

# The Applicability of Disc Golf for Finnish Tourism Industry

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## The Applicability of Disc Golf for Finnish Tourism Industry

Eskelinen Otto, Okkonen Anssi  
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The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to find out whether disc golf would be an applicable feature for domestic tourism in Finland. Disc golf is the fastest growing sport in Finland at the moment. The authors have noticed the sport causing domestic tourism amongst the players. Objective was to clarify what kind of travelers disc golf players are, what kind of accommodation used and how tourism service providers could use this information to their benefit.

The theoretical framework of the thesis consists of presenting the sport, its history and current state. Insights on domestic tourism, sport tourism and motivational factors concerning tourism are also given.

The research consists of both the qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research was conducted in a form of an interview with the person responsible for disc golf services in Peurunka spa and rehabilitation center. The aim of the interview is to make a case example of a well implemented disc golf service to a tourism-related business.

Quantitative research, a questionnaire answered by 535 Finnish disc golf players, investigated their travel patterns and motivations to play the sport. From these results the authors could see whether disc golf had any potential to be an applicable tourism service in Finland. The results were analyzed using SWOT analysis and an overall picture was formed of disc golf as a tourism service.

According to this research, disc golf is a very applicable service to be introduced more properly to the domestic tourism industry in Finland. Although the courses in Finland are mainly free of charge, there is potential indirect revenue available for the businesses which implement disc golf as one of their services. It can work well as one part of the services provided by a tourism company, but also grow to be one of the main attractions leading domestic tourists to visit an area.

**Key words:** disc golf, Finland, motivation, domestic tourism, sport tourism

Otto Eskelinen & Anssi Okkonen

**Frisbeegolfin potentiaali suomalaisen kotimaanmatkailun palveluna**

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Tässä opinnäytetyössä selvitettiin frisbeegolfin potentiaalia suomalaisen kotimaanmatkailun palveluna. Frisbeegolf on tällä hetkellä Suomen nopeimmin kasvava laji. Lajin on huomattu aiheuttavan kotimaanmatkailua sen harrastajien keskuudessa. Tavoitteena oli selvittää, minkälaisia matkailijoita frisbeegolfin harrastajat ovat, mitä majoitusmuotoja matkaillessa käytetään ja miten matkailupalveluiden tuottajat voisivat käyttää tutkimuksesta saatua tietoa hyödykseen.

Tutkimuksen teoria koostuu lajin esittelemisestä, sen historiasta ja nykytilanteesta. Lisäksi tarkasteltiin käsittäetä liittyen kotimaanmatkailuun, urheilumatkailuun ja erilaisiin motivaatiomalleihin liittyen matkailuun.

Opinnäytetyö sisältää niin kvalitatiivista kuin kvantitatiivista tutkimusta. Kvalitatiivinen tutkimus koostuu haastattelusta, joka on tehty Peurungan kylpylähotellin frisbeegolf-palveluista vastaavan henkilön kanssa. Haastattelun tarkoituksena oli tehdä Peurungan kylpylähotellista case-esimerkki onnistuneesta frisbeegolfin implementaatiosta matkailupalvelukeskittymään.

Kvantitatiivinen tutkimus toteutettiin frisbeegolfin harrastajille suunnatun kyselylomakkeen avulla. Kvantitatiiviseen tutkimukseen vastasi 535 suomalaista frisbeegolfin harrastajaa. Tutkimus selvitti frisbeegolfin harrastajien matkustustapoja ja erilaisia motivaatiotekijöitä, jotka vaikuttavat lajin harrastamiseen. Tuloksista pystytettiin päättelemään, millaista potentiaalia frisbeegolfilla on antaa suomalaiseen kotimaanmatkailuun. Tulokset analysoitiin SWOT-analyysi mallia käyttämällä ja näin kokonaiskuva lajista matkailupalveluna saatiin muodostettua.

Tulosten perusteella frisbeegolf olisi toimiva palvelu suomalaisessa kotimaanmatkailussa. Huolimatta siitä, että frisbeegolfradat ovat Suomessa pääasiassa ilmaisia, on matkailualalla toimivilla yrityksillä mahdollisuus epäsuoriin tuloihin lisäämällä frisbeegolfin palvelutarjontaansa. Laji voi toimia toissijaisena tai pääasiallisena vetovoimatekijänä matkailukohteessa.

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## 1 Introduction

Disc golf is the most quickly growing sport in Finland. Municipalities are building new disc golf courses throughout Finland in order to enhance the local exercise possibilities. Also companies operating on tourism field have noticed the growing interest in the sport and have installed courses in their premises. (Discgolfpark 2014) Disc golf is an easy and cheap sport to start. For a beginner, just one disc and a local course is needed to get familiar with the sport. The courses are usually situated in parks and recreational areas maintained by the municipalities. The sport is in close relation with nature and one motivational factor driving people to play disc golf is relaxation and enjoying time outdoors. Nature and relaxation are also driving factors for certain types of tourism and the aim of this bachelor's thesis to investigate whether disc golf and domestic tourism in Finland have any correlation.

The subject of this bachelor's thesis was formed through authors' common interest in the sport. The authors have been playing the disc golf now for two years almost on a weekly basis. During these two years authors have done overnight trips around Finland in order to get familiar with different disc golf courses and used local tourism services like campsites and hostels. Like with downhill skiing and golf, the quality of experience depends on the premises where the sport is being played at. Some courses offer a full-length 18-hole experience and some are 9-holed courses, usually situated at parks. No research on the subject has been done before and it could be helpful for the municipalities and companies working on the tourism industry to recognize the effect that disc golf has on domestic tourism in Finland, the top country of disc golf at the moment.

### 1.1 The Aim of the Research and Limitations

The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to investigate the correlation between disc golf and domestic tourism in Finland. The results being positive, the information could be useful for municipalities and private sector working on the field of tourism. Constructing upscale courses on the premises of hotels, camp sites and skiing centers would not only encourage people to try the sport as one of the possible leisure activities, but also make people already having a history with the sport to travel and familiarize themselves with the course.

About two thirds of the disc golf courses in Finland are publicly maintained and free to play. The remaining one third is constructed by the private sector and is usually situated at a close proximity of some other tourism services. These courses usually have a low entrance fee, the profit going to the business and for the maintenance of the course. For example, spa and a rehabilitation center Peurunka is one of the tourism service providers that have successfully taken disc golf as one of their leisure activity services in Finland.

This bachelor's thesis investigates whether disc golf courses could be applicable for the Finnish tourism industry even in a wider scale.

The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to answer to these following research questions:

1. Do Finnish disc golfers travel in Finland in order to play the sport?
2. Do people use accommodation like hotels or campsites when traveling in Finland in order to play disc golf?
3. Is disc golf seen as an applicable leisure activity to be successfully brought together with tourism services?

This thesis is concentrating only on domestic tourism in Finland. Due to the marginality of the sport and the difficulties in data research on the possible international disc golf tourism, international trips are excluded from the research. Quantitative research is conducted by forming a questionnaire to people who consider disc golf as their hobby. This way the questionnaire is answered by the right target group and the results are more valid.

## 1.2 Structure of the thesis

In the introduction part, the background of the subject and the aim of the bachelor's thesis are clarified. Disc golf in general, the history of the sport and its current situation in Finland are investigated in order to show how relevant the subject is.

Domestic tourism in Finland and its driving factors are discussed in the theory part to understand better how dependent Finnish tourism is of domestic customers and what are the driving factors making people to travel in Finland. Theory part also discusses the theory behind travel motivation as well as clarifies the situation of sport tourism as one tourism industry segment.

Theory part is followed by a case example about the spa and rehabilitation center Peurunka. The aim of the case study is to clarify how a disc golf course can be successfully implemented to be a part of a tourism service. The background of Peurunka, customer segment and the development of disc golf on the premises are explained.

The research part consists of explaining the conduction of the research and the results. Results are analyzed from the viewpoint that all the respondents are disc golf hobbyists and their opinion possibly differs from a general domestic tourist in Finland. Conclusions are made

from the results and development points and improvement propositions are clarified. Also a SWOT analysis is constructed to form a picture of the applicability of disc golf to tourism industry services.

In the last part, the development of our own professional abilities are assessed on the basis of how well the bachelor's thesis has succeeded in reaching its goal both in the results and with being reliable. Different phases of the research are analyzed and both pros and cons are discussed. The questionnaire made for the quantitative research can be found from the annex pages.

## 2 Disc Golf

Disc golf as a sport resembles normal golf played with clubs and balls. In disc golf, the game is played by throwing a Frisbee disc aimed at a disc golf basket, which works as an equivalent to the hole in normal golf. The courses usually consist of nine or eighteen holes. Each hole is started from a teeing ground and the aim is to throw the disc into the basket with as few throws as possible. The disc has to be thrown from the location it ended up with the previous throw. Trees and terrain of the premises form the obstacles, and shape the layout and outlook of the course.

Disc golf is a suitable hobby for everyone. The sport requires no skills that would exclude children, seniors or disabled from participating. Disc golf is also affordable to be played by anyone. The courses are usually free to play and are maintained by municipalities since the parks are often situated in city parks. To start with the sport, one does only need one disc that cost fewer than 15 euros apiece.

