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# Decline of a Tourist Destination in the Context of COVID-19: Conservatism or (R)evolution in the Hotel Industry

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# Decline of a Tourist Destination in the Context of Covid-19 Conservatism or (R)evolution in Lourdes Hotel Industry?



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Identify the outlook for the hotel industry in a declining and crisis situation

## Decline since the early 2000's

- Decrease in attractiveness
- Loss of brand image
- Drop in the number of visitors

## Covid-19 crisis

- Shutdown of 90% of Lourdes economy
- Mass tourism, with a single and highly segmented market

## Transformation of tourism

- Behavioral changes
- Digitalization of tourism
- Commitment towards a more sustainable tourism

## Lourdes, 2<sup>nd</sup> hotel city in France

- Difficulties for the hotel industry, which seems to have reached a turning point in its development

Does the hotel industry engage in a strategy of innovation?

## METHODOLOGY

Qualitative approach motivated by the objective of an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon using a mixed "inductivo-hypothetico-deductive" approach

### Prior to the research

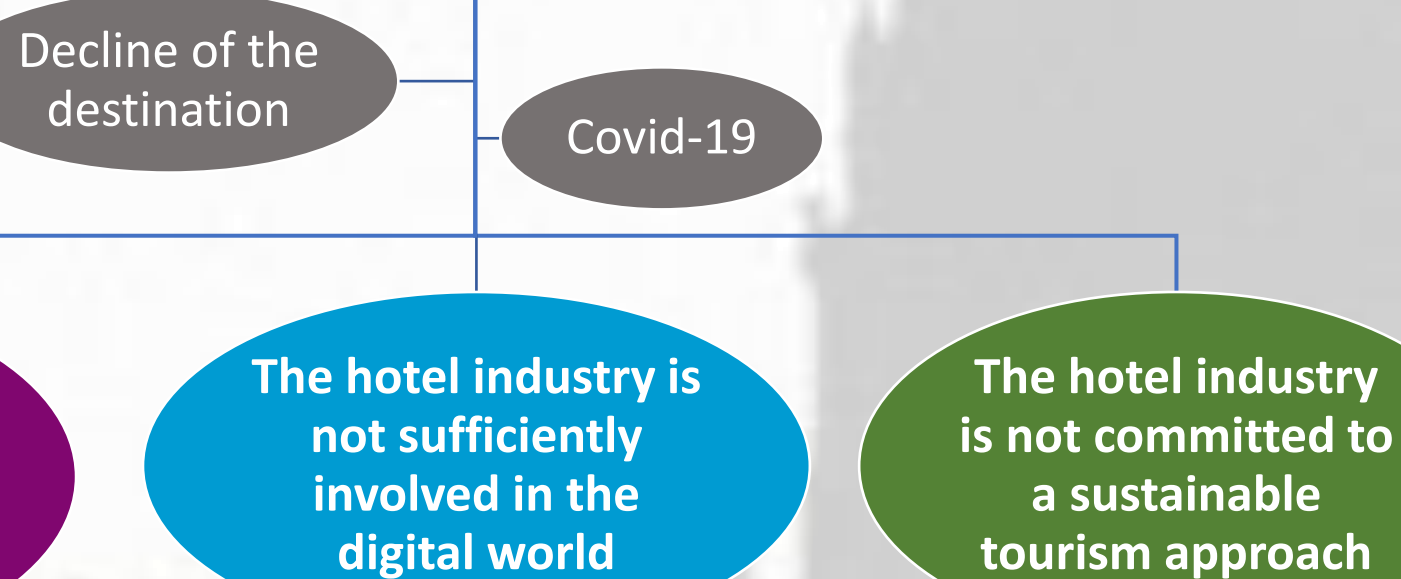
- Positionality of the practitioner-researcher
- Extensive literature review

### Exploratory phase

- 118 hotel visits
- 111 exploratory interviews
- Direct and indirect observation
- Archival and statistical research

- In-depth knowledge of the territory
- Development of a qualified database on the hotel industry of Lourdes
- Design of 3 hypothesis for the research

### Does the hotel industry of Lourdes engage in a strategy of innovation?



### Research design

- Identification of key indicators
- Development of a semi-structured interview guide
- Thorough sampling using the Ascending Hierarchical Classification method based on 12 preset parameters

### A 28-interview qualitative study

- Comprehensive manually made transcription
- 2 encoding methods: predictive and inductive
- Several levels of analysis: lexicometric, structural, semantic and mixed

