

PRE-TASK 3: FRENCH TEAM

STUDY OF THE PERCEPTION OF CHAMBERY AS A TOURIST DESTINATION BY FOREIGN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

This study is conducted in order to highlight several trends about what university students intended to visit during their stay in Chambéry and what did they actually visit. The further aim of this study is to determine the various places they are going to visit in order to identify what are the tourist places in Savoie, which are in competition. We would like to observe if there is a difference between participants' travel plans and their actual travels.

I - Methodology:

The method used to conduct this study was to create a qualitative survey, in order to know more about each student experience in Chambéry and in France. The use of qualitative research makes the identification of parallels between the given responses easier to determine.

The questions of the survey are listed in the following:

1. Where are you from?
2. How long are you staying in Chambéry?
3. Before coming here, which places did you plan on visiting?
4. Before coming here, what kind of activities did you plan on doing?
5. Since you arrived in Chambéry, what did you visit in the region?
6. Have you visited any other places in France?
7. Since you arrived here, what kind of activities have you done?
8. Which places in Savoy would you recommend to people coming here?
9. Which places in France would you recommend to people coming here?
10. Age
11. Gender

In order to ensure the comprehensibility of the questions, this survey was tested with several Erasmus students in advance. Then, it was broadly distributed by a diffusion contact list of all the Erasmus students of the University Savoie Mont-Blanc. From 200 email sent, we had 29 answers.

II - Results:

- Female: 25 / Male: 4
- From 12 nationalities:
 - Quebec (2), Peru (1), China (1), USA (1)
 - Germany (4), Italy (13), Ireland (1), Austria (1), Spain (2), Lithuania (1), Luxembourg (1), England (1).
- Students from 19 to 28. Average age was about 21,5 years.
- Length of the students stay was 7,2 months in Chambéry.

What appears from this study?

Before coming here, which places did you plan on visiting?

Three levels concerning the nature of the answers can be highlighted.

First of all, there is a group of people who plans to visit Chambéry itself as well as its near surroundings. The Alps, the Mont Blanc (ski resorts) as well as cities like Annecy, Grenoble and Lyon are often mentioned. This group of people seems to have basic knowledge of Chambéry and its tourist points of interest even before their travels.

“Musée Savoisien, Musée d'histoire naturelle, Galerie des Beaux-Arts, le Massif de Bauges, la grotte de St. Christophe.” “La fontaine des éléphants, le château de Chambéry” “le lac du Bourget” “Chambéry, les villes autour (Annecy, bourget, Lyon)” “Lyon, Annecy, the mountains here, Grenoble, La Bretagne et la Normandie, Marseille, Toulouse, Avignon” “Lyon, Grenoble, Annecy, Paris, Marseille, Avignon, la Provence, Geneva”. “Lyon, Annecy, Nice” “Annecy, Mont Blanc, Lyon, Marseille, Nice.” “Grenoble, Annecy, Lyon and Ski resorts (Tignes, Chamonix etc)”

Secondly, there is a group of people who want to visit places all over France and neighboring countries.

“ The Alps, Geneva and Italy.” “Surroundings of Chambéry, Turin, and Switzerland” “Lyon, Grenoble, Geneva”

The third group of people is those who want to travel across the whole Europe and even discover several countries outside the continent.

“Europe” “Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, USA, Czech Republic” “All over Italy, England, Spain and Portugal” “I didn't have specific plans, I only knew I want to see bits of Europe. “

Some people didn't have any plans before they came in Chambéry. They need some further advise in order to plan their visit. The word of mouth is very important for this category of students

“Cities that people recommend in the area. Did not have exact plans in the area. This usually comes up by occasion.”

Before coming here, what kind of activities did you plan on doing?

We have seen that people planned different activities to do during their stay.

First of all, a lot of outdoor sports like skiing, hiking, climbing, walking and biking were frequently mentioned. Then, above all, people are coming to study; it is a criterion that often comes out in the answers. Also, it is often mentioned that they want to enjoy life by travelling and meeting a lot of people, to discover the French culture as well as a few answers about shopping.

« Skiing, hiking, climbing » « Riding the bike” « Sightseeing” « Apart from studying, nothing in particular » « Enjoying with French culture, travel and study » « Mountaineering, climbing, hiking, swimming etc. » « Day trips, shopping, skiing » « Socialize generally (learning the language, cooking together, going out, etc.), sports, discovering what's going on, exploring whatever is interesting » « Study, gym, party » « Studying at the university » « Visiting more places I could. » « Traveling & party »

"soccer » « Sky, swim, and long walks. » « Hiking, Skiing, Biking, a dancing course » « Skier, faire randonnées, visiter des autres villes françaises » « Travelling in region of Savoie, skiing, hiking. » « Footing, natation et escalade. » « Before coming here I planned on doing all the various randonnées. » « Snowboarding, hiking, running, travelling » « Walking through some cities, hiking in the mountain and maybe skiing.

Since you arrived in Chambéry, what did you visit in the region? Have you visited any other places in France?

Destinations mentioned the most are cities near Chambéry like Annecy (mentioned 22 times), the Bourget lake (15 times), Grenoble (13 times) and Lyon (16 times). Furthermore, Paris is mentioned quite often 12 times out of 29.

Then, mountains and places like La Clusaz, Tignes, and Chamonix are a little less mentioned,

Finally, some cities from the South of France like Nice and Marseille were mentioned as well.

Students have only visited a few cities abroad, Geneva is mentioned 6 times and Turin twice.

Since you arrived here, what kind of activities have you done?