The courses, like in normal golf, can be built on very esthetic premises. Coexistence of disc golf courses with park facilities and other recreational areas is common. No large area is needed to build a course, one with nine holes requires space of only five acres and a course of 18 holes can be established in a space of 30-40 acres.

### 2.1 History of Disc Golf

Roots of disc golf take back to 1926 in Vancouver BC, where group of school children played golf with discs on the premises of the local school. The group played on a regular basis, but the sport was forgotten when the children grew up and got interested in more regular forms of sport. Other similar incidents took place in 1930-1960's, but they all ended the same way. George Sappenfield, a golfer interested in playing golf with discs, contacted Frisbee-producing company Wham-O MFG in order to ask financial support to organize disc golf com-

petition to be organized as part of his recreation program. The company agreed to help with the project, but did not see the potential of disc golf as part of its marketing campaign of flying discs.

Although no commercial organizations showed any interest, the popularity of the sport grew steadily and tournaments and leagues organized started attracting greater number of people from all over the States. Ed Headrick, working for the Wham-O MFG Company, saw the potential of the sport. After resigning from Wham-O, he started up Disc Golf Association Company in 1976. After that, the growth of the sport has been rapid and at the end of the year 2014, there were 24 443 active members of the Professional Disc Golf Association. (PDGA 2015.)

## 2.2 Disc Golf in Finland

Disc golf was introduced to Finland in the end of the 1970's. The first permanent course was established in Helsinki, Meilahti in 1983. (Mikkola 2012) To enhance the state of the sport in Finland, the Finnish Disc Golf Association was founded in 1998. Seven years later, in 2005, Finland was given the responsibility to organize the European Championships in Tampere and Nokia. After the championships, the growth of the sport in Finland has been fastest in the world. Currently disc golf is the most expanding form of sport in Finland. (Suomen Frisbeegolfliitto 2015.)

The statistics of Finnish Disc Golf Association show that the number of registered disc golf clubs and players grows at a fast annual pace. During 2013-2014, the amount of registered disc golf clubs rose from 56 to 78 and registered players from 2117 to 3387. This equals 39% growth in registered clubs and 60% growth in registered players. The total number of hobbyists, registered and non-registered, is estimated at 100 000 people. (Suomen Frisbeegolfliitto 2015) Also the number of disc golf courses is on the rise. In 2008 it was possible to play the sport in 122 different venues, whereas currently there are 425 courses open in Finland. In 2014, 55 new courses where established. (Discgolfpark.fi 2015) Two thirds of the disc golf courses ordered from Innova Champion Europe are paid by municipalities and one third by private sector. (Rantalaaho 2015.)

Again in 2016, Finland will organize the European Championships in 2016. The championships will be held in Oulu, at the DiscGolfPark Meri-Toppila which is considered as one of the most respected disc golf courses in Europe. Over 25 countries are expected to send players to compete and the Championships will be televised internationally. (Suomen frisbeegolfliitto 2015.)

### 3 Motivation

This bachelor's thesis investigates whether Finnish disc golfers are travelling or are willing to travel for disc golf. In order to understand why traveling occurs, it is important to discuss motivation. Motivation towards something makes people to spend one's time and money in order to achieve things close to one's interests. This chapter will define motivation and provide insight on behavior of disc golf tourist through motivation theories.

#### 3.1 Motivation Definitions

The tourism industry has become an extremely competitive industry. It has become essential for tourism destinations to better understand tourist behavior and what kind forces motivate them to choose and travel to a certain destination.

Motivation can be described as a psychological force that affects the decisions and choices of the individual. Motivation is constructed by motives, which are needs and desires that prompt people to act in a certain way. Decision to travel, for example, is created by different travel oriented motives or needs, such as need for exploration or relaxation.

Motives that control individual's travelling decisions are called travel motives. Travel motives can be divided into two categories; primary and secondary travel motives.

Primary travel motives determine why to travel while secondary travel motives determine for example where and when to travel. Secondary travel motives are factors that affect the decisions of what kind of a trip will it be. To put it shortly, people have certain needs that motivate them to travel and they seek destinations that can fulfill their needs best.

(Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 68-78.)

#### 3.2 Motivation's Push & Pull Model

One way to look at travel motives is through a push & pull model. In this model the primary travel motives are considered as push factors and secondary travel motives as pull factors.

Tourism can be said to be driven by "push" and "pull" factors. They help us to understand the motivations of tourists and answer to a question, why do people travel and how they choose their destinations. Tourism service providers and destination promoters should pay attention to tourism motivation in order to keep the customers coming and ensuring continued business, because if the customers are satisfied, they will recommend it to their friends and possibly return to the destination in the future. Push & pull model is accepted by many researchers in the tourism field and functions as a foreground for many motivation theories.

(Studying Tourism's Push and Pull, 2008.)

### 3.2.1 Push Factors

Push factors are individual's internal motives that make them seek certain activities in order to satisfy their needs. They, as the name suggests, push people out of their usual environment to satisfy their needs. These factors are often linked to human's biological needs like social interaction or need for rest and relaxation, for example. Push factors can also be related to work, physical and physiological, cultural, psychological and personal, social and relationship, leisure and entertainment or religious needs. Studies have found that the most pressing push factor in travel motivation for travelers is the need of escapement, meaning the desire to escape from daily routines and stress. (Woodsie & Martin 2008, 18 -21.)

This research studies the motivations of Finnish disc golf players, therefore it is important to discuss about the motives to travel for sport. Reasons to travel for physical motive mean participating in sport while travelling, but it can also mean participating in such activities that improve health and / or are for leisure.

Push factors for sport tourism often have to do with physical health, fitness, relaxation, good psychological feeling gained from doing sport and sense of achievement. They can also be about developing skills or seeking mastery in the sport in question. Doing sports is also often a very social experience, thus motives can also have to do with social reasons. Traveling for sport also does not necessarily require physical participation, travelling in order to spectate a sport event for example, is also included. (Woodsie & Martin 2008, 18-21.)

Push factors alone do not determine the details of the travel, like travel methods and destination. For example the tourist who hopes to travel in order to play disc golf, does not necessarily care about where he/she goes, the key factor is to play disc golf.

### 3.2.2 Pull Factors

Once the decision to travel is made there are numerous motivating factors that affect the decision of destination. These are called pull factors.

Pull factors are for example, facilities and the surrounding nature around the destination, the overall image of the destination, the price level it has and the people in the destination. Tourist travelling for sport can be attracted by the destination's sports facilities for example.

It has been argued that pull factors aren't relevant when discussing tourist motivation because they can be considered just to be destination attributes. Nevertheless many studies claim that these destination attributes also stimulate and reinforce push motivations. (Woodsie & Martin 2008, 20-21.)

Pull factors can be further divided into inner-directed and outer-directed factors. Inner-directed are for example individual's money situation, personal attitudes, knowledge about the destination and previous travel experience. Outer-directed factors are for example the opinions of friends and relatives, influence of the media and overall political and economic situation. (Komppula ja Boxberg 2002, 70.)

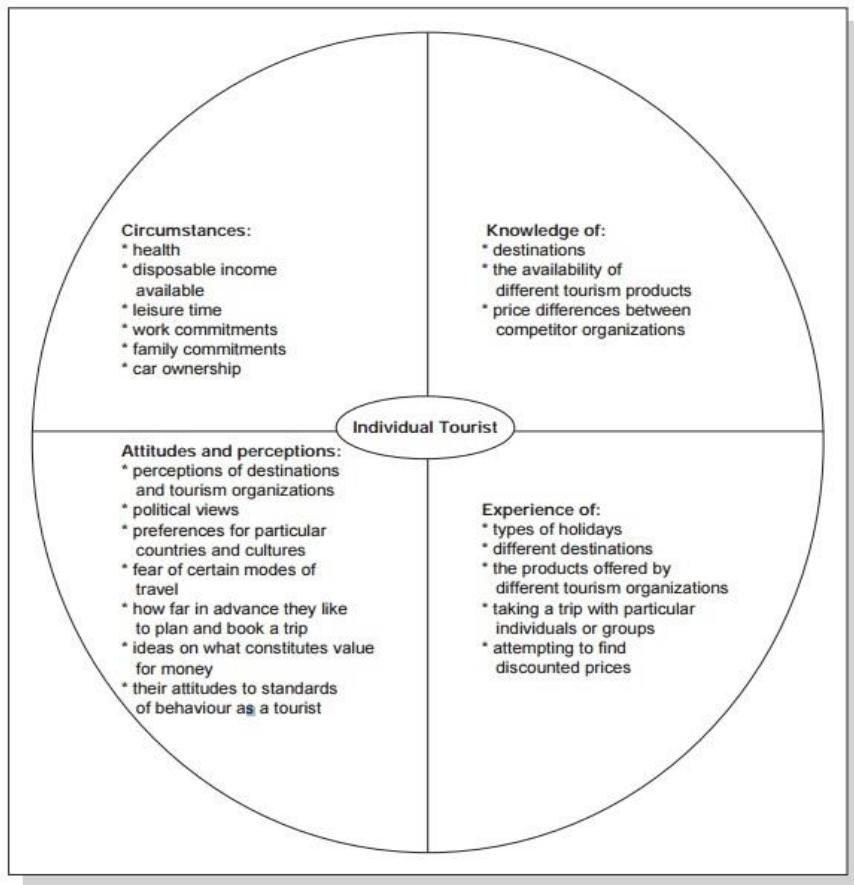


Illustration 1: Inner directed Pull Factors (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007)

Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) divided inner-directed motivational factors into two categories. Left side of the figure represents the attitudes, beliefs and personal circumstances of the individual in which companies cannot affect. The right side represents inner-directed factors which can be manipulated through marketing. (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 68-78.)

