fragmented in the areas of organizational capabilities such as technology trends, organizational culture, absorptive capacity, human resources, corporate social responsibility, resources and capabilities. For example, the question might be: Why does our competitor have a higher profitability or customer satisfaction than our company? They deploy at least one competitive advantage based on an organizational capability.

In that perspective, this doctoral thesis takes the theoretical approach based on resources and capabilities as a source of competitive advantage. From this context, two themes can be followed to measure the competitive advantage of organizations: The Resource Based View



(RBV) of the firm (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991) and the Business Models (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Teece, 2010). The resource-based theory demonstrates that a company's competitive position is based on a unique set of resources that enable it to exploit a market opportunity and neutralize its competitors (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). The RBV theory closely links the set of resources, skills, and the unique quality of the services provided. In the camping management literature, measuring the capabilities of managers as already been done by the study of Breen et al. (2006). Their article has studied capabilities of camping owner-managers to neutralize competitors from their capacity to innovate by introducing new products and services. However, this doctoral thesis does not study managerial profiles but rather the organizational components of the company. Thus, it seems necessary to turn to the second proposal, the literature on Business Models to explore firm black boxes (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Teece, 2010).

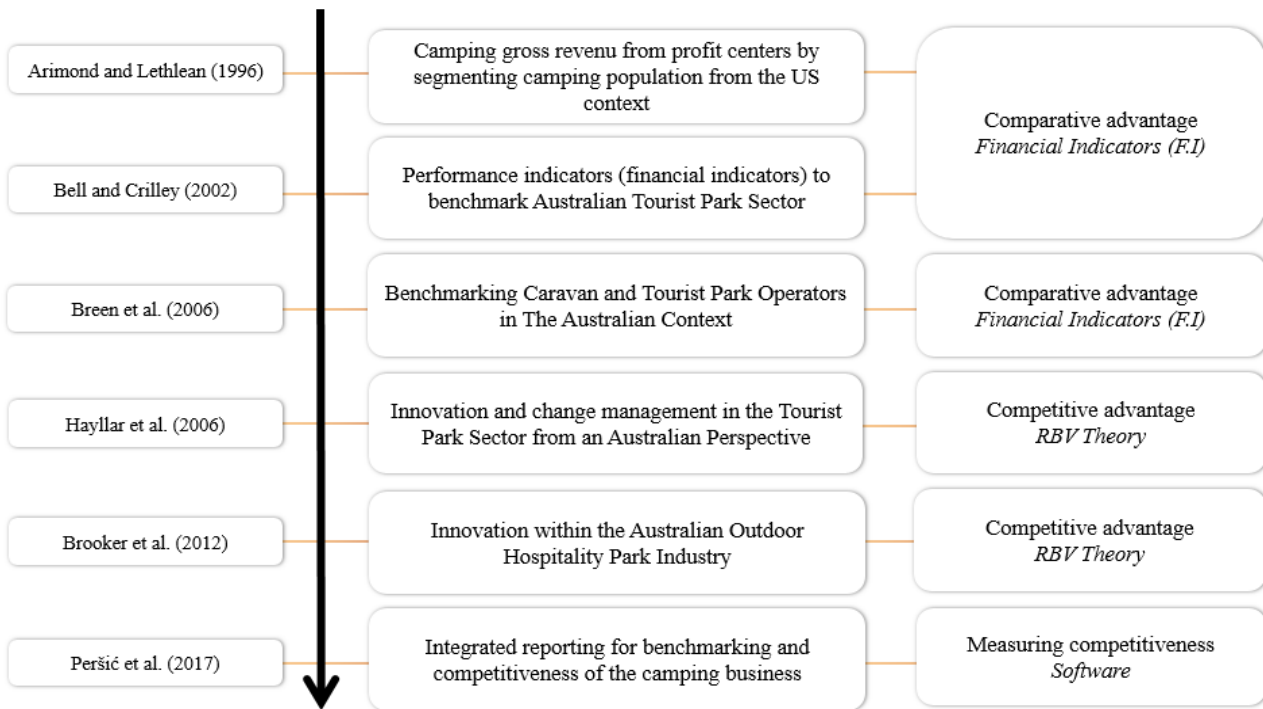
Business models represent how the business delivers value to customers and makes customers pay for value and converts it into profit (Björkdahl, 2009; Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Teece, 2010; Kim and Min, 2015; Foss and Saebi, 2018). In current management literature, there is no a single definition of the concept due to its multidimensionality. All the previous authors agreed with the fact that business models have to be viewed as a set, implying to follow a structured workflow to coordinate resources, abilities and capacities in order to minimize costs and delivery quality services to justify a maximized revenue to stakeholders. Thus, this refers to identify how businesses optimally allocates their costs in their value chain and generate upper revenues. In tourism management, business models were recently illustrated (Urban et al., 2018; Szromek and Naramski, 2019; Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al., 2020; Setiawan, et al., 2021). All these contributions have shown the usefulness of business model frameworks to identify resources and capabilities advantages of firms. Nevertheless, the camping and hotel sectors deploy a large paucity of knowledge in the area of business model research. In doing so, the business model literature contributes to the multidimensional objectives of this thesis as it explores the black boxes of camping businesses.

### *Camping competitiveness measurement*

Recently, the camping sector gained interest in the academic world with the publication from Brooker and Joppe (2013) and then, Rogerson and Rogerson (2020) who wrote a review article about camping within an international context. Before this, Bell and Crilley (2002), Breen et al. (2006), Hayllar et al. (2006), Brooker (2011) and Brooker et al. (2012) wrote about camping management in the Australian context. Hewer et al. (2017) wrote about camping in a Canadian context, and Ma and al. (2021) have recently written about camping in North America. Lee (2020) wrote about the Asian continent with Taiwan camping businesses. Finally, European researcher gaining interest on camping businesses with the first contributions in Croatia (Mikulic et al., 2017; Peršić et al., 2017) and in Spain (Saló et al., 2020).

Accordingly, two points have to be mentioned. Firstly, as we can appreciate, the majority of the publications are about the American and Australian territories. Nonetheless, some of them were oriented towards climate and meteorology (Hewer et al., 2017; Ma and al., 2021). Secondly, the last publications in competitiveness were based on innovation and change management from manager's perspective (RBV theory) by Breen et al. (2006) and Brooker et al. (2012). Thus, all these recent contributions do not expose measurements of the competitiveness and performance of camping businesses. This proof that is time to update the camping competitiveness and performance research (figure 2).

In response to these shortcomings outlined, the chapters of this doctoral dissertation are organized as follows. The first section presents the overall objectives of the doctoral thesis and the aim of this academic research. This is followed by three chapters corresponding to the three academic papers. Lastly, the general conclusions detail the general outcome, the main contributions of this doctoral thesis and its limitations, as well as future lines of research.



**FIGURE 2. TIMELINE OF ARTICLES STUDYING THE COMPETITIVENESS AND PERFORMANCE OF CAMPING BUSINESSES.**

## OBJECTIVES OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

This section presents the research question and general objectives of this manuscript, as well as the specific research objectives of each of the publications in this collection. Considering the background exposed above the research question is:

*"Given that the core of camping businesses is to provide services based on lodging and recreational resources, and that to this point, the literature review has never determined what camping businesses and outdoor hospitality parks are, should we consider them to be synonymous and similar or should we focus on distinguishing them based on their strategic orientations and component determinants?"*

To answer this question, a series of general objectives corresponding to the several gaps identified are set in the figure 3. Each of the three articles focuses on a specific area of competitiveness and performance research and, as a whole, supports the objectives of this doctoral research (figure 3). This doctoral thesis responds to a research process involving a compendium of three academic articles to measure the competitiveness of camping businesses (figure 3).

The process of measuring the camping competitiveness and performance has been presented and segmented by the three chapters of this doctoral thesis. The first article is entitled "*An exploratory analysis of the camping sector as a provider of attractive resources: The case of outdoor hospitality parks (OHPs) in unattractive regions*". This paper (a) aims to explore the core of camping businesses, in other words, to explore the determinants of comparative advantage in lodging and recreational activities by answering the following research question: How can OHPs positioned in these unattractive regions perform and stay attractive? Thus, the purpose of this paper is to characterize a set of camping businesses by fulfilling the following gap:

- The literature on camping management has not exposed a methodology to detail an inventory list of the stock of lodging and recreational assets (amenities and facilities) that make up the camping product
- The literature on camping management has not identified scarce assets in this market

The second article, entitled "*Measuring the capital-intensive competitiveness of Outdoor Hospitality Parks: A multi-criteria sorting methodology*". The article addresses the following research questions: (i) What are the criteria that make up OHP's capital intensive competitiveness model? (ii) What method (MCDM) should be used to measure the competitiveness of OHPs considering the expectations of the representative actors of this sector? (iii) Do the selected method (MCDM) offer consistent OHP typologies? Therefore, this article (b) aims to develop a model of camping competitiveness based on lodging and recreational resources in order to measure their comparative advantages. This article measures the comparative advantage of camping businesses according to the resources identified in the article 1. This approach aims to segment the sector and constitute homogeneous groups in the perspective of measuring camping performances (that lead to improved business performance and sustainability).

- Lack of research on measuring comparative advantage in the camping sector
- Lack of application of non-compensatory segmentation methods in the entire hospitality industry (hotel, camping, resort and other types of tourist accommodations...)
- Lack of measurement of firms' homogeneity in the camping sector

On the other hand, the third article, entitled "*Business model canvas: An application with cluster analysis to the camping sector*", focuses on the determinants to measure the competitive advantage of for-profit camping businesses, and it attempts to answer the following research question: To what extent can different business model profiles be identified in the camping sector? Therefore, this article aims to explore the organizational forms of business models. Our contribution aims at reinforcing the gaps previously raised while proposing an innovative vision of the existing business models in this ignored sector. Accordingly, the main gaps addressed are the following:

- Lack of measuring the competitive advantage of camping businesses
- Creating business model typologies has never been done in the hospitality industry
- Measuring the performance of camping typologies has never been proposed in the hospitality industry
- Addressing a set of camping KPIs according to their specific typology has never been undertaken in this sector.

Thus, these three academic articles explore complementary research topics within the measurement of the competitiveness and performance in the camping sector. All of these three articles contribute to the existing literature by providing a critical perspective on camping management literature.

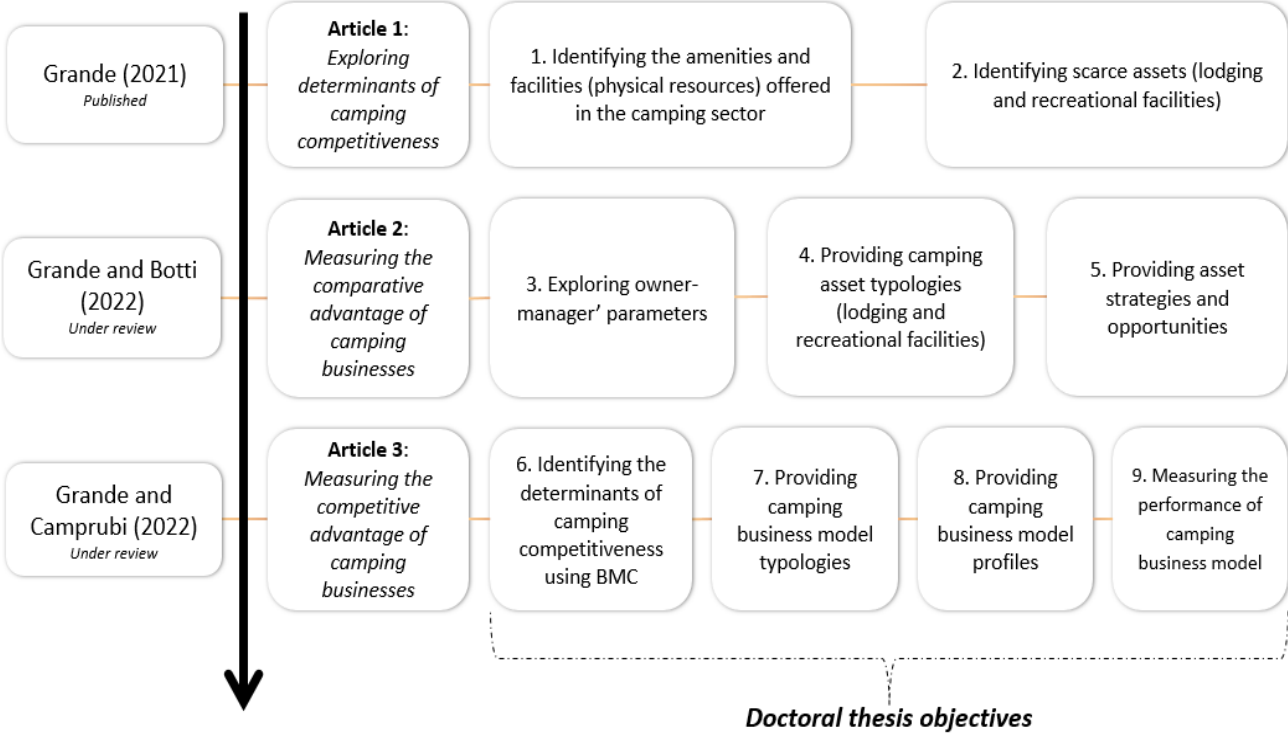


FIGURE 3. TIMELINE OF ACADEMIC ARTICLES PREPARED DURING THIS DOCTORAL THESIS.



**Universitat de Girona**

**An exploratory analysis of the camping industry as a provider of attractive resources. The case of outdoor hospitality parks (OHPs) in unattractive regions.**

**Author:** Grande, K.

**Journal:** Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism-Research Planning and Management  
Volume 33, 2021, 100365, ISSN 2213-0780, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2021.100365>. (*Quartile 2*)

**Keywords:**

Camping; Hospitality; OHP; Lodging and recreational resources; Services; Determinants; criteria; Competitiveness; Performance.

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**Abstract.**

The outdoor hospitality sector is growing faster than other type of tourist accommodations. Camping are delivering an intense competition by investing each year on new resources such as accommodations or recreational equipment's. Consequence, a high level of competitiveness and performance is necessary to attract and retain consumers. Since this decade, some Contributions appear in hospitality management review which investigate camping profitability. In that context, articles use leisure and accommodation determinants without always justifying its specific choice rather than other multiple alternatives. This article proposes to discover which leisure and accommodation determinants were previously used in camping research. After what, this contribution organizes and classifies each attribute into criterion. That gives a first way to assess camping competitiveness through available data. From theory to practice, this research assesses if current literature review is well-grounded within this particular sector.



## 1. Introduction

Camping can be considered as a special-interest form of tourism (Brooker and Joppe, 2013). It involves spending at least one night away from home in temporary accommodation, such as a tent, recreational vehicle, or caravan (WS Lee et al., 2019; Brochado and Pereira, 2017). Camping accommodation and leisure enterprises provide services to attract and retain consumers in their territory and strive to offer their customers a unique experience. Currently, such enterprises are created by various actors such as familial/independent owner-managers, municipal organizations, groups, or financial investment groups. In this decade, the camping sector has grown considerably and is attracting more and more financial groups who are scrambling for acquisition. Whether they are private or public investors, independent, municipal, franchises or integrated groups, all are locked in intense competition in a market that offers 28,000 commercial parks in Europe (Eurostat, 2019). Between surviving and conquering new territories, camping operators seek to acquire the best strategic management tools to continuously innovate (Brooker et al., 2012). Innovation in the camping sector comes from a series of strategic investment decisions that lets operators offer a range of services. Many regions around the world have opted to create and develop commercial parks on their territories. In this context, the Internet has become a basic tool for commercializing, managing and planning investments. The Internet and websites are also powerful instruments that facilitate the extraction of information from the sector (resources, services, pricing, size, service quality and customer satisfaction). Resources can be considered as internal capital integrating all the lodging amenities and recreational facilities in a commercial park. Many authors have identified literature of interest on the camping sector that pools interdisciplinary knowledge.

In this recent multidisciplinary context, this work examines the proposition of Saló et al. (2020) on determining final prices in the camping sector. These authors point to a wide gap due to internal capital not being sufficiently used to gain price robustness. Saló et al. (2020) are not alone: many authors report findings that do not integrate the main technical capital in the camping sector, such as facilities and service determinants. Breen et al. (2006) and Brooker et al. (2012) argue that internal capital should be studied by each decision-maker to innovate and gain competitiveness. In not classifying and aggregating determinants, previous authors did not consider the full stock of resources (lodging amenities and recreational facilities) proposed to customers. Thus the internal context of commercial parks has remained fuzzy in many articles in management research. Considering the increasing interest in the camping sector, further

research needs to be oriented towards an overall approach and integrate all relevant determinants and determinants (Barros et al., 2011; Botti and Peypoch, 2013). This work thus takes the view that the stock of lodging amenities and recreational facilities in the camping sector needs to be reported on to gain robustness and relevance.

This article first classifies and organizes the stock of lodging and recreational resources found in a literature review into distinct criteria. We take the multi-criteria approach advocated by Botti and Peypoch (2013, p109), who proposes a “*Tourist multi-criteria decision framework*” and underline the importance of analyzing tourism enterprises systemically. We then confront theory with practice in an operational stage that consists in analyzing the stock of resources offered by these rural hospitality provisions. We go on to conclude with a set of determinants classified by determinants of production, on the basis that the literature review is well-grounded in this sector.

During this investigation, we took the particular case of the north-east of France, an area located near several national boundaries. For many years, this part of France has seen a large flow of international tourists passing through, who do not stay very long in comparison with other French regions. The regions chosen were Bourgogne-Franche-Comté (BFC) and Grand-Est (GE), with a sample of 29 hospitality provisions involved in rural tourism (Kaptan Ayhan et al., 2020). For this research, the Internet and websites were used as a constantly available tool to scan the camping sector environment (Breen et al., 2006) and collect primary data.

The article is organized as follows. The first section gives a literature review focusing on lodging amenities and recreational facilities, which Breen et al. (2006) identifies as determinants of competitiveness. The method used to carry out the exploratory research is then presented, followed by findings. Finally, the last section concludes with some managerial implications for managers and by extension for all stakeholders in tourism. The study ends with pointers for extending possible future academic research.

## **2. Literature review**

In 2018, tourists in the European Union spent 413 million nights in temporary accommodation, compared to 358 million in 2012 (Eurostat, 2019). This shows that camping is an increasingly popular outdoor activity (Forbes, 2018). Commercial parks are companies that provide lodging

and recreational resources, which can be described as a variety of facilities designed to attract and retain tourists holidaying (The Economic Planning Group of Canada, 2005). Even so, very few researchers have examined internal resource determinants proposed in the camping sector. This article takes the view that resources cover all lodging amenities and recreational facilities proposed to customers to attract and retain them.

This section is divided into three parts: (i) literature reviews on camping in general are analyzed (ii) competitiveness of commercial parks is studied through their websites, and (iii) references on competitiveness determinants based on lodging amenities and recreational facilities are given for commercial parks. These considerations are important because they have been scantily analyzed in the literature yet can be helpful for owner-managers and other stakeholders in the camping sector.

Literature reviews of the camping sector use general terms that need to be correctly understood for in-depth research. For some authors, camping is understood as special-interest tourism, and defined as a combination of two major orientations associated with “a form of outdoor recreation that is part activity and part accommodation” (Brooker and Joppe, 2013, p1). However, this sector comprises various terms to describe the camping experience that vary internationally (Brooker and Joppe, 2013). Commercial parks are referred to as outdoor hospitality parks (OHPs), caravan parks, holiday parks, or tourist parks (Brooker, 2011). In North America, these same types of parks are commonly called campgrounds, trailer parks, travel parks, RV parks, or RV resorts. In Europe, properties offering camping and caravan use are referred to as campsites (Alan Rogers, 2020), a term that in North America denotes one site within a campground.

Then, table 1 describes the terms used in this sector. It gives four terms commonly used in articles, namely “camping”, “campsite”, “campground”, and “OHP/tourist park/commercial park”. The term “camping” qualifies the sector or the industry, and denotes the activity or the action, never an enterprise. The term “campsite” is used in several countries (US, Asia, Australia, New Zealand) to designate a pitch as a place to camp. By contrast, in Europe the same term “campsite” can designate an enterprise. The industry needs a common vocabulary to clearly identify the object of study. The two terms “campground” and “OHP/tourist park/commercial park” are helpful (Brooker and Joppe, 2013). Our research focuses on Outdoor hospitality businesses (as defined by Brooker et al., 2012).

<b>Terminologies cited by authors</b>	<b>Camping</b>	<b>Campsite</b>	<b>Campground</b>	<b>OHP / Tourist Park</b>
Arimond and Lethlean (1996)	6 times	15 times	93 times	0
	Area, industry, experience	Rental	Operator, owner, private, gross revenue, sales, financial, industry	NOT USED
	"According to Cooper (1992) and Rose, Cooper, and Schink (1986), financially successful campgrounds provide a well-developed camping area with a variety of available services. These services, in the eyes of the camper, significantly enhance the camping experience. Private campgrounds tend to attract a very large market share of RV (recreational vehicle) users".			
Breen et al. (2006)	7 times	0	0	143 times
	Accommodation, area	NOT USED	NOT USED	Tourist Park with - Sector, facilities, industry, operators
	Tourist parks are defined in AAA Tourism's Tourist Park Guide as being all types of accommodation that can be classified as 'caravan parks, camping areas and onsite park accommodation (including lodges, park cabins, holiday flats, chalets, on site vans and bunkhouses)' (AAA Tourism 2004: 10). The term tourist park, for the purpose of this project, will refer to any accommodation operator that provides two or more of these accommodation types on one site.			
Brooker et al. (2012)	3 times	0	0	54 times
	Industry, tenting and caravanning	NOT USED	NOT USED	"OHP with - Innovation, industry, sector, operators, onsite facilities, resorts"
	"The outdoor hospitality park (OHP) sector, which includes caravan parks, holiday parks, and tourist parks in Australia and Europe and campgrounds, RV parks and RV resorts in North America. Overall, the OHP sector has matured substantially from its initial offering of inexpensive tent and caravan camping today's array of accommodation options". "The primary OHP product is overnight accommodation, complemented by various onsite facilities including children's play areas, jumping pillows, resort-style swimming pools, water play areas, and in some parks, spa facilities".			
Brooker and Joppe (2013)	19 times	8 times	9 times	12 times
	A general term to camping experience	European campsites	Trailer park, travel park, RV park, or RV resort	Facilities, amenities, number of factors, Push factors are clients' internal motives
	Camping refers to the activity of living in a tent for a short period of time, whether in a campground or wilderness setting, although it has been associated with RVing, caravanning, and other forms of temporary shelter. Terminology varies internationally to describe a camping experience. Commercial parks are referred to as caravan parks, holiday parks, tourist parks, or by 32 other terms (Brooker, 2011).			
Saló et al. (2020)	0	103 times	0	0
	NOT USED	"European campsites, size, location, experience, prices, services, pitches,	NOT USED	NOT USED
	Campsites are one of the most common tourist accommodation facilities throughout the world (e.g., 31% of all tourist bed-places in Europe are located in campsites; Eurostat (2018).			

**TABLE 1. CAMPING VOCABULARY IN USE.**

This article uses the term “camping” to denote the camping sector or activity. Following Brooker (2011), this we use the term “outdoor hospitality park” (OHP) to refer exclusively to a private enterprise developing commercial parks and offering an attractive stock of resources (lodging amenities and recreational facilities). As mentioned by Brooker et al. (2012), the primary OHP product is overnight accommodation, complemented by various onsite recreational facilities including children’s play areas, jumping pillows, resort-style swimming pools, water play areas, and in some parks, spa facilities. We consider that the OHP product is a combination of technical capital, such as lodging amenities, recreational facilities, and labor capital by services proposed to enhance the OHP experience. As stated by Brooker and Joppe (2013, p1), technical capital refers to recreational vehicles, caravans, tents, and other contemporary forms of temporary housing such as mobile homes, bungalows, and luxury lodges. However, it can also include sports fields, fitness facilities, swimming pools, water play areas, wellness facilities, children’s play areas, barbecues, and laundry facilities (Hayllar et al., 2006). This article considers a second determinant of production, namely labor capital. OHP labor capital can refer to services provided by human resources: breakfast and meal service, reception, recreation planning, wellness services and others (Breen et al., 2006).

We have identified various contemporary lines of management research in the camping sector such as innovation (Breen et al., 2006; Brooker et al., 2012), investments and assets (Arimond and Lethlean, 1996; Mikulic et al., 2017), competitiveness management and benchmarking (Breen et al., 2006; Hayllar et al., 2006; Peršić et al., 2017), operational management and cost management (Hayllar et al., 2006), Marketing Trend (Brooker and Joppe, 2013), forecasting management (Rice et al., 2019) and pricing (Saló et al., 2020; García-Pozo et al., 2011). In their pricing method, Saló et al. (2020) consider seasonality, dimension and location to determine final prices. However, they explain that their current method needs to integrate other specific determinants to gain robustness. The approach of Saló et al. (2020) is not exceptional. Many other researchers (Rice et al., 2019; Peršić et al., 2017; Mikulic et al., 2017; Hayllar et al., 2006) report results where the main technical capital from commercial parks is not integrated. For some, the stock of lodging and recreational resources proposed can be described as a source of competitiveness (Breen et al., 2006). Others suggest studying the stock of lodging amenities and recreational facilities to ascertain which are the most relevant for increasing gross earnings (Arimond and Lethlean, 1996).

Although competitiveness in the camping sector has hardly been analyzed in the literature, Breen et al. (2006, p30) have proposed some interesting links between innovation, facilities, services, profit and competitive advantage in the camping sector. Following Breen et al. (2006, p30), owner-managers consider that the competitive advantage of their enterprise arises from “products and services not found in other parks in the local region”. Managers are oriented toward “constantly looking at what other parks are not doing and staying in front through providing the services and products that others don’t”. For the second Australian case, competitive advantage stems from size (hectares), amount of accommodation and a range of products such as leisure facilities. Concerning the UK Case 1, “managers are aware that their types of accommodation are not unique and do not offer a competitive advantage because similar lodges are found in other OHPs”. In this situation, we observe that each attribute can be classified as offering strong, low or no competitive advantage. Likewise, some managers state that “certain facilities have been built for the specific purpose of differentiating the park from other competitors”. For others, as in UK Case 2, “the competitive advantage comes from the freedom the customers have to stay at the park and enjoy a broad range of activities”. For NZ Cases 1 and 2, competitive advantage is represented by “unique services or facilities and their quality, which retain customers in the park by proposing accommodation and leisure as a package for a holiday experience”.

The main objective for owner-managers is to recognize market opportunities that give an edge over competitors. Breen et al. (2006) found that innovative managers practiced “environmental scanning”, actively studying competitors and picking up ideas. Despite the fierce competition in the camping sector, owner-managers do not possess operational tools to study their competitors with a standardized, tailored method.

OHP competitiveness requires multidisciplinary knowledge and a systemic definition. It implies ability to optimize costs, and provide quality, innovation and a stock of lodging and recreational resources to win market share nationally and internationally. Finally, it ensures that the resources offered are used efficiently and sustainably.

In the tourism literature on competitive advantage, the articles by Melian-Gonzalez and Garcia-Falcon (2003), Algieri et al. (2018) or Cheraghalizadeh and Tümer (2017) specify a method for identifying a company’s competitive advantage. There is also more theoretical research such as that of Wernerfelt (1984) which views resources as encompassing all tangible physical elements and likens them to a strength or weakness for the business. Or that of Evan (2016) which states that operant resources are a fundamental source of competitive advantage for companies. For

others, facilities and amenities can be interpreted as resources with a strong influence on the business model (Zahra and Covin, 1993). All these authors draw on the resource-based view framework. This signifies identifying resources, in our perspective, lodging amenities and recreational facilities, that determine an advantage against competitors.

Other authors argue that the hospitality sector is a multi-criteria environment every characteristic of which helps to drive hospitality competitiveness (Assaf et al., 2009; Peypoch and Sbai, 2013; Assaf et al., 2015; Assaf et al., 2017; Peypoch et al., 2020). This recalls Porterian logic (1991) viewing an accumulation of resources as a source of comparative advantage. In this, all characteristics have to be integrated into the final sum to obtain a comparative advantage. Comparative advantage is a sum of resources from which an enterprise will derive a better productivity and so offer more attractive prices than competitors.

Our research focuses on clients' internal motives (Brooker and Joppe, 2013) that retain and attract them in the Camping sector. In this approach, we postulate that customers are facing a purchase decision based on an accumulation of lodging amenities and recreational facilities available for use during their holidays and for a price paid. The major difference from a competitive approach is that our proposition does not integrate an assessment of infrastructure quality. Our view is that infrastructure quality is difficult to evaluate before living the OHP experience. It is hard to know whether a slide is slippery enough from pictures on a website.