It can be observed that the activities mentioned the most were sports activities such as hiking (6 times), running and gym. Then, it was mentioned parties, meeting people and going on travels.

« Randonnée, nager, courrir, vélo, canoë-kayak » « hiking, traveling, rode my bike, swam in the lake (in September!!) » « not much. I went to the gym and went out with my schoolmates » « None » « I am member of the Club Alpin and I always do activities with them, I go climbing, swimming, i see friends » « Day trips, cycling, hiking, cable car trip » « Not so much really, I have lessons that take me away a lot of free hours in a day » « Study, gym, not so much parties » « Studying and going around the city » « Visiting the city of Chambéry. Cycling from the city center to Lac di Bourget. » « Meeting people and local food" "Participated to the event ""Soirée internationale"" and guided tour of the city the same day. » « Went ice-skating and for walks" « I'm attending the chorale of the University. » « Skiing, Gymnastics, Hiking » « Hiking, other sports activities, such as, football, swimming, basketball;. » « Skiing and sightseeing » « I went to university, I went out with my friends, I met new people escalade et arts martiaux. » « Sightseeing, walking » « since I arrived here I just attended dance lessons. » « I have hiked, swam in Lac du Bourget, joined yoga » « Walking through the cities, hiking in the mountain and a Laser Game activity. » « just visited the cities ».

Which places in Savoie would you recommend to people coming here?

When people were asked which places they would recommend in the Savoy, the places recommended the most were Annecy (20 times), followed by Lyon (9 times) and some natural sites such as "Parc de la Vanoise", "massif des Bauges", "lac d'Aiguebelette" and "lac du Bourget".

Which places in France would you recommend to people coming here?

Even if a lot of cities and destinations were mentioned, some of them were more often quoted than others. It can be observed that Paris (17 times) stays the most recommended place to visit, followed by Lyon (8 times) and subsequently several cities and destinations in South of France as Marseille (6 times), Nice (7 times), Arles or Aix-en-Provence. Bordeaux, Toulouse Strasbourg were named only once.

« Paris, Lyon, Nice » « Bordeaux, Dieppe in Normandy, Marseille » « Basically everywhere I was.. Marseille, Lyon, Chambéry, Rouen, Dieppe, Avignon » « Paris, Lyon, Annecy, Cannes » « Lyon, Marseille, Arles, Paris,.. ». « Every place. France is amazing » « everywhere! » « Lyon, Paris, Nice » "Hard to tell, because I haven't visited that many myself. » « Paris and Lyon » « Paris » « Paris » « Menton, Nice and Paris. » « Lyon is awesome » « Paris, Evian-les-Bains, Nice, Camargue and Loira's castles ». « Marseille, Nice, Bordeaux » « South of France (Montpellier, Toulouse, Savoie..) And Paris » « Marseille; Nice; Toulouse; Bordeaux; region of Alsace; region of Normandy; » « Paris, Côte d'Azur, les chateaux de la Loire » « Normandie, Nièvre et Savoie: les trois régions ont toutes quelque chose à vous montrer! » « Paris, Nice, Strasbourg, Annecy » « I really enjoyed Paris and la Côte d'Azur, so I recommend these two places. « Bordeaux, Aix-en-provence, Nice, Paris, Chamonix, Le touquet » « So far I recommend Lyon, Annecy and Grenoble. » « Arles »

III - Analysis:

From the survey results described above, it is clear that the Savoie Mont Blanc region is mainly perceived as a destination for alpine activities. More than 60% of the responses included at least one of the three keywords "climbing, hiking and or swimming" in their answers to the questions number three and four (Before coming here, which places did you plan on visiting?)

Before coming here, what kind of activities did you plan on doing? ⇒ On the contrary, the key words "shopping" , "party" as well as "French cuisine" were only mentioned by two participants.

Surrounding cities like Annecy, Grenoble, Genève and Lyon seem to be well known and they had planned to visit by most of the participants. Cities like Paris, Marseille, Nice and even the Normandy as well as well as foreign European and non-European countries were mentioned by more than 50% of the respondents. It seems that travel distance is not an issue for exchange students. The results of questions number five and six (Since you arrived in Chambéry, what did you visit in the region? Have you visited any other places in France?) confirm this assumption. Half of the students have already visited a destination further than 200km from Chambéry.

According to the answers for questions number eight and nine (Which places in Savoy would you recommend to people coming here? Which places in France would you recommend to people coming here?), the exchange students are discovering their favorite cities to visit while doing a study visit in Chambéry are Annecy as well as Paris. Deriving from this fact it can be assumed that Chambéry's foreign students are visitors with a wide range of interests. They enjoy the picturesque setting of Annecy just as much as the hustle of a major city like Paris.

Most people from European countries (20/29 countries) have mentioned that they plan to visit mostly France and neighboring countries, such as Italy and Switzerland. On the contrary, half of the people from foreign countries such as USA, Canada or Peru have planned to visit Europe as a whole destination. Some people from European countries also want to visit Europe but it represents only 4 people out of 29. Due to the low amount of responses from non-European countries, we cannot declare that the more people come from far away, the more they visit far away destinations from where they are actually living. And conversely the fewer people are from a closest country than where they live, the fewer they visit far away destination during their trip.

To conclude, it is important to say that we conducted this survey only three months after the beginning of school. Therefore, people may be still adapting themselves to their new environment and life in Chambéry. Students are likely to travel more during longer holidays because those who have mentioned that they really want to travel across the Europe have not done it yet and have only visited France so far.