In other words, people travel because they are pushed by their own internal motives and pulled to a certain destination by external factors that the travelers think satisfies their

needs the best. Push factors are considered to be more important for initial desire to travel, while pull factors act more as support when deciding the destination.

(Studying Tourism's Push and Pull, 2008.)

In conclusion it can be said that tourists travel for various reasons. Travel decisions are based on individuals' traveling motives. There is rarely just one reason to travel, but some motives may have a more significant role for travelling than others and be more decisive for example in destination choice. Understanding the travel motivations behind tourists enables us to understand their behavior and categorize them into different groups in order to develop better focused tourism products and strategies to attract such tourists.

(Joram Ndlovu 2014; Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 68-78.)

When considering disc golf as a possible catalyst for domestic tourism, disc golfer's personal desires to play courses outside one's own municipality can be considered as pushing factors. These may include desire to escape and explore, experience new courses in new environments in order to relax. For more competitive players pushing factor can be the desire to challenge oneself in order to develop their skills in the sport. Pulling factor occurs in a case where the visited disc golf course or the services attached to it are in a level that creates an urge for the visitor to revisit the location in question. This player might have pre-existing knowledge and positive image of the disc golf destination that attract him or her towards it. One should also not forget the social aspect, which can work as either push or pull factor. Players may travel in order to play with friends maintaining relationships.

#### 4 Domestic Tourism

In this chapter domestic tourism and the characteristics of domestic tourism and tourists will be defined. Finland as a tourism destination will be analyzed focusing on domestic tourism and arguing what kind of a role does disc golf has in it.

##### 4.1 Defining Domestic Tourism

Tourism is described as movement of people to outside their home environment for leisure, business or other purposes. Individuals who participate in tourism activities are called visitors or tourists. (UNWTO 2015.)

People are considered to be tourists when they spend at least one night at the destination. If the time spent at the destination is less than a day, they are called same-day-visitors. Same day visits are usually done to destinations which are near and are easily accessible, day trip to a spa center in neighboring municipality for example. (Vuoristo & Vesterinen 2009, 13-14; Tilastokeskus 2015)

Domestic Tourism is defined as tourism activities done within one's country of residence, but still outside of their home area, travelling to a different municipality, for example.

Domestic tourism comprises majority of tourism activity practiced in the world today and this is also the case in Finland. (Tilastokeskus 2015.)

For this research it is important to understand the tourism potential of Finland. Tourism potential consists of certain factors creating a basis for tourism growth in a country. Factors like location, nature, culture and population can have a positive effect on tourism development, for example. Since this research concentrates only on domestic tourism, tourism potential factors that only apply for international tourists, like location, are excluded.

(Vuoristo, Vesterinen, 2009, 22.)

#### 4.2 Characteristics of Domestic Tourism

Domestic tourism has a few characteristics which are important to point out. In contrast to international tourists, domestic tourists know the destination better; they know its language and customs, laws, climate and its cultural context. This in turn leads to at least two important thoughts. Since domestic tourists are familiar with the destination, it can make them more demanding customers, demanding more quality products. It is worth noting that they are also familiar with the customer-protection laws. (Pierret 2014.)

The motivation to travel also tends to differ in comparison to international travelers. Out of the four main travel motivations discovery, encountering others, experiencing something unique and resting, the last two, "experiencing something unique" and "resting" are more significant among domestic tourists.

Domestic tourists want to experience new things while travelling in a friendly environment, as demanding customers, constantly seeking for new kinds of experiences to keep things fresh. It is also very typical for domestic travelers to travel for quick escape from daily routine, travelling to a destination not too far away which provides the needs for relaxation and leisure time. (Pierret 2014.)

Second characteristic is an obvious, yet perhaps most important one, destinations are nearer. This means that land transportation is often favored over aviation. Trips also tend to be more frequent than international ones. Paid accommodation is not necessarily used as much as in international tourism since domestic travelers often seek alternative, non-hotel accommodations and do repeated stays at family or friend's place at a rural area for example. (Skanavis & Sakellari 2011; Frédéric Pierret 2014.)

As the destinations are nearer and land transport is utilized more, the cost of trips is also lower as the land transportation is generally cheaper than aviation. This brings down a very notable barrier when it comes to travel as financial reasons are one of biggest obstacles whether or not people decide to travel. (Tilastokeskus 2015; Pierret 2014.)

Domestic travelers tend to seek the best price price-quality ratio or cheapest way of travel, accommodation, food services, tourism activities, shopping, for example. Keeping the costs minimal, domestic travelers also tend to stay longer in their destinations compared to international travelers. (Pierret 2014.)

Applying these characteristics to disc golf, helps us to understand what kind of movement disc golf creates and to a limited extends, forms a tourist profile of Finnish disc golf players. Considering points given above, disc golf creates movement because it is easy for the players to keep the costs minimal and the destinations are accessible. Playing the sport is essentially free as most of the courses are free to play. Transportation of choice is usually a private car and also due to the social nature of the sport, trips are often done as a group rather than individually. When an overnight stay is needed, accommodation at the lowest price is preferred. Players may seek to stay at friend or relative's place who lives close to a desired disc golf destination. However players would be willing to pay for the access to the course as well as for accommodation services, but as demanding customers, only if the price-quality standards are met.

#### 4.3 Seasonality in Finland

Companies in the tourism industry function according to the rhythm given by the seasons which determines the marketing strategies of companies and control high and low seasons in the tourism industry. Seasonality is a problem for many tourism destinations, for example for skiing centers to build better revenue, the companies need to concentrate on services provided for tourists visiting also during the summer. The best case scenario would be when a company is able to make use of all seasons. (Seasonality in the tourism industry 2008, 1.)

When analyzing Finland's seasons in terms of tourism, it is especially important to take note on temperature, luminosity, rain and snow during winter time. At the same time it is important to understand that the regional difference in these is significant. This creates very variable regions in terms of traveling potential. (Vuoristo & Vesterinen 2009, 28.)

Summer and winter are the longest seasons, thus they control the travelling seasons in the country. Warmness and luminosity are strengths during the summer time. Finnish summer is classified as unsteady and somewhat cool but it still provides necessary circumstances for active leisure time. Winter contributes a major role in domestic tourism in Finland. Snow and ice make many popular past-times possible such as ice-skating and skiing, which also have esthetic values to them. Tourism in these destinations, however, is usually hindered significantly during the time when there is no snow on the ground. Disc golf as a winter activity is not very popular, however it is possible practice it during the winter and few locations like Kerava and Peurunka, do maintain the courses even during winter time.

(Vuoristo & Vesterinen 2009, 25-32.)

Spring and fall are shorter seasons and can be classified as transition months, but they too have their own potential and strengths. Spring slowly makes people start their summer activities as the outside becomes warmer and greener. Spring opens the cottage season and especially weekend trips to cottages are common during spring time. Spring's travel potential however, is not yet fully understood in Finland. Spring also opens the disc golf season of the year. Fall is famous for its colors and autumn colors have become an attraction by themselves. In Lapland this phenomenon is especially strong. Fall is good time for all sorts of nature/outdoor activities such as sports or camping. (Vuoristo & Vesterinen 2009, 25-32.)

Disc golf is an activity that is mainly practiced during the summer, which is the liveliest travel time of the year in Finland, but as stated earlier, it is not limited to just summer months. Spring and fall both are also completely suitable for the activity and even winter to some extent. Due to the fact the disc golf can be practiced at almost any time of the year makes it an ideal service for tourism destinations to invest in. It can provide a mean to tackle seasonality problems. Disc golf can help destinations such as skiing centers, which's prime season is during winter time but which struggle to keep up the tourism flow during their off-seasons. Disc golf course can also help to diversify a summer destination's tourism products by offering additional recreational facilities.



Illustration 2: Disc golf during winter (Author's photo, 2015)

#### 4.4 Domestic Tourism Statistics in Finland

Domestic tourism in Finland has experienced remarkable growth during the last decade. Domestic tourism covers roughly 70% of tourism activity in the country. (Visit Finland) According to Tilastokeskus, Finnish statistics center in 2004 Finnish tourists made 4, 5 million domestic trips which included a chargeable accommodation such as hotels, rentable cottages and campsites, while in 2014 this number was 5,9 million. Trips to Southern-Finland gained popularity in 2014. Most popular destinations were Uusimaa, Pirkanmaa and Lapland regions. 1,1 million trips were directed towards Uusimaa region and 0,7 million trips to Lapland region. (Tilastokeskus 2015.)

Lapland attracts tourists around the year but the most popular time of travel was in March to enjoy spring skiing. In other parts of Finland, the summer months were most popular period. Altogether, 17% of trips with paid accommodation were made in July. In total 14,5 million nights were spent in paid accommodation. 63% of the nights were spent in hotels and campsite/resort villages and 35% in rentable cottages. (Tilastokeskus 2015.)