From a previous identification of resource determinants (Brooker and Joppe, 2013) in the camping sector, our article underlines weaknesses of previous contributions in the field of tourism, leisure and management research. Numerous researchers have chosen some determinants rather than others, without justifying their choice (Breen et al., 2006; Brooker et al., 2012; Arimond and Lethlean, 1996; Mikulic et al., 2017; Hayllar et al., 2006; Peršić et al., 2017; Brooker and Joppe, 2013; Rice et al., 2019; Saló et al., 2020). Based on the previous OHP definition, this article outlines gaps to be filled in order to improve management research and investigations through a multi-criteria approach (Botti and Peypoch, 2013). This will permit further contributions to fit a precise OHP definition. To enrich future research and give managers operational tools, results need to be more robust, pertinent and reliable for the choice of determinants. This article considers the outdoor hospitality sector as a producer and user of internal resources, in the strict limit of lodging amenities and recreational facilities. We propose

an analysis of specific camping resources used as determinants of competitiveness to gain a comparative advantage (Porter, 1990) against competitors (Table 2).

To explore specific resources from competitors, data need to be available, reliable and robust. Canoves et al. (2004) and Yagüe (2002) explain that to analyze competitiveness, a rural enterprise should use constantly available data. Our proposition follows Roy (1991), Figueira et al. (2005) or Botti and Peypoch (2013) who use three to five criteria to organize all relevant determinants taken to assess destination competitiveness. As defined by Breen et al. (2006), OHPs can adopt two main strategies: camping-destination or camping-transition. This means observing which kinds of feature, facility or amenity are proposed in the park. For this purpose, six categories were created (bathing area, children's play facilities, entertainment plan, digital space and other leisure facilities and accommodation). All the determinants came from an international literature review of camping, campsites, campgrounds and OHPs. Categories (criteria) were created with regional federations to group and classify all the resource determinants mentioned.

This article looks at OHPs as integrated sets of tourist facilities seeking to draw their consumers away from the competition and retain them. In general terms this means outperforming alternative experience in the tourist accommodation market (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999). From the consumer's perspective and according to Hayllar et al. (2006), tourists expect levels of operational infrastructure or a combination of specific facilities to be offered them during their experience. Hence OHP selection and competitiveness can be seen as a multi-criteria offer. A multi-criteria offer is described below and presented from a camping sector literature review.



<b>Authors &amp; determinants related to the camping management literature (x)<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>Arimond &amp; Lethlean (1996)</b>	<b>Breen &amp; al (2006)</b>	<b>Brooker &amp; Joppe (2013)</b>	<b>Brooker &amp; al (2011)</b>	<b>Clark &amp; al (2009)</b>	<b>Garst &amp; al (2010)</b>	<b>Hayllar &amp; al (2006)</b>	<b>Mikuic &amp; al (2017)</b>	<b>Prideaux &amp; Mc Clymont (2006)</b>	<b>Rice &amp; al (2019)</b>	<b>Saló &amp; al (2020)</b>
1	Outdoor Pools / Swimming Pools	x	x	x	x			x				x
2	Indoor Pools / Heated Pools		x	x								x
3	Wellness : Spa - Hammam - Sauna - Jacuzzi - Whirlpool		x	x	x							x
4	Swimming Pools for babies		x									
5	Aquatics playground / Water play areas / Water park		x	x	x							
6	Beach or river access		x				x		x	x		x
7	Solarium, sunbeds & umbrellas			x								
8	Playground areas		x	x	x		x	x				
9	Jumping pillows			x	x							
10	Kids club / Child care / Babysitting		x	x				x	x			
11	Tourism booking services - Tourist guides		x							x		
12	Adult / Child or Family Events - social interaction	x	x	x			x	x	x			
13	Organised games	x	x			x	x	x	x			
14	Fishing / Photography / Cooking						x		x	x		
15	Walking / Hiking / Running / Bicycling						x					
16	Other nature-based activity						x			x		
17	Music / Sing / Dance / Play instruments			x		x	x			x		
18	TV / DVD / RADIO Room		x			x						
19	Games Room / Amusement machine / Video games	x	x	x				x				
20	Undercover outdoor areas				x							
21	WIFI / Internet access								x			x
22	Outdoor sports - Tennis court - Volleyball court - Basketball ring	x	x	x				x	x			x
23	BBQ and communal camp kitchens		x				x	x		x		
24	Restaurant, bar, snack	x	x	x				x	x	x		
25	Mini-golf / Petanque	x						x				x
26	Shop / Store / Supermarket / Local Market	x						x	x	x		x
27	Hairdresser			x								
28	Kiosk							x				
29	Bike hire / Watercraft renting / Windsurf renting	x						x				x
30	Gym / Fitness / Yoga / Shiatsu			x								x

<sup>1</sup> The character "x" means that the scientific article has mentioned or used at least once the determinant referenced in this list. All the contributions proposed are specialized in camping management sciences.

<b>Authors &amp; determinants related to the camping management literature</b>		<b>Arimond &amp; Lethlean (1996)</b>	<b>Breen &amp; al (2006)</b>	<b>Brooker &amp; Joppe (2013)</b>	<b>Brooker &amp; al (2011)</b>	<b>Clark &amp; al (2009)</b>	<b>Garst &amp; al (2010)</b>	<b>Hayllar &amp; al (2006)</b>	<b>Mikuic &amp; al (2017)</b>	<b>Prideaux &amp; Mc Clymont (2006)</b>	<b>Rice &amp; al (2019)</b>	<b>Saló &amp; al (2020)</b>
<b>31</b>	Medical services on site											x
<b>32</b>	Relaxation services (massages, cures, beauty treatments...)			x								
<b>33</b>	Chalets / Bunkhouses / Bungalows / Cottage / Lodge	x	x			x		x				x
<b>34</b>	Mobile-homes /caravanning		x			x		x	x	x		x
<b>35</b>	Park cabins		x					x	x			
<b>36</b>	Holiday flats		x					x				
<b>37</b>	Glamping			x								x
<b>38</b>	Tents / Sites / Pitches	x	x			x	x	x	x			x
<b>39</b>	Motorhome sites / Rving / RV storage / Trailers	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>40</b>	Toilet / Shower / Laundry blocks and wash facilities	x	x		x	x	x	x				
<b>41</b>	Cooking facilities, dining table		x		x		x			x		
<b>42</b>	Handicap access cabins		x									
<b>43</b>	Pet friendly cabins		x									x

**TABLE 2. LITERATURE REVIEW OF LODGING AND RECREATIONAL DETERMINANTS USED IN THE CAMPING SECTOR.**

In Table 2, each attribute was classified into a unique criterion. This table indicates which determinants were cited by authors. It shows the number of determinants cited by authors. Finally, it underlines the percent of OHP determinants used to refer to leisure and accommodation facilities in their work. This gives us a picture of how current resource and service determinants are used in the camping literature review. The overall approach adopted in destination competitiveness (Crouch, 2006; Botti and Peypoch, 2013; or World Economic Forum, 2019) has not been used at all in camping research, which reveals an average of 32% of the determinants in these 11 research articles.

We confront determinants from theory and practice in an operational stage that consists in analyzing facilities and services offered in rural OHPs. The following criteria were validated by the regional camping federation. To name these determinants taken overall they used the term “*animativité*” in French, to mean all the hospitality amenities and on-site facilities (Arimond, Lethlean, 1996; Brooker et al., 2012).

The first gap we identified is that the internal context of OHP is not clearly defined in the existing literature. To narrow this gap, OHP determinants are classified considering the previous papers in the field. We propose a multi-criteria framework to consider amenities proposed to tourists by OHPs. We provide a literature review on OHP competitiveness. Destination competitiveness models do exist (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Enright and Newton, 2004; Kayar and Kozak, 2010; Kozak et al., 2010; Barros et al., 2011; Botti and Peypoch, 2013; Salinas Fernández et al., 2020). Hotel competitiveness models also exist (Peypoch and Sbai, 2011; Leonidou et al., 2013; Assaf et al., 2015; Cheraghalizadeh and Tümer, 2017; Xia et al., 2020). But there are no OHP models.

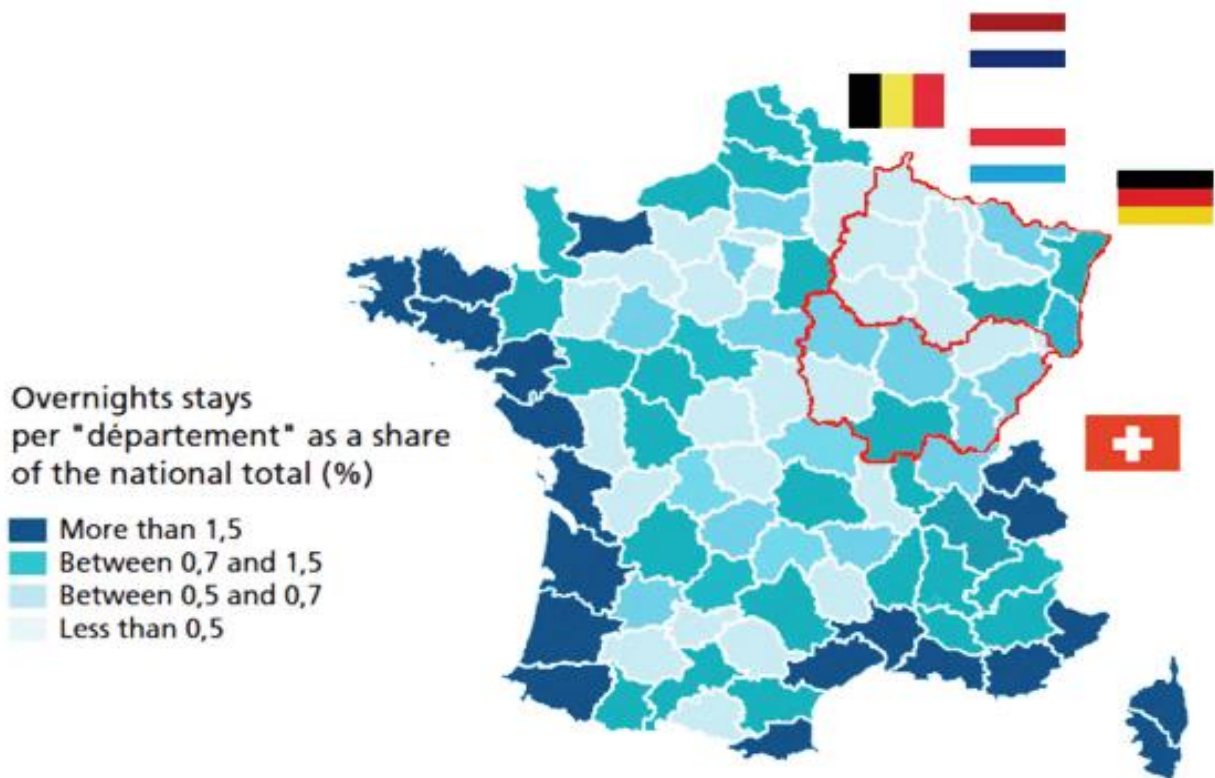
Previous competitiveness models cannot be fully applied to the camping sector. The Camping sector is an amalgam of lodging and recreational resources that integrate both housing and leisure in a closed, secure perimeter. Similarly, Channoi et al. (2018) also confirm why “beach resorts” cannot be associated with standard hotels. They argue that facility and activity reflect the uniqueness of a beach resort hotel stay compared to hotels. They conclude that “beach resort hotel management may use some unique activity to help segment and position their particular resort”. Lack of precision limits the two models, which shows the need for a new model, better suited and specialized. Lastly, Channoi et al. (2018) assert that the comparative importance of size in beach hotel resorts has not been empirically investigated. Our article takes the view of a comparative advantage in an accumulation of lodging and recreational resources according to Porter (1990; 1991).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 - Sampling**

In France, tourism consumption represents 7.4% of GDP (French statistical institute Insee, 2018). The important regions that contribute most to tourism consumption are Corsica (33.8%), Province-Alpes-Côte d’Azur (PACA) (12.9%), and Occitanie (10.7%). They are the most attractive regions in the tourism industry. However, the figures for the two regions BFC and GE demonstrate that tourism is not a representative sector for their sustainability: respectively 6.5% for BFC (8<sup>th</sup> position/12 regions) and 5.1% for GE (12<sup>th</sup> position/12 regions). We wanted to compare a large set of lodging and recreational resources in an economic environment where tourism is not key (Figure 1). The BFC and GE regions were therefore selected. They are currently poorly positioned for the tourism consumption / regional GDP.

*How can OHPs located in these unattractive regions (Figure 1) stay competitive?*



**FIGURE 1. OVERNIGHTS STAYS PER "DEPARTMENT" AS A SHARE IN FRANCE (2017) FROM THE DGE (ADAPTED).**

Following the method of Brooker et al. (2012), we took a sample of OHP managers as identified by the sector representatives. The two camping federation presidents were very amenable; they were contacted by e-mail. A meeting was organized during a European event, "Tourism Equipment and Techniques Trade Fair", so that the research could be explained to members of these regional federations. Both camping federation presidents were then asked to identify owner-managers. As confirmed by Brooker et al. (2012), this sample technique "identifies people who know people who are information-rich". A non-probability sampling method was used. 29 OHPs were selected by convenience sampling, including volunteer decision-makers (Table 3). The research was presented at the annual camping federation congress of BFC and GE. The OHP executives finally filled out a questionnaire to take part in the research protocol.

SAMPLING PROFILE		
<b>CHAIN</b>	AU CLOS DE LA CHAUME	<a href="https://www.camping-closdelachaume.com/">https://www.camping-closdelachaume.com/</a>
<b>CHAIN</b>	DU METTEY	<a href="http://www.campingdumettey.com/">http://www.campingdumettey.com/</a>
<b>CHAIN</b>	ETANG DE LA FOUGERAIE	<a href="https://www.camping-fougeraie-bourgogne.com/">https://www.camping-fougeraie-bourgogne.com/</a>
<b>CHAIN</b>	GRAND LAC	<a href="http://www.camping-grandlac.com/">http://www.camping-grandlac.com/</a>
<b>CHAIN</b>	LA ROCHE D'ULLY	<a href="http://www.camping-ornans.com/">http://www.camping-ornans.com/</a>
<b>CHAIN</b>	LOUVAREL	<a href="https://www.louvarel.com/fr/">https://www.louvarel.com/fr/</a>
<b>CHAIN</b>	LES PORTES DU BEAUJOLAIS	<a href="https://www.camping-beaujolais.com/fr">https://www.camping-beaujolais.com/fr</a>
<b>CHAIN</b>	VERTE VALLEE	<a href="https://www.campingvertevallee.com/fr/">https://www.campingvertevallee.com/fr/</a>
<b>CHAIN</b>	VILLAGE DES MEUNIERS	<a href="http://villagedesmeuniers.com/">http://villagedesmeuniers.com/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	AU MICA	<a href="https://www.camping-au-mica.fr/en">https://www.camping-au-mica.fr/en</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	BOYSE	<a href="https://www.camping-boyse.com/">https://www.camping-boyse.com/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	ESPACE SABATOUX	<a href="https://www.espacenamesabatoux.fr/">https://www.espacenamesabatoux.fr/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	ETANG AUBIGNY	<a href="https://www.camping-aubigny.com/">https://www.camping-aubigny.com/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	ETANG DES FORGES	<a href="https://www.camping-belfort.com/">https://www.camping-belfort.com/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	HAULME COQUELICOTS	<a href="http://www.campingdehaulme.fr/">http://www.campingdehaulme.fr/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	LA FORET DE LEVIER	<a href="http://www.camping-dela-foret.com/">http://www.camping-dela-foret.com/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	LAC DE PANTHIER	<a href="https://www.lac-de-panthier.com/">https://www.lac-de-panthier.com/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	LE BIVOUAC 39	<a href="https://www.camping-le-bivouac.com/">https://www.camping-le-bivouac.com/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	LES BOUCLES DE LA MOSELLE	<a href="https://www.lesbouclesdelamoselle.com">https://www.lesbouclesdelamoselle.com</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	LES BREUILS	<a href="https://www.campinglebreuils.fr/">https://www.campinglebreuils.fr/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	LES GROTTES D'AZE	<a href="https://www.camping-des-grottes.com/">https://www.camping-des-grottes.com/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	MANOIR DE BEZOLLE	<a href="http://www.campingmanoirdebezolle.com/">http://www.campingmanoirdebezolle.com/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	PREMEAU PRISSEY	<a href="https://cpg-moulin-prissey.fr/">https://cpg-moulin-prissey.fr/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	FORET DES VERGERS	<a href="http://www.foret-les-vergers.fr/">http://www.foret-les-vergers.fr/</a>
<b>INDEPENDANT</b>	VERT AUXOIS	<a href="https://camping-vert-auxois.fr/">https://camping-vert-auxois.fr/</a>
<b>MUNICIPAL</b>	LA PLAGE DE BESANCON	<a href="https://campingdebesancon.com/">https://campingdebesancon.com/</a>
<b>MUNICIPAL</b>	LE SAPIN ALSACE	<a href="http://www.keskastel.fr/camping-municipal.html">http://www.keskastel.fr/camping-municipal.html</a>
<b>MUNICIPAL</b>	LES FEUILLES	<a href="http://www.chauffailles.fr/camping.html">http://www.chauffailles.fr/camping.html</a>
<b>MUNICIPAL</b>	RHODES	<a href="https://www.campingrhodes.fr/">https://www.campingrhodes.fr/</a>

**TABLE. 3. SAMPLING PROFILE**

The camping sector comprises companies offering a very heterogeneous provision of lodging and recreational resources, even though the classification standards (star-rating system) are meant to reduce it. This research addressed all types of establishment whether they belonged to a chain or franchise, or were independent. Descriptive statistical tables are given (Table 4). These tables show the heterogeneity of the sample.

EXCERPT FROM DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS TABLES.		
Star-rating	Quantity of OHPs	Frequency
[ 0 ; 2 ]	7,00	24%
[ 3 ]	12,00	41%
[ 4 ]	10,00	34%
[ 5 ]	0,00	0%
Surface (hectare)	Quantity of OHPs	Frequency
[ 0 ; 2 ]	10,00	34%
[ 2,01 ; 4 ]	8,00	28%
[ 4,01 ; 6 ]	7,00	24%
[ 6,01 ; 8 ]	4,00	14%

**TABLE 4 - EXCERPT FROM DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS TABLES.**

### **3.2 - Data collection**

In this investigation, the literature review was the first stage in identifying and collecting lodging and recreational resources valorized in previous camping research (Arimond and Lethlean, 1996; Breen et al., 2006; Brooker and Joppe, 2013; Brooker et al., 2012; Clark et al., 2009; Garst et al., 2010; Hayllar et al., 2006; Mikulic et al., 2017; Prideaux and Mc Clymont, 2006; Rice et al., 2019; Saló et al., 2020). A set of lodging and recreational resources was obtained from the exposed literature. To reinforce literature determinants, we then collected data from OHP websites. Internet and websites were considered as constantly available tools for scanning the OHP environment. Internet and websites are forms of recorded communication (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991) that are systematically used to collect and assess content. To strengthen OHP determinants obtained from websites, a confirmatory step was then added with semi-structured interviews. These 29 semi-structured interviews served to confirm data reliability and robustness. New lodging and recreational resources were collected and added to previous ones. The data collection was performed in April–May 2018.

### **3.3 - Data analysis**

Camping literature, websites and semi-structured interviews were analyzed by content analysis (CA). This is a common research method in social sciences (Berg, 2009, Krippendorff, 1990)

and is commonly used in research on various forms of human communication, including permutations of written documents, photographs, and motion pictures (Berg, 2009).

This study first analyzes the content of 11 camping research papers cited below in Table 2. The CA focused on lodging and recreational resources offered to customers. In all, 43 different determinants were obtained by the literature review. We followed the methods set out by various authors, such as Fossgard and Fredman (2019); Brocado and Pereira (2017); Camprubi and Galí (2015); Cao and Yang (2016). All the 43 determinants were published in the camping literature but were not grouped. Researchers could use a criterion of organization (c1;...; c6) to synthesize its content. The information obtained from the literature analysis was examined in the subsequent steps.

Following the rules proposed by Camprubi and Coromina (2016) and Diaz and Koutra (2013), the website content analysis made it possible to confirm a list of push resources determinants and to add new insights to the camping literature. We analyzed the content of 29 OHP websites belonging to rural regions where tourism is not key.

To guarantee reliability, the categorization of resource determinants was carried out in two steps (Berg, 2009, Krippendorff, 1990). Firstly, decision-makers categorized each resource independently, according to the pre-established rules (six criteria based on previous studies). Secondly, the resulting categorization was scrutinized to find consistency in the outcomes (Berg, 2009). When divergences in categorization were found, the matter was discussed until the evaluators reached an agreement (Kassarjian, 1977).

This procedure was chosen for its ability to underline lodging and recreational resources valorized by the OHP literature review and the OHP websites. Camprubi and Coromina (2016) state that if content analysis is well done, it provides a replicable method. Duriau, Reger, and Pfarrer, (2007) argue that if content analysis is well organized, it can be reproduced in future studies by other researchers. The protocol to analyze lodging and recreational resources can be applied to any sample of OHPs, provided the sample size is sufficiently representative of the sector.

Some authors consider that if the method involves counting, content analysis can transform qualitative sources into a quantitative result (Brotherton, 2015, Krippendorff, 1990). During the investigation we counted lodging and recreational resources from qualitative sources (website images, texts). These resources were then summed for each OHP.

*What are the lodging and recreational resources that make an OHP stand out from its competitors?*

#### **4. Results**

As described above, 43 determinants came from an international literature review of camping research. To obtain new determinants and validate these 43 determinants, a CA was conducted on OHP websites. The website CA gave us a set of 69 determinants referring to lodging and recreational resources. The main problem was to organize and verify the robustness of data to exploit them. The semi-structured interviews included decision-makers' preferences. Six criteria were obtained. The 43 determinants were arranged by criterion. Criteria can structure competitiveness based on lodging and recreational resources. Criteria were discussed with 29 decision-makers. The following proposal was the final agreement obtained.

Each attribute was organized and classified under one criterion.

- **Criterion 1.** Determinants relating to the bathing area. They included determinants such as pools, wellness treatments and all facilities (solarium, sunbeds, umbrellas, etc.).
- **Criterion 2.** Determinants related to children. They covered facilities and services offered to babies, juniors and teenagers as targets.
- **Criterion 3.** Determinants relating to entertainment plan and social interaction. The family target seeks a large number of activities, not only social interaction inside the family but also social interaction with other families. This part concerns exclusively services offered where human resources in entertainment are involved.
- **Criterion 4.** Determinants related to the digital space. They integrate all relevant determinants that concern multimedia facilities, such as music events, games room, Wi-Fi...
- **Criterion 5.** Determinants relating to the other leisure facilities. This means all facilities that concern adult targets but could also be used by children.
- **Criterion 6.** Determinants related to accommodation facilities. They concern only the type of lodging proposed in OHPs.

The results show that the 43 determinants from our literature review are well cited and used in our sample of 29 OHPs. Each attribute was used by at least one OHP. We conclude that the camping literature review, with its 43 unique determinants, reflects the sector well. This also



confirms that some of the 11 previous research studies cited did reflect the camping sector satisfactorily.

New determinants come to enrich the previous literature review from rural OHPs including our 29 OHPs (Table 5). No list of determinants can ever be exhaustive. With time, further new determinants will inevitably be added, as innovation proceeds (Brooker et al., 2012) and competitiveness continues to fuel that process.

Our findings concern newly discovered determinants. We add 26 new determinants to strengthen our camping literature review. Website content analysis revealed 69 determinants of lodging and recreational resources in these rural enterprises. Determinants facilitate examination and comparison of the competitiveness of OHPs located in these unattractive regions. The information obtained from the analysis prompts some recommendations. By this method, managers could improve their environmental scan of trends to compete more effectively against rivals.

This work strengthens the reliability of each criterion. The criteria “children play’s facilities and service”, “entertainment plan”, and “digital space” were not well addressed in the camping literature review. The website CA provides new determinants for these criteria and so empowers them.

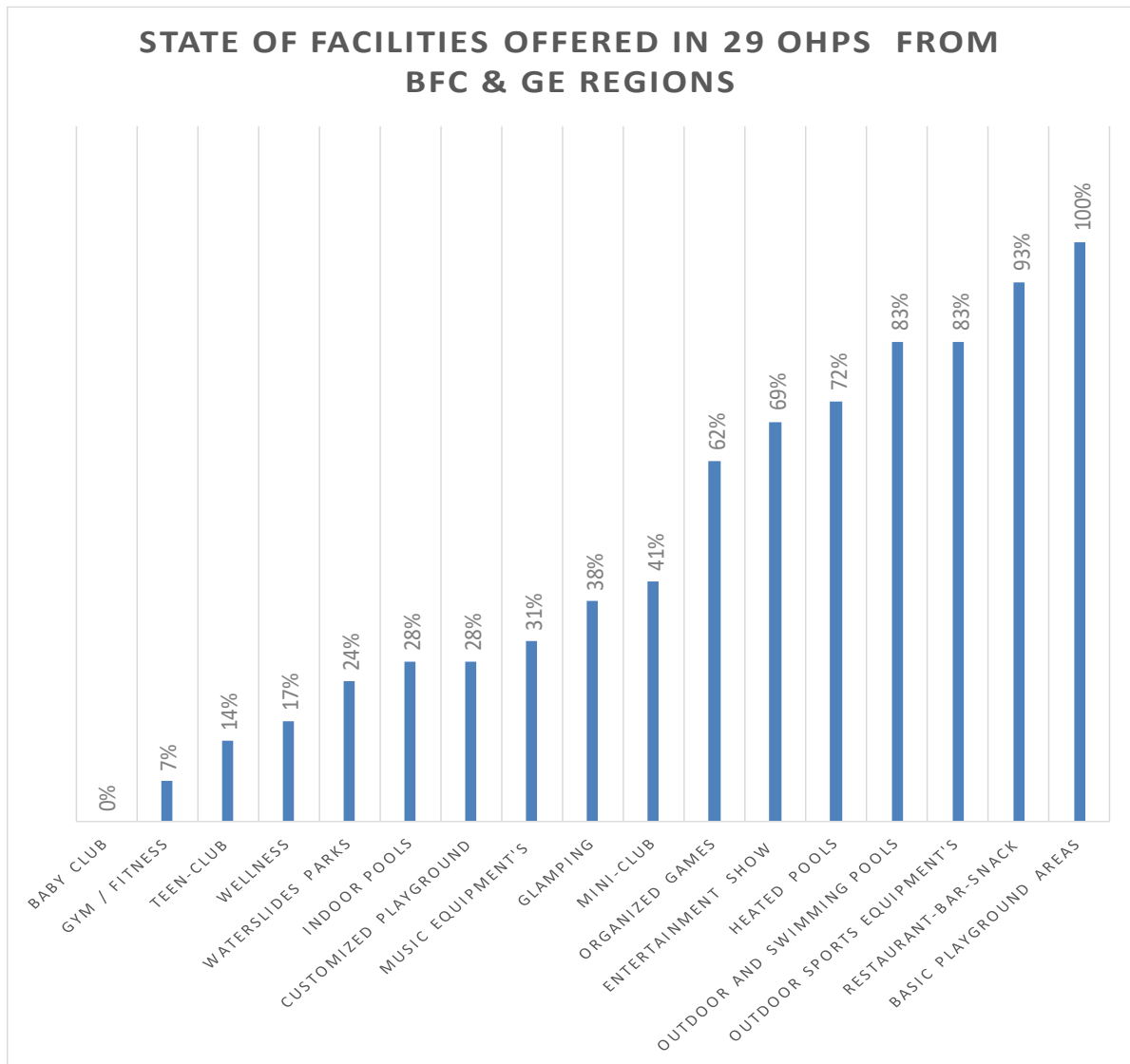
The most important information is not in the number of new determinants added (n=26). It is above all the accessibility of this method, through the organization of a competitiveness scan based on six criteria. These 26 new determinants were added to reflect content used by OHP managers through their websites. Some of the determinants proposed in the literature review need to be developed to gain consistency, robustness and reliability. The content of the following determinants was developed into more precise determinants used in OHP websites: “organized games”, “kids club”, “adult-child-family events”, “related to music”. In certain cases, we adjusted the content of the criteria by specific determinants (swimming pool entertainment, waterslide parks, ping-pong or football grounds, outdoor cinema, inflatable structure).

