DIGITAL NOMADS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN TOURISM HUB

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Abstract

Purpose – Over the last two decades, people have significantly changed how they work and spend their leisure time. Taking advantage of remote work and lockdowns, many have taken up a digital nomad lifestyle. There are minimal studies on digital nomads in tourism destinations in developed countries, therefore the main objective of this study was to explore digital nomads as a traveller, their needs, and lifestyles in the relatively large city of Split in Croatia.

Methodology – The eight online in-depth interviews were conducted in Split in the spring of 2022 on a population of digital nomads residing there during 2021 and/or 2022.

Findings – This study identifies significant benefits of being a digital nomad in Split. However, the results also reveal a complex picture of the experiences and challenges of digital nomads affected by the seasonality of tourism, which manifests itself in a sharp increase in the cost of living (especially accommodation costs), disruption of their lives by crowds and noise, or services geared towards mass tourism. Furthermore, although local service providers appreciated the digital nomads in the off-season, they tried to maximise their income by switching to short-term accommodation rentals once tourist demand picked up, forcing them to move out and eventually return after the season.

Contribution – This research identifies the digital nomad profile in popular tourist destinations in Europe. It provides recommendations that could help policymakers in any tourism-developed destination to implement policies for attracting more digital nomads to their cities which could positively impact their local economies.

Keywords: digital nomad, tourism destination, seasonality, local community.

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital infrastructures and the integration of mobile communication into daily life has significantly changed the contours of the workplace, opening the possibility of new flexible work arrangements (Brocklehurst 2001; Messenger and Gschwind 2016; Aroles and McLean 2019; Kingma 2019). High-speed Internet connectivity facilitated communication, and workers no longer relied on sitting in the office from nine to five to complete their tasks. In addition, airline tickets became affordable to a broader range of people, and location-independent people began to travel and use technology to get their work done (Kathleen et al. 2021; Thompson 2019). During COVID-19, such type of work, mobile work, or so-called remote work, has become the new normal for many employees (Hermann and Paris 2020). According to the M.B.O. Partners research (2021), the number of such professionals in the U.S.A. increased by 42% from 2020 and 112% from the pre-pandemic year 2019.

This form of career is prevalent among young people who enjoy living abroad and working simultaneously (Dal Fiore et al. 2014). They are known as digital nomads (D.N.) because they provide innovative business models to various industries while valuing multiple work cultures and forms of capital (such as reputation, information, and symbolic capital) (Nash et al. 2018).

This study will explore this new segment in tourism demand by providing valuable insights and empirical evidence on this market in the relatively large city of Split in Croatia, considered the Mediterranean tourism hub and a popular hotspot for digital nomads (NomadList 2022). Additionally, it provides guidelines for destination managers to develop marketing strategies that target this new tourism segment in the long term. Therefore, the specific research questions of this study were:

1. What is the evolution of the digital nomad phenomenon and its confirmation in tourism research?
2. Is there a link between digital nomadism and sustainable tourism?
3. What are the experiences and challenges of this potential tourism segment in the Mediterranean tourism hub of Split in Croatia?

To answer these research questions, the paper begins with a complete assessment of the literature on this phenomenon and its validation in tourist research. The second section explains the methodological approach, data-collection methods, and results. Finally, following the discussion, conclusions are derived, along with the research's limitations and recommendations for further study.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Digital nomadism - a social and tourism phenomenon

In the literature, the definition of digital nomads is still controversial (Thompson 2019; Hannonen 2020) and used in various and often contradicting ways. Initially, the term "nomad" was used to describe individuals or a group of people who migrate from one destination to another. However, the expression "digital" was later added to describe "nomads" who work with the help of technology while travelling (Mouratidis 2018). Almost two decades ago, Makimoto and Manners (1997) predicted this social phenomenon by emphasising that future lifestyles would benefit from mobile technology, allowing people to travel while staying connected to their job simultaneously.