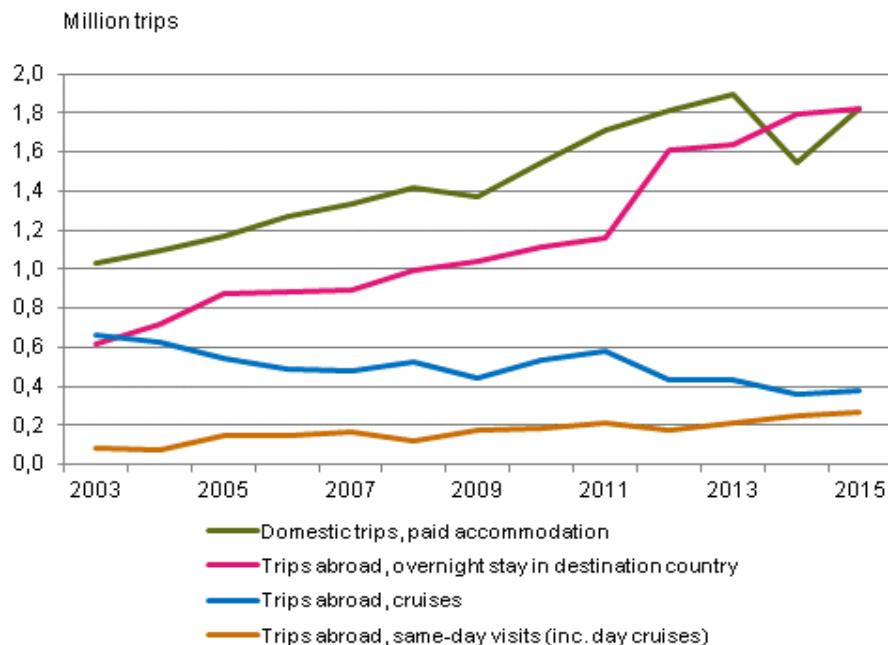


Figure 1: Finns' leisure trips in January to April 2003 to 2015 (Tilastokeskus 2015)

These statistics tell us that domestic tourism is the backbone of Finnish tourism market, therefore utilizing the tourism movement created from disc golf can be rewarding when incorporated to or near popular domestic tourism destinations such as camping sites and cottage areas. Building a disc golf course is relatively low-cost process. Assuming the land is already available and not much clearing is required, expenses for building a good full length course float around 15 000 euros. Maintaining them does not require lot of funds either when compared to golf courses for example, providing the destination a low risk option to diversify their services. (PDGA 2015.)

## 5 Sport Tourism

In this chapter sport tourism will be defined and traveling motives of sport tourists are to be discussed. The chapter also explores the diversity of sport tourism markets.

Sport tourism in Finland has gained recognition over the recent years. Studies tell that people have shown growing interest in mental and physical well-being. People want activities during their holidays and especially young travelers look for opportunities to do sports while travelling. Finnish people travel to do sports and participate in sports events domestically as well as internationally. (Yle 2010; Studio55 2015.)

## 5.1 Sport Tourism Definition

Tourism is often divided into multiple different niche markets and while such subjects as ecological tourism have been the focus of many studies, sport tourism has not received that much attention until recently. It has been recognized that people have been travelling to participate or watch sport for centuries; this was already popular among ancient Greeks. Travelling for sport started gaining popularity during 1900. Industrialization had a big role in this, when work became not so physically demanding anymore, sport became a popular way of relaxation and recreation, as people's free time increased, so did the demand for sport tourism. (Ritchie & Adair 2004, 2-3.)

However sport tourism's potential for the tourism industry was first truly realized during 80 - 90's. Governments, academics, general population and the tourism industry started showing growing interested in the field of sport tourism, this lead to a rapid construction of sport tourism destinations like sport institutes and spas. Today sport tourism's role has been understood to be increasingly significant niche tourism market. (Schwark 2007.)

Defining sport tourism is hard primarily because it holds two vast terms which are tricky to define themselves; sport and tourism. Secondly, like tourism, sport tourism can also considered to be a collection of niche markets, all which include sport as part of travelling motivation.

The term "sport" has various definitions and the term can be looked from various different perspectives. In North America, it is often narrowly defined to be an action of competitive play with formalized rules. Other interpretations of the term include the aspects of recreation and health to the definition. (Hudson 2008, 2.)

The World Tourism Organization defines tourism as movement of people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes". (World Tourism Organization 2015.)

Sport tourism thus, is an activity where people travel outside of their own livelihood to take part in a sporting activity either for competing or recreation. Also movement in order to see sporting competitions or to visit some specific sport attraction such as Olympic or a football stadium can be put under the definition of sport tourism. Some critics have questioned whether tourism activities which are purely recreational can be considered as sport and whether non-competitive physical activities are part of sport tourism.

(Ritchie & Adair, 9; Hudson 2008, 15.)

Sport tourism can be divided into different categories according to tourist's motivations and reasons to travel. This research supports the idea that sport tourism includes competitive sports and events, as well as leisure and recreational sport activities.

## 5.2 Sport Tourism Markets

Tourists take part in sport activities at a destination with varying levels of commitment, competitiveness and active/passive engagement. This creates multiple different niche markets or demand groups. The resource requirements of top performance athlete can be very different than those of passive sport tourists'. (Hinch & Higham 2004, 36-39.)

Generally speaking sport tourism can be divided into two categories; active sport tourism and passive sport tourism. Active sport tourism is when a tourist actively participates in sport activities while on holidays, competitively or non-competitively. These people seek to develop their skills in the sport or experience new and unique places related to the sport.

Passive sport tourism encompasses spectating at an event or visiting sport museums, sport facilities, halls of fame, sport theme parks or stadiums. Passive sport tourists might travel to a particular destination specifically to experience sport but it may also be that they have travelled to experience broader tourism products with the inclusion of some sport activities. In context of disc golf, the passive sport tourists are people travelling outside of their region not necessarily for the purpose of participating in disc golf activities.

(Hinch & Higham 2011, 39-40 , Ritchie & Adair, 2004.)

Disc golf related traveling leans more towards active sport tourism category, where players travel primarily in order to play and experience the sport. Day trips with friends or family to play to a nearby disc golf course are highly popular.

Nevertheless, some major tournaments in Finland have attracted a fairly large amount of spectators, showing that the sport caters also to passive sport tourism market.

(Opendiscgolf, 2015.)

Heather Gibson divides sport tourism into three main market categories; active sport tourism, event sport tourism and nostalgia sport tourism, latter two of which are forms of passive sport tourism. Gibson's theory is highly noted in sport tourism field (Brent W. Ritchie & Daryl Adair 2004, 9-13.)

The active sport tourism market consists out of people who pursue to be physically involved in competitive or non-competitive sports, thus the main motivation to travel is to do sports. This segment in tourism is said to cover 10-30% of whole travelling population in the world.

General conception is that active sport tourism caters to those in early adulthood, however further studies have recognized this being increasingly popular trend among older population as well. (Hinch & Hihgam 2011, 39-44; Ritchie & Adair 2004, 9-10.)

Event sport tourism consists of people travelling to see and participate in sport events. Event sport tourism includes hallmark events such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup which attracts immense amount of tourists, but also small scale events which often tend to be overlooked. Small scale sport events play an important role in regional tourism development.. These smaller scale events can make use of existing infrastructure and are more manageable than larger hallmark events, thus they require reduced investment of funds. (Hinch & Higham 2011, 44-48; Ritchie & Adair 2004, 11-12.)

Sport events are beneficial to regions as they can create valuable exposure. Events not only attract fans of the sport but they also have potential to attract media and sponsors. Media coverage leads into greater awareness and overall positive image of the destination. Event sport tourists are different from other tourists in a sense that they have very specific schedule regarding flight times and accommodation since they have to be at the destination at specific time. (Ritchie & Adair 2004, 135-139; Hudson. 2003, 8-12.)

An excellent example of how a city can create exposure through a disc golf event is a case of Nokia, Finland. Disc Golf European Open 2015 was organized in Nokia in July. Event had thousands of spectators visiting the tournament area each day and furthermore it was estimated that the day of the finals gathered 7000 - 8000 spectators.  
(Opendiscgolf 2015.)

Nostalgia sport tourism is a bit different as it includes tourists who don't travel in order to participate in sport activities as such. It rather consists of visits to sport related areas such as sport museums, for example, Olympic stadium in Helsinki or Ice-hockey museum in Tampere. Concepts of heritage, pilgrimage and even religion can be associated with this category. Disc golf in Finland has yet to reach the status where nostalgia sport tourism would be relevant, however if the popularity of the sport continues to grow, this type of tourism could become relevant in the future. (Ritchie & Adair 2004, 12-13.)

Gammon and Robinson made a distinction of two types of "sport tourists" based on the level of participation; sport tourism and tourism sport. In Sport tourism the sport itself is the primary motivation for travel while in tourism sport it is a secondary or incidental part of travel motivation. Sports may simply be an additional part of their tourism activities while at a destination. It was further suggested that sport tourism can be defined either "hard" or "soft". Hard sport tourist's main motivation to travel is sport, in which they can have either active or

passive involvement. Hard sport tourists are more associated with competitive sports. The ‘soft’ sport tourist is someone who is primarily involved in recreation or leisure more so than the competitive activity. (Hinch & Highman 2004; 2011 35-49.)