## 69 DETERMINANTS AND 6 CRITERIA

### Lodging & recreational determinants from websites CA

<b>Cr.1</b>	Bathing Area	Cr.4	Digital Space
<b>1</b>	Outdoor Pools / Swimming Pools...	-	Music / Sing / Dance / Instruments...
<b>2</b>	Indoor Pools / Heated Pools...	36	Professional stage
<b>3</b>	Wellness (Spa - Hammam - Sauna - Jacuzzi - Whirlpool)	37	Professional light system
<b>4</b>	Baby pool	38	Professional sound system & instruments
<b>5</b>	Aquatics playground / Water play areas / Water park...	39	Bleachers & dancefloor
<b>6</b>	Beach / river / Lake access...	40	Nightclubs & dancing
<b>7</b>	Solarium / sunbeds / umbrellas...	41	TV / DVD / RADIO Room...
<b>8</b>	Waterslides parks / River pools / Wake & Surf parks...	42	Games Room / Amusement machine / Video games / VR...
<b>Cr.2</b>	Children Play's Facilities & Services	43	Undercover outdoor areas
<b>10</b>	Child care / Babysitting	44	WIFI / Internet access...
<b>11</b>	Baby-club	45	Outdoor cinema & video projection...
<b>12</b>	Mini-club	46	Swimming pool music equipment...
<b>13</b>	Teen-club	Cr.5	Other Leisure Facilities
<b>14</b>	Mini-disco & children show...	47	Outdoor sports - Tennis courts - Volleyball court - Basketball ring
<b>15</b>	Basic playground areas...	-	Ping-pong table - Football grounds - beach sports...
<b>16</b>	Customized playgrounds (castles, boats, ...)	48	BBQ & communal camp kitchens...
<b>17</b>	Mini Theater	49	Restaurant / bar / snack...
<b>18</b>	Customized mascots...	50	Mini-golf / Petanque...
<b>19</b>	Mascots entertainment...	51	Shop / Store / Supermarket / Local Market...
<b>20</b>	Puppet show...	52	Hairdresser
<b>21</b>	Jumping pillows and kids swing seat...	53	Kiosk
<b>22</b>	Inflatable structure...	54	Sport rental equipment (bike hire / Watercraft renting / Windsurf renting...)
<b>Cr.3</b>	Entertainment Plan (social interaction)	55	Gym / Fitness / Yoga / Shiatsu...
<b>23</b>	Tourism booking services / Tourist guides...	56	Medical services on site
-	Adult / Child or Family Events - social interaction	57	Relaxation services (massages, cures, skin or beauty treatments...)
<b>24</b>	Welcome show (by staff)	Cr.6	Accommodations
<b>25</b>	Entertainment show (by professionals)	58	Chalets / Bunkhouses / Bungalows / Cottage / Lodge...
<b>26</b>	Camper drink event	59	Mobile-homes /caravanning...
<b>27</b>	Tourist show	60	Park cabins
<b>28</b>	Dancing entertainment / Music events...	61	Holiday flats
-	Organized games	62	Glamping
<b>29</b>	Artistic & cultural animations...	63	Tents / Sites / Pitches...
<b>30</b>	Social games...	64	Motorhome sites / Rving / RV storage / Trailers...
<b>31</b>	Adventure games (mud camp, escape games, paintball, ...)	65	Handicap access cabins
<b>32</b>	Fishing / Photography / Cooking...	66	Toilet & Shower facilities
<b>33</b>	Walking / Hiking / Running / Bicycling...	67	Cooking facilities & dining table...
<b>34</b>	Other nature-based activity...	68	Laundry blocks and wash facilities...
<b>35</b>	Swimming pool entertainment / show...	69	Pet friendly cabins

**TABLE 5. LODGING AND RECREATIONAL DETERMINANTS USED IN RURAL OHPS**

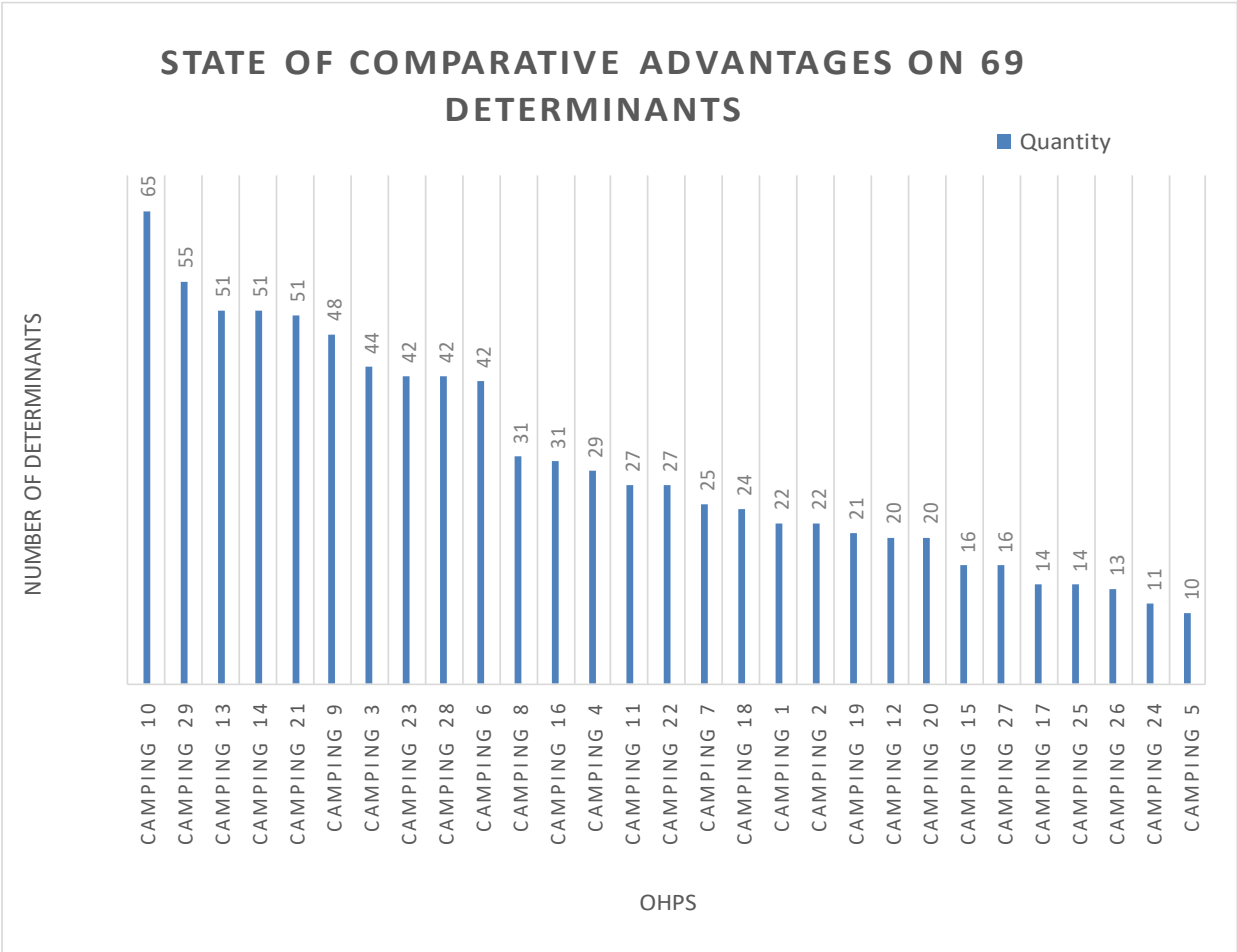


**FIGURE 2 – EXCERPT OF FACILITIES OFFERED IN 29 OHPS SURVEYED IN BFC AND GE REGIONS.**

Figure 2 shows a synthetic compensatory sum of facilities and services proposed in OHPs. A report was produced to underline which facilities and services are rarely used by OHPs. The figure gives an excerpt of trends in facilities and services offered by the 29 OHPs located in north-east France. Our results show strategic ways to make investment decisions (Figure 2). If managers deploy this type of approach on the 69 determinants, it will facilitate benchmarking, business intelligence, and therefore innovations (Botti and Peypoch, 2013; Corne 2015; Corne and Peypoch, 2020).

In the next section, we identify how many facilities an OHP is proposing from the list (Figure 2). This part can be linked to previous articles cited in the literature review, which use facilities without justifying a selection of determinants against other multiple alternatives. In the 11 articles listed below, the citation average is about 14 determinants.

Because websites give competitive information about enterprises, products and services, we opted not to give information about what our 29 OHPs are currently offering to the international market. One facility is counted as one point. A sum of the number of facilities is proposed in this list.



**FIGURE 3 – OHP RANKING BASED ON A STOCK OF 69 RESOURCES AND SERVICES.**

Figure 3 compares 29 OHPs on 69 determinants offered to the international market. This figure gives information about how many facilities an OHP is offering customers. OHP 10 offers 65 determinants from Table 5. The average of facilities proposed by these 29 is around 31

determinants. Only 10 enterprises are offering more facilities than the average number of samples tested. Resources are still relevant to obtaining a competitive advantage in this sector. Finally, using 69 determinants from OHP websites gives a first trend of facilities and services proposed by each OHP and their organizational form. Following organizational forms, results give an average of 44 lodging and recreational resources offered by chain OHPs, and an average of 23 lodging and recreational resources for independents and 21 municipal OHPs. This contribution is a first step in making an environmental scan and integrating an overall approach rather than choosing determinants without justifying them.

## **5. Discussion**

From the literature review on hotel and destination competitiveness (Boo and Busser, 2018, Xue et al., 2020; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Ivanova and Ivanov, 2016; Crouch, 2006; Enright and Newton, 2004; Kayar and Kozak, 2010; Kozak et al., 2010) this article demonstrates that the choice of determinants used has been a subject of debate. Our research set out to work toward guidelines.

Boo and Busser (2018) and Xue et al. (2020) have shown that “outdoor/recreational activities” are important determinants that need to be deeply integrated into hospitality competitiveness. By detailing OHP determinants, hospitality managers will provide optimal products and services (Kim et al., 2020) to customers. A large part of hospitality research is market-oriented by determinants that influence customer choice and customer segment (Mei and Zhan, 2012; Boo and Busser, 2018; Trong Thuy Tran et al., 2019). Our approach was to make a managerial contribution like Diaz and Koutra (2013) in hotel chains. Diaz and Koutra (2013) segmented hotels by their persuasive features. To do this, they used a content analysis method to assess websites. This demonstrates that content analysis is an appropriate way to segment and manage enterprises.

Hospitality competitiveness is complex owing to its diversity of lodging and recreational resources. The current models cited were ill-suited and a new one was needed for this sector. Chanoi et al. (2018) have confirmed this need. They claim that resorts can be located in unattractive areas and perform independently from a famed tourist destination. They add that "guests who stay between 12 and 17 days make greater use of the resort's facilities. This encourages international guests to increase their vacation time on site.". By these results, our

work demonstrates that OHPs are also deploying a large stock of resources to perform in unattractive areas such as resorts. This confirms the need to differentiate hospitality enterprises according to their specific determinants.

## **6. Conclusions**

Our study brings new insights by analyzing current trends in the camping sector. The aim of this contribution was to identify facility and service determinants from a literature review and organize them into distinctive criteria. In an operational step, we then confirmed that the theoretical determinants were mentioned by OHP websites. This meant observing which facilities and services were used in OHPs located in unattractive rural regions. This section integrated 26 new determinants according to the leisure and accommodation theme. They added to the previous 43 determinants found in the literature review. This work concludes with a set of 69 unique determinants classified and organized by criteria. Specifically, our last part confirms that the camping literature review reflected this sector well.

This research has clear theoretical implications. The approach constructs a useful, flexible, realistic and comprehensive tool for identifying OHP competitiveness determinants based on lodging and recreational resources. By examining the camping literature and 29 commercial parks, this study avoids bias and justifies each component. Validated by an advisory board, it also gives reliable, robust results. These findings contribute to a better understanding of OHP competitiveness based on lodging and recreational resources. It shows that previous studies did not take into account enough determinants to integrate all the features of this sector in their studies. Today many OHP suppliers act as a monopoly when called upon to take strategic and investment decisions. Their approach is to continually adjust their products and services reactively, rather than trying to stay ahead proactively (Brooker et al., 2012).

The present study also has managerial implications. First, it offers a method to see leisure and accommodation determinants in competitors. More generally, it gives information about what rural OHPs are doing to compete against others in unattractive regions. Owner-managers through their websites try to offer their customers a unique experience. Our findings show that competitiveness of OHPs is in part composed of several internal capital items such as leisure facilities, accommodation amenities, or human resources through services. We advocate

adopting an overall approach to resource competitiveness in accordance with its multi-attribute definition. These determinants will be constantly enriched by further research.

Finally, this study shows that a camping literature review reflects this particular sector well, and reveals major international determinants that are also found in French rural OHPs. Nevertheless, large differences appear in the results for the stock of resources in our OHP sample. It will be of interest to examine how resources help to increase economic performance. To this end, it would be advisable to follow on from the studies of Botti and Peypoch (2013); Assaf and Barros (2011); Assaf et al. (2015); Assaf et al. (2017); Barros et al. (2010) who have studied the stock of amenities and facilities in tourism organizations.

Performance is thus linked to the relative importance of each attribute (Gómez-Vega and Picazo-Tadeo, 2019). This work opens the way to a future weighting of criteria and determinants to create a full OHP competitiveness model according to Ritchie and Crouch (2003). It is a first step in benchmarking enterprises, segmenting them, and analyzing a part of their competitiveness and performance.

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**Universitat de Girona**



## Measuring the capital-intensive competitiveness of Outdoor Hospitality Parks: A multi-criteria sorting methodology

**Authors:** Grande, K., Botti, L.

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**Abstract.**

Gaining competitive advantage hinges on adopting the appropriate strategies. This paper develops a methodology for measuring the comparative advantage of Outdoor Hospitality Parks (OHP) based on composing an operational definition of the concept and then implementing an assessment method. We review the literature on competitiveness metrics in tourism and hospitality to develop a multi-criteria framework for evaluating comparative advantage in OHP. This framework is then applied to French OHP using the ELECTRE TRI methodology. The proposed methodology has real value for real-world situations and can thus usefully inform OHP management practices. Moreover, the paper has theoretical significance as it extends the literature on competitiveness in hospitality and specifies criteria tied to OHP advantages over competitors.

## 1. Introduction

Outdoor hospitality parks (OHP) belong to the camping sector and refer to for-profit businesses (Brooker and Joppe, 2013). Camping involves spending at least one night away from home in temporary lodging facilities such as tent, caravan or recreational vehicle (Brochado and Pereira, 2017). This sector is witnessing a move upmarket and a particular expectation towards the tourist experience between rental accommodation and leisure activities (Saló et al. 2020). It can be considered as a special-interest form of tourism and recreational activity (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2020). In terms of consumption, the camping sector is following two strategic directions, nature-based camping and leisure-based camping (Grande, 2021). Studies on consumer expectations confirm this situation (KOA, 2022).

From the U.S. context, the KOA (2022) report shows 93.8 million active camping households in 2021, including 56.9 million households that have gone camping at least once. Camping experiences in 2021 showed that U.S. campers are attracted to being close to nature, with 54% spending time outdoors, 46% spending time with family and friends, 44% simply relaxing, and 26% sitting around a campfire.

From the European context, the French camping federation estimates that there will be 22 million active campers in France (Eurostat, 2020). The FNHPA (2021) cite that the French camping sector is a lifestyle activity where campers are seduced by comfort (43%), quality of service (39%), children's safety (25%), a diversified food offers (20%), sports activities (16%), entertainment at all hours (15%), meetings (14%), and well-being services (13%). The average length of customer stays reached 5.13 days (FNHPA, 2021). These high scores translate into high levels of profitability, notably a gross margin of more than 90%, and profitability can reach 20% with revenues increasing by 4 to 5% per year (FNHPA, 2021). The share of investments (pools, waterslides, playground equipment, accommodation) represents 22% of the gross revenue each year (FNHPA, 2021).

Due to its extensive holdings of real estate, land, building and equipment, hospitality, tourism and leisure is a capital-intensive industry (Chambers and Cifter, 2022). The financialization of the outdoor hospitality sector is ongoing, with investment funds massively exploiting every square meter of their camping-park (OT camping, 2021). Capital accumulation is their source of success and this is achieved through the generalization of mobile homes, the development of mega aquatic complexes and new vacation clubs (OT camping, 2021). However, if the

economic domination of the major groups is no longer debated, the European camping sector is still supported by independent campsites (90%) (Eurostat, 2020). Nonetheless, in recent years, this segment of independent campsites has seen many small for-profit camping disappear (< 100 pitches). In France, the FNHPA (2021) précised around 1000 campsites in 10 years. These camping businesses no longer meet customer expectations and today, signals and tools are lacking to alert the less competitive camping businesses (Peršić et al., 2017).

The camping management literature report that managers lack of practical methodologies for the purpose of competitiveness measurement, benchmarking and strategic planning (Peršić et al., 2017). Competitiveness measurement has received scant academic attention in camping management literature and needs to be deeply updated (Arimond and Lethlean, 1996; Breen et al., 2006; Hayllar et al. 2006; Brooker et al. 2012). Competitiveness based on financial data have been exposed by Arimond and Lethlean (1996) or Hayllar et al. (2006). When, Breen et al. (2006) or Brooker et al. (2012) studied the profiles of innovative managers. Nonetheless, the capital-intensive dimension has never been measured (Chambers and Cifter, 2022) in the camping sector.

Within this context, this research aims to measure the OHPs' competitiveness based on their capital-intensive dimension. Furthermore, this paper aims to apply a multi-criteria decision method (Ishizaka and Siraj, 2018; Guarini et al., 2018) to engage benchmarking and strategic planning in accordance with the methodological issue addressed by Hayllar et al. (2006) or Peršić et al. (2017): A lack of consistent methodology for benchmarking OHPs versus its real competitors.

The article has theoretical significance as it exposes the model serving to frame OHP competitiveness from a capital-intensive dimension. Furthermore, this article has methodological significance as it exposes *how* to implement a Multi Criteria Decision Method (MCDM) in the OHP context. In addition, this paper is based on a research agreement between the authors and the professional union of Outdoor Hospitality Park (OHP) managers in a French tourist region and offers managerial outputs that aligns with practitioners' issues, uses and expectations (Sainaghi et al., 2019).

The article brings miscellaneous contributions that address the following research questions: (i) What are the criteria that make up OHP's capital intensive competitiveness model? (ii) What method (MCDM) should be used to measure the competitiveness of OHPs considering the expectations of the representative actors of this sector? (iii) Do the selected method (MCDM) offer consistent OHP typologies?

In doing so, hospitality competitiveness measurement is presented (section 2.1). Next, the OHP's competitiveness criteria and sub-criteria are specified (section 2.2). Then, we present methods and parameters (section 3). Finally, the measurement of OHP's capital-intensive competitiveness (section 4), discussion (section 5) and conclusions (section 6).

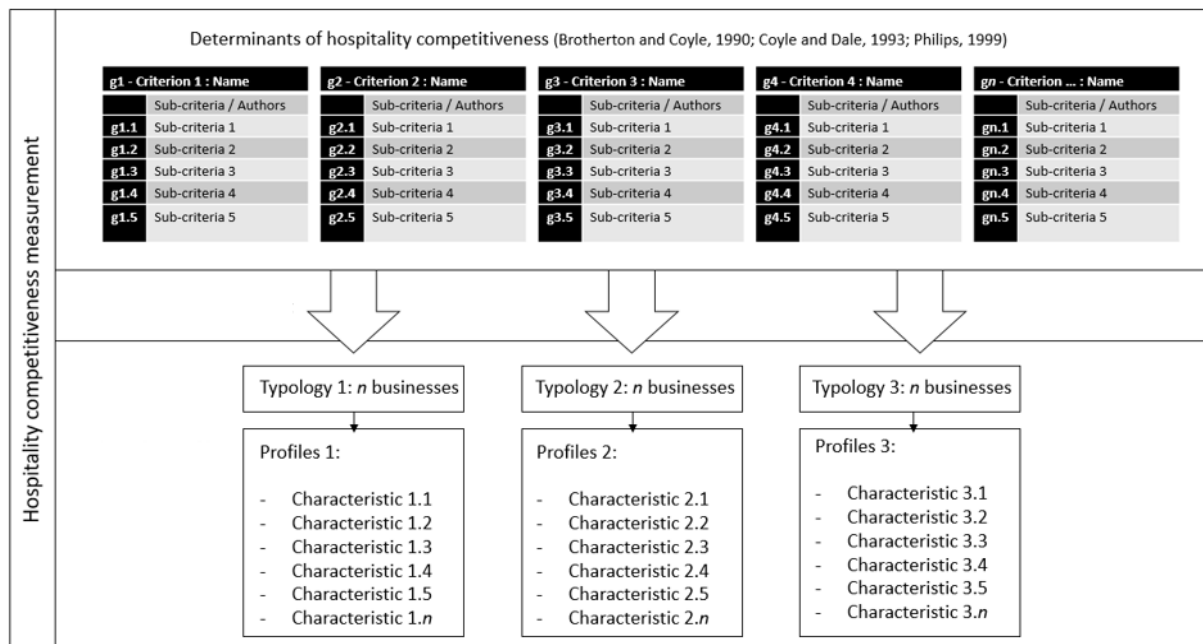
## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Hospitality competitiveness measurement**

In the hospitality literature, competitiveness measurement has been structured from identifying the key determinants, criteria and sub-criteria characterizing the specificity of the hospitality sector (Brotherton and Coyle, 1990; Coyle and Dale, 1993). In that way, Brotherton and Coyle (1990) or Coyle and Dale (1993) have explored the determinants of hotel quality from a customer and provider perspective. In this context, Philips (1999) propose a competitiveness measurement system to enlighten the competitive advantage of hotels and address a contingency approach to identify hotel typologies. Their objective was to propose homogeneous segments of hotels in order to explore their main competitive characteristics. Finally, Barros (2005), Assaf and Barros (2013) and Assaf and Tsionas (2018) assessed competitiveness from a performance perspective, using typologies and profiles to present a benchmarking of hotels (Assaf and Barros, 2013). In this context, measuring the competitiveness involves several stages, as identifying the determinants, the typologies and profiles of businesses (figure 1).

Here (figure 1), determinant refer to a set of criteria that make up the objective, measuring competitiveness. The criterion makes it possible to distinguish a concept from its determinant and can be detailed by several sub-criteria. The set of criteria and sub-criteria evaluated allowed the creation of typologies. The typologies separate a given set of criteria and sub-criteria (Smith, 2002). In order to validate a typology, it is then necessary to describe and compare each of the

types in order to identify their differences in content, to judge their relevance and operational value, i.e. thanks to the illustrative variables that characterize each profile (Smith, 2002).



**FIGURE 1. HOSPITALITY COMPETITIVENESS MEASUREMENT STAGES (ADAPTED FROM BROTHERTON AND COYLE, 1990; COYLE AND DALE, 1993; PHILIPS, 1999)**

## 2.2 OHP competitiveness measurement

OHP competitiveness management does not appear to have evolved significantly since many years (Arimond et Lethlean, 1996; Breen et al., 2006; Hayllar et al., 2006; Brooker et al., 2012; Peršić et al., 2017). Within this context, Arimond et Lethlean (1996) have studied camping gross revenue from profit centers by segmenting camping firms from the US context. In this view, they benchmark camping businesses from financial indicators. In this same way, Hayllar et al. (2006) give a national benchmark based on operational management indicators. However, Hayllar et al (2006) did not propose a specific segmentation for OHPs and did not specify their profiles, this affects the consistency of the indicators provided. Thus, these three articles address relevant contributions in competitiveness measurements from a comparative advantage based on financial indicators. Nevertheless, they do not extend the literature on camping typologies, profiles and strategies applied to propose consistent benchmark.

Brooker and Joppe (2013) used the term "Outdoor Hospitality Parks (OHP)" to demonstrate the capital-intensive change (Chambers and Cifter, 2022) from nature-based camping tourism to

commercial infrastructure developed through intensive lodging and recreational facilities. However, research on OHP-competitiveness from a capital-intensive perspective lacks of investigation. As the core of OHP businesses involve lodging facilities and recreational amenities (Brooker and Joppe, 2013) specific determinants, criteria and sub-criteria have been used in camping management literature and never aggregated into a unique model. Thus, the figure 2 constitute the OHP's capital-intensive competitiveness model (Figure 2)

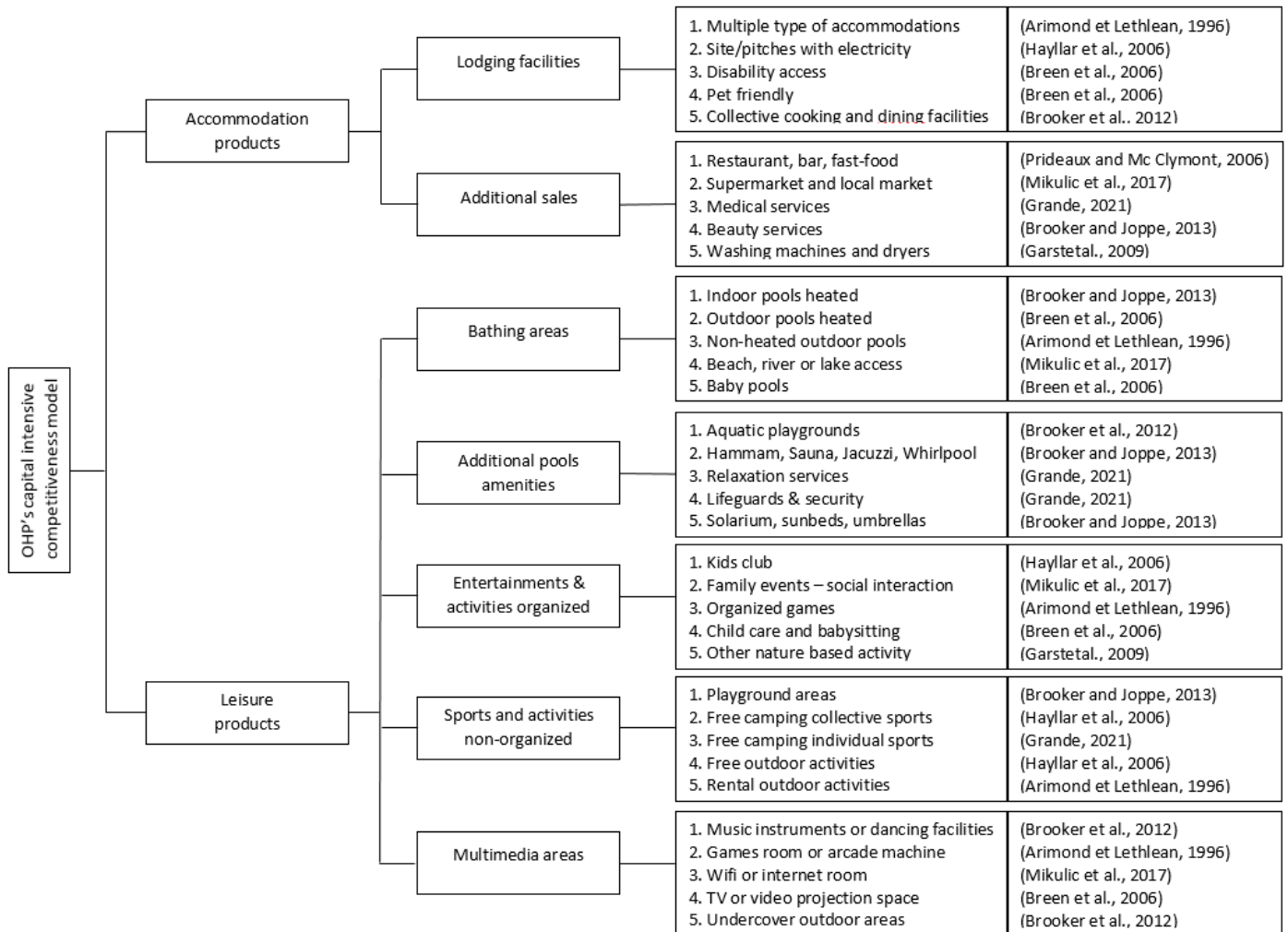


FIGURE 2. OHP'S CAPITAL INTENSIVE COMPETITIVENESS MODEL "AUTHORS".

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Sampling method

To launch this research, we employed a convenience sampling method to involve 27 French Outdoor hospitality businesses. The evaluation took place in May 2019 during a research agreement between the authors and the professional union of OHP-managers. Several variables and determinants were explored to characterise the sampling profile (Table 1).

Variables and determinants	Sample	%
<b>Property</b>		
# Municipal	4	15%
# Delegation	6	22%
# Private	17	63%
<b>Star-rating</b>		
# 0 to 2 stars	6	22%
# 3 stars	11	41%
# 4 to 5 stars	10	37%
<b>Location</b>		
# Rural	17	63%
# Mountain	5	19%
# City	5	19%
<b>Length of Long Stay in High Season</b>		
<i>The share of stays longer than 4 nights (&lt; 30%; 30% to 50%; &gt; 50%)</i>		
# Low (< 30%)	12	44%
# Medium (30% to 50%)	5	19%
# High (> 50%)	10	37%

TABLE 1: OHP SAMPLING PROFILE "AUTHORS".

#### 3.2 Data collection

##### 3.2.1 Capital-intensive data collection

To collect data, we used the OHP's capital-intensive competitiveness model (Figure 2) and follow Costa et al. (2018) methodology to transform a qualitative data into a quantitative one. During their investigations, Costa et al. (2018) construct various scale levels for each criterion, considering the scale levels of the sub-criteria previously provided by decision-makers. An adaptation of it can be found in Appendix A. Their matrix was adapted to our seven criteria (*g1* to *g7*). Sub-criteria are ordered in the evaluation scale (Appendix A) as in Figure n°2 (ex. from

the most important “*g1.1*” to the least important “*g1.5*”). All criteria were considered maximized. As Costa et al. (2018), we provided scale levels using qualitative judgments (e.g., *Yes/No*). By following a resource path, the final score is converted into numerical ranks that represent their combination of resources for each criterion (i.e., from 1 to 32 ranks). After inventorying the OHP capital-intensive according to the scale levels, we obtain the performance matrix for 27 OHPs (Table 2).