The trend of digital nomadism started to spread in the last decade of the 20th century when big companies such as Amazon and eBay began to make online profits. Moreover, airline prices for long trips drastically decreased, which made air travel widely affordable. The Internet has become cheaper and more accessible, and Skype was introduced as an online communication tool. At the same time, the Airbnb platform became a perfect online tool for accommodation services, while PayPal enabled people to receive and send electronic payments worldwide. The Covid-19 crisis has created a

need for businesses to adopt the remote type of work, which is, in some cases, still using it (Wang et al. 2020).

Various disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, and economics, have researched the concept of digital nomadism. The main themes emerging from the literature relates to the work aspects such as personal knowledge management (Jarrahi et al. 2019), employment (Thompson 2018), benefits of remote work (Mouratidis 2018), motivational factors (Prabawa and Pertiwi 2020), and the nomad's lifestyle and experiences with co-working travel (Chevtaeva and Denizci-Guillet 2021). In 2018, Reichenberger described digital nomadism as a location-independent lifestyle usually conducted by young individuals motivated to explore and combine travel with virtual work. Those individuals are predominantly participants of Generation Y, who still do not have family obligations and take advantage of technology and remote work while exploring the world (Mancinelli 2020, Nash et al. 2021).

The travelling component of the digital nomad lifestyle is still not clarified in the literature. Moreover, it is often confused with other phenomena, such as ex-pats, business travellers, remote workers, freelancers, and global nomads. In that sense, Richards (2015) defines digital nomads as frequently travelling young adults, while McElroy (2020) refers to them as tech hub workers or settlers. Others refer to them as mobile workers, telecommuters (Orel 2019), or a mix of travelling business professionals and backpackers (Wang et al. 2018). Generally, they straddle the lines between work, play, and travel (Hannonen 2020).

A few studies have attempted to classify them based on their degree of movement. Thus, according to Reichenberger (2018), digital nomads fall into three categories: (1) flexible employees without travel intentions; (2) extensive travellers with permanent residences; and (3) lifestyle nomads without a permanent house. In addition to mobility, Toussaint (2009) makes reference to the lifestyle dimension, by identifying (1) permanent travellers who are constantly on the move, live as modest a life as possible to save money, and try to make a living by from donations or sponsors; (2) self-employed people who like to travel and choose a profession that allows them to do so, using different communication technologies to do their work; (3) business travellers who travel all over the world to run their business, for example, to meet clients, and find a living environment that meets their needs for a good living space. Similar to Hall et al. (2019) refer to digital nomads as a new type of business traveller. However, Reichenberger (2018) emphasised that digital nomads differ from business travellers since they travel for recreational purposes, stay longer at the destination, and cover their expenses alone. On the other hand, for business travellers, all costs are covered by the employer. Therefore, the purpose of travel is the main difference between digital nomads and business travellers.

Some authors consider telecommuters, nomads, and other (im)mobile professionals as digital nomads even though they do not all practice a digital nomad lifestyle. The term "telecommuter" refers to people who work remotely but often have a regular residence in a city, do their work from home or various places, and interact electronically via computer (Thompson 2018; Golden and Gajendran 2019). They work from home using their remote work flexibility to save money on commuting expenses, avoid workplace distractions, and accommodate childcare needs. In contrast, global nomads like to travel

slowly, live a minimalist lifestyle and prefer freedom and leisure over work. Instead of focusing solely on making money and meeting job obligations, they spend more time with their family, live healthier lives, and engage in activities that make them happy and fulfilled. In addition, they like to mingle with local people and immerse themselves in local culture while in the destination (Kannisto 2014).

Müller (2016) and Nash et. al. (2018) introduce a dimension of travel frequency and work productivity, stressing that digital nomads like to travel frequently, but value the work productivity (Müller 2016; Nash et at. 2018). In addition, they strive for a place with an established community of like-minded people. As digital nomads are different from typical travellers, it is essential to understand what motivates them to travel.