Disc golf has a diverse player base where people participate in the sport with various levels of dedication. This group consists of people belonging to both “sport tourism” and “tourism sport” as well as people who fit into both hard and soft categorizations.

In context of disc golf, tourists belonging to tourism sport are people travelling outside of their region not necessarily for the purpose of participating in disc golf activities.

The travel motivation for players belonging to sport tourism group, is primarily disc golf itself, participating either actively or passively.

### 5.3 Sport Tourism & Social Media

Tourism industry has changed greatly with the rapid rise of social media platforms. Digital media and social media in particular has become a significant factor in sport tourism and this is also the most relevant trend regarding this thesis.

Social media is a valuable and easy way to seek information. Internet era has enabled sport communities to get together and share information on destinations and events online. Anyone can ask destination recommendations or ask general advice when and where to travel to do certain sports. Additionally, social media gives spectators the possibility to be part of the event by commenting what is going on and prompt discussion.

Social media also serves as an important marketing, as well as a customer service tool for travel-based companies, event organizers and sponsors. It allows them to promote their products quickly and efficiently, reach the online community and motivate them to travel. (Hudson, 2003, 60-61; Tourism review 2011.)

Disc golf has a strong presence on the internet and in social media, where it is easy to seek various pieces of information about the sport. Youtube is saturated with disc golf related content from instructional videos to tournament videos and course reviews. People can rate courses and locations, giving recommendations of best disc golf destinations. Finland’s official disc golf association’s Facebook page has almost 2500 active followers. Various websites provide information on courses and events as well as message boards where players can discuss various disc golf related topics. These message boards allow players not only to find courses they are interested in, they also let you get in touch with the people who play them, or even who make them.

## 6 Peurunka

Peurunka, situated in Laukaa 30 kilometers from Jyväskylä, is a spa and a rehabilitation center. It was founded in 1974 one of the initiators being President Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, with an idea to provide a well-being center especially for the needs of Finnish war veterans. The spa area was opened in 1975 and Peurunka was soon noticed also by other customer segments. In 1984, Peurunka expanded its operation to serve leisure customers along with the rehabilitation customers with spa and hotel services.

Nowadays Peurunka is one of the largest privately owned hotel complexes in Finland. It is a significant tourism service provider also for international customers. In 2013, 140 000 hotel nights were purchased and customers consisted of 31 different nationalities. The company describes itself as a tourism destination with diverse services to provide an experience for a large scale of visitors. In the premises there are conference rooms, multiple saunas, companies working in the line of beauty and health and golf- and disc golf courses. Peurunka is a well-being and tourism service provider with readiness to serve couples and families, companies, athletes and rehabilitation customers. (Ruuhinien 2015.)

### 6.1 Peurunka Lake View- Disc golf Course

Disc golf European Open was held in Finland, Epilä in 2007. Hilkka Lipponen, exercise services correspondent in Peurunka, saw the televised event and decided to take disc golf as part of the exercising possibilities provided in the premises. To make the course as user friendly and proficient, Jussi Meresmaa was hired to design the six hole-course. He is well known in the Finnish disc golf scene. (Suomen Frisbeegolfliitto, 2014) In 2014 Meresmaa was honored with a nomination of the sport culture achievement award due to his actions that caused growth in the popularity of disc golf in Finland. (Frisbeegolfradat 2014.)

Visa Ruuhinen was hired in Peurunka to educate the personnel on the sport. Disc golf was taken to be part of physical education on the premises and it got a wide range of customers from rehabilitation and company visitors. In 2009, the local disc golf team, Puska Puttaajat was founded and the plans to lengthen the course were started. Year later in 2010, the course was built to be full-length 18 holes and the first official tournament was held at 2011. (Ruuhinien 2015.)

## 6.2 Disc Golf as a Tourism Service in Peurunka

The turnover of Peurunka is estimated at 20 million euros annually, and the business is growing every year. Disc golf is seen as a one form of the leisure activities in the premises. Customers visiting Peurunka in order to play disc golf are expected to be staying in the Peurunka hotel for the time they engage in the sport.

The annual profit from disc golf-related business is estimated at 150 000 euros. One third from the total amount comes from the course fees, annual subscriptions and the purchases made in the Peurunka Disc Golf Pro Shop. Rest of the total comes from the additional purchases made by disc golfers visiting Peurunka. Additional purchases include spa tickets, hotel nights, restaurant visits and other chargeable recreational activities bought from Peurunka.

As Peurunka is not profiled just as a disc golf or sport destination but as a tourism and rehabilitation center as a whole, disc golf business on the premises grows with the total financial growth of Peurunka and not vice versa. The promotion and development of the sport is annually financed by the profits from a previous fiscal year and disc golf-related business yields every year its marginal share to the total revenue of the company. Since integrating the sport to the operation of Peurunka in 2008, the annual revenue has shown growth.

Although the disc golf competitions started after the construction of the full length course, the sport has interested the customers and the personnel from the beginning. Course ticket and subscription sales are on the growth and the local disc golf club PuskaPuttaajat has now over 250 signed members of whom some play on the top national level. Disc golf is not just another recreational activity offered on the premises; the sport is one of the driving factors making people visit Peurunka.

It is usual for the visitors of Peurunka to try disc golf for the first time on their premises. During summer, organized training of disc golf is kept almost daily for groups, and this is a good way for a beginner to get familiar with the sport. “Frisbee-spirit” lives strong in Peurunka. It means that whether one takes the sport seriously or not, it should always be played so that it increases social and physical well-being and creates joy. Role of the sport is to dismantle stress through exercise and being in the nature, create experiences of success and to be a way of spending one’s free time in good company.

Peurunka rehabilitation center stands as an case example in this research to show the possibility of having disc golf as a functioning tourism service as a part of a larger business model. Due to professional employees and constant development of the product, it is one of the most well-known training centers and competition arenas for the sport in Finland. (Ruuhinens 2015)



Illustration 3: Peurunka Lakeview Disc Golf Course (Facebook 2014, Peurunka Lakeview - frisbeegolfrata.)

## 7 Research Methods and Conduction

The aim of scientific research is to find out the function principals and characteristics of the target of the study. The goal of a research can be to find out whether a hypothesis based on theoretical research is valid, but can also study the reasons for some phenomenon. (Heikkilä 2005, 13.)

Quantitative research was chosen to be the main method of research for this bachelor's thesis. For the research to be reliable, the studied sample has to be correctly selected. The respondents of the study have to be selected randomly and not by choosing in order to make the results not dependent on the respondent-concerning decisions made when conducting the research.

Every respondent has to belong to the selected sample group. In this research, the sample group is Finnish disc golf players, and all the respondents of the research that claim not playing the sport, are excluded from the research. Also, the size of the sample is important factor

making the research reliable. The aim is to get the same results from the sample group as it would get from the whole group being studied. The size of the sample group adds to the reliability of the whole study.

In order to find out whether disc golf as sport makes people to travel domestically, a quantitative research was conducted, Finnish disc golfers as the studied group. The questionnaire was shared in Facebook by a popular Finnish disc golf site, Frisbeegolfradat, with over 5000 likes on their Facebook pages. The aim of this questionnaire was to find out how the Finnish disc golfers see the sport and its linkage with domestic tourism in Finland. Through the questions, the driving factors to play the sport, disc golf-related travel history and the opinion on the marketability of disc golf in tourism industry was investigated.

## 7.1 Research Methods

In the thesis, both the qualitative and quantitative research methods are used. Qualitative research was carried out in form of interview with Visa Ruuhinen, Head of Education for the Disc Golf Training center in Peurunka Spa and Rehabilitation center. Quantitative research was conducted in a form of questionnaire for Finnish disc golfers.

### 7.1.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research method can be applied to researches that are studying behavior patterns of certain human group. It can be based on questionnaires with pre-assigned answer possibilities designated for a large number of people. Also, studies conducted to produce statistical information on issues not studied before can successfully be done with quantitative research. Subjects of research are usually portrayed with numerical data and the results can be expressed by statistical charts. Quantitative research does not give the researcher the reason why something occurs, but instead it gives the statistical information from which one can continue on making analyses, qualitative research and conclusions. (Heikkilä 2005, 16.)

In order to study the possible marketability of disc golf in Tourism Industry, a quantitative research was made by conducting a questionnaire for Finnish disc golfers. The multiple-choice questions' aim was to find out the behavioral patterns concerning disc golf-related travel in Finland. The survey also gathered demographic information in order to form a profile of a stereotypical Finnish disc golfer and his or hers disc golf travel habits.

### 7.1.2 Qualitative research

The aim of qualitative research is to help understand the subject of the research better. Whereas quantitative research is intended to study *what happens*, the qualitative research studies *why something happens*. Usually in this kind of research, the subjects of research are carefully picked, and instead of statistical generalization, the few samples are carefully analyzed and presented. The results gathered help to understand why certain behavioral patterns occur and to find out possible development points on the researched subject. (Heikkilä 2005, 16.)