Performance Matrix of 27 French OHPs							
OHP (alternatives)	Lodging Facilities (g <sub>1</sub> )	Additional Sales (g <sub>2</sub> )	Bathing Areas (g <sub>3</sub> )	Additional Pool Amenities (g <sub>4</sub> )	Entertainments & Activities Organized (g <sub>5</sub> )	Sports & Activities Non Organized (g <sub>6</sub> )	Multimedia Areas (g <sub>7</sub> )
a <sub>1</sub>	13	2	22	4	9	10	8
a <sub>2</sub>	28	26	18	26	29	28	8
a <sub>3</sub>	12	18	10	4	2	9	7
a <sub>4</sub>	32	26	20	4	30	31	16
a <sub>5</sub>	28	18	10	10	2	11	7
a <sub>6</sub>	28	26	24	28	29	32	8
a <sub>7</sub>	12	18	9	1	1	1	8
a <sub>8</sub>	9	17	1	1	2	1	1
a <sub>9</sub>	30	18	12	4	30	28	24
a <sub>10</sub>	12	18	3	1	1	4	1
a <sub>11</sub>	28	18	14	4	17	15	24
a <sub>12</sub>	12	10	9	1	6	9	15
a <sub>13</sub>	30	18	30	28	29	25	7
a <sub>14</sub>	16	2	14	4	1	9	5
a <sub>15</sub>	16	18	9	2	14	12	23
a <sub>16</sub>	26	18	5	10	9	4	23
a <sub>17</sub>	30	2	17	2	30	28	7
a <sub>18</sub>	29	2	11	2	18	4	5
a <sub>19</sub>	10	2	3	1	2	3	5
a <sub>20</sub>	8	18	9	2	1	9	5
a <sub>21</sub>	16	18	10	17	1	3	16
a <sub>22</sub>	17	2	17	1	6	4	5
a <sub>23</sub>	12	26	5	2	1	3	15
a <sub>24</sub>	11	2	3	3	17	11	6
a <sub>25</sub>	32	28	26	32	29	29	31
a <sub>26</sub>	32	30	30	20	30	32	32
a <sub>27</sub>	30	5	30	28	32	24	24

**TABLE 2: PERFORMANCE MATRIX OF 27 FRENCH OHPs "AUTHORS".**



### 3.2.2 Variables

Additionally, we collected data that allowed to characterize the economic development of these businesses. Thus, we identified ten variables of their economic activity (Breen et al. 2006; Hayllar et al. 2006). These variables will be used to characterize the business profiles.

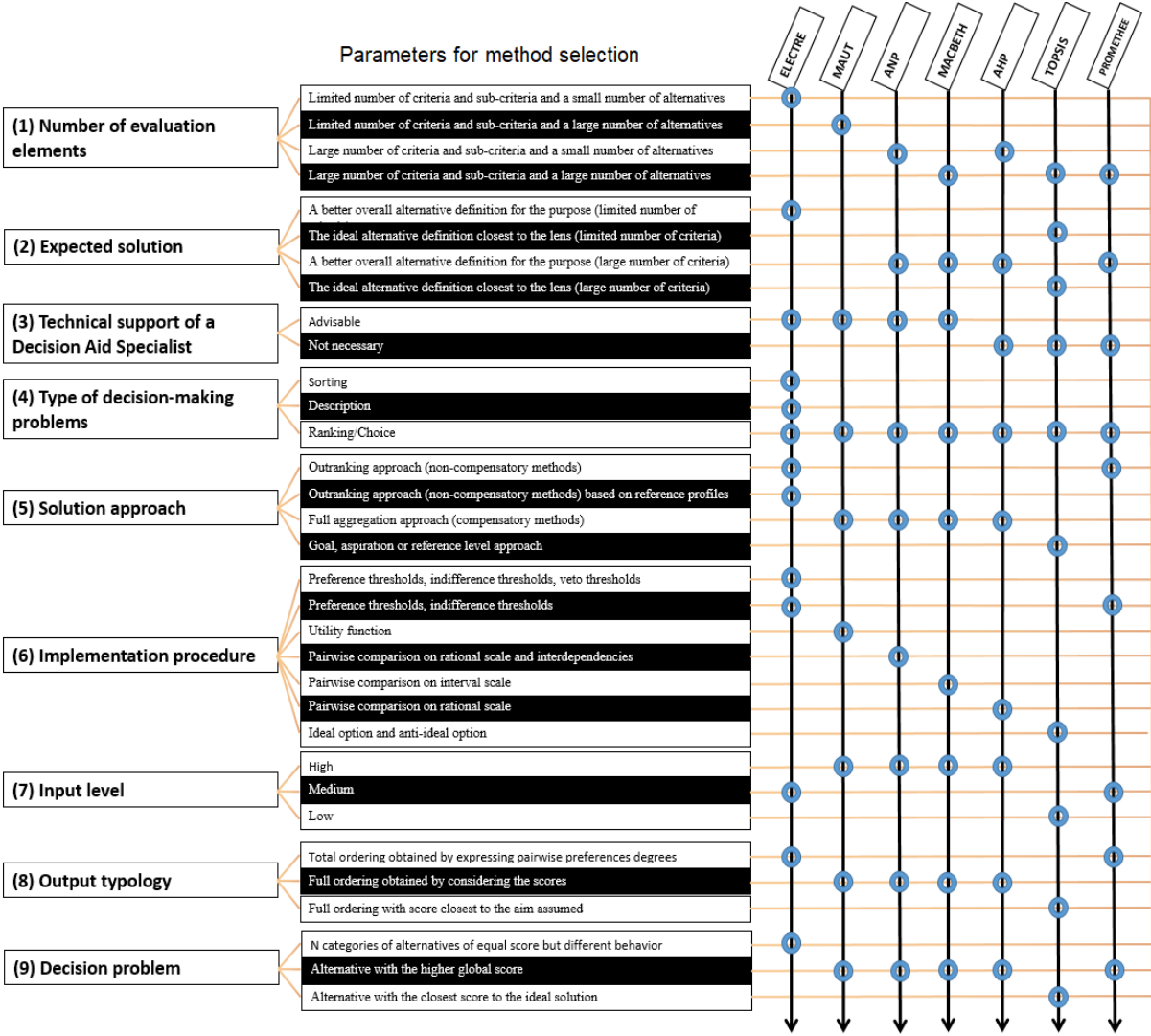
### 3.3 Data analysis

MCDM methods are used in data analysis for strategic planning (Guarini et al., 2018). These methods offer techniques for dealing with evaluation processes based on a range of heterogeneous and conflicting criteria. MCDM methods employ quantitative and qualitative approaches that allow the measurement of criteria to decide between a set of alternatives to the decision. Indeed, several stakeholders can often be considered directly or indirectly in the decision-making problem, including: institutions (national, regional, local); entrepreneurs; economic operators; property owners or workers. These methods are classified into three groups (full aggregation, outranking approach and reference level) and need to be detailed to be chosen (Ishizaka and Siraj, 2018; Guarini et al., 2018).

In the following decades, Cicek et al. (2010) and Guarini et al. (2018) proposed procedures for the selection of appropriate MCDM methods. In their article, Guarini et al. 2018 specified a set of ten variables to be characterized in order to select the most appropriate method according to our research and context (figure 3). Each variable integer several qualifications allowing the distinction between each method. All these methods proposed can include stakeholders in the decision process (Guarini et al., 2018). These methods have been particularly adopted to measure the competitiveness and performance of hotel businesses (Barros, 2005; Assaf and Barros, 2013; Assaf and Tsionas, 2018).

Henceforth this phase requires the method selection (Figure 3) using the Guarini et al. (2018) model. Our sample has a limited number of capital-intensive criteria and sub-criteria and a small number of alternatives (*number of evaluation elements, Figure 3*). In addition, the participatory process is activated by the inclusion of a limited number of outdoor hospitality specialists. The expected solution is a global distribution of alternatives according to defined objectives. The decision-makers expect to be fully supervised during the measurement protocol (*technical support, Figure 3*). The problem to be solved concerns the measurement of competitiveness according to the segmentation approach (*type of decision-making problems, Figure 3*) in order

to create groups of businesses that outrank each other on a majority of criteria (*solution approach, Figure 3*) and in relation to parameters (*implementation procedure, Figure 3*) that express the preferences of decision makers (*output typology, Figure 3*). Ranking problems are to be discarded, as they are considered to be of limited value since managers are not in a race to acquire equipment but rather to target the best equipment in their competitive context. For all of these aspects, we selected the ELECTRE Method.



**FIGURE 3. PARAMETERS FOR SELECTING A MULTI-CRITERIA MEASUREMENT SYSTEM (ADAPTED FROM GUARINI ET AL., 2018)**

### **3.3.1 ELimination and Choice TRanslating Reality (ELECTRE)**

ELECTRE is one of the most recognized algorithms in the literature to choose the best alternative(s) from a given set of alternatives. This method was applied to the three main problems of choice, ranking and sorting (Roy, 1991). ELECTRE originated in Europe in the mid-60s and has evolved into several extensions (Zopounidis, 1999; Hatami-Marbini and Tavana, 2011). Outranking methods like ELECTRE serve to handle these effects. However, the literature concerning the ELECTRE methods in the tourism field is still thin (Ishizaka et al., 2013; Botti and Peypoch, 2013) due to its complexity (Kadziński and Ciomek, 2016).

In this paper, we propose to use ELECTRE TRI (Zopounidis and Doumpos, 2002) as a method to deal with CA evaluation by assessing and classifying OHPs into predefined ordered categories. Govindan and Jepsen (2016) applied this method to sort suppliers into risk categories, but to the best of our knowledge, it has not yet been applied to sort tourism and hospitality businesses.

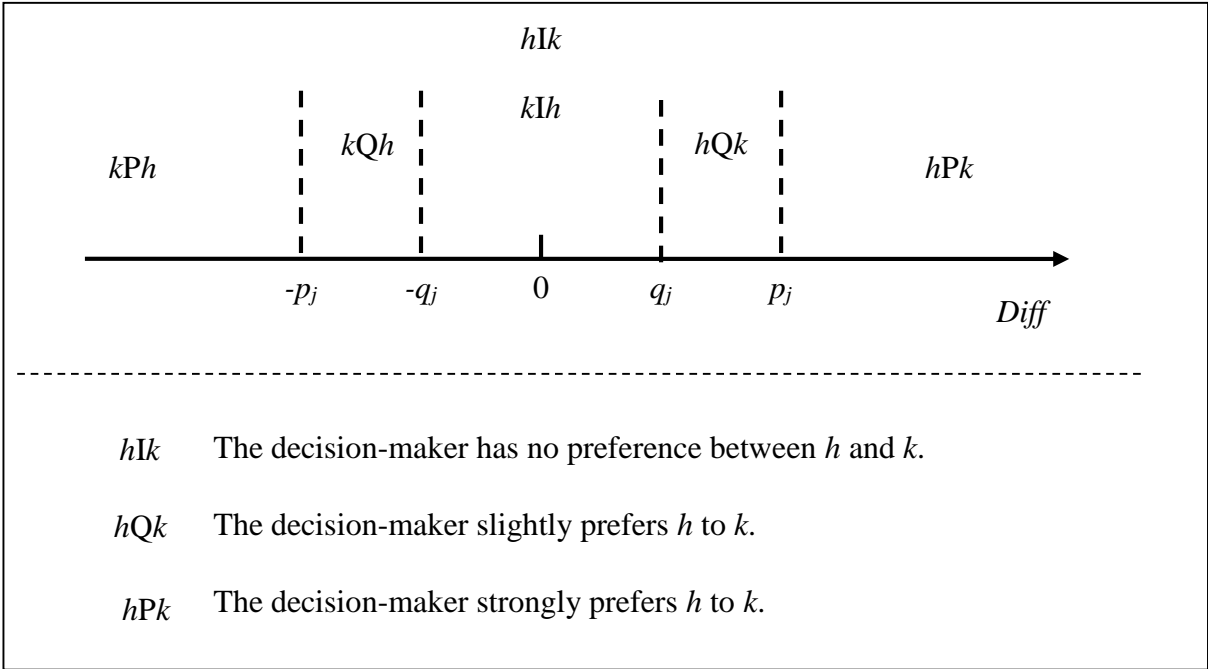
ELECTRE is a relevant method for at least three reasons: (i) The decision problem does not tolerate a compensatory effect between criteria. Xidonas et al. (2009) mentioned that ELECTRE TRI method manages incomparability between alternatives in such a way that it will point out those having particularities in their evaluation. In other words, the incomparability prevents from unrealistic and mandatory comparisons between alternatives (Xidonas et al., 2009). In this way, worse performances on certain criteria cannot be compensated by better performances on other criteria (Roy et al, 2014; Costa et al, 2018). (ii) Decision Makers can participate in the process by giving all parameters needed to start ELECTRE such as criteria weights, thresholds (including vetoes) (Xidonas et al., 2009; Almeida-Dias et al., 2012). (iii) ELECTRE propose a specific sorting program noted ELECTRE TRI, and works with a categorisation of businesses between segments (more than two) also called reference parameters (Dias and Mousseau, 2018).

### **3.3.2 ELECTRE TRI (sorting method)**

The ELECTRE TRI method comprises two parts: (i) construction of outranking relations based on the combination of a concordance index and a discordance index between two alternatives, and (ii) exploitation of these relations to sort them. ELECTRE TRI is a well-known and widely-

used method (Govindan and Jepsen, 2016) but it has never been employed in the CA measurement literature concerning the hospitality sector.

Generally speaking, for MCDM methods like ELECTRE TRI, the evaluation is done on  $n$  alternatives represented by the vector  $a: (a_i; i=1,2, \dots, n)$ , which could be analysed by  $m$  criteria represented by the vector  $g: (g_j; j=1,2, \dots, m)$ . The assessment of each  $a_i$  on each  $g_j$  gives the performance matrix composed of all the  $r_{ij}$ .



**FIGURE 4: PSEUDO-CRITERION (MAXIMUM AS PREFERENCE ORIENTED) "AUTHORS"**

ELECTRE TRI uses a fuzzy framework, and the criteria composing vector  $g$  are pseudo-criteria with thresholds, as presented in Figure 4. In this figure,  $Diff$  stands for the difference between the performance of two businesses ( $h$  and  $k$ ) on a particular criterion. This aspect is cardinal in the ELECTRE TRI, since the reasoning is done within criteria and not between criteria as in compensatory methods (which then use trade-offs between criteria). Note that in Figure 4, the decision-maker chooses to lend importance to big values because it will prefer alternative  $h$  to alternative  $k$  if  $Diff$  is  $> q$ , which is the indifference threshold for criterion  $j$  ( $p_j$  is the preference threshold for criterion  $j$ ).

The ELECTRE TRI algorithm build outranking relations by considering two conditions (concordance and discordance) and a veto threshold. By knowing to which category a given

business is assigned, the managers can then implement a relevant benchmarking procedure. In this perspective, and considering the managerial problem dealt with in this article, the proposed methodology is about a supervised and ordinal classification of OHPs.

Categories of businesses are built by a set of boundary firms with “*worst*” ( $c_1$ ), “*intermediate*” ( $c_2$ ) and “*best*” ( $c_3$ ) classifications. To define three categories, we must then define two reference businesses, i.e.  $pBM$ , which is the boundary between “*worst*” and “*intermediate*” businesses, and  $pMG$ , which is the boundary between “*intermediate*” and “*best*” businesses. The reference (which are ‘*virtual*’ models) separate the three categories.

However, this method does not indicate how to define criteria weights, thresholds, and profiles (Boer et al., 1998). Thus, we combined ELECTRE with a specific method to obtain the criteria weights of the decision makers.

### **3.3.3 Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)**

In social sciences, Roy et al. (2014) explain that it is the analyst, often in close collaboration with the decision-makers, who must decide on the most appropriate way to support MCDM parameters such as criteria weights. For obtaining the criteria weights from a number of alternatives (decision-makers) the methods have been compared from the Figure 2 (Guarini et al., 2018). AHP was the most adapted method to aggregate seventeen decision-maker expectations (Figure 3).

The AHP method is accurate as respondents can only focus on two criteria at a time and allows the problem to be structured into a hierarchy (Saaty, 1980). To determine the relative importance of criteria ( $w_j$ ), we implemented an Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) within the panel of OHP Decision-Makers ( $n=17$ ). Since this method has been extensively detailed and cited by 11370 papers (google scholars), we only provide the aggregated criteria weights (table 4). Readers interested in the calculations can refer to the article from Saaty (2008). In addition, we used the Saaty (1980) scale with numeric rating ( $1$  to  $9$ ) and reciprocal value ( $1$  to  $1/9$ ) to assess two criteria at a time. Next, we calculate the pairwise comparison of the criteria and a data normalization process for decision maker #1 up to decision maker #17. We obtain the weights of the criteria for each decision maker. Finally, we aggregate the criteria weights of the

decision makers via a standard average to obtain the criteria weights of all decision makers that are used into ELECTRE TRI process (Table 3).

Criteria parameters	Criteria Weights for ELECTRE TRI						
	g <sub>1</sub>	g <sub>2</sub>	g <sub>3</sub>	g <sub>4</sub>	g <sub>5</sub>	g <sub>6</sub>	g <sub>7</sub>
Weight (w <sub>j</sub> )	0.10	0.20	0.30	0.20	0.10	0.05	0.05

**TABLE 3: CRITERIA WEIGHTS DEFINED BY 17 DECISION-MAKERS IN ELECTRE TRI "AUTHORS".**

### 3.3.4 Other ELECTRE TRI parameters

Then, to determine thresholds, Roy et al. (2014) have adopted a constant threshold equal to two ranks (or two months in their example). This means that a difference of two ranks is not considered compelling enough to warrant a strict preference (three months in their study case). This does not mean that such a difference can be considered insignificant in all cases. Therefore, the analyst can reasonably put  $q=1$  for an indifference value and  $p=3$  for a strict preference value (Roy et al., 2014; Costa et al., 2018).

However, to counter the imprecision of the evaluations, Dias and Mousseau (2006) propose to treat the criteria in a similar way by setting the indifference thresholds ( $q_j$ ) and the preference thresholds ( $p_j$ ) at the same values for the different criteria (discriminant thresholds). Moreover, they consider that the thresholds, including the discordance thresholds (*veto*es), are constant from one profile to another (i.e. they do not vary with the performance of the alternatives compared).

Discriminant thresholds thus make it possible, in the case where, to delimit a zone of ambiguity in which it is not possible to "cut off" between a preference or an indifference in favor of the best performing action; this preference being thus very weakly established (Costa et al., 2018). The pseudo-criteria model (cf. Section 3) allows us to take this important aspect into account. They reflect a very realistic situation that corresponds to a hesitation between indifference and strict preference in favor of the stock with the best performance, and excluding a strict preference in favor of the stock with the worst performance (Roy et al., 2014).

In addition, the ELECTRE TRI method involves setting veto thresholds. According to Dias and Mousseau (2006), the DM needs support in determining the values of the parameters related to

the discordance. In an illustration, Dias and Mousseau (2006) demonstrate a case where, the DM feels that criteria  $g_1$ ,  $g_2$ , and  $g_3$  should not have veto power (so the DM and analyst agree to set  $v_1 = v_2 = v_3 = +\infty$ ), while criterion  $g_5$  may have some veto power. Second, the DM does not know whether criterion  $g_4$  should have veto power or not. As a result, Dias and Mousseau (2006) argues that veto thresholds are parameter to be set according to the decision makers' expectations, it can be variable or constant such as the indifference thresholds ( $q_j$ ) and the preference thresholds ( $p_j$ ).

By doing so, to set the thresholds, we coordinate our 17 decision-makers, as representatives of the Outdoor Hospitality Park union. From the scale in Appendix 1, the DMs decided to be indifferent when a difference between two alternatives did not exceed 1 rank of resource ( $q=1$  rank). As Roy et al. (2014), we then drove the preference ( $p=3$  ranks). To set up the veto thresholds, Dias and Mousseau (2006) proposed that it can be equal to 2 times the preference threshold. However, as they specify, in certain cases where the preference thresholds are low, the veto threshold becomes a constraint due to its non-applicability and realistic interpretation of the results. To reinforce our application and to fight against the problems of interference of the veto thresholds, we opted for different veto threshold tests.

Unanimously, DMs decided to include the incomparability parameters and thus to sanction very low scores which could not be compensated (Table 4). First, we (DMs and coordinators) opt for veto thresholds (*a priori*) at 3 ranks as proposed by Dias and Mousseau (2006) but we had interference problems. Then, we continue with 5 ranks, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16 until 17 ranks as no interference problems were detected after proceeding ELECTRE TRI calculation tests. Furthermore, this study opts for constant thresholds set according to the decision makers' expectations (Dias and Mousseau, 2006). Nonetheless, as Mousseau et al. (2000), we give the opportunity to DMs to ignore veto threshold ( $+\infty$ ). However, in the case where we had no decision makers, we would have proceeded with linear programs to set thresholds (Dias and Mousseau, 2006).

	<b>Thresholds for ELECTRE TRI</b>						
Criteria parameters	g <sub>1</sub>	g <sub>2</sub>	g <sub>3</sub>	g <sub>4</sub>	g <sub>5</sub>	g <sub>6</sub>	g <sub>7</sub>
Indifference threshold (q <sub>j</sub> )	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Preference threshold (p <sub>j</sub> )	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Veto threshold (v <sub>j</sub> )	17	17	17	17	17	17	17

**TABLE 4: DISCRIMINATING THRESHOLDS "AUTHORS".**

After what, decision-makers determine the reference profiles which represent the boundaries of predefined and ordered classes. These parameters could be directly provided by DMs or indirectly computed by specific elicitation techniques (The and Mousseau, 2002). In our context, we do not consider it desirable to make categories that depend on the scores of each alternative and criterion. In this sense, it has proven to be more meaningful to propose boundaries based on scale deviations in order to assess the intensity of heterogeneity of a sample of businesses (Appendix A). So then, we met one last time with the 17 DMs. The purpose of this meeting was to establish the reference parameters identified as the boundaries of the businesses. Three ordered categories were determined: "best OHP" (c1), "intermediate OHP" (c2) and "worst OHP" (c3). We define three categories, and two OHP boundaries, namely pBM, which is the boundary between the "worst" and "intermediate" OHP, and pMG, which is the boundary between the "intermediate" and the "best" OHP. Table 5 gives the references of the OHP boundaries on each criterion and related to the criteria assessment scale (Appendix A). The references of the OHP are "virtual" models that separate the three categories. Unanimously the 17 DMs validate to set the boundaries at the first third and then at the second third of the distance of the scale. For them, this approach is more equitable (Xidonas et al., 2009) regarding the assessment scale based on 32 ranks. In this model, the chosen credibility level by the analyst was 0.7 ( $\lambda$ -cut level).

	<b>Category profiles for ELECTRE TRI</b>						
Reference OHP	g <sub>1</sub>	g <sub>2</sub>	g <sub>3</sub>	g <sub>4</sub>	g <sub>5</sub>	g <sub>6</sub>	g <sub>7</sub>
pMG	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
pBM	1/3	1/3	1/3	1/3	1/3	1/3	1/3

**TABLE 5: CATEGORY PROFILES OF THE TWO REFERENCES OHPs (BOUNDARIES) "AUTHORS".**



### 3.4 ELECTRE TRI Software

Then, to run the ELECTRE TRI method, we used Diviz software ([www.diviz.org](http://www.diviz.org)) which performs computations required by multi-criteria methods (MCDM) to executing the successive steps of the dedicated algorithm. The Diviz workflow given in Figure 5 illustrates the ELECTRE algorithm: building outranking relations by considering two conditions (concordance and discordance) and veto thresholds. The workflow is organized into 3 steps, from left to right. Step 1 concerns the data that have to be codified in the X MCDM language. Step 2 concerns the ELECTRE TRI algorithm. Step 3 concerns the output of the algorithm, i.e. sorting firms.

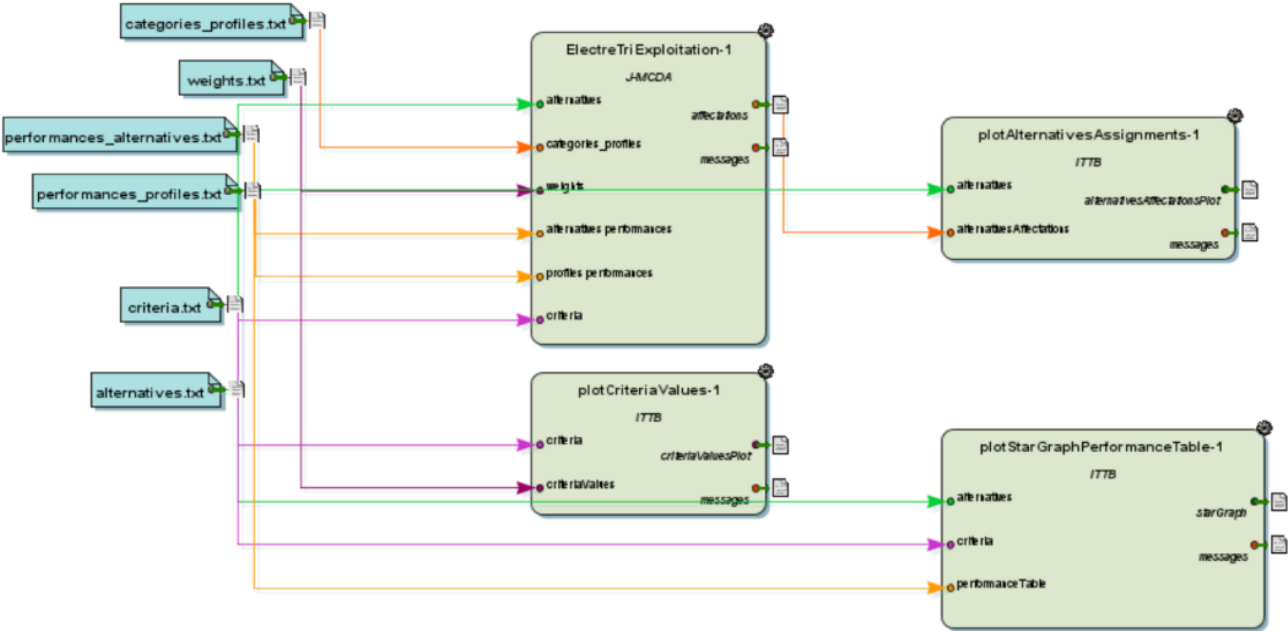


FIGURE 5: DIVIZ ELECTRE TRI WORKFLOW

### 3.5 Statistical Analysis

In order to evaluate the strategic development of the OHPs, we proposed a table representing the strategic development of the camping sector based on the calculation of the median on each criterion. The median is calculated on each criterion and from the 52 campsites. It allows us to observe the strategic orientation of each typology.

Finally, to analyze the typology's consistencies, we used ten variables and determinants (table 6). The analysis scale was provided by the experts representing the French OHP unions involved in this research.

<b>Variables explored</b>		
Property	The type of property (Municipal; Delegation; Private)	
Star-rating	The number of star-rating (0 ; 1 ; 2 ; 3 ; 4 ; 5)	
Market segment	Nature / Route / Leisure	
Location	The OHP location (Rural; Mountain; City)	
Length of Long Stay	The share of stays longer than 4 nights (< 30%; 30% to 50%; > 50%)	
Lodging revenues in Low Season	The share of rental revenues in the off-season	
Pitch revenues in Low Season	The share of pitch revenues in the off-season	
Lodging revenues in High Season	The share of rental revenues during the high season	
Pitch revenues in High Season	The share of pitch revenues during the high season	
Extra revenues All Season	The share of extra revenues all season	
<i>For example, # Low (&lt; 0,10) : &lt; 0.10 signify &lt; 10% of the annual gross revenue. #Low, #Medium, #High are scales used by Breen et al. (2006, p15)</i>		
<b>Scales Analysis</b>		
Property	Market segment	Pitch revenues in Low Season
# Municipal	# Nature	# Low (< 0,10)
# Delegation	# Route	# Medium (0,10 to 0,20)
# Private	# Leisure	# High (> 0,20)
Star-rating	Extra revenues in Low Season	
# 0 to 2 stars	# Low (< 0,10)	
# 3 stars	# Medium (0,10 to 0,20)	
# 4 to 5 stars	# High (> 0,20)	
Location	Lodging revenues in High Season	
# Rural	# Low (< 0,15)	
# Mountain	# Medium (0,15 to 0,25)	
# City	# High (> 0,25)	
Length of "Long" Stay in High Season (> 4 nights)	Pitch revenues in High Season	
# Low (< 30%)	# Low (< 0,15)	
# Medium (30% to 50%)	# Medium (0,15 to 0,25)	
# High (> 50%)	# High (> 0,25)	
Lodging revenues in Low Season	Extra revenues in High Season	
# Low (< 0,10)	# Low (< 0,10)	
# Medium (0,10 to 0,20)	# Medium (0,10 to 0,20)	
# High (> 0,20)	# High (> 0,20)	

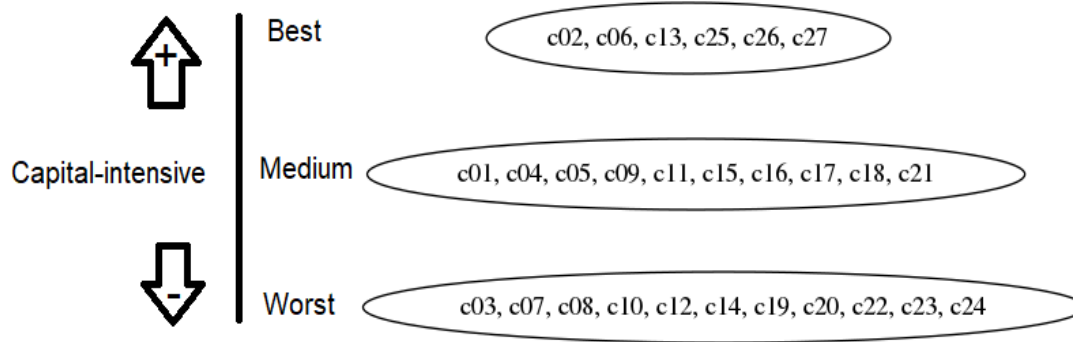
**TABLE 6. ANALYSIS SCALE FROM THE FRENCH OHP UNIONS "AUTHORS"**

## 4. Results

### 4.1 OHP Typologies

{ c01, c02, c03, c04, c05, c06, c07, c08, c09, c10, c11, c12, c13, c14, c15, c16, c17, c18, c19, c20, c21, c22, c23, c24, c25, c26, c27 }

#### Alternatives assignments



**FIGURE 6: OHP ASSIGNMENT TO HOMOGENEOUS TYPOLOGIES "AUTHORS"**

The ELECTRE TRI method was applied to this real-world OHP sector case using the Diviz Software. The results obtained are displayed in figure 6. These results give the classification of the 27 French OHPs according to their resource endowment. Comparatively to the OHP reference, 6 Outdoor hospitality businesses were sorted into the “best OHP” typology, 10 into the “intermediate” typology, and 11 into the “worst OHP” typology. The results indicate OHP assignment to homogeneous typologies (Figure 6).