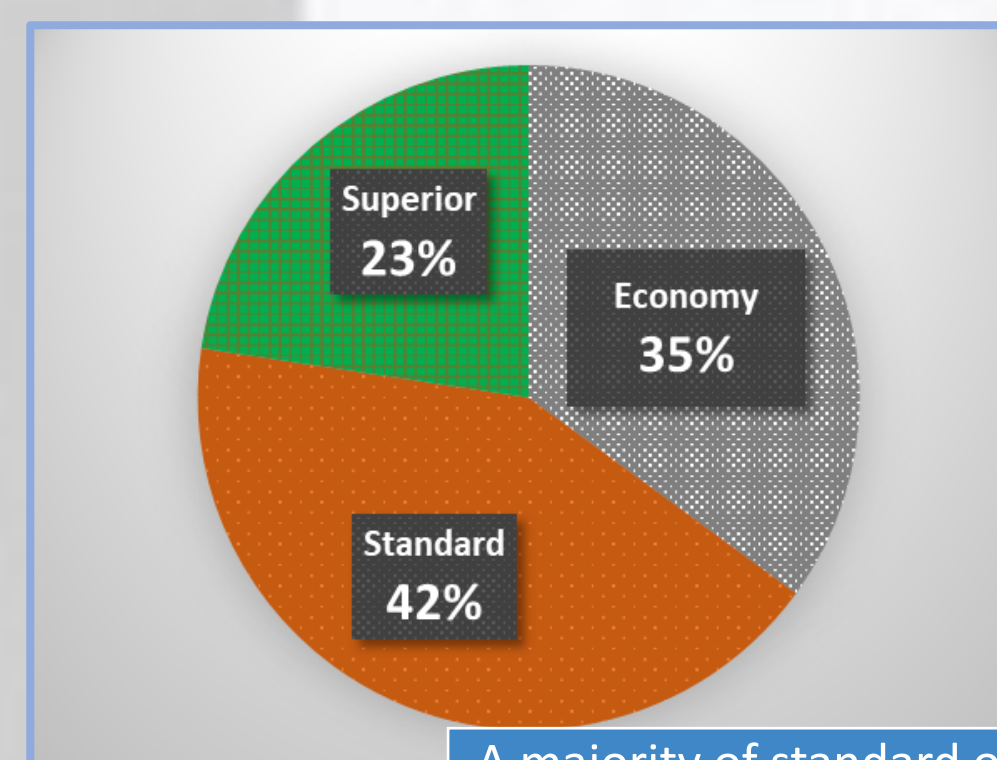
### Further research

- Validation through triangulation technique
- Deepening through additional interviews: other kinds of accommodation + hotels in other cities + pilgrimage directors

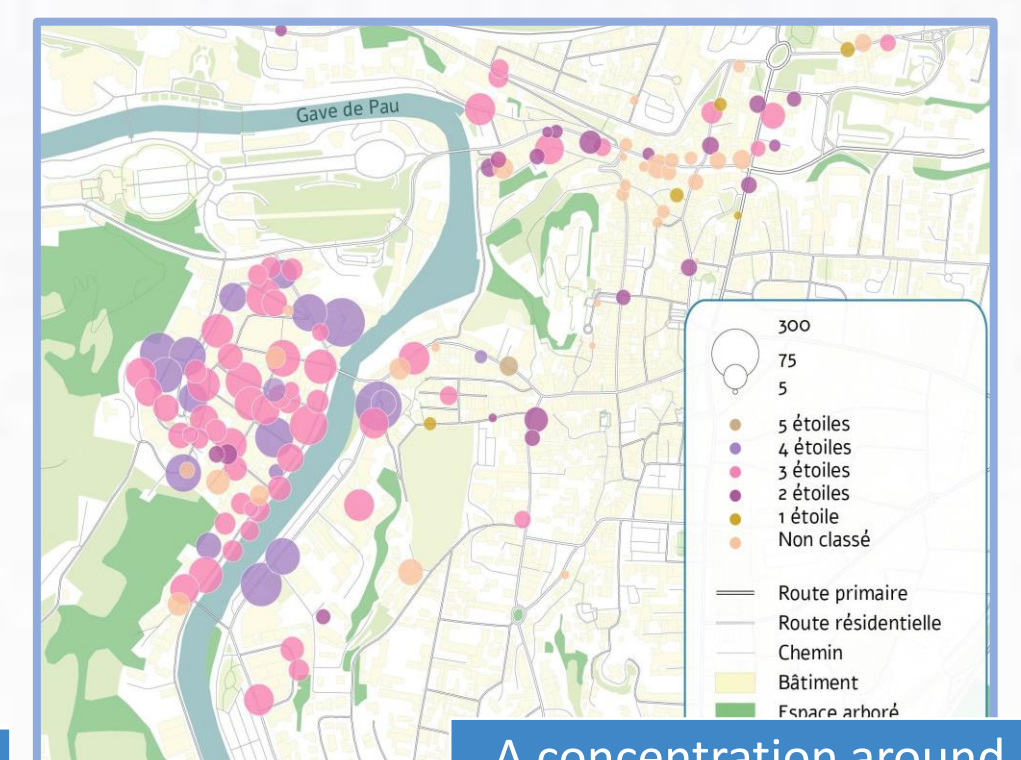
Analysis carried out through dedicated softwares: Sphinx iQ2 & MAXQDA