In this thesis, qualitative research was conducted by interviewing Visa Ruuhinen, responsible for organizing disc golf services for Peurunka Spa and Rehabilitation Center in Laukaa. The interview took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April at the premises of Peurunka. The aim of the interview was to find out how disc golf is taken in as one the tourism services by the company. The history of developing disc golf product in Peurunka and the effect it has had on the company was investigated.

### 7.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Surveys and questionnaires with multiple-choice questions are the most effective way to reach a larger target group as usually is the aim in quantitative research. The respondent group has to belong in a larger demographic group of what the research is studying in order to make the research as valid and reliable. In order to accomplish that, the studied group needs to be carefully defined. Also, the questionnaire needs to be delivered through the right channels so that people needed to do the research on, are reached. (Heikkilä 2005, 16,33-35.)

The questionnaire was shared in May 2015 on the Facebook pages of Frisbeegolfradat.fi with over 5000 followers. Frisbeegolfradat is one of the most popular Finnish pages presenting disc golf-related news and disc golf course descriptions. The questionnaire form was open to be responded for 9 days and in that time the questionnaire was answered by 535 people. Apart from one response, all the respondents defined themselves as disc golfers.

### 7.3 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are factors ensuring the research to be a successful one. Validity measures whether the research is studying the subject that was meant to be studied. Reliability is defined to measure how specific the results are and whether the same results could be achieved if the study was redone after a certain time period. (Heikkilä 2005, 29-30.)

If a systematic error is found from the research, the research can be considered as invalid. Systematic error can be a mistake done when creating the questionnaire. All the questions need to be targeted to investigate the research questions formed before creating the questionnaire. If the questionnaire fails to do so, the research can't be called valid. This can be prevented by conducting a questionnaire with simple multiple-answer questions in order to help the respondents to answer it with no difficulties. Other factors affecting to the validity are defining the right target group for the questionnaire and getting an enough large sample to represent the whole target group. (Heikkilä, 2005, 29.)

The research can be considered reliable, if the same results could be obtained again with another research studying the same subject. Results cannot be generalized. For example, this research studies the effect of disc golf in domestic tourism only in Finland and can't be applied to also describe the same phenomenon in Sweden. Also a factor adding to the reliability is that the sample represents the whole target group. For example, if the questionnaire had been answered just by people living in the Helsinki area, it wouldn't have made the research reliable to describe the whole target group spread around the country. (Heikkilä, 2005, 30.)

Our questionnaire was answered by 535 people from 119 municipalities in Finland. Results achieved followed certain patterns and we obtained a clear opinion of the Finnish disc golfers' attitudes towards the impact of disc golf to domestic tourism in Finland. No systematic errors took place in the questionnaire and the results clearly show what motivates Finnish disc golfers to travel and play the sport in Finland. Due to the high response rate of the sample and the clear patterns in opinions, the study can be considered as reliable and valid.

## 8 Results

The aim of this research, the quantitative and the qualitative studies was to find out whether disc golf has positive effect on domestic tourism among the Finnish who engage themselves with the sport regularly. Quantitative research method, a questionnaire for Finnish disc golfers, intended to find out the different motivations to play and to travel due to the sport. The qualitative research, interview with Visa Ruuhinen, helped to explain the possible tourism implications of the sport through the example of the spa and rehabilitation center Peurunka, which has successfully introduced disc golf to its tourism and rehabilitation services. In the next paragraphs the results are explained and visualized through graphs.

## 8.1 Demographics of the Respondents

The first five questions of the questionnaire were aimed to investigate the basic information of the respondents. In order to see whether the research is reliable, it was needed to know the gender, age, home municipality, years having been engaged with the sport and whether the respondent belongs to a registered disc golf club.

94, 9% of the respondents were male. Only 27 of the 535 respondents were women. Due to the small participation of female disc golfers, no differentiation is made between the opinions and travel patterns of male and female respondents.

The age of the respondents varied more. According to the results, disc golf is a hobby that can be played no matter the age. Age groups with fewest respondents were the under-aged 10-17 year-olds and people over 40 years old, but both of them accorded for over 10% of the respondents. 74, 8 % of the respondents belonged to the age groups between 18 to 40 years. Certain questions of the questionnaire will be analyzed later in the study by investigating whether the age of the respondents has an effect on their answer patterns.

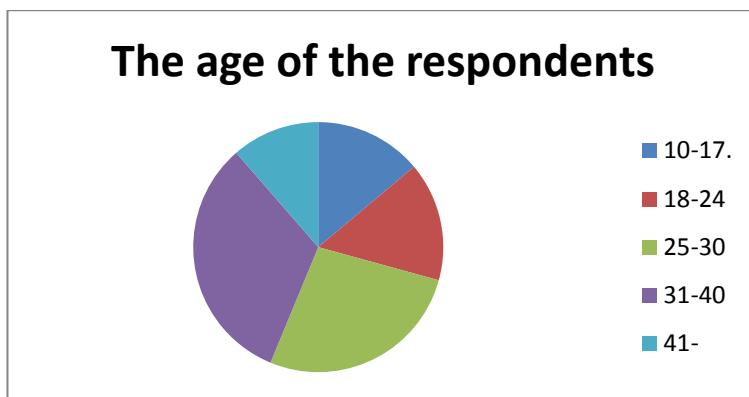


Figure 2: The age of the respondents

The 535 respondents came from 119 different municipalities. Like stated earlier in the study, it is beneficial to have respondents from all around the country in order to make the study more reliable. The most answers came from Helsinki with 45 answers, followed by Turku with 34 answers and Tampere with 29 answers. The amount of respondents from one municipality is highly related to the size of the municipality. In general, the smaller the municipality is, the fewer the respondents are. In the study no differentiation is made between different municipalities since the samples from the smallest appearing municipalities are so low that they do not represent the whole municipality in question. An important notion is that according to the questionnaire, disc golf is played all over Finland. Also, since people are concentrated on

southern parts, and of close proximity to the archipelago, of the country, the disc golf course distribution is following the same patterns. Lapland is less populated, so it is only natural that it also hosts fewer possibilities to engage oneself with disc golf.

The next question investigated how many years had the respondents engaged themselves with the sport. Only one of the respondents stated not playing the sport at all. 41, 1% of the respondents have been playing for 2-3 years, 40% four or more years and 18, 8% one year or less. In other words, over 80% of the respondents have at least a history of 2 years with engaging with disc golf. It adds to the reliability of this research that the respondents in general are not new to the sport and its possibilities in Finland.

Last of the demography-related questions sought out whether the respondents belong to a registered disc golf club. According to the responses, half of the people playing the sport also belong to a registered disc golf club, with 51, 8% of the answers stating yes. Since there are over 250 respondents for both the options to be answered, differentiation will be made in the analysis of the data collected by the survey.

To sum up the demographic information, a general respondent of this research is a male, aged between 18-40 years, with 2 or more years of background from disc golf. For companies functioning on the tourism field, the key information here is that a possible customer buying a disc golf-related tourism service is an adult with experience and knowledge of the sport. People not new to the sport might be more demanding on how challenging or otherwise interesting the courses should be, for example.

## 8.2 Motivations of the Respondents to Play Disc Golf

In order to find out whether disc golf might have features applicable for tourism, the study needed to clarify what makes Finnish disc golfers to play the sport. This was done by asking the respondents to value different motivations to play the sport from 0 to 5, zero meaning no value and five meaning high value. The motivations in this research are:

- keeping up one's personal fitness
- improving oneself in the sport
- nature and outdoors
- relaxation
- getting familiar with new disc golf courses

From these motivations, the outdoor and nature, relaxation and getting familiar with new disc golf courses are the ones most closely related to motivation patterns to engage oneself in traveling and tourism. Getting familiar with new disc golf courses is not directly

related to travelling and tourism, but in case one wants to experience different locations to play disc golf, travelling is necessary. Outdoor activities, nature and relaxation are directly the same motivational patterns that make people engage themselves in tourism. The aim of this part of the questionnaire was to find out whether the Finnish disc golfers play the sport only to improve their fitness and skills or are there other driving factors, intersecting with driving factors closely-knit with driving factors in tourism.

According to the questionnaire, the least important motivational factor was clearly to keep up one's personal fitness, which averaged 2,9 on the scale. Disc golf is not considered as a very physical means of exercise, therefore this result was expected when creating a questionnaire. The other motivational factors reached higher averages. Improving oneself in the sport averaged 4,1 and relaxation 4, those being the highest motivational factors for the respondents to engage themselves with disc golf. Nature and outdoors averaged 3,9 and getting familiar with new disc golf courses averaged 3,6 and are both considered as strong motivational factors also in this research.

Typical Finnish disc golf player is playing disc golf to improve his or her skills in the sport and as a way to relax. Nature and being outdoors, also sources of relaxation and well-being, are considered as an important driving factor among the respondents. The urge to try different courses also acts as an important driving factor to play the sport for Finnish disc golfers. That is to say that disc golf is seen in Finland more as a way to spend leisure time than just as a way to exercise and keep up good fitness.