The case of OHP a4 illustrates that a good performance on some criteria does not offset low performance on other criteria in non-compensatory methods like ELECTRE. Here, pBM is outranked by a4. Then, we compare a4 with the reference OHP pMG. The difference between a4 and pMG on criteria 6 is above the veto threshold. So, the decision-maker can neglect the information coming from the concordance index and conclude that a4 is definitely not as good as pMG. Consequently, as a4 does not outrank the reference OHP pMG but does outrank the reference alternative pBM. OHP a4 is part of the second category reference. Non-compensatory action is resumed in figure 7. Furthermore, we add alternative a27 to explore comparative advantages.

Illustration with  $a_4$  &  $a_{27}$  ( $g.1 \dots \dots \dots g.7$ )

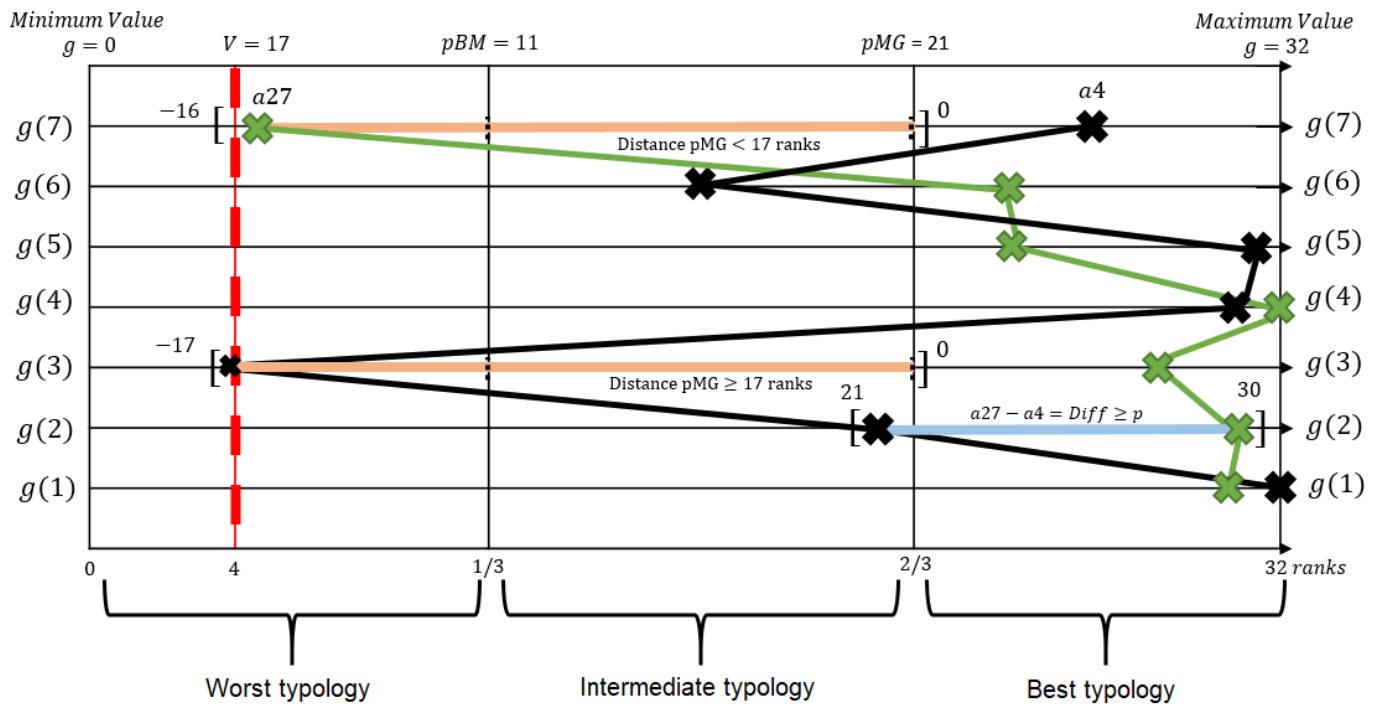


FIGURE 7: VISUALIZATION TYPOLOGIES USING LIMIT PROFILES pBM & pMG "AUTHORS".

## 4.2 Strategic development of OHPs

After what, Table 7 provides a synthetic explanation of strategic development found from the 27 Outdoor hospitality businesses (Table 8). We distinguish three stages of OHP development. For example, \*37% represent the part of investments (12 points on the scale level). For the first segment “worst”, OHPs start their strategic investments by acquiring lodging facilities or offering pitches (37% or rank 12th from scale level). Moreover, to reach the highest category “best” from “intermediate”, managers have strongly invested on the criteria g2, g3, g4, g5 (Figure 7).

Criteria	Typology "Worst"	Scale level	Typology "Intermediate"	Scale level	Typology "Best"	Scale level
Lodging Facilities (g <sub>1</sub> )	*37%	12	78%	25	94%	30
Additional Sales (g <sub>2</sub> )	38%	12	44%	14	69%	22
Bathing Areas (g <sub>2</sub> )	24%	8	41%	13	82%	26
Additional Pool Amenities (g <sub>3</sub> )	6%	2	18%	6	84%	27
Entertainments & Activities Organized (g <sub>4</sub> )	11%	4	50%	16	93%	30
Sports & Activities Non Organized (g <sub>5</sub> )	18%	6	46%	15	89%	28
Multimedia Areas (g <sub>7</sub> )	21%	7	48%	15	57%	18

TABLE 7. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE 27 OHP BUSINESSES "AUTHORS"

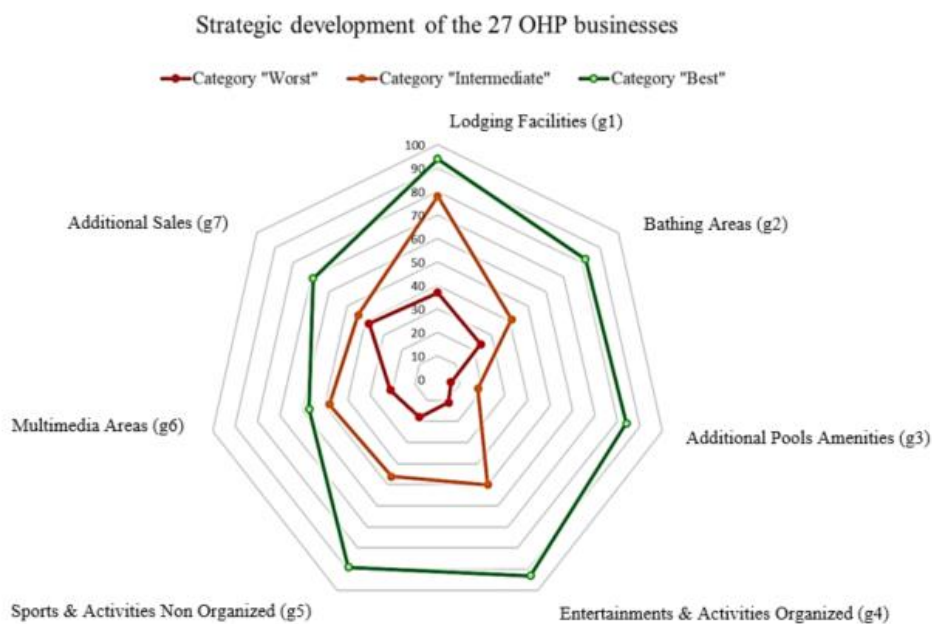


FIGURE 8. OHP CAPITAL-INTENSIVE TYPOLOGIES "AUTHORS"

### **4.3 OHP Profiles**

The three typologies were explored from the variables and determinants (Table 6). The variables have been analyzed and give the following results (Table 8):

#### **Category “Worst”**

In this category, it appears that the lack of resources in lodging and recreational facilities creates a disequilibrium in the OHP offer. As a consequence, these deficits in facilities have an impact on the star rating and the length of the long stay. Thus, we find standard camping pitches systematically associated with an on-site catering offer. It appears that the lodging activity is dependent on the catering activity since it generates as much income (>20%) as the pitches in low season (>20%) and more than the pitches in high season (15% to 20%).

- Majority of the 0 to 2 star-rating
- Low number of long stays (> 4 nights) in high season
- Low lodging revenues in low and high season
- Benchmark revenue from pitches in low season
- Benchmark revenue from additional activities in high season
- High dependence on the activity's diversification (catering activity)

#### **Category “Intermediate”**

In this category, the results indicate that investment in lodging resources (see g(1), Table 7) increases from 37% "Worst" to 78% "Intermediate" has a significant impact on activity parameters. Investment in recreational activities also appears to influence the star category, revenue, and length of stay. The "Intermediate" category illustrates a move upmarket for OHPs. In addition, investment in lodging and recreational facilities appears to reduce dependence on the restaurant business.

- Majority of the 3 star-rating
- Low pitch revenues in low season
- High lodging revenues in low season
- Lodging revenues strengthening in high season
- Increasing length of stay
- Decreasing dependence on additional activity

## **Category “Best”**

In this section, the results reveal that the investment in capital assets has an influence on the star rating, since only 4 to 5-star OHPs are present. In addition, the length of stay follows the level of capital-intensive owned by the business, i.e., the strategy of capital-intensive accumulation positively influences the increase of the length of stay. Consequently, all the investments have an impact on the economic activity of the company, since a large majority of its income comes from the weekly rental of lodgings to enjoy a large set of recreational activities during the high season.

- Only 4 to 5-star-rating
- Strong domination of long stays
- Benchmark in rental revenues in low season
- Benchmark in rental revenues in high season
- Very low pitch revenues in both low and high season
- Very low revenues on additional activity

Variables	Sample <i>n</i>	Category « Worst » <i>n</i> = 11	Category « Intermediate » <i>n</i> = 10	Category « Best » <i>n</i> = 6	X2	p-value
<b>Star-rating</b>					17,00	0,002
➤ # 0 to 2 stars	6	46%	10%	0%		
➤ # 3 stars	11	45%	60%	0%		
➤ # 4 to 5 stars	10	9%	30%	100%		
<b>Market segment</b>					26,30	< 0,001
➤ # Nature	9	27%	60%	0%		
➤ # Route	11	73%	30%	0%		
➤ # Leisure Park	7	0%	10%	100%		
<b>Length of long stay</b>					19,70	< 0,001
➤ # Low (< 30%)	12	91%	20%	0%		
➤ # Medium (30% to 50%)	5	0%	40%	17%		
➤ # High (> 50%)	10	9%	40%	83%		
<b>Lodging revenues in Low Season</b>					9,00	0,038
➤ # Low (< 0,10)	8	55%	20%	0%		
➤ # Medium (0,10 to 0,20)	13	36%	40%	83%		
➤ # High (> 0,20)	6	9%	40%	17%		
<b>Pitch revenues in Low Season</b>					10,40	0,034
➤ # Low (< 0,10)	15	36%	50%	100%		
➤ # Medium (0,10 to 0,20)	6	18%	40%	0%		
➤ # High (> 0,20)	6	46%	10%	0%		
<b>Lodging revenues in High Season</b>					13,40	0,009
➤ # Low (< 0,15)	13	82%	40%	0%		
➤ # Medium (0,15 to 0,25)	6	0%	40%	33%		
➤ # High (> 0,25)	8	18%	20%	67%		
<b>Pitch revenues in High Season</b>					3,49	0,479
➤ # Low (< 0,15)	7	18%	20%	50%		
➤ # Medium (0,15 to 0,25)	17	73%	60%	50%		
➤ # High (> 0,25)	3	9%	20%	0%		
<b>Extra revenues in High Season</b>					9,85	0,043
➤ # Low (< 0,10)	11	18%	40%	83%		
➤ # Medium (0,10 to 0,20)	10	36%	50%	17%		
➤ # High (> 0,20)	6	46%	10%	0%		

**TABLE 8: OHP PROFILES**



## 5. Discussion

Our study has three aims: (i) to enlighten the criteria that make up the OHP capital-intensive (lodging and recreational resources), (ii) to select the most adapted MCDM technic to measure the OHP competitiveness in a sorting perspective which respect decision-maker's expectations, (iii) to obtain consistent typologies and profiles of OHPs. Following these objectives, this study proposes an operational procedure from multi-criteria methods to benchmark OHP businesses according to their comparative advantage in capital-intensive.

Findings demonstrate that this sector is heterogeneous and offers a diversification of products and services. In this context, we opt for 3 segments. The first typology focuses on accommodation facilities as well as on additional sales (mainly restaurants) "route market segment". Then, some transformation in the leisure side of the business begins (Chambers and Cifter, 2022) (bathing areas, entertainment and sport infrastructures). These offers stay close to "nature market segment". Finally, the third typology corresponds to a large-scale capital-intensive change, since all the criteria double their volume in facilities and amenities. This corresponds to massive investments "Leisure market segment".

Added to this is the strong upmarket nature of camping businesses. The move upmarket is illustrated by the variable "star-rating" which reports the classification of hotel companies (Moshin et al. 2019). However, this star rating raises some questions insofar as our results show that the 2, 3 and 4 star-rating camping businesses are present in the "worst and intermediate" typologies. Thus, the star-rating system does not depend on an accumulation of infrastructure, equipment and services but only on a quality of service (Moshin et al. 2019). Therefore, we consider the star-rating system and the capital-intensive dimension can be complementary and crossed to understand the strategic development of these businesses. In other words, for the "worst" typology, this means that only one camping business stands out strongly from the rest of the value propositions with a service quality of 4 to 5 stars. Then, we move on to 30% and then 100% of 4 to 5 stars. In the last one, the quality of service reaches higher levels of quality.

This research contributes to the work of Hayllar et al. (2006) and Peršić et al. (2017) by proposing a method for competitiveness measurement. In fact, Peršić et al., (2017) address a relevant contribution but really ahead of the last work conducted in camping competitiveness literature, that of the digitalization of benchmarking and performance measurements (Peršić et al., 2017). In their work, they do not indicate any methodological process to include in their

benchmarking system. With regard to the technical feasibility expressed by their article, we observe methodological needs to be strengthened. Indeed, the authors do not specify how to carry out this benchmark, which methods, which parameters, which criteria to use. However, to initiate software development as envisioned by Peršić et al. (2017), this gap needed to be filled.

Regarding the method, ELECTRE TRI was perceived as accessible by the decision makers and they expressed satisfaction with its effectiveness (Roy et al., 2014). Considering its useful value, this methodology aligns with practitioners' issues (Sainaghi et al., 2019). In doing so, this contribution is therefore conceptual, methodological and also practical.

Regarding the decision-maker's expectations, the DMs explain that these results will help to justify the need for investments and to defend the OHPs that are currently "uncompetitive and do not benefit from a rent-based economy". In this context, findings help DMs to structure and argue their future investment plans to convince stakeholders (shareholders, banks or private equity). So, we noted a set of verbatim frequently used to characterize these findings: « to invest », « acquire », « competition », « value », « experience », « social-link », « concept », « entertainment ». These elements are in line with the findings of Breen et al (2006, p17), who evaluated the profiles of camping managers and the perspectives of camping managerial innovation. Thus, they cited that managers reported a need for « we need to be more efficient in how do we plan our investments » ; « we are facing strong competition in attracting customers », « we need information technology to extend our business ». Furthermore, this study contributes to the work of Breen et al. (2006, p30) since the authors cite that “camping managers need strategic planning tools that allow them to always be aware of what the competition is offering in order to propose services and products that others do not”.

Thus, DMs illustrate a strategic use of these results by presenting the case of a19 and a20 located in the same town and belong the “worst OHP” typology “here, a19 have comparative disadvantage from a20 on criteria g2, g5 and g7. To improve its comparative advantage, a19 should prioritize investment into sub-criterion g5.2, g2.2 and g5.2”. Since the sector is in constant capital-intensive change, this tool is a way to structure and monitor the developments of competitors.

## 6. Conclusions

Capital-intensive is a subject that has been widely studied in management sciences applied to tourism and hospitality. This article discusses the capital-intensive determinants of the camping sector, using a created framework from camping management literature. The attention paid to this aspect allows to highlight the position of the camping businesses and their different strategic orientations that exist and are taken by certain firms. This research contributes to the growth of knowledge in the camping business sector. Moreover, it allows to serve as a framework for reflection in the strategic planning of decision-makers.

From a theoretical point of view, this research contributes to the development of knowledge about outdoor hospitality businesses by focusing on their lodging and recreational facilities. From a methodological point of view, this research demonstrates how to select to right MCDM method and how to parameter ELECTRE TRI. From a managerial implication, this study allows to identify strategic orientations and their operating determinants. Furthermore, it aims to clearly distinguish capital-intensive typologies and their firm profiles.

However, the results reveal some limitations which correspond to future lines of research. the first limitation of this research is that the methodological process is relatively extensive to fully integrate the decision makers. Another limitation relates to the sample size. The proposed sample was limited to 28 Outdoor hospitality businesses. A larger number of firms will increase cluster consistency and open up new strategic perspectives. Furthermore, as a limit, this framework does not consider competitiveness based on capabilities, performance and customer expectations. In addition, we do not indicate whether investments are consistent with the applied strategy and the clients' expectations. Finally, future research could replicate this approach to diffuse new patterns since worldwide.