1.2. Digital nomads' travel motivation

The concept of push and pull factors defined by Crompton (1979) is still widely used today to explain tourist motivation. Push factors are related to the desire of tourists to go on holidays, a person's intrinsic psychological needs that lead them to travel. Pull factors are external physical qualities of a destination that attract them there, such as the presence of attractions, culture, services (transportation, accommodation and similar) and natural beauty (Yousefi and Marzuki 2015; Han et al. 2020). These attributes are essential for a destination's competitiveness and for meeting tourism demand. However, several studies found that push and pull motivations vary by nationality, destination, and demographic characteristics. For example, Yousefi and Marzuki (2015) found that cultural differences affect travel motivation and that there is a difference between international and domestic travellers. In a similar vein Sangpikul (2009) found that Asian travellers to Thailand preferred taking part in activities, while Europeans preferred visiting cultural sites.

The motivation of digital nomads also displays a combination of pull and push factors. The crucial factors that digital nomads consider when deciding where to travel and live are the cost of living, climate, culture, internet connection, and visa requirements (Stickel 2020). It is clear that these criteria are based on the valid assumption that digital nomads select the travelling spot according to their leisure preferences rather than job requirements. They seek new experiences (Schlagwein 2018) and cultural enrichment (Mancinelli 2020; Chevtaeva and Denizci-Guillet 2021). When they are in a destination, they are keen to experience and immerse themselves in local culture (Korpela 2009, cited in Mouratidis 2018). Furthermore, an accessible and reliable Internet is essential not only for work (Nash et al. 2018; Prabawa and Pertiri 2020) but also as a social tool to connect with people with similar interests, share their experiences and gather information (Hardy and Robards 2015; Willment 2020). They typically travel alone or with a partner and prefer affordable locations with pleasant climate (often in Southeast Asia) where they may engage in activities like skiing, hiking, and surfing (Lee et at. 2019). The length of their stay is greatly influenced by lifestyle choices and visa requirements (Hannonen 2020).

Recently, some authors note that many digital nomads are more eco-conscious, strive to fly less, stay in sustainable accommodations, and invest in, or contribute to, green

projects (Schwarz 2021). They travel slowly and focus more on quality of experience. From this line of research a new phenomenon emerged – the "slomads" (Thompson 2021), but there is yet a paucity of research on this market, except for a few articles such as Vierra (2022), Gill (2022) and Tagliaferri (2022).

In growing online networks, digital nomads describe themselves as self-determined, accessible, and independent (Nash et al. 2018). They move simply out of a desire for a lifestyle change, freedom of choice, and self-actualisation. In line with this, Mouratidis (2018) highlights that digital nomads choose such a lifestyle to challenge themselves and to foster their personal growth. They prefer the independence from fixed workplace and nine to five work schedule. Furthermore, they want a simple, convenient destination with an established digital nomads' network (Hall et al. 2019).

While the lifestyle of digital nomadism has a number of advantages, Lee et al. (2019) discovered that while digital nomads desired frequent travel and geographical flexibility, nomadism can became a substantial psychological burden. This way of living obscures social interactions and blurs the distinction between work and leisure time (Reichenberger 2018; Lee et al. 2019). Furthermore, Schlagwein (2018) asserts that one of the primary motivations for being a digital nomad is to be a part of a community of intriguing, like-minded individuals. None the less, several studies pointed out that digital nomads feel lonely (Hall et al. 2019; Lee et al. 2019). Separated from their families and friends, they need to establish social networks again and again as they move from place to place. However, building social relationships with locals or fellow digital nomads requires time and effort; usually they do not stay in one place long enough, and they might get fatigued from the continuous process of establishing new social connections The online communities often replaces the place-based socialising (Schlagwein 2018). The online community is beneficial for exchanging essential information and experiences (Altringer 2015). For example, social media and websites like Nomad List, a large online community allow digital nomads to share their experiences and perspectives (Sutherland and Jarrahi 2017).