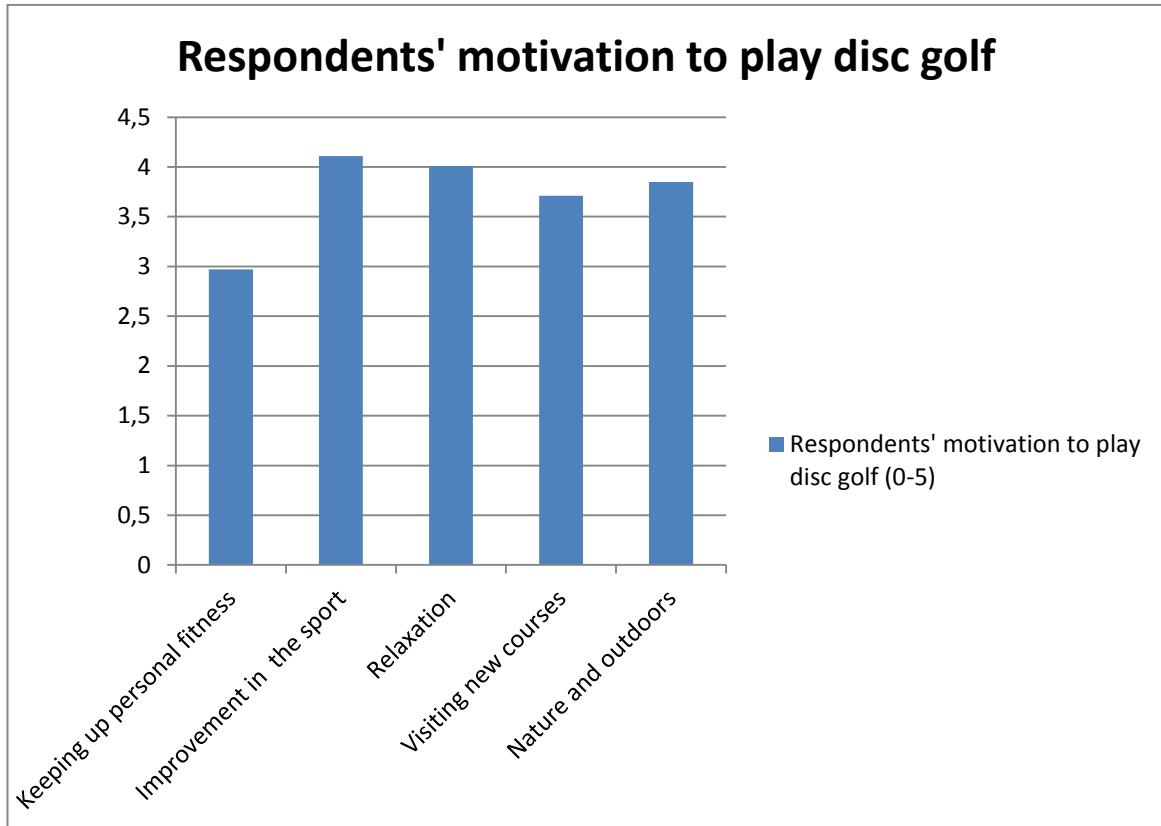


Figure 3: Respondents' motivation to play disc golf

### 8.3 Disc Golf and Domestic Tourism

The following part of the questionnaire investigated the respondents' history of domestic travel due to disc golf, preferred accommodation and the willingness to travel domestically in order to play the sport. Also the importance of the outlook of the course and how satisfying the possibilities are to play the sport in the home municipalities of the respondents were researched.

From the 535 respondents, 62% stated having done overnight trips in Finland in order to play disc golf. 30% have done more than just one trip and 16% are doing overnight trips repeatedly. 38% of the respondents had no history of domestic travel due to disc golf. The results show that people with only 1 year or less of history of playing the sport have travelled considerably less than people who have 2 or more years of history of playing disc golf. Also there is a difference between respondents with 2-3 year of disc golf history and with people who have played 4 or more years, the most active domestic travelers being the respondents who have played the sport for the longest time. In other words, the more time the respondents have spent time playing disc golf, the more they tend to travel in Finland to play disc golf.

Other questions of this section of the questionnaire were put to a form where a statement is valued from 0-5, 0 meaning strong disagreement and 5 meaning strong agreement.

The questions investigated the willingness to do an overnight trip to play disc golf, the level of contentment with one's local possibilities to engage in with the sport and whether the aestheticism of a disc golf course has any importance to the respondents.

From all the respondents, 60, 9% valued their willingness to do an overnight trip in order to play disc golf 5 out of 5. That is followed by 30, 4% of the respondents who valued their willingness to be as high value as 4. In other words, 91, 4% of all the respondents think positive or very positive about disc golf-related overnight trips in Finland. From the results it can also be seen that the interest in overnight trips grows with the amount of years having played the sport. People who have engaged themselves with the sport only for a year, are not so positive on doing overnight trips as people who have longer history with the sport. This can be explained by the growing urge to try other courses as the local ones have been played numerous times.

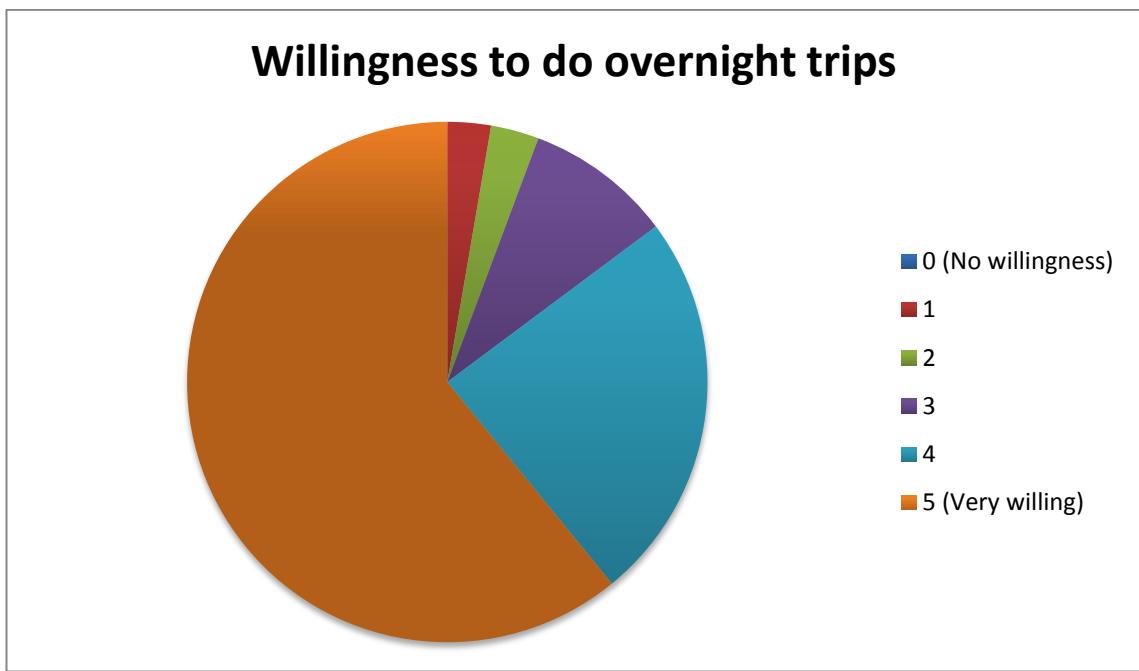


Figure 4: Respondents' willingness to do overnight trips to play disc golf

Next, the contentment level towards the local possibilities to play disc golf was measured. This was done in order to find out whether people travel other municipalities to play the sport because the local conditions did not meet the needs of the players. The case having been like this, travel caused by disc golf would not be a travel motivated by will to see other venues but a raw need to play the sport where it is possible.

It is not the case according to the results. Of all the respondents, 54, 2% valued their contentment level 4 or 5 out of 5. The next 23% stated their contentment level being 3 out of five, which still can be considered as a positive opinion. The remaining 22, 8% ranked the value from 0 to 2 out of five, presenting their lack of contentment on the local possibilities. That is to say that a greater deal of the respondents are pleased with local courses and the will to travel comes elsewhere.

When conducting this questionnaire, it was presumed that disc golfers give high value to the outlook and aesthetics of a disc golf course. The courses are usually situated in recreational parks, where people can also relax with other forms of sport and leisure. From this, an idea was derived that disc golfers also visit these areas, not just to play and develop themselves in the sport, but also enjoy the other aspects an outdoor sport can offer.

In order to back up the theory, the questionnaire investigated whether the outlook and aesthetics of the courses have any value amongst the respondents. The result averaged a value of 3,7 out of five, which shows the respondents to consider the outlook as an important factor. The most given value was 4 out of 5 with 40,4% of the respondents. This is important data to the research since outlooks and aesthetics play also important role in tourism. People are interested to see and visit places, natural and human-made, due to their appearance.

#### 8.4 The Accommodation Types

For the research it is also important to find out what types of accommodation have the respondents used while travelling domestically to play the sport. Question was formed in a way that the respondents had four options to choose from; no experience with accommodation, hotel, hostel and camping site. Since the aim here was to find out about the usage of paid accommodation, accommodation types like friend and family visits were excluded from this question.