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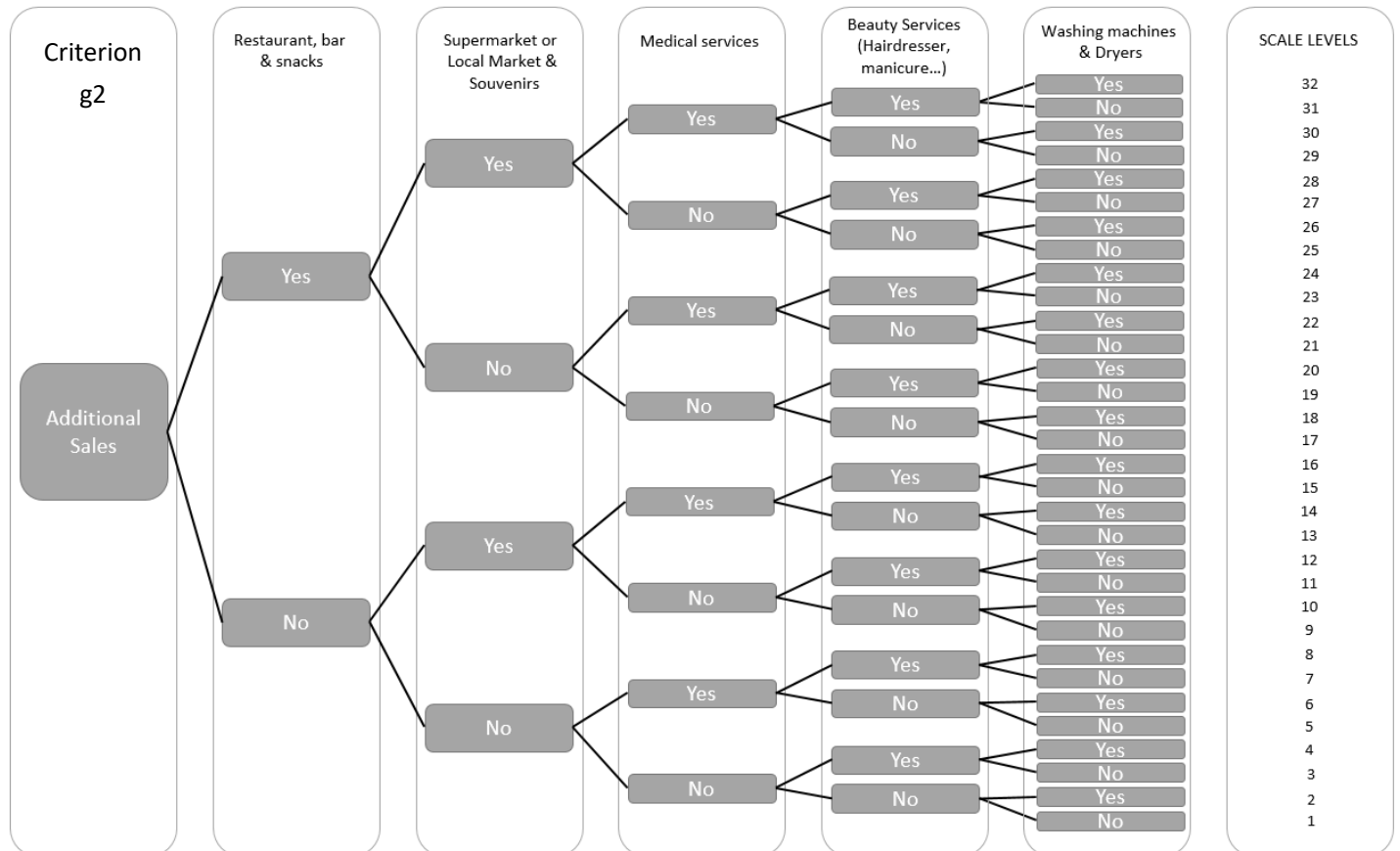
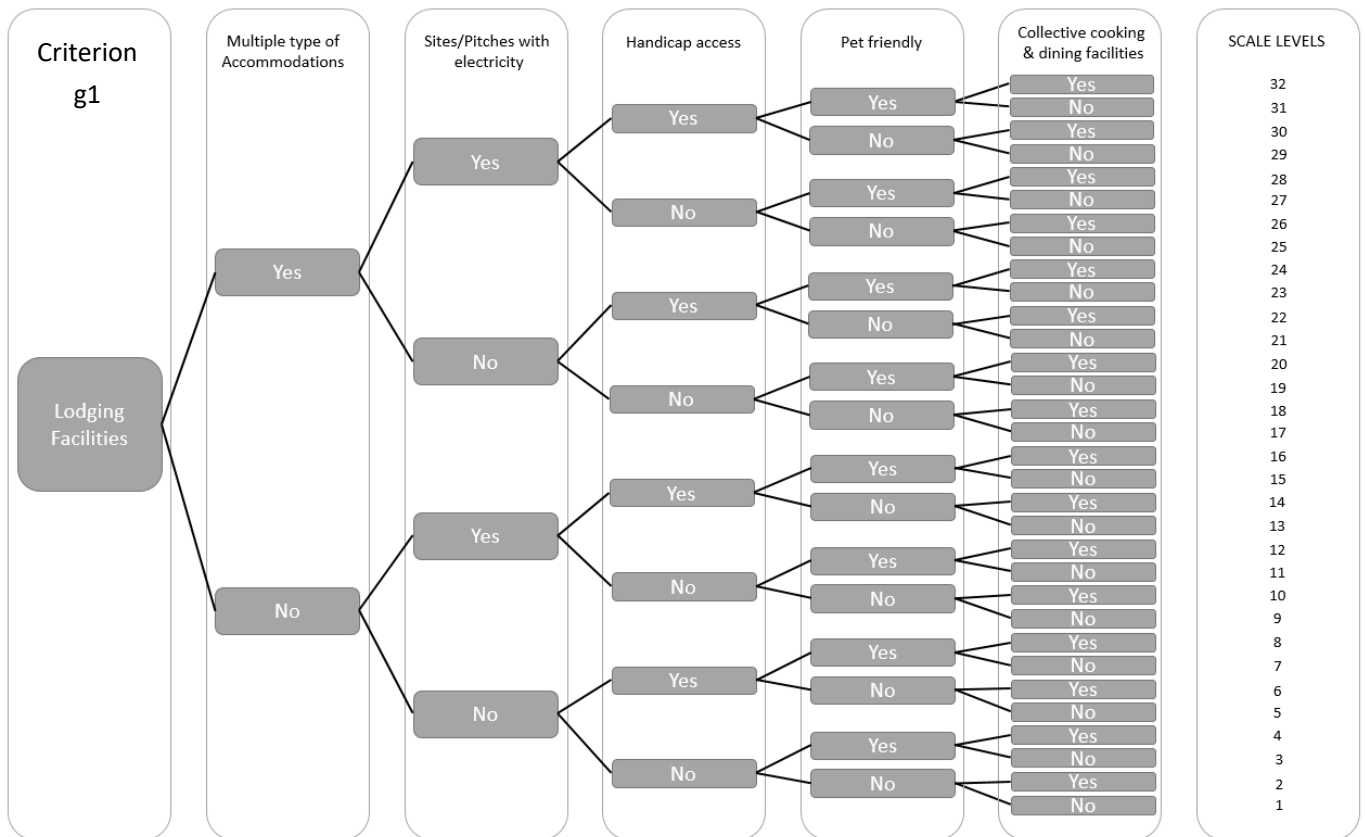
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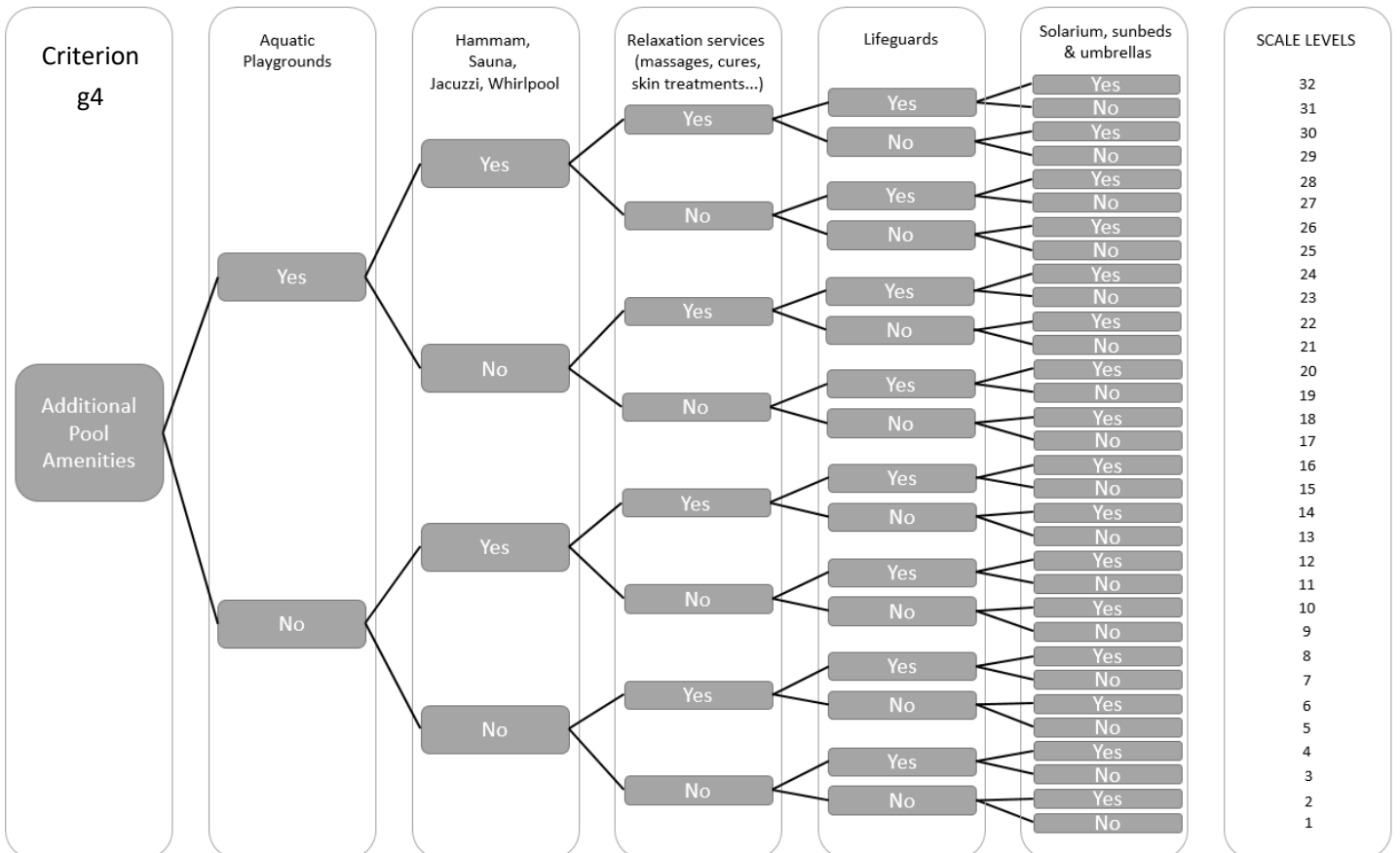
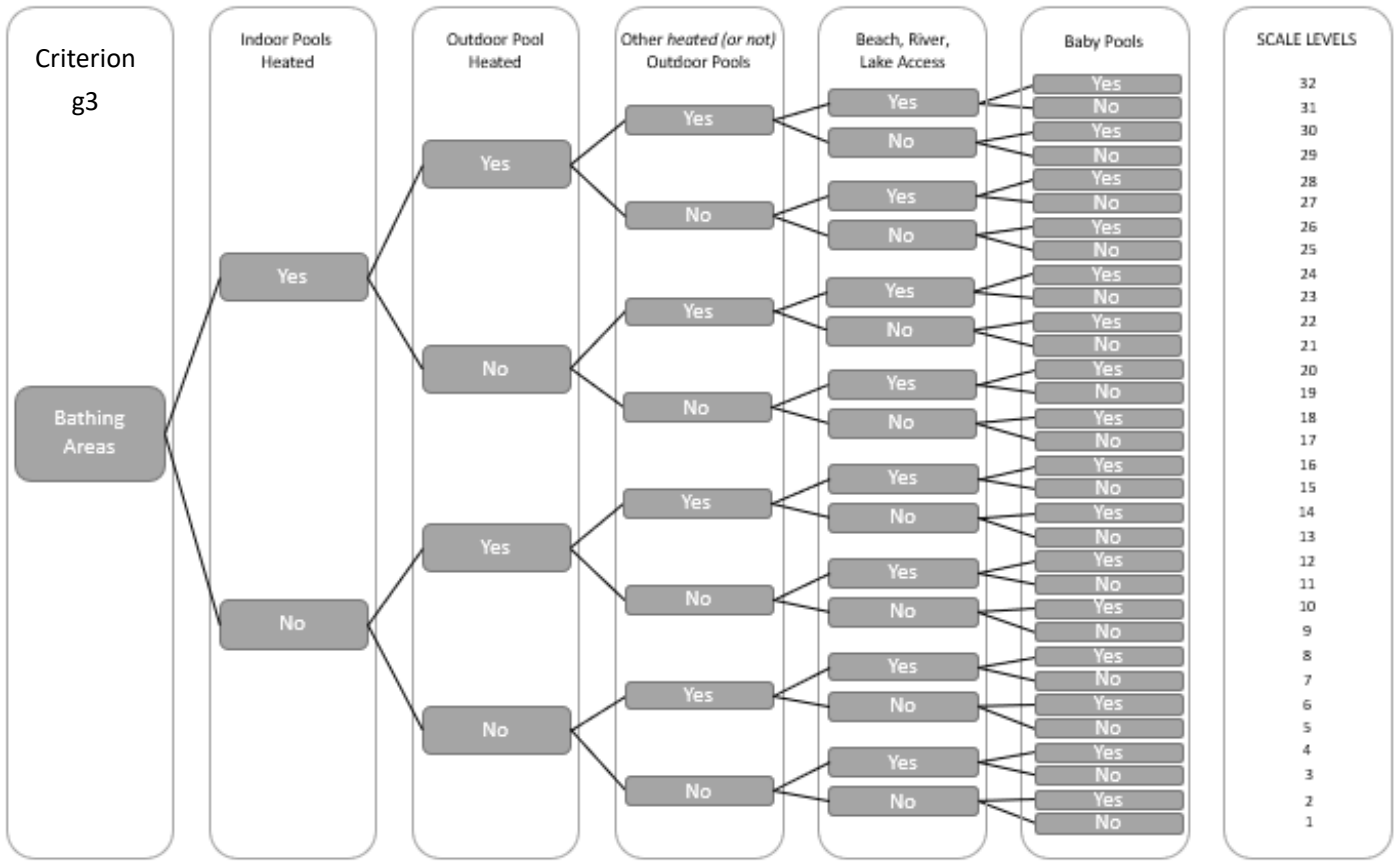
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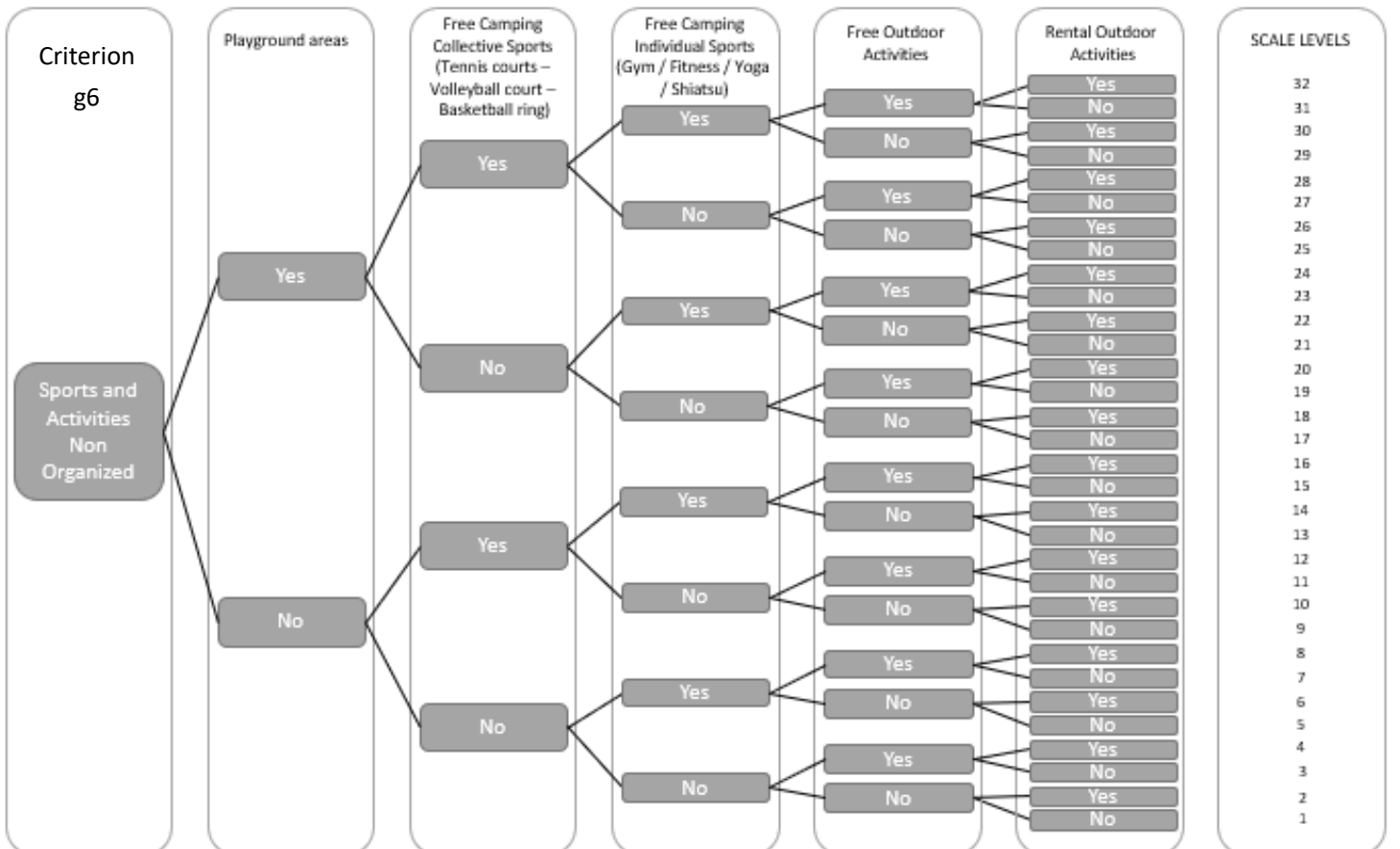
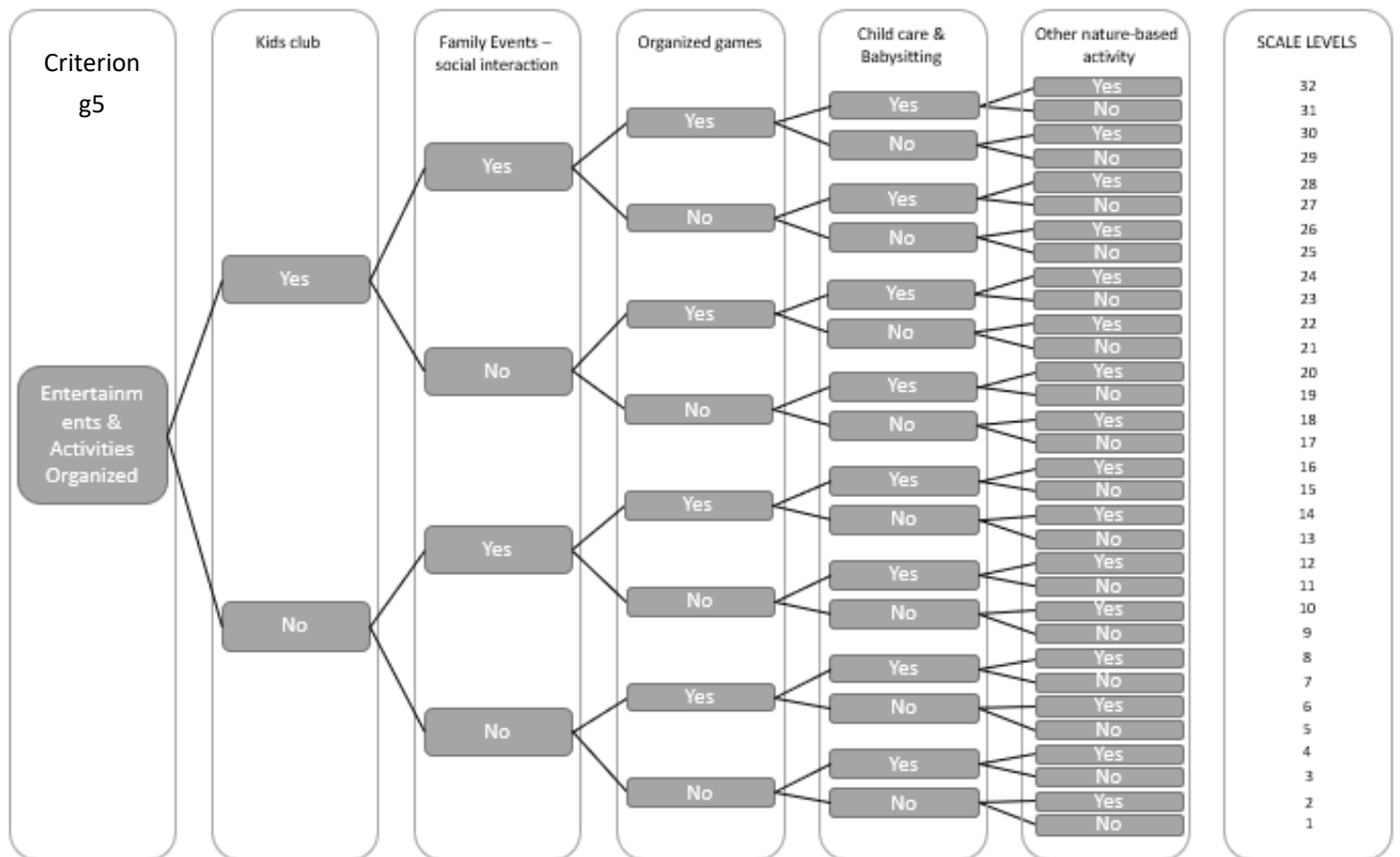
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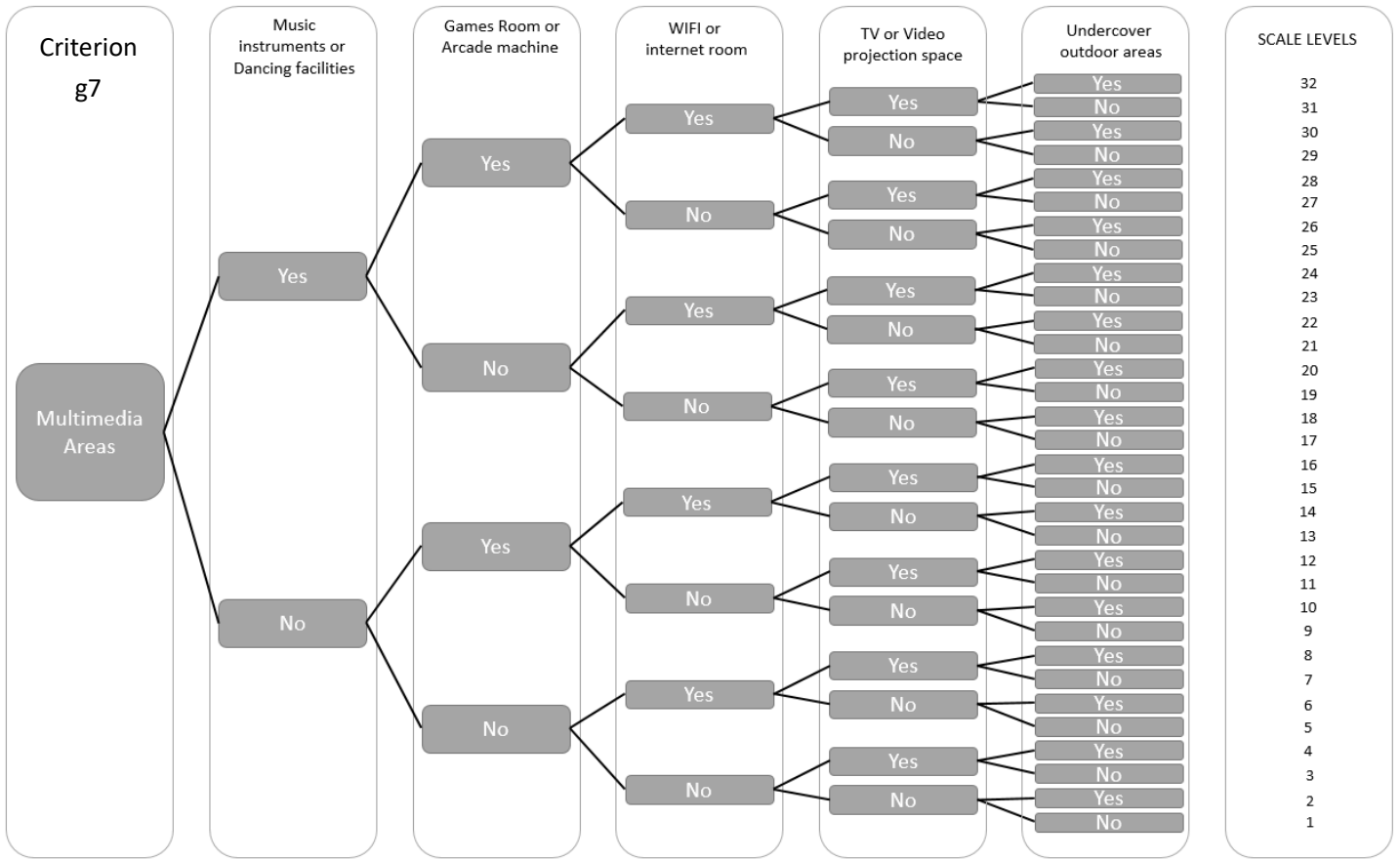


## Appendix A. Criteria assessment scale.











## **Business model canvas: An application with cluster analysis to the camping sector.**

**Authors:** Grande, K., Camprubi, R.

**Journal:** Tourism and Hospitality Research (*Quartile 1*)

**Keywords:**

Business Model Canvas, BMC, Cluster Analysis, Camping, Competitiveness.

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**Abstract.**

Private and public outdoor hospitality businesses are struggling with the strategic and operational management of their business. Camping operators can count on the support of academic research. It was urgent for all, to improve knowledge on camping management and furthermore on existing business models. The objective of this paper is to identify the groups of business models that exist in the camping sector, determine the categories of outdoor hospitality businesses, and facilitate a better understanding of the determinants that distinguish the different business models by proposing key financial and non-financial indicators. Thus, the Business Model Canvas approach is applied to a set of 52 currently operating outdoor hospitality businesses in order to explore key determinants during a three-step multidimensional analysis. Findings reveal four camping business' profiles. Conclusions and managerial implications are reported.

## 1. Introduction

The camping industry gained interest in the academic world (Craig et al, 2021; KOA, 2021; Ma, 2021; Grande, 2021; Lee, 2020; Tong et al., 2020; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2020; Rice et al, 2019; Hewer et al, 2017) and exceeds professional expectations in USA with summer bookings up 500% with many sites fully booked for July and August (Forbes, 2021). North America was the largest region in the global camping market, accounting for 40% of the world market in 2020. Western Europe was the second largest region accounting for 27% of the global market. Africa was the smallest region in the global camping market (FICC, 2021). In 2020, the global revenue of Camping World was approximately 5.45 billion U.S. dollars, which is a considerable jump when compared to the small increase recorded between 2018 (4.79) and 2019 (4.89). The United States of America, count 15 367 camping businesses in 2021. There are 2542 camping businesses in Canada, 3 500 in Australia and 825 in China. In Europe, there is 28.500 commercial parks. These businesses are concentrated in 5 countries: France (27%), UK (16%), Germany (10%), Nederland (9%), Italy (8%) and other UE countries (30%). As a result, the camping industry has grown considerably, increasing the number of competitors in the international market. This proof that the camping business industry is becoming an important hospitality part of the tourist accommodation industry in the world. However, the paradox is that the literature on camping suffers from a lack of consideration and knowledge about the industry strategies applied by for-profit operators in the world. This decade, the main publications have been geared toward nonprofit camping in United States and studied in terms of climate index, weather-based decisions, climate resources, and forecasting (Craig et al, 2021; Ma, 2021; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2020; Rice et al, 2019).

Camping businesses, as other SMEs, are constantly confronted to changes and developments, in a world which is facing constantly for technical and organizational capacities (Zott and Amit, 2006). Intense competition and flexibility needs constrain firms to design new concepts, techniques, practices and frameworks to outperform competitors. To do so, it is necessary to offer managers modern management frameworks, covering the broadest possible scope of their business activities. In this context, Rigby (2001) proposes an overview of management frameworks which facilitate to design strategic views. These business model frameworks focus on specific aspects such as technology (Afuah and Tucci, 2003; Timmers, 1998), strategy (Chesbrough and Rosenbloom, 2002) or organization (Tikkanen et al., 2005; Zott and Amit,

2006). Nevertheless, none of the cited frameworks are useful to study all these previous perspectives in a unique and simple framework.

Later, Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) developed a structured model which fuse these previous perspectives into one framework the “Business Model Canvas”. This model includes 9 key elements that explore the organizational and technical capacity of businesses in order to better increase competitiveness (Moir, Lohmann, 2018), improve knowledge of firm strategies (Szromek and Naramski, 2019) and argue future strategic plans (Perkins et al, 2021).

In management literature, there is miscellaneous contributions focusing on business model canvas application. For example, Sort and Nielsen (2018) have used the business models canvas to improve investment processes. As well in tourism management, there is the article from Urban et al, (2018) which deploy the BMC to dress airlines clusters. Results are clusters which give airlines business pattern. In addition, there are Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al., (2020) which aimed to present the concept of a business model of e-platform for sailing tourism using the Business Model Canvas. Their article points out that the application of the BMC for e-platform for sailing tourism can serve as a framework guide for marinas managers and local authorities to implement the concept. Since recently, this study observe that business model canvas is a relevant framework used to explore the black boxes of businesses (Sort and Nielsen, 2018; Urban et al, 2018; Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, the hospitality sector has never used the business model canvas to explore the different business models existing in this industry. Precisely, as mentioned above, the camping businesses have a lack of contribution. So, exploring their business model constitutes an important academic contribution for the entire hospitality sector. Taking into consideration this framework, the following research question guides this study: To what extent can different business model profiles be identified in the camping sector?

By answering this research question this article contributes to academic literature by linking camping management literature (Mikulic, 2017; Lee, 2020; Grande, 2021) with the BMC framework (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). From a methodological point of view, this research demonstrates how to clustering hospitality businesses (Urban et al. 2018; Mora Cortez et al. 2021; Hair, 1998). From managerial implications, this article furnishes a dedicated



framework to enlighten predominant business models, their competitive advantages (Porter, 1980) and benchmark them (Persic et al, 2017).

To achieve these goals, this article explores the literature concerning business models and frameworks (i). After what, the BMC was adapted to the camping sector (ii). Then, the cluster analysis methodology was applied to identify businesses profiles (iii). Finally, the cluster results are set out, conclusions, limitations and lines for future research are advanced.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Business model conceptualization**

Business model (BM) in management literature has been largely assessed the last decade (Björkdahl, 2009; Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Teece, 2010; Kim and Min, 2015; Foss and Saebi, 2016). For illustration, Osterwalder et al. (2005: p4) propose that a business model is a “blueprint” for how to run a business. Then, Chesbrough (2006a, p2) points out that a business model “creates value by defining a series of activities from raw materials through to the final consumer that will yield a new product or service with value being added throughout the various activities. Zott and Amit (2008) defined BM as one or more articulation of activities which all aim to produce goods and services using both resources and capabilities. However, Björkdahl (2009, p1470) indicates that “business model is a logic and activities, which create an appropriate economic value”. In that way, there is Teece, (2010, p172) which explains that BM define “how the business delivers value to customers and makes customers pay for value and converts it into profit”.

After what, there is the proposal from Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010), which indicates that business model is a process, during which the value created and presented to the consumers and then the incomes gained. This approach was shared by other authors as, Teece (2010) which proposed that business model is a logic, which creates value proposition for the customer and enterprise structure of incomes and expenses, which create the value. Furthermore, Baden-Fuller and Morgan (2010) or Perkmann and Spicer (2010) have shown that business model is an activity composed from methods to gain the benefit from products and services and a framework to manage their activities.

Furthermore, Cavalcante et al. (2011, p1328) defines the business model as « a systematic analytical device, partly for evaluation and action with respect to organizational change in general, and partly for addressing innovation activities in particular. In the same line, there is Newth (2012) which propose that business model is a perception of how to gain from the idea with methods and actions with reference to own abilities and competencies to create the value proposals.

All of these authors argue that businesses seek for the best possible combination of determinants of production, in order to remunerate all the stakeholders and shareholders who have participated in the production activity of the company (Garay and Font, 2012). Then, Foss & Saebi (2016) have mentioned that business models are widely cited as the architecture of the set of interconnected and interdependent activities of the business executed to meet the perceived needs of internal and external stakeholders, the underlying value proposition, the value delivery, value creation and value capture.

Academic literature shows the complexity of business model conceptualization, since there is no agreement among the various authors and their definitions. Nevertheless, all the previous authors agreed with the fact that BM have to be viewed as a set, implying to follow a structured framework to coordinate resources, abilities and capacities in order to minimize costs and delivery quality services to justify a maximized revenue to stakeholders. Business conceptualization is a general term that requires to be structured to be used empirically. In this sense, conceptualization must identify existing determinants and frameworks in order to better explore and analyze the black boxes of organizations.

## **2.2 Business model frameworks in management research**

Organizations are constantly faced with change and progress in a world in constant search for innovation. Business model frameworks play a key role in strategic management, since the intensity of competition forces businesses to develop new concepts, techniques and practices to be highly competitive. Famous frameworks such as value chains (Porter, 1985), the five competitive forces (Porter, 1980), SWOT (Learned et al., 1965), Balanced ScoreCard (Kaplan and Norton, 1996), and PESTEL (Aguilar, 1967) have been widely employed, evaluated and discussed in leading management journals (Rigby, 2001; Eppler et al., 2011; Lima and Baudier, 2017).

In that perspective, Eppler et al. (2011) argue that business model frameworks are artefacts that facilitate group ideation and innovation processes. In this sense, Lima and Baudier (2017) precise that business model tools are artefacts which can be templates, sketches and other materials that are used to test ideas and foster collaboration.

Furthermore, Lima and Baudier (2017) argue that business models artefacts deploy several benefits. These artefact benefits are separated into functional benefits and cognitive benefits. Functional benefits integer performance, communication and innovation. Cognitive benefits are related to visualization, decision-making, creative thinking, collaborative, and reflection. Nonetheless, Lima and Baudier (2017) explain that the main limit for all previous strategic frameworks mentioned above, is about the fact that they do not consider all external and internal stakeholders such as the framework from Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010).

### **2.3 Business Model Canvas for the camping sector**

In 2010, two economists design business model framework named “Business Model Canvas (BMC)” (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). The Business Model Canvas is currently the most popular framework to structure ideas and design future enterprises (Hamwi et al., 2021). This framework contains nine elements (right side: key partners, key activities, key resources, value proposition and revenue streams; left side: customer segments, customer relationships, channels, structure costs (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). The right side aims to choosing, delivering and capturing value. The left side enlighten how to create the value creation from internal components as resources and relations with external partners to given cost (Hamwi et al., 2021).

Studies on BMC are relatively recent in management literature (Joyce and Paquin, 2016). Previous studies from this decade have investigated the BMC through large enterprises (Joyce and Paquin, 2016), small & medium enterprises (Shimasaki, 2020; Daou et al., 2020) and customer (Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al., 2020) or industry orientation (Ferranti et Jaluzot, 2020). This framework was primarily intended for large groups, even if they precise that it could corresponds to entrepreneurial issues and small enterprises.

From these contributions, that BMC is considered as being a pertinent framework in management research (Urban et al., 2018; Shimasaki, 2020). In addition, Hamwi et al. (2021)

stated that BMC is a visualization framework that supports researchers, entrepreneurs, and organizations interested in studying and creating new BMs. However, from an exploratory and then an evaluative perspective, an important question needs to be solved. It concerns how to identify determinants involved in adapted BMC.

In that way, Sort and Nielsen (2018, p5) applied the BMC to explore investment processes. Their article aims to identify drivers which “provide a clear understanding of the company’s uniqueness”. Then, several articles applied BMC to digital businesses (Brunner and Wolfartsberger, 2020), biotechnologies (Shimasaki, 2020), circular economy (Braun et al., 2021). Thus, Braun et al. (2021) specify, in part, how to adapt the business model canvas to fit its interests. These authors argue that the development of their template is based on the original Business Model Canvas and is extended by circular value creation structures on different levels of value creation.

Furthermore, tourism management also counts some contributions using the BMC. There is Urban et al. (2018) which adapted the BMC framework to segment aircraft companies. In particular, their article aimed to underline organizational forms of business airlines, decomposing its organizational decision and airlines strategic positioning. These authors stated that in order to explore the business models of enterprises, it is necessary to identify their key determinants. To do so, Urban et al (2018) then explored several sources to justify a framework tailored to this industry. In their article, the authors proposed four different sources in order to identify the key determinants: the "current classification of airline business models (i.e. low-cost carrier, full-service network carrier, regional carrier, and charter carrier), research on scientific literature regarding common competitiveness determinants in the airline industry, annual reports of ten different airlines, and three expert interviews" (Urban et al., 2018; p177).

Moreover, there is the one based on sailing tourism (Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al., 2020) and the other based on spa tourism enterprises (Szromek and Naramski, 2019), national parks (Setiwan, et al., 2021), herbal tourism (Wibawa et al., 2016). All these contributions have shown the usefulness of BMC to analyze organizational management. However, in the hospitality sector, there was no contribution that adapted the BMC to explore the organizational and technical configurations of the businesses.

Considering only generic and scalable methods, Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al. (2020, p1646) detailed a three-step procedure for adapting the business model canvas. “Step 1: Literature

review concerning e-platforms and business models; Step 2: Interviews with representatives to create a ranking of information and functionally needed; Step 3: Adjusting BMC template and designing BMC for the sector considered". Moreover, Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al. (2020) explains a ranking of determinants and functions coming from experts and individual in-depth interviews.

Thus, this contribution enlightens that Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al. (2020) and Urban et al. (2018) agree that initially the research should focus on literature review to identify the drivers of business models. Then, these determinants will be supported by financial and non-financial reports from businesses and interviews with experts. This last part will make it possible to link the competitiveness determinants of the outdoor hospitality businesses to the classical BMC.