Agrowing popularity of co-living and co-working spaces among digital nomads might be attributed to the need for socialising and belonging to a community of like-minded people. Co-living spaces are imaginary campsites that allow digital nomads to establish their temporary base as part of their nomadic tribal life where wellbeing is paramount (von Zumbusch and Lalicic 2020). More so, Chevtaeva and Denizci-Guillet (2021) argue that co-working and co-living spaces are essential for digital nomads to consider when deciding where to live. Moreover, co-working and co-living places provide venues for individuals to work and interact in a community setting (Lee et al. 2019).

To be more attractive to this market destinations worldwide have refocused their marketing efforts and positioned themselves as perfect locations for digital nomads to live and work (Situmorang and Karthana 2021). Urban areas were the first to respond to this new demand due to existing infrastructure. In contrast, rural areas came into play with the Covid-19 pandemic without much preparation, as digital nomads wanted to escape the effects of the pandemic and started to be attracted to what they considered to be isolated and safe areas. In June 2020, Estonia was the first to introduce a digital nomad visa that allows location-independent workers to stay for a maximum of one year (E-

residency, 2020 in Chevtaeva and Denizci-Guillet 2021). The government of Barbados took the same approach in July 2020 by introducing a "12-month Barbados welcome stamp" for remote workers. In early 2021, Croatia joined a digital nomad visa initiative (Ministry of Interior, 2021), and the NomadList platform listed Split, Dubrovnik, and Zagreb as hotspots for digital nomads (NomadList 2022). According to the Digital Nomads Association Croatia (D.N.A. 2022), the number of digital nomad visa applications is constantly increasing. Therefore, the growing importance of digital nomadism in urban tourism destinations makes it necessary to understand this market segment. The following part of this paper presents the methods and results of the research into characteristics, experiences, and challenges of digital nomads residing in Split during 2021 and/or 2022.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research approach through in-depth interviews since this technique is considered appropriate for gathering behavioural data and is the most used technique among qualitative researchers to collect information (Marshall and Rossman 1999).

2.1. Sample and data collection

The target participants were digital nomads who stayed in Split during 2021 and/or 2022. Two criteria were applied in the participant selection process: 1) working as a digital nomad professional and 2) having good the grasp of English. The first criterion aimed to bring together digital nomads as a group of people sharing common knowledge, challenges, and concerns (Gabriel 2018) as well as hopes, dreams and wishes about the future (Sools, Tromp, and Mooren 2015). The second criterion was to select participants with sufficient language competencies (Sools and Mooren 2012).

The participants were recruited during springtime 2022 through Digital Nomad Association Croatia, co-working spaces in Split, digital nomads' social network sites, including Facebook (DigitalNomadsSplit), Instagram, and LinkedIn. A homogeneous sampling under a purposive sampling technique was applied as the research focus was on the population with similar characteristics (i.e., lifestyle) while researching how that relates to their stay in Split and their satisfaction with Split's offer (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim 2016). Considering the relatively homogenous target population (primarily regarding the lifestyle of digital nomads), budget constraints, and, above all, the concept of saturation that is advocated by many scholars when it comes to the sample size determination, specifically within the purposive sampling (Dworkin 2012; Hennink and Kaiser 2022; Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim 2016), a total of eight digital nomads were recruited.

The participants were interviewed online, via the Microsoft Teams platform, in June 2022. Online face-to-face interviews have been well documented and accepted technique far before the COVID-19 pandemic (Salmons 2014, Nehls, Smith and Schneider 2014;

Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel, and Cook 2020), but during the pandemic era, their use exploded. According to Lobe, Morgan, and Hoffman (2022), in-depth interviews are especially effective since they match our daily communication with smartphones.