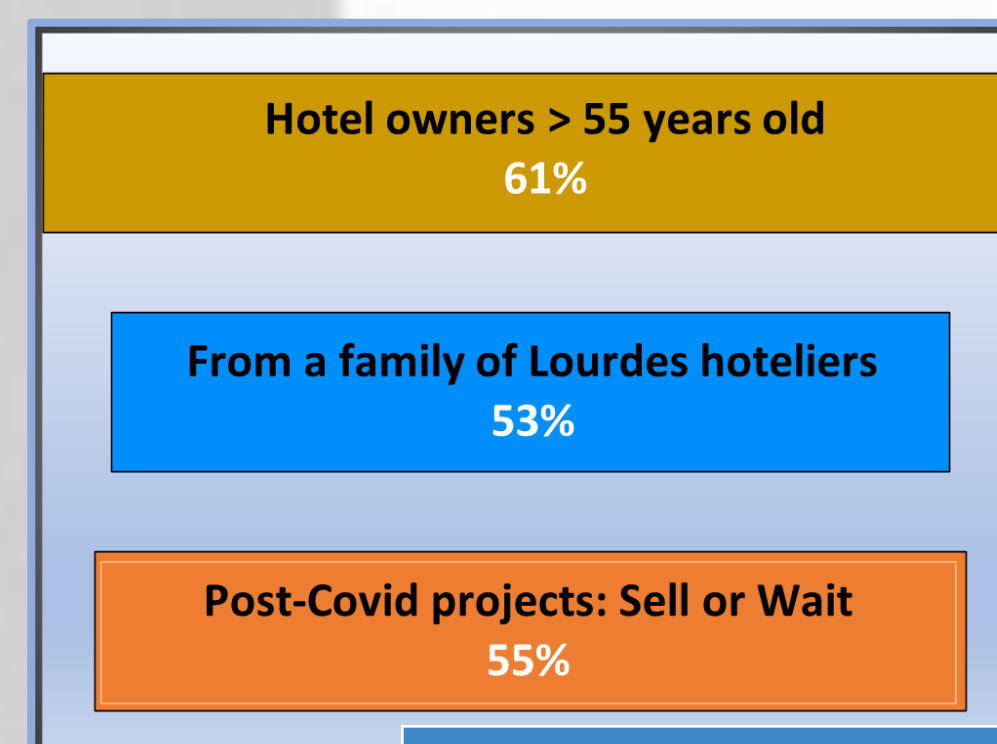
## EXPLORATORY STAGE FINDINGS



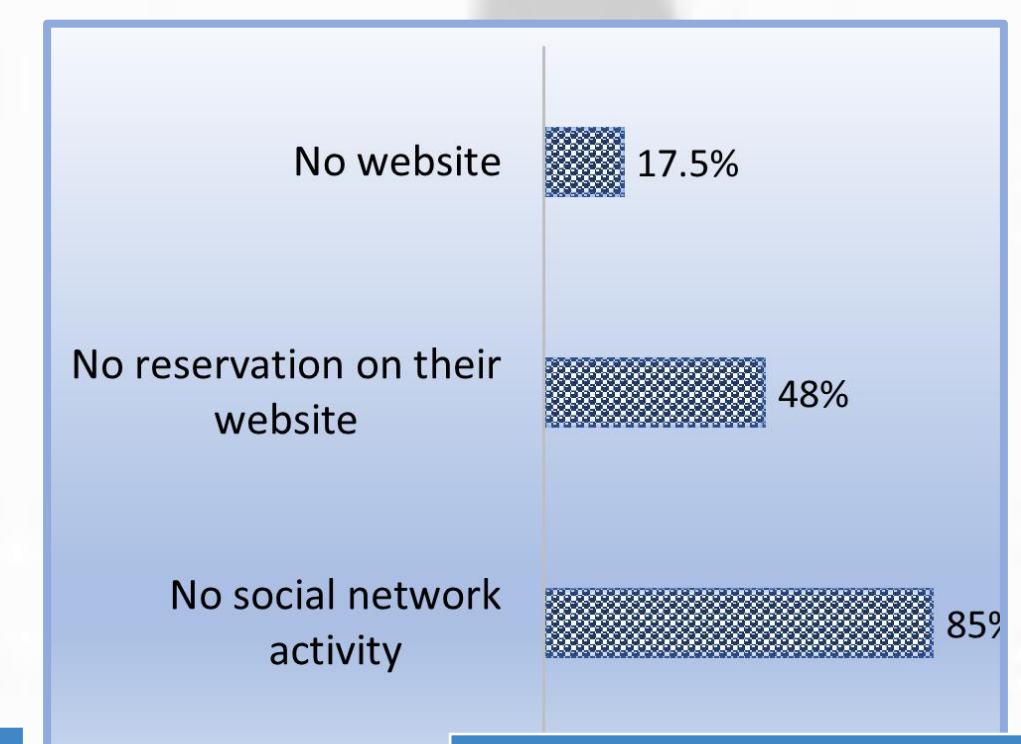
A majority of standard or economy hotels



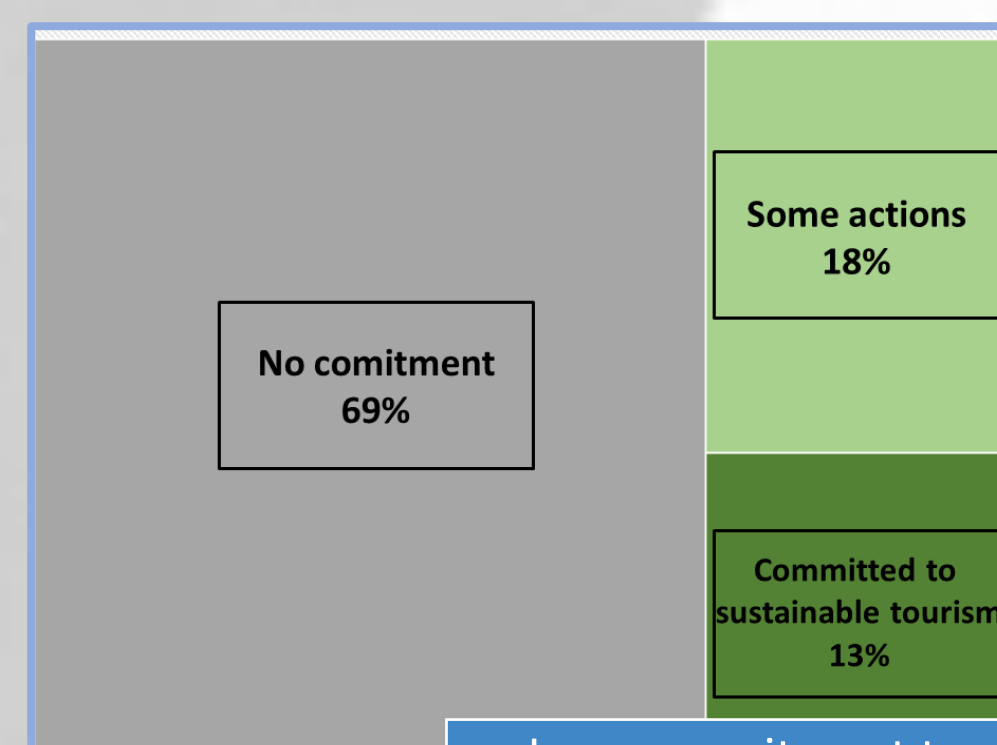
A concentration around the Sanctuary



An aging, traditional and not very dynamic hotel industry



Limited digitalization



Low commitment to sustainable tourism



Signs of negativity and temporality

## NEXT STEPS

- Qualitative data coding and analysis
- Reporting of the results
- Discussion and options for improvement
- Thesis drafting and editing

## PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing  
Interactions between stakeholders in Lourdes: An 'Alpha' framework approach

ESPACES  
tourisme et loisirs  
LOURDES : LE TOURISME RELIGIEUX DANS LA TOURMENTE

Read my article online in  
Journal of Convention & Event Tourism  
COVID-19: Impacts and perspectives for religious tourism

Via  
TOURISM REVIEW  
Lourdes, haut-lieu du tourisme religieux, entre crise et transition ?