By doing so, to explore organizational and technical configurations of outdoor hospitality businesses, this research used e camping management literature and their several determinants listed and organized in Table 3. Then, the classical BMC is adapted from the camping management literature and their specific determinants. Following the procedures of Urban et al. (2018) and Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al. (2020), Table 3 combines 9 determinants (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010) completed with 33 camping determinants. These determinants were justified by the literature on camping management. The first two columns "determinants" and "determinants" constitute the relationship between the key determinants of the identified outdoor hospitality businesses and the BMC (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). The third column justifies that the determinants have been used in previous camping management research. Based on these 33 key determinants and the 9 BMC dimensions, the exploration and analysis of business models in the camping sector will be considered.

<b>CAMPING SECTOR - BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS</b> <i>(adapted from Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010)</i>		
<i>Classical determinants</i>	<i>Camping business determinants</i>	<i>Camping literature</i>
<b>(1) Key resources</b>	1. Human resources 2. Property 3. Lodging 4. Location 5. Size	Kottke (1974) Arimond and Lethlean (1996) Grande (2021) Lee (2020) Hayllar et al. (2006)
<b>(2) Key activities</b>	6. Pitches 7. Rental accommodations 8. Food & Beverage 9. Entertainment 10. Stores	Arimond and Lethlean (1996) Arimond and Lethlean (1996) Hayllar et al. (2006) Grande (2021) Arimond and Lethlean (1996)
<b>(3) Key partners</b>	11. Voluntary group 12. Association (industry networks)	Brooker et al. (2011) Brooker et al. (2011)
<b>(4) Value proposition</b>	13. Value for money 14. Park cleanliness 15. Range of recreational facilities 16. Accommodation comfort 17. Suitable secondary services	Hayllar et al. (2006) Mikulic et al. (2017) Grande (2021) Brooker and Joppe (2013) Brooker et al. (2011)
<b>(5) Customer segment</b>	18. Market segments 19. Duration Stay	Brooker and Joppe (2013) Breen et al. (2006)
<b>(6) Customer channel</b>	20. Online reservation procedure 21. Marketing and web marketing 22. Tour Operators / OTA 23. International trade fair	Mikulic et al. (2017) Jakovic et al. (2014) OT (French review, 2021) Brooker et al. (2011)
<b>(7) Customer relationship</b>	24. Customer satisfaction management 25. Loyalty 26. Personalized customer attention	Grzinic et al. (2010) Hardy et al. (2005) Breen et al. (2006)
<b>(8) Cost structure</b>	27. External providers 28. Maintenance and repairs 29. Marketing 30. Salaries of human resources	Hayllar et al. (2006) Hayllar et al. (2006) Hayllar et al. (2006) Hayllar et al. (2006)
<b>(9) Revenue stream</b>	31. Pitch 32. Lodging 33. Additional sales	Arimond and Lethlean (1996) Brooker and Joppe (2013) Grande (2021)

**TABLE 1. A PROPOSED BMC FOR THE CAMPING SECTOR (ADAPTED FROM OSTERWALDER AND PIGNEUR, 2010)**

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Context of the study**

In France, the most influencing accommodation sector is the camping sector with 2,7 million of tourist beds which represents 49,7% of the overall tourist bed capacity, against 23% to hotels. The camping sector benefits in particular from an average length of stay of 5.1 days, which is much more than for hotels (1.8 days), tourist residences (3.9 days) and holiday villages (4.7 days) (Eurostat, 2019).

The context of the current study is the French territory. During the last decade, this sector has grown considerably and attracts more and more financial groups who are competing fiercely. The European camping sector groups 28.500 commercial parks (Eurostat, 2019). With the massive development of this industry in the EU, commercial parks have also become the pillar of hospitality in France (Grande, 2021). This sector is everyday more and more organized and influenced by Outdoor Hospitality Parks (OHP) involved into chains and groups. The President of the National federation of camping and Outdoor Hospitality Parks in France declared that their weight is considerable, they represent more than 56.8% of the overall gross revenue, with around 1043 commercial parks in 2019 (OT Camping, 2019).

Thus, this camping sector is fragmented into Three orientations (traditional camping, glamping and outdoor hospitality businesses). The first considers camping such as pitches as a place to camp and reconnect to nature-based tourism (Grande, 2021; Fossgard and Fredman, 2019). The second orientation refers to Brochado and Pereira (2017). They explain that glamping refers to an emergent concept in camping that combines comfort with direct contact with nature. The third orientation refers to the outdoor hospitality businesses. For Brooker (2011) or Grande (2021), “outdoor hospitality park” is exclusively an enterprise offering a large stock of lodging and recreational resources, which can be described as a variety of facilities designed to attract and retain tourists holidaying.

This market is locked in intense competition, where independent and municipal camping organizations are continuously resisting against fierce competitors (OHP chains and groups). In recent years, over 600 private and municipal camping businesses have gone bankrupt in France (Eurostat, 2019). These owner-managers face unprecedented challenges to survive in this competitive market. This demonstrates that many camping businesses are still seeking their ideal business model (M'Pherson, 1998; Amit and Zott, 2001; Zott and Amit, 2008; Björkdahl, 2009; Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010).

### 3.2 Sampling and data collection

A convenience sampling method was carried out in order to select the outdoor hospitality businesses for the final sample (table 2). The managers of the camping business agree to participate in the study and they were identified by the sector as representatives. A total number of 52 outdoor hospitality businesses located in each part of France were selected (figure 1).

Profile variables	Frecuency	%
<i>Type of property</i>		
Municipal	9	17
Delegation	34	66
Private	9	17
<i>Location</i>		
Litoral	6	12
Mountain	6	12
Rural	40	76
<i>Lodging</i>		
Only Pitches	8	15
Pitches and Lodgings	44	85
<i>Voluntary Group</i>		
None (independent)	40	77
Chain	5	10
Eco-Chain	7	13
<i>Customer Segments</i>		
Nature	24	45
Leisure Park	18	34
Routes	11	21
<b>Total sample size</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

TABLE 2. SAMPLING PROFILE

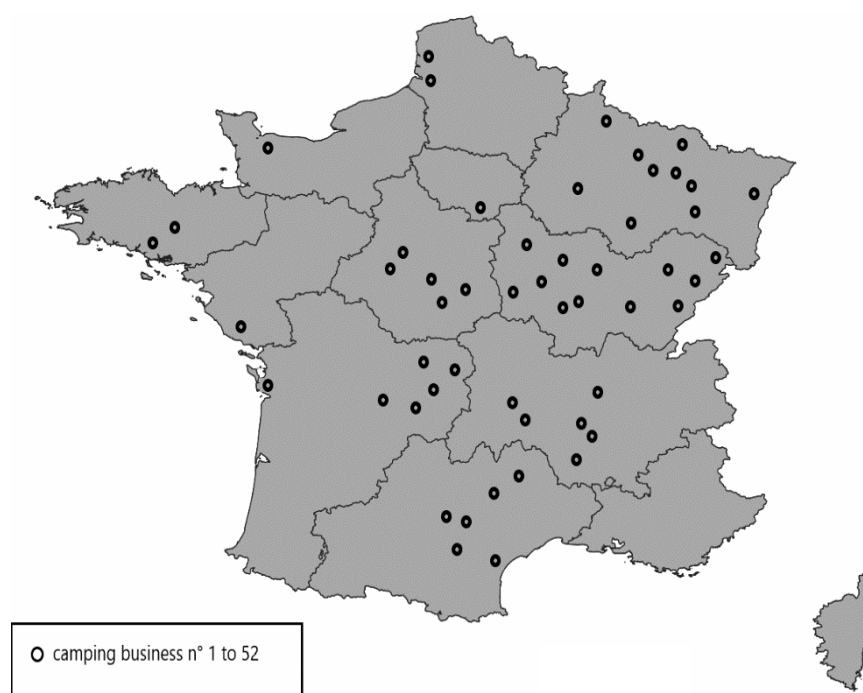


FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF THE SAMPLE. SOURCE: OWN ELABORATION



Data collection was conducted by means of face-to-face in-depth interviews between March and June 2018. According to Rubin & Rubin (2011), in-depth interviews are helpful to collect relevant information to understand the phenomenon studied and the agents involved in it. Since data gathering was on site, this make easier to get access to reservation systems and accountancy systems of each camping business. During the interviews it was observed that many managers had difficulties to extract the correct and expected data. So, researcher presence was necessary to reduce biases and mistakes during the data collection process. Data related to customers' satisfaction, value for money, park cleanliness, accommodation comfort, suitable secondary services, were collected through TripAdvisor.

<i><b>BMC &amp; measurement scale for the camping sector</b></i>			
<i><b>Classical determinants</b></i>	<i><b>Camping determinants</b></i>	<i><b>Measurement scale</b></i>	<i><b>Type</b></i>
<b>Key resources</b>	1. Human resources	Quantity of human resources	Quantitative
	2. Size	Size in Hectare	Quantitative
<b>Key activities</b>	3. Pitches	Quantity of camping sites	Quantitative
	4. Rental accommodations	Quantity of rental accommodations	Quantitative
	5. Food & Beverage	No service / Snacking-bar / Snacking-Bar & Restaurant	Qualitative
	6. Entertainment	No activities / Kids activities / Activities for all	Qualitative
	7. Stores	No stores / Little market / Supermarket	Qualitative
<b>Key partners</b>	8. Association (industry networks)	Affiliated / Active member / Participating in meetings	Qualitative
<b>Value proposition</b>	9. Value for money	Rating score from 1 to 5 points (min value = 1; max value = 5)	Quantitative
	10. Park cleanliness	Rating score from 1 to 5 points (min value = 1; max value = 5)	Quantitative
	11. Range of recreational facilities	Quantity of recreational facilities	Quantitative
	12. Accommodation comfort	Rating score from 1 to 5 points (min value = 1; max value = 5)	Quantitative
	13. Suitable secondary services	Rating score from 1 to 5 points (min value = 1; max value = 5)	Quantitative
<b>Customer segment</b>	14. Duration Stay	Part of long stay (ration "0 to 1")	Quantitative
<b>Customer channel</b>	15. Online reservation procedure	No online reservation system / Online pre-reservation / Online reservation	Qualitative
	16. Marketing and web marketing	Non-paid advertising programs / Non-paid and paid / Paid ad programs	Qualitative
	17. Tour Operators / OTA	No intermediaries / OTA / TTOO / Both (OTA and TTOO)	Qualitative
	18. International trade fair	No trade fairs / Trade fairs in France / Trade fairs in EU countries	Qualitative
<b>Customer relationship</b>	19. Customer satisfaction management	Rating score to 1 to 10 points (min value = 1; max value = 10)	Quantitative
	20. Loyalty	None loyalty program / With loyalty program	Qualitative
	21. Personalized customer attention	No personalized attention / Personalized attention at arrival / at the end of stay / Post-stay attention / All	Quantitative
<b>Cost structure</b>	22. External providers	Ration of expenses "external providers" to the overall revenue	Quantitative
	23. Maintenance and repairs	Ration of expenses "maintenance and repairs" to the overall revenue	Quantitative
	24. Marketing	Ration of expenses "marketing" to the overall revenue	Quantitative
	25. Salaries of human resources	Ration of expenses "salaries of human resources" to the overall revenue	Quantitative
<b>Revenue Stream</b>	26. Pitch	Ration of pitch revenues to the overall revenue	Quantitative
	27. Lodging	Ration of lodging revenues to the overall revenue	Quantitative
	28. Additional sales	Ration of additional sales to the overall revenue	Quantitative

**TABLE 3. BMC & MEASUREMENT SCALE FOR THE CAMPING SECTOR.**

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

Cluster analysis was used to determine business model typologies of strategic orientation in the outdoor hospitality businesses sector. Cluster analysis is a multivariate classification technique, aiming to group data into a reduced number of clusters (Hair, 1998) which are mutually exclusive (Cea, 2004).

To identify groups of similar organizations, cluster analysis has been a famous method applied in strategic management research since many decades ago (Hair et al., 1992; Ketchen et al., 1993; Reger and Huff, 1993; Ketchen and Shook, 1996).

Cluster analysis involves to take some methodological decisions. Firstly, considering that the case study does not exceed 200 cases, a hierarchical method was considered as suitable. Second, Ward's method was the algorithm classification selected (Jurowski and Reich, 2000), considering that this method optimizes the minimal intra-group variance (Cea, 2004), tending to constitute clusters with a hyperspherical shape and with a similar number of objects (Aldenderfer and Blashfield, 1984; Hair, 1998). Thirdly, a Euclidean distance was used, since this measure is the most appropriate when the Ward method is used (Cea, 2004). Additionally, variables were standardized according to z score, in order to avoid the possible influence of the Square Euclidean Distance in the resulting clusters. Cluster analysis results have been examined by two, three, four and five groups, being the option of four groups the most appropriate in terms of variance explained and coherence.

Finally, ANOVA test was carried out to determine whether strategic orientation (property, lodging, voluntary group and market segment) and localization differences exist among the various camping business model typologies. Data was processed using the SPSS 20.0.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Camping's BMC clustering**

Using (four) cluster groups were considered the most appropriate solution in terms of variance explained and internal coherence (table 4). The table 4 gives statistical results by determinants and clusters based on 52 outdoor hospitality businesses. The four camping business typologies identified are:

### **Cluster 1 – Municipal camping businesses (public organizations)**

The first cluster is composed by 15% businesses of the sample. The majority of the camping businesses in this cluster are smaller (2.14 hectares) than the average (2.60 hectares). This cluster represents the smallest commercial parks. In addition, it can be seen that the businesses operate very few leisure facilities (30%). Value proposition is evaluated on the basis of scores for the criteria "value for money, park cleanliness, accommodation comfort, and suitable secondary services". These determinants obtained a low value proposition and quality with results always under the global average. Then, these results demonstrate that high-customer satisfaction is measured. Finally, this cluster obtains very high operating costs compared to their global revenues, especially on "Salaries of human resources". Businesses spend more than 60% of their generated revenues. To summarize, the first cluster involves the following characteristics:

- Small size
- Low level of recreational facilities
- Low value proposition and quality
- High customer satisfaction
- High operating costs
- Strong pitch revenue

### **Cluster 2 – Budget camping businesses (private organizations)**

The second cluster is represented by 33% of businesses. This cluster focuses on the provision of a number of bare pitches compared to the competition (88%). This ration expresses the level of capacity to produce overnight stays per bare pitch in relation to accommodation. Secondly, this cluster has a fairly low level of recreational facilities (0.29). This signifies that camping businesses have a low technical capacity. The duration of stay explains the part of long stay. This part explains the share of stays sold for more than 4 consecutive nights. In this cluster, only 25% of customers stay more than 4 consecutive nights. The satisfaction level is one of the lowest of the 4 clusters with 8.13/10. The operating costs are low, except for salaries which constitute 30% of their generated revenues. Nevertheless, these commercial parks focus mainly on additional sales which constitute 30% of the overall revenues.

To summarize, findings give the following characteristics:

- Strong pitch market
- Low level of recreational facilities
- Low duration stay
- Low customer satisfaction
- Low operating costs (except salaries)
- Strong additional sales revenues

### **Cluster 3 – Premium camping businesses (glamping)**

The third cluster is composed by 33% of businesses. It includes a low quantity of human resources with an average of 3 against a global average of 6 employees. Also, this cluster is not provided with recreational facilities with 34%. This is very slightly higher than the two previous clusters but still below the average. Nevertheless, this cluster stands out from the previous ones by its high level of "value proposition and quality; and customer satisfaction". Finally, it was observed that sales are very important on "lodging revenues". This cluster stands out from the other clusters with:

- Low quantity of HHRR
- Low level of recreational facilities
- High value proposition and quality
- High customer satisfaction
- Low operating costs
- Strong lodging sales revenues

### **Cluster 4 – Outdoor Hospitality Parks (OHP)**

The fourth cluster is composed by 19% of businesses and includes a large number of employees with an average of 15 employees. The camping area is generally the largest in this cluster with 5.73 hectares, compared to an average of 2.66. This type of cluster focuses on an abundance of lodging and recreational resources (75%). Also, they obtained high income from lodging revenues (45%) and low operational costs. Nevertheless, the paradox is that these companies

neglect customer satisfaction with the lowest ration compared to other clusters (8.09/10). This group stands out from the others due to:

- High quantity of HHRR
- High size
- High lodging facilities
- High range of recreational facilities
- Low customer satisfaction
- Low operating costs
- Strong lodging sales revenues

<i>Camping's BMC clustering and KPIs</i>								
<i>Averages by determinant and by cluster</i>	<i>Measurement scale</i>	<i>Cluster 1</i>	<i>Cluster 2</i>	<i>Cluster 3</i>	<i>Cluster 4</i>	<i>Global average n = 52</i>	<i>Fisher test</i>	<i>p-value</i>
		<i>n = 8</i>	<i>n=17</i>	<i>n=17</i>	<i>n=10</i>			
Human Resources	0 to 100	3,63	5,06	3,06	15,00	6.19	0.003	0.000
Size	0 to 15 hect	2,14	3,48	3,91	5,73	2.66	0.429	0.000
Number of pitches	0 to 300	54,50	87,94	62,41	125,36	82.26	0.797	0.000
Number of lodgings	0 to 300	12,50	11,69	22,06	86,64	31.60	0.648	0.000
Pitches	Ration : 0 to 1	0,78	0,88	0,72	0,55	0.74	0.112	0.000
Rental accommodations	Ration : 0 to 1	0,23	0,12	0,28	0,45	0.26	0.112	0.000
Value for money	Scale : 0 to 5	2,19	4,03	4,21	3,77	3.75	0.004	0.022
Park cleanliness	Scale : 0 to 5	1,50	3,97	4,41	4,00	3.75	0.001	0.019
Range of recreational facilities	Ration : 0 to 1	0,30	0,29	0,34	0,75	0.41	0.093	0.000
Accommodation comfort	Scale : 0 to 5	1,38	3,81	4,59	4,27	3.79	0.001	0.019
Suitable secondary services	Scale : 0 to 5	2,69	4,09	4,32	3,82	3.90	0.019	0.018
Duration stay	Ration : 0 to 1	0,41	0,25	0,39	0,59	0.40	0.669	0.000
Customer satisfaction	Ration : 0 to 10	8,69	8,13	8,81	8,09	8.42	0.225	0.000
External providers	Ration : 0 to 1	0,32	0,18	0,22	0,23	0.23	0.116	0.000
Maintenance and repairs	Ration : 0 to 1	0,15	0,09	0,08	0,08	0.09	0.861	0.000
Salaries of human resources	Ration : 0 to 1	0,65	0,30	0,21	0,22	0.30	0.020	0.000
Pitch revenue	Ration : 0 to 1	0,40	0,43	0,27	0,31	0.35	0.555	0.000
Lodging revenue	Ration : 0 to 1	0,48	0,25	0,58	0,53	0.45	0.101	0.000
Additional sales	Ration : 0 to 1	0,13	0,32	0,15	0,15	0.20	0.599	0.001

**TABLE 4. CAMPING'S BMC CLUSTERING.**

Then, this research explores previous camping profiles identified through qualitative data. This stage reinforces the four-clusters obtained based on camping's BMC. The four organizational configurations are developed below.

## **4.2 Camping profiles**

Regarding the results of the cluster analysis, this research proposes statistical results which give camping profiles (table 7). From this analysis, findings give that 83% of the sample are private firms. Rural businesses are largely represented in this sample (77%) and rarely they possess only pitches (15%). However, it observes that only 23% of the sample are integrated into voluntary groups. This precise that 77% are managing support services by themselves. Voluntary groups refer to centralize support services such as commercial and marketing operations, human resource recruitments, pooled purchases, reports and legal advice.

Since the final cluster analysis, results provide very homogeneous solution which are detailed for each cluster. In doing so, this contribution aims to detail the determinants that influence the profile categories.

### **Cluster 1 – Municipal camping businesses (public organizations)**

These camping businesses are composed of 87.5% of public organizations. They are mostly route market segment (63%) and then nature market oriented. None of these 8 organizations are involved into a voluntary group. Furthermore, this first cluster does not hold restauration, snack and bar. There is no adult entertainment and rarely some enterprises offer children entertainments. To continue, no little market or supermarket are proposed. Differences appear then. Owner-managers are involved into a syndicate by participating in committee, affiliated or represented directly by a member of this cluster. In addition, these firms bet only on non-paid advertising, pre-online reservation system, combined to Online Tourism Agencies. They do not participate in trade fair. Finally, none of them propose loyalty programs and only 20% declare making a personalized attention to customers, this only at customer arrival.

### **Cluster 2 – Budget camping businesses (private organizations)**

These firms are managed by private owners (94%). They are mostly nature market oriented (59%) and then route market oriented (24%). In this case, heterogeneity exist. However, such as cluster 1, none of these 17 commercial parks are involved into a voluntary group. This constitutes a cluster consistent and different from others. Moreover, findings indicate that these private firms are proposing a majority of pitches and some standard lodgings. A majority of them possess at least a snack-bar. As cluster 1, rarely these campsites offer children entertainments (18%). Furthermore, it is rare to observe mini-market or supermarket (24%). Then, none of them are affiliated to a voluntary group, they prefer to be at least syndicated. In addition, these campsites bet on non-paid advertising and online reservation system. Mostly, they have combined Tour Operators and Online Tourism Agencies. Finally, they do not propose loyalty programs (100%) or personalized customer attention (82%).

### **Cluster 3 – Premium camping businesses (glamping)**

These businesses belong to private firms (94%). They are mostly nature market oriented (65%) and then leisure tourism oriented (24%). This strategic orientation has changed from the economic private campsite which differ on the route market oriented. In this premium cluster, route market is rank on the third position with 12%. Then, 30% of them are involved into an eco-chain, this represents the highest score compare to the three other clusters. This result appears pertinent regarding that this cluster is also represented by the highest percent of nature market-oriented compare to others. In addition, results demonstrate that these commercial parks vary in term of furnishing restauration, snack and bar. Such as the cluster 2, the entertainment is not a priority and rarely some enterprises offer children entertainments (18%). Furthermore, no mini-market are proposed (6%). Differences appear then. These campsites are mainly independent without an association to a voluntary chain (71%). Owner-managers are involved into syndicate by participating in committee (82%). They bet on non-paid advertising, online reservation system and combine Tour Operators and Online Tourism Agencies. Finally, they do not propose loyalty programs (88%). Nonetheless, they personalize their customer attention (94%). This cluster is very homogeneous.

## Cluster 4 – Outdoor Hospitality Parks (OHP)

These private parks (100%) are involved in a standard chain or an ecological chain (70%). All are focused on the leisure tourism market segment. Cluster 4 is deeply homogeneous. Located in rural tourist destination, these businesses show their capacity to work within a strategy of deploying an abundance of lodging and recreational resources. The results reveal that although these OHPs are located in rural tourist destinations, there is a significant supply of recreational tourism. These businesses offer a wide range of accommodations (pitches and lodgings) and could be associated with the concept of a "camping-destination" (Breen et al., 2006) that substitutes for any poorly resourced tourist destination (Lee, 2020). Consequently, the last group provides pitches but also a high range of lodgings. They are offering restauration, snack and bar (100%). They offer entertainments to all (90%). Furthermore, mini-market or supermarket are frequent (80%). In term of commercial orientations, these businesses are affiliated to a chain (70%). Owner-managers are mostly affiliated to a syndicate but are not active member (30%). In addition, these firms are leisure tourism market oriented (100%) and bet on both non-paid and paid advertising, online reservation system, combined to Tour Operators and Online Tourism Agencies (100%). Furthermore, these firms participate in international trade fair (90%). Finally, they offer loyalty programs (70%) and a high level of personalized attention for the customer (70%), upon arrival, departure and post-stay.

Cluster Profiles							
<i>Variables and determinants</i>	<i>Businesses sample</i>	<i>Cluster 1 N = 8</i>	<i>Cluster 2 N = 17</i>	<i>Cluster 3 N = 17</i>	<i>Cluster 4 N = 10</i>	X2	p-value
<b>Property</b>		%	%	%	%	34,012	0,001
# Municipal	9	87,500	5,900	5,900	0,000		
# Private	34	12,500	70,600	70,600	90,000		
# Delegation	9	0,000	23,500	23,500	10,000		
<b>Location</b>						6,257	0,395
# Litoral	6	0,000	11,800	5,900	30,000		
# Mountain	6	12,500	17,600	5,900	10,000		
# Rural	40	87,500	70,600	88,200	60,000		
<b>Lodging</b>						8,033	0,045
# Only Pitches	8	0,000	35,300	5,900	0,000		
# Both	44	100,000	64,700	94,100	100,000		
<b>Voluntary Group</b>						32,578	0,001
# None	40	100,000	100,000	70,600	30,000		
# Chain	5	0,000	0,000	0,000	50,000		
# Eco-Chain	7	0,000	0,000	29,400	20,000		
<b>Market Segments</b>						34,025	0,001
# Nature	24	37,500	58,800	64,700	0,000		
# Leisure Parks	18	0,000	18,600	23,500	100,000		
# Routes	11	62,500	23,500	11,800	0,000		

TABLE 5. CLUSTER PROFILES.



## 5. Discussion

To assess the organizational design of hospitality businesses, our contribution notes that several studies have used the BMCs (Urban et al., 2018; Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al., 2020; Szromek and Naramski, 2019; Setiwan, et al., 2021; Mulia et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the literature review demonstrates that the hospitality sector has not encountered any such applications. Consequently, this contribution confirms that BMC is a relevant and scalable strategic framework for the outdoor hospitality industry.

According to Perkins et al. (2021) there is a lack of understanding about how clusters are formed. Their article states that "there is no research framework to explain the steps involved in forming a tourism business cluster" (Perkins et al., 2021, p. 347). Following previous author, results have demonstrated how a cluster can be conducted in SMEs. While SMEs has received low attention (Daou et al, 2020; Shimasaki, 2020) in clustering business models.

After what, this study has identified contributions dealing with business clusters in tourism (Urban et al., 2018; Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al., 2020; Szromek and Naramski, 2019; Setiwan, et al., 2021; Mulia et al., 2016). From these articles were founded that very few applied the contingency attributes perspective to describe the SME context. For example, Strulak-Wójcikiewicz et al. (2020) explains a ranking of determinants and functions coming from experts and individual in-depth interviews. Unfortunately, the dependencies between these determinants were not justified, by doing so, the consistency of the results could be discussed. Thus, this contribution validates the specificity of the SME (Foss and Saebi, 2016) through the study of contingency attributes (ownership, accommodation, voluntary group, market segment) that helped to strengthen the camping business profiles identified.

In particular, findings indicate that the French camping industry is heterogeneous. Camping businesses were segmented into homogeneous groups with nearest business models. In particular, four different models have been identified: the first is oriented towards municipal campsites, the second is oriented towards budget campsites, the third corresponds to premium campsites and the last is oriented towards Outdoor Hospitality Parks. These results are consistent with previous studies from Breen et al (2006). They show that the camping industry must separate "camping-transit" from "camping-destination" (Breen et al, 2006; Lee, 2020). Indeed, 67% of the businesses within this sample are involved in the nature or road market segment. These market segments belong to cluster 1 and 2. Results have shown that these

clusters do not provide a large set of resources and services to keep attracting tourist and increase duration stay. From results, cluster 1, 2 and 3 does not offer to their customers all the opportunities for consumption (lodgings and recreational activities). Thus, this study contributes by emphasizing the distinction of the terms "camping businesses" and its evolution as "OHP businesses".

Furthermore, regarding the BMC, Osterwalder et al (2010) indicate that it is a conceptual and structural model of a business. BMC remains a tool for strategic reflection due to its ability to open up a wide range of strategic and operational alternatives. Consequently, its usefulness is associated to its capacity to transform the business (Lima and Baudier, 2017; Hamwi et al., 2021). In the camping sector, BMC can help renovation and adaptation of the business model to the new customers' needs, considering the four different business profiles found in the present study.

Therefore, this study constitutes a new contribution in line with hospitality and outdoor hospitality management literature. This research revealed private and public camping businesses and exposes their key indicators by means of BMC. Unlike previous studies on outdoor hospitality businesses, these results also give financial and non-financial key indicators. Finally, this study does intra-group and inter-group benchmarking of their performance (Peršić, Jankovic, & Cvelic-Bonifacic, 2017) to explore the levels of competitiveness in the camping sector. Therefore, this study at a practical level allows knowing the existence of different business profiles in the camping sector. For a specific camping company, a comparison of its results with those presented in this study can be applied. This will allow to determine its current performance. In other words, to start a benchmarking analysis using BMC as a strategic tool. This process can be understood as a reflection exercise, which will be useful, firstly, to identify strength and weaknesses and, secondly, for individual future strategic planning.

## 6. Conclusions

Business model is a subject that has been widely studied in management sciences applied to tourism and hospitality. This article discusses the business factors of the camping industry, using a specific framework adapted from the original "Business Model Canvas". This adaptation broadens the perspective on the use of the model and its dissemination to the businesses that collaborated on this research. The attention paid to this aspect allows to highlight the role of the actors and the different strategic orientations that exist and are taken by certain firms. This research contributes to the growth of knowledge in the camping business sector, by showing the potential of BMC. Hence, BMC for camping sector is conceived as a reflection framework for strategic planning, which can help to decision-makers to improve companies' investment process and to contribute to further operational and qualitative development.