2.2. Interview design and analysis

The in-depth online interviews were conducted using the interview guide in an open-ended and semi-structured format. The interview consisted of five topics. First, after an introduction and general demographics, questions were structured to tap into their work and life patterns in general (including the background of the digital nomad lifestyle, motivations for choosing it, and reasons for coming to Split); their stay in Split (the length of visit, accommodation type, work arrangements, activities in leisure time and preferences for social life) and, finally, their overall satisfaction with Split, specifically accommodation, food and beverage and services such as transport, cultural facilities, and events.

The average interview duration was 40 minutes. The interviews were recorded, and interviewees gave consent to this. The inductive thematic content analysis was used to analyse the transcripts as the main goal was to identify common patterns and relevant themes across the data (Douglas 2002; Thomas 2006).

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1. Digital nomads in Split

The participants included both those residing in Split at the time of the interview (four participants) and those who were in Split before (the other four) (Table 1). The youngest participant was 30, while the oldest was 45. Half were from the United Kingdom, while others were from Singapore, the United States, Italy, and Ukraine. Most had Croatia tourist visas since they stayed in Split for up to three months. The reason for that is either they had no intentions to stay longer, or the process of getting a digital nomad visa was seen as administratively overly complicated and time-consuming. Digital nomads from E.U. countries do not require visa applications.

Tables 1: **Digital nomad's characteristics**

Interviewee	Homeland	Gender	Age range	Profession	Travel companion
DN1_resided in Split during 2021/2022	Great Britain	M	From 30 to 39	Software Developer	Solo
DN2_ resided in Split during the interview	United States	F	From 20 to 29	Writer/ blogger	Solo
DN3_resided in Split during 2021/2022	Great Britain	M	From 40 to 49	Freelancers	Solo
DN4_ resided in Split during the interview	Ukraine	F	From 30 to 39	Holistic Advisor	With partner
DN5_resided in Split during 2021/2022	Singapore	F	From 30 to 39	Freelancers	Solo
DN6_ resided in Split during the interview	Great Britain	F	From 40 to 49	Software Developer	With partner
DN7_resided in Split during the interview	Great Britain	M	From 40 to 49	Writer/ blogger	Solo
DN8_resided in Split during 2021/2022	Italy	F	From 30 to 39	Business Development	Solo

Source: Authors

3.2. Motivation

According to the respondents, independence is the primary reason for becoming a digital nomad. They prefer the freedom to travel slowly anywhere and explore different cultures. They do not like to be limited by a job schedule. Furthermore, such a lifestyle provides a better work-life balance. *Therefore, it is considered more than rewarding for those who do not like to be limited by job routines but strive for flexibility and freedom.* Participant 3 shared:

DN3: Independence would be the number one benefit. The fact that I don't have anybody to report to or keep up with. And everything sorts tails come from that – the ability to do what I want and when I want, go where I want and when I want, eat what I want when I want. I enjoy walking and running. It is great seeing new places as much as I can. I feel blessed to be in that position. I can go to a new coffee place and restaurant every morning.

Such a lifestyle is something that they have wanted for a long time (e.g., being a writer/blogger in the wine industry) but waited for the right opportunity or a push to happen. That push appeared in the form of unsettling circumstances in their private lives

(e.g., divorce, unhappiness with work-life balance) or significant societal shifts (e.g., the pandemic, Brexit, and the war in Ukraine). Whatever the cause, they all needed a change in how they lived.

All respondents agreed that as a digital nomad, one could have the power to make a life-changing decision, such as a career or a lifestyle change which brought personal benefit to them. However, they pointed out the challenges of living as a digital nomad, such as making real and meaningful relationships due to time and distance constraints. Due to administrative problems such as obtaining a digital nomad visa and finding affordable accommodation during summertime, they could only stay in Split for a limited time.

Regarding their level of sustainability awareness, most of them prefer eco-friendly products. However, sustainability is not their pull factor to a destination or even an accommodation for a long-term stay.

3.3. Accommodation and work arrangement in Split

All interviewees stated that they used short-term rental accommodation while in Split. The most common way to find accommodation is via a service platform such as Airbnb and Booking.com. It is most convenient and straightforward, especially for those who do not know any locals and have never been to Split. Furthermore, some used Facebook groups such as Digital Nomads Accommodation Croatia to contact landlords who provided a special price directly.

DN5: The good thing that I enjoy about apartments in Croatia is that all of them have a kitchen. That's important for me because I cook a lot of food by myself. So they always provide you with enough pots and pans and utensils. Wi-Fi is always strong. So that's good.

In spite of a relatively short stay, they have usually moved a couple of times - some to a more suitable location, some to a more affordable place to stay, while some were forced to do so by the steep rent increase at the beggining of tourist summer season. Major requirements when choosing a place to live were reliable Wi-Fi, good location and equipment, such as a washing machine and a kitchen. Sustainable accommodation were not a priority; it was just a plus. The price of accommodation was a decisive factor in accommodation choice. In most cases, they booked the apartment for themselves. Since most of them booked a flat in the city centre, all services they used were within walking distance. They used Uber if their accommodation was further away from the centre.

DN5: I stay in various parts of Split, so I must have stayed in at least eight or nine houses, mainly apartments.

Regarding work arrangements and the possibility of using co-working space, respondents noted that such places are expensive and inconvenient, especially if someone has an online call/session. Therefore, most of them used their accommodation facilities as a working space. However, they pointed out that sometimes they used specific coffee shops to get out of the apartment and to socialise while working.

3.4. Leisure and social life

Most respondents liked to spend time with other digital nomads, but get information from locals about places to visit and things to do. At the same time, the participants emphasised that they dislike being treated as tourists, mainly because tourist offers are too expensive and commercialised. Instead, they prefer simple things and look for products and places where locals go and buy.

Spending time outdoors was what digital nomads liked while in Split since the weather is nice and nature is beautiful (beaches, islands). They liked cycling and walking around the city and, sea promenades and forest park. Some took the opportunity to explore the region. In that case, the short trips (more than one day), were made to nearby islands or coastal towns and villaged, such as Hvar and Trogir. They were not after cultural activities as visit to theatres, museums, or cinemas were rare.

Although there is a well-organised digital nomad community in Split, and occasionally, several events happen, digital nomads prefered spontaneously contacting people through messaging or meeting them somewhere without a plan. Word of mouth was considered the most valuable source of relevant information, primarily through social media such as Facebook. During their stay, some of their family member or friends visited them.

> *DN2: F.B. groups have been an excellent resource for getting visa. I found this apartment there and some others too. They also have people leave and come all the time. So, you can get these if you need a bicycle or this stuff. So, it is a good resource, also.*

> *DN3: I have friends visiting me, which makes my time. Otherwise, I occasionally meet people, local people from the area, but I do not have any dependence on anyone here.*

3.5. Benefits and challenges of stay in Split

The significant benefits of being a digital nomad in Split wre enjoyment a good climate, beautiful nature, rich culture, and high-quality food while performing work. Such a lifestyle affords a work-life balance, which they could not achieve in the big cities where they previously worked (e.g., London, New York). In addition, they felt welcomed by locals, and the digital nomad community was active.

> *DN5: As a woman, I never felt I was in danger, even if I was out walking at like 2:00 AM. I never felt people had those intentions. I never felt that there would be robbing or stealing from me, which is essential.*

However, they emphasised that accommodation and restaurant services are too expensive and commercialised, especially during peak season, while during wintertime, they are closed. Moreover, during summertime, the city is overcrowded by tourists. Such circumstances forced them to move from the centre and spend less time in Split.