From a theoretical point of view, this research contributes to the development of knowledge about camping businesses by focusing on their organizational and technical structure. In terms of methodological contributions, this research demonstrates how to operate clusters in the tourism and hospitality industries using BMC. Furthermore, from a managerial perspective, this study allows to clearly identify strategic orientations and their operating factors. Besides, it allows to characterize and differentiate camping business profiles for the first time, by showing features that differentiate a "camping" from an "OHP". In the same vein, BMC and results from this study can be used to perform a benchmarking analysis.

However, this study has some limitations that must be mentioned. Firstly, the sample size used in this study is relatively small and limited to camping located in France. Consequently, results cannot be generalized to the whole sector or other countries. Therefore, another study in other country and using a broader sample would be useful to explore whether the same conclusions are reached. Secondly, the number of attributes selected and included in the analysis were limited to those identified in the academic literature. Thus, further research will be necessary to introduce new attributes, which reflect other dimensions that might be "invisible" in this study. Qualitative techniques might be appropriate to make arise some hidden attributes. Finally, findings have shown that the use of BMC and cluster analysis have also some limitations to identify business benchmark. It is for this reason that the BMC framework must be combined with multi-criteria methods to rank the performance of business models (Botti & Peypoch, 2013; Peypoch & Sbai, 2011; Corne & Peypoch, 2020).

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**Universitat de Girona**

## **General conclusions**

This section provides the general conclusions of this doctoral thesis, and outlines the specific results and conclusions of each publications contained in this compendium by addressing all the above-mentioned objectives. Then, it is followed by a summary of the theoretical and methodological contributions of this study, and the managerial implications. Limitations and future research opportunities are proposed at the end of this section.

In general, and from an integrated perspective, the main objective of this doctoral thesis was to determine what camping businesses and outdoor parks are, to understand whether they should be considered similar or clearly distinguished. To do so, this doctoral manuscript has taken the perspective of competitiveness and performance measurements based on resource and capability factors. With this context, this manuscript emphasizes the importance of exploring and measuring the comparative and competitive advantage of camping businesses. This aims to detail the factors that compose them and to foresee a fair benchmarking of the businesses, based on firm typologies, i.e. against their real competitors and KPIs.

Thus, the main objective of this doctoral thesis has been achieved by (1) clarifying that camping businesses and outdoor hospitality parks are to be dissociated since they constitute diametrically opposed products. (2) This study proposes typologies and profiles of camping products that exploit a variable stock of resources and are involved differently in their business model.

To provide a summary of this compendium of publications, the following outlines the results from each of the three consecutive studies, and how the goals of each study were reached.

### **Main results**

In the first article, the research organized and categorized 69 attributes based on lodging and recreational facilities. The results provide an analysis of the resources that are rarely adopted by camping businesses. This exposes several opportunities for business development. Nevertheless, this contribution reveals that the sector seems to be heterogeneous in the use of physical resources.

In addition, the research question was answered by outlining the attributes and criteria identified from literature review in camping management and then confirmed and enriched from sector representatives and their camping business. This gives new insights by analyzing current trends in this accommodation and leisure sector (Breen et al., 2006; Hayllar et al., 2006; Brooker and Joppe, 2013).

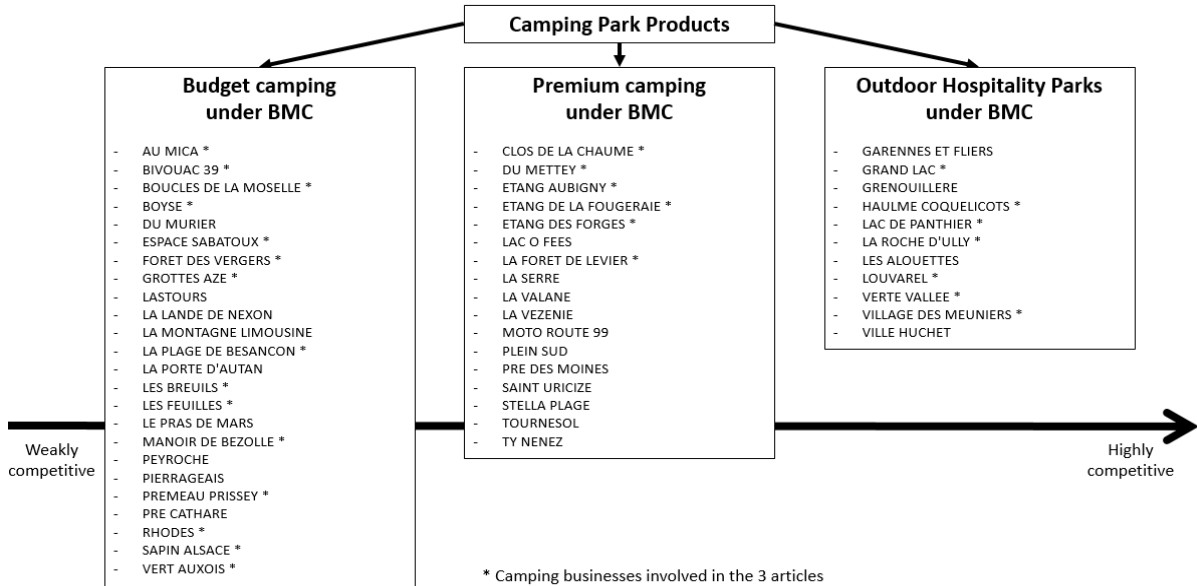
In the second article, the research used the previous determinants identified in the article 1 as it offers organized sub-criteria and criteria from the camping sector. The objective of this second article was to measure the comparative advantage of camping businesses. To do this, this research involved operators and representatives of the sector in determining their approval thresholds in order to validate common parameters for measuring the comparative advantage of camping businesses. The results reveal that the camping sector is composed of camping-based natural and commercial parks as defined by Brooker and Joppe (2013) "Outdoor Hospitality Parks". This research details three specific resource-based typologies. From the prism of these resources, this article specifies how strategies are developed in the camping sector. Therefore, results cover the research questions and the subsequent gaps exposed. In conclusion, this second article reveals a sector composed of very heterogeneous companies and details the investment stages between each typology. Finally, it brings the existing market opportunities.

In the third article, the research has given other significant factors to measure the camping business competitiveness. The perspective adopted is the competitive advantage of the firms. In this regard, this article uses and adapts the classical BMC to identify the determinants composing camping business models. For this purpose, thirty-three variables were identified and analyzed in order to obtain 4 economic typologies and profiles that are clearly differentiated from each other. The results answer the research question and confirm once again that the fifty-two camping businesses measured are heterogeneous and that it is therefore necessary to segment them in order to better explore their black boxes. Thus, this article gives the competitive advantage of the identified typologies and measures the performance of these camping typologies through a set of KPIs. Thus, this research provides insights into how to measure the competitive advantage of camping firms.

Therefore, this third article has demonstrated how business typologies and profiles works. The objectives of the third article dealt with exploring attributes and frameworks of business model,

regarding how these frameworks were adapted in literature and how they have been measured. So, this contribution states by exploring specific strategic frameworks to explore camping business models. After that, this proposal gives an analysis of the camping clusters and proposes some naming adapted to the characteristics of the camping businesses. The key conclusion of this third article is that the proposed BMC adapted to the camping sector indicate that location does not influence camping business models. This close the debate of confronting camping business models to the potential of their own tourist destination.

In general results, this doctoral thesis presents the camping sector as being heterogeneous, systemic and complex since it is composed from several amount of amenities and facilities involved into several typologies of business models. For now, camping organizations were detailed from their black boxes to underline their particularities. This research has gaining in depth knowledge on what are relevant physical resources and business model applied in this sector. In general, Figure 1 below shows the classification of camping businesses into "budget camping, premium camping, and outdoor hospitality park" typologies. The first two typologies in Item 3 "budget camping businesses and municipal camping businesses" can be merged into "budget camping" because of their similarities based on a low level of lodging and recreational resources. Finally, the results for Article 2 are consistent with those to Article 3. 86% of the 27 camping businesses affected by Article 2 are classified in the same position to Article 3. For the remaining 14%, this implies the question of the relevance of the business model applied and the choice of investments in comparison with the resources allocated by the competitors.



**FIGURE 1. CAMPING PARK PRODUCTS FROM 52 CAMPING BUSINESSES.**

The general results reinforce the analysis of the camping sector. (1) Camping sector is deeply heterogeneous. (2) Camping and Outdoor Hospitality Parks are different touristic and recreational products involving different business models. (3) Preparing homogeneous typologies aim to facilitate a benchmarking approach to obtain precise key performance indicators for this sector.

### **General contributions**

As such, this study brings multiple contributions. First, it contributes to expand and organize the literature review on camping management and specifically on competitiveness and performance measurements. Then, it gives a methodological way to measure the competitiveness. Finally, it addresses managerial implications.

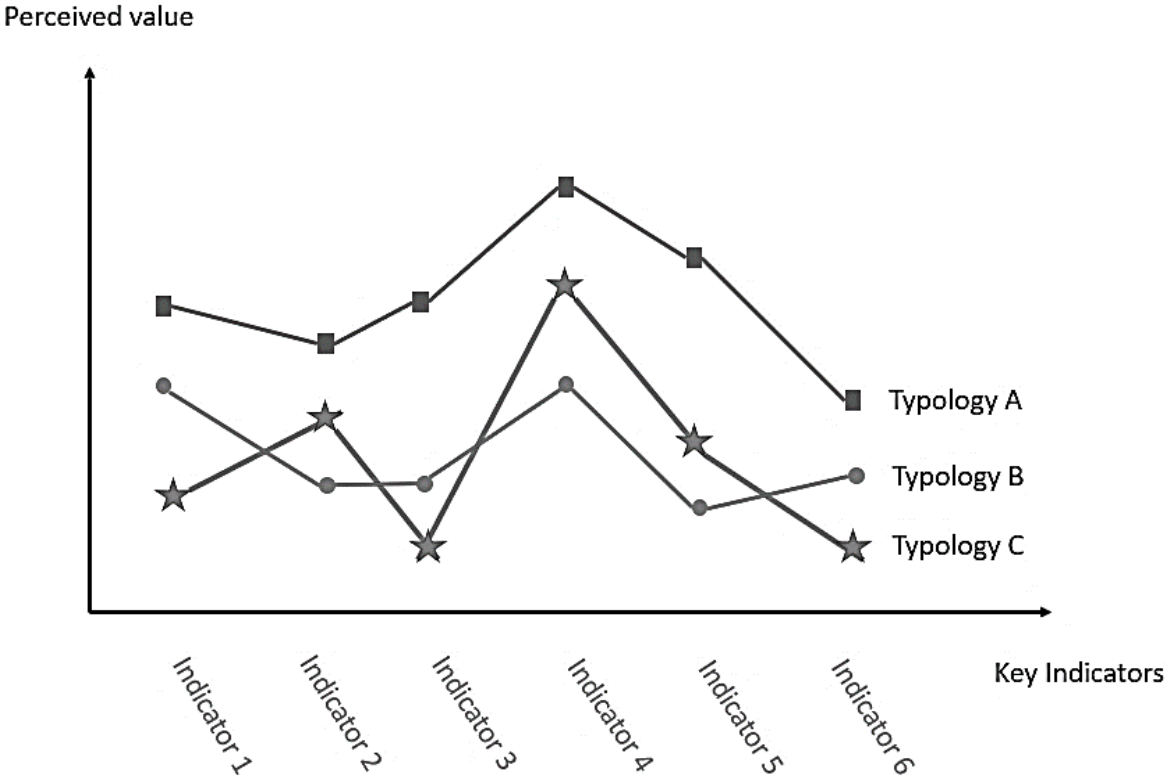
Concerning theoretical contributions, this thesis has proposed a research based on comparative and competitive advantages in the camping sector. The camping sector has suffered from a lack of consideration these last decades. This compendium of articles aimed to deeply explore camping characteristics, typologies and profiles in order to enhance knowledge in this dynamic sector. In that perspective, the first article contributes to the work of Breen et al. (2006), or Brooker and Joppe (2013) by giving new determinants and trends based on physical resources in the camping sector. Furthermore, this first article organized and synthesized the camping management literature by focusing on 69 determinants-based-amenities.

The second article carries out the problem of measuring the comparative advantage of camping businesses based on non-financial data. This article details typologies of firms ‘camping-destination’ and ‘camping-transit’ cited by Breen et al. (2006) which were never justified in term of research. By doing so, this research exposes the content of these both previous terms by proceeding to an empirical study. In addition, this article proved that, for the first time, the camping supply is deeply heterogeneous. Furthermore, Breen et al. (2006) have contributed to produce accurate profiles of managers. As a perspective, the authors proposed to study the camping business profiles, in to identify their deep particularities and the innovations they are adopting. Finally, Brooker and Joppe (2013) have detailed some recreational resources to explain the core of Outdoor Hospitality Parks. However, they do not measure the comparative advantage of firms based on these identified resources. This second article carries out these



both theoretical gaps (Breen et al., 2006; Brooker and Joppe, 2013) and conclude by three homogeneous typologies.

The third article contributes to the camping management literature by outlining camping business models, a field that has not been researched. This article confirms that the camping sector is composed of heterogeneous and diversified businesses. This article contributes to strengthening the literature on camping management since it provides key performance indicators based on created economic typologies (Figure 2). This aimed at encouraging the implementation of business benchmarking practices.



**FIGURE 2. IDENTIFYING TYPOLOGIES OF BUSINESS MODELS BASED ON VALUE PROPOSITION.**

From a methodological point of view, the contributions consist in the fact that the multi-criteria method ELECTRE-TRI is adopted in order to be able to proceed to the measurement of the competitiveness of the camping sector; as well as the business model CANVAS to show, according to the determinants, that it is a relevant model that allows to establish business typologies and profiles. Both methods, although developed for the study of other sectors, have provided valuable and innovative results for the academic literature in the study of camping businesses.

Furthermore, the methods used in each of the publication are complementary to each other, as they aimed to measure a complex and systemic sector from their resources and capabilities. In this regard, the main idea was to involve several methodological stages that aimed, one within the other, to build a robust and relevant approach. In addition, this global methodology has combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches that give rise to a wealth of non-compensatory multi-criteria methods. In that way, this doctoral thesis has proposed a specific model to measure competitiveness and performance in the camping sector (Figure 3).

In addition, this model details the several stages to measure the competitiveness and performance from a resource and capability perspective. With respect to the Deming cycle approach, this model requires to identify specific determinants to then, measure the competitiveness, measure the performance, analyze results and plan actions which need to be controlled by the management. In doing so, each part of this systemic process needs a series of research protocol which will guarantee a complete diagnosis from entire resources and capabilities of hospitality firms. This model includes the methods used by Breen et al. (2006) and Brooker and Joppe (2013) as integral parts of this systemic model of measuring competitiveness and performance from the perspective of the resources and capabilities in the camping sector (Figure 3). In doing so, the combined methodologies contribute to camping competitiveness and performance measurements.

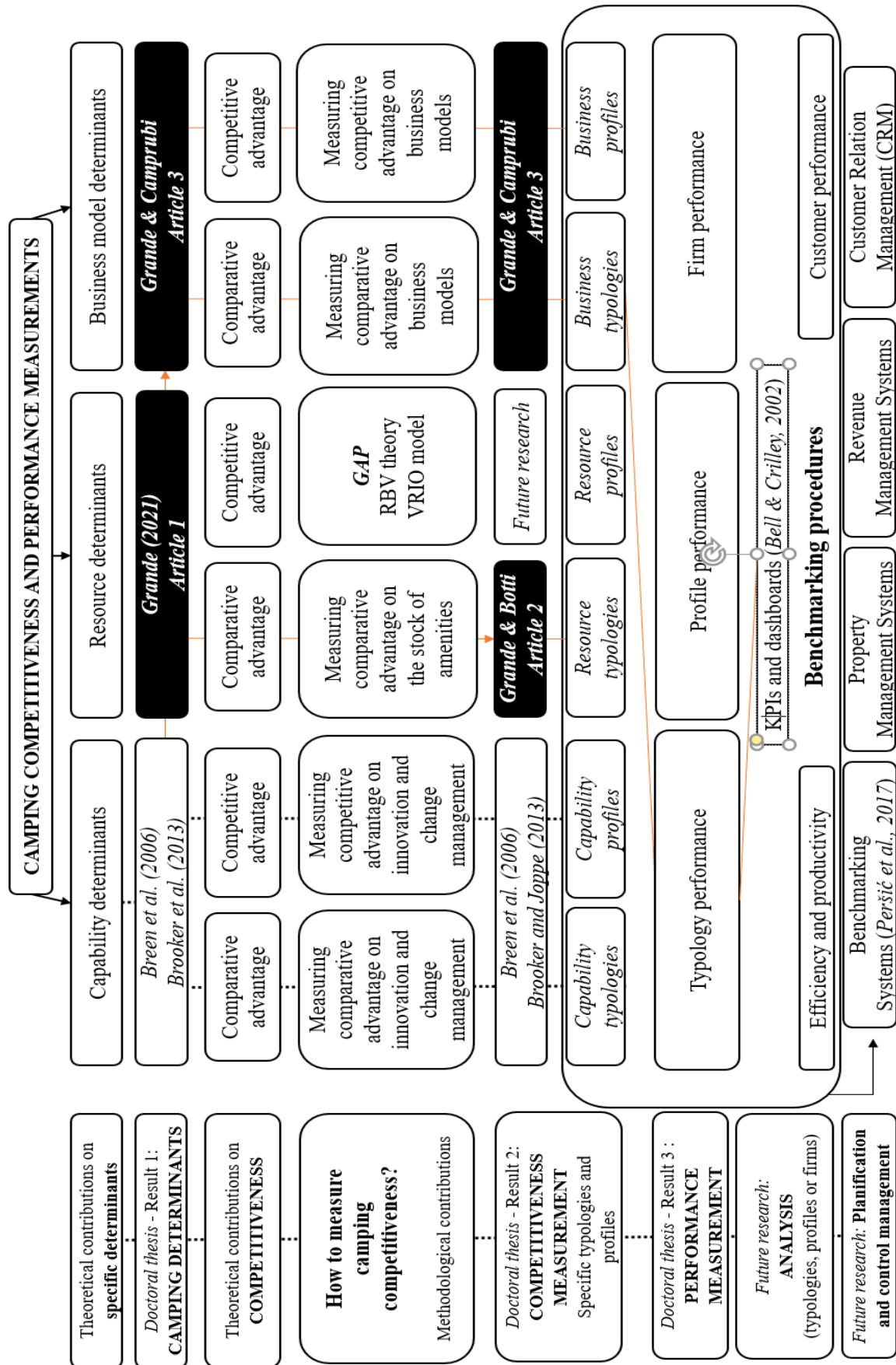


FIGURE 3. METHODOLOGY FOR MEASURING THE COMPETITIVENESS AND PERFORMANCE OF CAMPING BUSINESSES.

As far as the managerial contributions are concerned, this thesis highlights the positive aspect of operational and strategic management perspectives. This contribution provides a significant amount of information regarding the supply side, which can be of great value to groups, chains, independents or municipal camping businesses. Furthermore, this thesis support decision-makers looking for strategic opportunities in camping businesses. Furthermore, it contributes to largely increase the camping business knowledge. Thus, this research has presented the situation of camping businesses located in unattractive areas and their need to find specific resources and business models to diversify their activities and maintain themselves in this competitive market.

In consequence, the first article has proposed a protocol to improve competitive intelligence based on lodging and recreational resources. Then, the second article gave significant managerial implications as it explains how managers can prioritize investments based on physical resources. Finally, the third article proposes a suitable framework to improve benchmarking analysis since managers can compare their own financial and non-financial indicators against their real competitor typology. In that way, this contribution support manager to improve innovations and change management (Brooker and Joppe, 2013). Furthermore, this article opens the deployment of multi-criteria decision aiding systems in the camping sector.

The overall contribution supported state in the fact that this doctoral thesis points out that a large number of independent and municipal retro-littoral camping centers no longer have the means to imitate the large groups and chains. While the chains have identified relevant and robust business models that are now their strength and their DNA, this is not the case for the vast majority of independent and municipal camping businesses that have contributed to this research. Thus, the global analysis points out that many independent and municipal camping establishments show characteristics of precariousness of the activity and a lack of competitiveness. In this way, only a few small independent camping companies have found a value proposition that reflects their intrinsic characteristics. Overall, this research provides an innovative understanding of what represents the camping sector since it separates firms into several economical categories. From this perspective, decision makers informed of these frameworks and methods can identify existing opportunities, prioritize their investments based on resources, and plan future business models. However, the findings are subject to several limitations which can be considered such as research opportunities and future lines of research.

## **Limitations**

The limitations of this first article are numerous. From a theoretical perspective, this research has proposed to explore a set of amenities and business models in terms of resources and capabilities. This signify that this research has adopted the multidimensionality point of view. In that perspective, other factors such as social, environmental, cultural, or economic have been partially forget.

Another limitation of this compendium of articles are directed towards the resource base theory (RBV) of firms. This study does not inform us about the knowledge, experience and skills held by the employees and the manager involved into these studies to obtain successful results. Moreover, this means that this study does not explore how these resources are valorized for a result. In addition, this study does not explore the capabilities of the business managers and their employees.

On the other hand, this manuscript details the stock of resources of the firms without giving any details on the quality of these infrastructures. For example, an organization can offer many waterslides, but if these facilities are in poor condition, then it will be difficult to meet the needs and expectations of customers. The consequence will be measured by low quality indicators that previous studies did not provide. From this point of view, we do not indicate whether the proposed investments are consistent with the expectations of customers.

From a finally theoretical perspective, this research studies the typologies and profiles of camping businesses. However, this research does not indicate which companies are the most competitive and the most efficient. In a logic of competitiveness and performance measurements, a continuation of this research work seems necessary, otherwise it might appear to be incomplete in camping management literature.

Also, methodological limitations can be seen. First of all, the results obtained are static. In practice, camping managers always have to readapt and test new forms of management, resources or business models to progress in this competitive market. This implies that this research provides methodological ways to follow in the near future. Secondly, the number of camping businesses surveyed is small (n=52). As a result, it cannot be sufficiently representative to be a barometer of the camping sector. This study cannot be generalized to the entire sector since it does not sufficiently consider all the coastal, rural, mountain or urban typologies. Thus, this study was oriented towards the supply side, forgetting the demand side. Thus, the decision-makers proposed a set of parameters to measure the comparative advantage

of firms. This research was not applied in the direction of customer perception. A double analysis must be conducted in order to understand the importance that customers bring to the valued resources and thus compare the results according to the two typological bases of camping. This signifies that some resources may be more important for customers rather than decision-makers.

Furthermore, this research has focused on the French camping sector. In other words, it does not inform whether all camping businesses in the world postulate the same analysis and results. This limitation is in line with the limitations of the articles by Lee (2020), Saló et al. (2020), Mikulic et al. (2017), Brooker et al. (2012). Similar studies at the international level should be undertaken in order to strengthen the consistency of the strategic diagnostic tools provided during this doctoral thesis.

Finally, our most important limit has concerned the ability of managers to surround themselves with competent intra-sector professionals. In that way, Boquet et al. (2009, p230) explain that SMEs are not used to sharing knowledge and are naturally reticent. Thus, the implementation of cooperation modes must be scrupulously framed to be adopted by the network. Heterogeneity is a recurring condition in the adoption characteristics of this study. Boquet et al. (2009, p230) argue the need to approach the networking of firms in the same sector with tact and sensitivity, especially when these firms are heterogeneous. They precise that if the characteristics vary, the objectives and stakes of SME managers may also have different strategic orientations. SMEs and VSEs tend to adopt individualistic behaviors in order to preserve their competitive advantages. Thus, the pooling of their knowledge and experience is rarely done. Boquet et al. (2009, p230) talk about the culture of secrecy. This is even more realistic in the camping sector where the fear of divulging secrets has been real obstacles to the networking of this academic research. In reality, the role of managers and their knowledge, the need for training in the sector, the lack of relationship between researchers and practitioners, the low level of cooperation between companies, and the lack of financial resources of SMEs were all factors that precipitated the unavailability of quantitative and qualitative data for many years in this sector. These elements represent the barriers overcome to penetrate the black boxes of the camping sector during this doctoral challenge.

## **Future research**

Therefore, this doctoral thesis offers future lines of research. As seen in the limitations, the results are static and need to be updated. In this context, creating digital decision support tools would allow for the continuous process of data collection and analysis. To this end, the work of Peršić et al. (2017) can be taken up and operationalized. In this perspective, it would be necessary to work with sector representatives to create planning and control management tools (Peršić et al., 2017). In general, this would allow us to considerably increase the number of camping businesses that participate in our studies. In addition, the aim is to launch joint studies with the main countries of the world camping market. This opens up a major opportunity for the creation of a European research group to coordinate cooperation efforts (increasing the average sample size of studies, common data collection tools and the ambition to bring researchers and professionals together) around the management of the outdoor hospitality sector.

In addition, the natural progression of this doctoral dissertation would be to continue the discussion of measuring the performance of firms. Since this manuscript reports on several specific segmentation methodologies, it would be interesting to take the typologies formed and analyze the level of business performance of each grouping. The question of performance analysis can be established according to efficiency and productivity studies using the DEA method as in the article by Botti et al. (2009). To do so, it is necessary to identify inputs and outputs used in the hospitality industry (Peypoch and Sbai, 2011; Assaf et al., 2012; Hathroubi et al., 2014) since no research has yet been done in the camping sector.

Subsequently, this doctoral thesis deplored that the camping sector is lacking in dashboards. Thus, the proposal of specific KPIs and dashboards (Kaplan and Norton, 1996) adapted to the typologies previously exposed during this thesis are relevant research perspectives. These perspectives are linked to the management literature of the camping sector. As recommended by Peršić et al. (2017), obtaining specific KPI and dashboards would be an opportunity for creating a camping business barometer.

Afterward, Breen et al. (2006) have studied capabilities of camping owner-managers. Their project examined innovation as a means to improve the business performance of camping firms. In this context, Breen et al. (2006) have contributed to produce accurate profiles of managers. They have studied the characteristics and profiles of the camping managers, in order to explore the type and dimension of the innovations they are adopting. As a result, these authors proposed

profiles of managerial capabilities that add differentiating value to their business through their ability to innovate. However, Breen et al. (2006) does not explain what these differentiating values are, what these innovations are, or whether these differentiating factors are resource innovations or organizational innovations. In doing so, the research of Breen et al. (2006) needs to be strengthened by studying whether if their specific profiles contribute to develop specific camping business typologies of competitive firms. To do so, future line of research should fuse Breen et al. (2006) and this compendium of three articles to observe if their competitive firms are related to a specific profile of owner-manager.

Finally, measuring competitiveness can involve to study both internal and external determinants of firms. As Hayllar et al. (2006, p9) observe, the main reason for choosing a particular camping park is the location, and only subsequently do “specific park factors come into play”, enlighten the manager on his competitive positioning from the point of view of his attractiveness factors. Following this theory, Lee (2020) proposes a specific framework which includes camping internal and external amenities. However, Lee's (2020) study proposes the weights of the criteria proposed by the camping representatives and does not evaluate the competitiveness of Taiwanese companies. The criteria weights are participant-specific; therefore, they cannot be reused in our future research. However, this opens the way to the comparative analysis of criteria weights between Taiwan and France. In addition, Lee's (2020) research offers the opportunity for a more comprehensive measurement of firm competitiveness based on lodging and recreational facilities. Indeed, Lee (2020) proposes a set of external determinants to a camping business by identifying the determinants of a tourist destination. Thus, it would be valuable to associate the external determinants with the internal determinants of the camping businesses in order to identify the strategic orientations adopted by the identified typologies and profiles of camping businesses.



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## List of abbreviations

<b>AHP</b>	Analytic hierarchy process
<b>ANOVA</b>	Analysis of variance
<b>BFC</b>	Bourgogne-Franche-Comté
<b>BM</b>	Business model
<b>BMC</b>	Business model canvas
<b>CA</b>	Content analysis
<b>DEA</b>	Data envelopment analysis
<b>DM</b>	Decision maker
<b>ELECTRE</b>	ELimination Et Choice TRanslating Reality
<b>F&amp;B</b>	Food and beverage
<b>FICC</b>	Federation internationale of camping caravanning
<b>FTE</b>	Full time equivalent employees
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GE</b>	Grand-Est
<b>KPI</b>	Key performance indicator
<b>MCDA</b>	Multiple-criteria decision analysis
<b>OHP</b>	Outdoor hospitality park
<b>OTA</b>	Online travel agency
<b>PACA</b>	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur
<b>PBM</b>	Boundary between “worst” and “intermediate”
<b>PMG</b>	Boundary between “intermediate” and “best”
<b>PROMETHEE</b>	Preference ranking organization method for enrichment evaluations
<b>RevPAR</b>	Revenue per available room
<b>RBV</b>	Resource-based-view
<b>RV</b>	Recreational vehicle
<b>SME</b>	Small and medium enterprise
<b>TO</b>	Tour operator
<b>TOPSIS</b>	Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution
<b>VSE</b>	Very small enterprise
<b>XMCD</b>	XML-based encoding standard for MCDA data



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