DN6: I think it's expensive compared to other areas we've been to. The accommodation can be OK. However, depending on when you come, it can also be costly. Food and drink are expensive since this is a tourist town. But the average price is much higher than in other places in Spain or Portugal.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research paper provides a comprehensive literature review of the digital nomad market segment that is gaining more and more attention in the tourism industry. According to the literature review, those individuals live location-independent lifestyles and differ from tourists since they travel slowly and stay longer in their destination. They are young professionals who shifted from working in a conventional office to working solely in an online environment. Moreover, they are looking for a attractive place that are often popular among tourists to gain new experiences while working to support their lifestyle. They are constantly active online and like to share their opinions and experiences through social media. When they want to socialise, they prefer to be a part of a community with similar interests and lifestyles while exploring the local culture.

The empirical results in Split, a popular Mediterranean tourist destination, while supporting results of the previous studies, revealed a complex picture of digital nomads' experiences and challenges. During the peak season, those individuals face increased accommodation prices and landlords' unwillingness to extend the rent for longer. Moreover, too many tourists in a destination disrupt their life due to crowding and noise or services geared to mass tourism. This contrasts their experience during the off-season period when they find the city pleasant, with reasonable living costs and locals more amenable to socialising. Therefore, it can be concluded that local service providers, at the same time, while appreciating digital nomads in the off-season, sought to maximise their income by shifting to short-term accommodation rental once tourist demand started to pick up, forcing digital nomads to move out and, eventually, get back after the season.

Such circumstances represent the challenges for tourism policymakers to attract digital nomads, specifically ensuring their stability in terms of accommodation and services such as restaurant and travel agency offers, events, and transportation which is very difficult during high and low seasons. Furthermore, the other challenge is to ensure a positive world of the mouth of digital nomads, predominantly through social networks where they are constantly active. Therefore, to ensure quality service and products for digital nomad market throughout the year, a destination management organisation should collaborate with interested businesses, invest in technology and adequate infrastructure, and propose specific offerings geared to suit the demands of the targeted audience on long term. Such offers are related to hotel and accommodation facilities, restaurant, and travel agency services. Even go further and organise social activities, connect with this market online and provide them up to date newsletters, with catering packages, access to hotel amenities and workspace solutions, social events and tours. Digital nomads like to interact with local people and explore their culture. When they are satisfied with the destination, they will spread the word online and recommend the place, which is the best online promotion.

While planning the growth of digital nomad tourism in a place, it is equally critical to consider sustainability issues. Developing digital nomads' tourism may enhance the destination's sustainability in several ways. Firstly, it can potentially reduce seasonality in demand and mitigate the harmful effects of the tourism industry on destinations. In that sense, the respondents of the interviews agreed that Split is a perfect winter destination for digital nomads due to its location and mild winter climate. Additionally, digital nomads like to volunteer and help the community through donations, clean-up actions, tree planting or similar activities. Furthermore, they are environmentally conscious and prefer to reuse and recycle. Generally, digital nomads' tourism contributes to sustainable consumption if digital nomads' attitudes and behaviours are understood and managed. Therefore, Destination Management Organizations should develop an online community that would link locals, entrepreneurs, and digital nomads in one place and provide an opportunity for sharing experiences, promoting local services and products, and providing all necessary information, resulting in mutual satisfaction.

The findings reported in this research shed new light on a study into digital nomadism in tourism research and contribute to understanding this new tourism segment. It benefits researchers who want to understand this tourism phenomenon and Destination Management Organisations' marketing strategies for this new segment. This research identifies the digital nomad profile in popular tourist destination in Europe and provides recommendations that could help policymakers in any tourism-developed destination to implement policies for attracting more digital nomads to their cities which could positively impact their local economies.

One of the main limitations of this research is the lack of data. Since this social and tourism phenomenon has only been around recently, there isn't much information in tourism studies. Furthermore, this research explored only one tourist destination; therefore, it would be interesting to compare it with other destinations in the Mediterranean. Moreover, exploring digital nomads who are environmentally aware and prefer sustainable-based products and services while exploring tourist destinations and natural attractions would be valuable.

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