47,7% have never used any type of paid accommodation when travelling due to disc golf. From this figure we can deduct the amount of respondents who have never travelled in order to play the sport. That figure being 38% of the respondents, the amount of people travelling but not using the paid accommodation, is 9,7%. In other words, of all the Finnish disc golfers travelling domestically, only rough 10% has not been using any form of paid accommodation.

The most popular form of accommodation amongst the disc golfers is hotel with 39,9% of the responses. Hostel and camping site were both answered by almost 20% of the respondents. Age of the respondents made some variations on the response pattern of this question. People

aged between 10-17 years had less experience of a paid accommodation than people aged over 30, for example. That is only natural when considering that the means to travel, like money and transportation, are harder to achieve when one is under-aged. The important notion from this question is that all the accommodation types are used and that only a small minority of travelling respondents have used other types of accommodations over paid one.

### 8.5 Travel Motivations

In the next section of the questionnaire, the values of different motives to travel due disc golf were investigated. The different motives are good or interesting course, other pulling factors in the area like relatives and other recreational activities and sights in the area. Also the impact of official tournaments is analyzed. In this part of the questionnaire also, the respondent has to value the motive on a scale of 0-5, where 0 means the motive in question not being any important. Number 5 means that the respondent values the motive very highly.

The motivational impact of a good disc golf course is highly valued among the respondents. The average value given reached 4.4 out of 5. 90% of all the respondents valued it 4 or 5. People considering the value of a good course less important, were almost non-existent. This is valuable information for the research since a good course is disc golf-related motive to travel domestically. It suggests that people are interested in travelling domestically disc golf as their primary motivation.

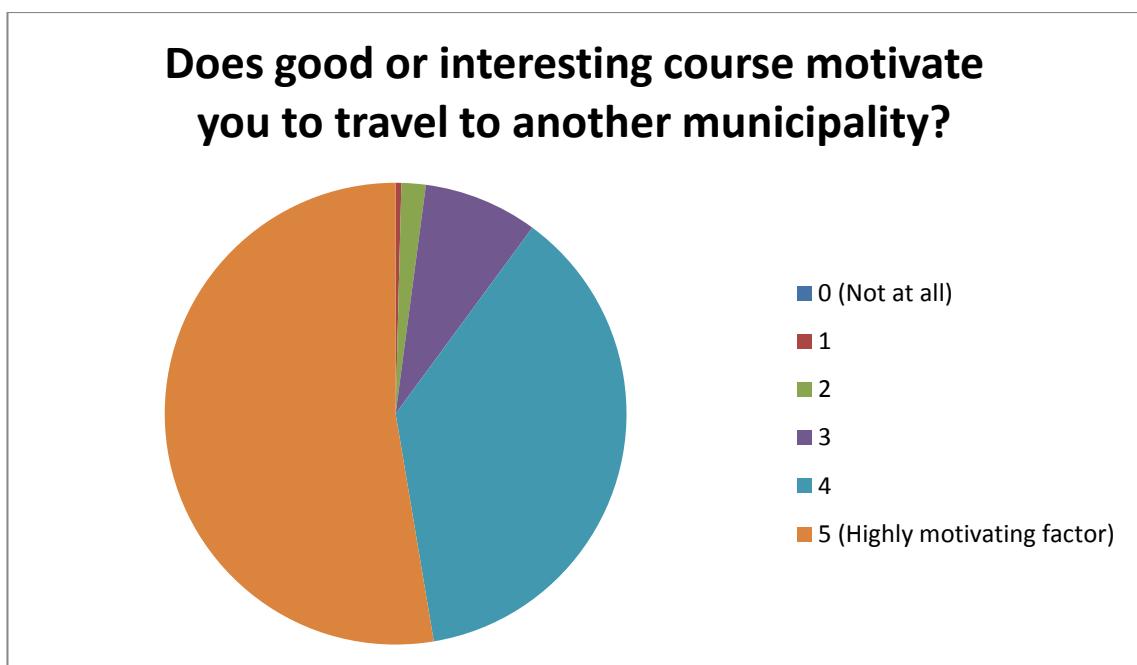


Figure 5: Good/Interesting course as a motivational factor for disc golf-related travel

Other motivational factors like cottage, relatives and friends were also valued reasonably high as a motivational factor to visit other municipalities and play disc golf. The average reached 3, 8 and 70, 4% respondents ranked it 4 or 5 out of five. Other recreational activities and local sights were not valued as high, their value averaged only 2, 7 on the scale. According to the results, average disc golfer would like to visit new courses while on a vacation or seeing distant relatives or friends. Combining other recreational activities and sight-seeing with disc golf-related travel is not highly supported.

The value of taking part or following a competition was investigated with the next two questions. This question has great value to the research since competition, an organized event is a way to attract larger amount of people to the same area at a certain time. People taking part in competition usually need to pay the entry fee, but also spectators use money during events. Competitions are also efficient way to promote one's own business. For example, the competitions organized by spa and rehabilitation center Peurunka usually attract a lot of attention in disc golf-related web pages in the internet. This can indirectly lead to increase in sales of the company.

Taking part in a competition is considered higher value-motive to do disc golf-related travel than just travelling to follow a competition. Taking part in a competition was valued 2, 9 on the scale, whereas following a tournament was valued 2, 6. The figures here are lower due to the differences between Finnish disc golfers. People belonging to a registered club are more interested to travel to take part and follow a tournament. Also, the interest towards competitions rises with the amount of year being familiar with the sport. In other words, people playing in a registered disc golf club and with longer history are more prone to travel to organized competitions. This notion is logical since one's abilities grow better with time and that increases the motivation to test these abilities by competing in a tournament, for example.

## 8.6 Disc Golf as a Domestic Tourism Service

This part of the questionnaire is comprised of three statements to be valued on the same 0 to 5 scale. Their aim was to investigate whether the respondents see disc golf as a functioning tourism service, whether the sport has any spiritual or mental value in addition to the physical aspect, and the willingness to pay for playing on a course situated on the premises of some tourism-related company.

Firstly, the attitudes towards the applicability of disc golf as a functioning service in tourism-related companies was researched. 83, 1% of the respondents valued the statement 4 or 5, the average reaching to 4, 1. The opinions did not vary notably along with the

demographics of the respondents, meaning that the statement was highly valued amongst all the respondents.

The spiritual and mental value of disc golf was investigated next. Spiritual and mental value in this case was defined as compilation of aesthetics, nature and relaxation. Like the previous statement, also this was highly valued. 83, 7% of the respondents valued it 4 or 5. The average reached 4, 2. This value is highly positive regarding the objective of this research. Majority of people considering the mental and spiritual value of the sport high, it is safe to suggest that disc golf has at least some potential of being a functioning tourism service.

The last statement investigated whether the respondents would be ready to pay a 5-10 euro entry fee to play on a course situated on the premises of some tourism destination. This time there was more variations on the answers. The average reached only 2, 9 on the scale and 34, 3% of the respondents valued their willingness to pay entry fee between 0-2 out of 5. Even though the negativity towards this statement might be caused by the high price presented in the statement, the result still shows that majority of the people are reluctant to pay for playing the sport. Currently the majority of the courses in Finland are free to play and it understandably decreases the willingness to pay for playing the sport.

## 8.7 Free Comments and Estimates of Visited Disc Golf Courses

Last part of the questionnaire gave the respondents a chance to leave free comments and to estimate the number of visited disc golf courses. With freely formed comments, the authors could learn whether the respondents consider the questionnaire to be a functional one, but also obtain some additional ideas from the disc golfers. The estimates of the number of visited disc golf courses are helpful to investigate how eager people are to play other courses.

### 8.7.1 Free Comments

The free comments received were mainly positive. According to one respondent, starting disc golf has made him to appreciate nature more. Disc golf was mentioned to have stress-relieving effect due to the level of concentration needed when playing the sport. In addition, the social aspect of the sport was highlighted by three respondents. According to these three comments, the possibility to socialize with friends when playing disc golf is one of the greatest assets of the sport.

22 respondents stated travelling domestically in order to engage with the sport. 3 people had travelled abroad, one as far the United States, to try new courses. Although this research studies only domestic impact of the sport, the urge to travel abroad also indicates the

positive effect disc golf has on travel patterns. One respondent even stated that a quality of a local course was a factor when choosing a municipality to study in.

Multiple comments were also received concerning the question about the willingness to pay 5-10 euros for playing a course situated on the premises of tourism-related company. The price was said to be too expensive, good priced estimated to be around 2-4 euros. One respondent suggested annual subscriptions or day fees for the chargeable courses. Also some expectations were received concerning a course played against 5-10 euro fee. It should be full-length or at least 9 holes. The green should be cut regularly and the quality of the teeing pads and baskets should be high.

One respondent highlighted that when applying disc golf to a tourism service, the staff of the company or organization should possess know-how and interest in the sport. This is a remarkable notion since that is one factor which helped Peurunka to make disc golf a lucrative service on their premises.

#### 8.7.2 Estimates of the Visited Courses

Of all the respondents, 121 people estimated the number of courses they had visited. By counting the average from the numbers, average respondent on this question had visited 37 disc golf courses. That is a very high number considering two particulars; the total amount of courses, and the regional distribution of disc golf courses in Finland.

Currently there are 425 registered disc golf courses in Finland. It can be calculated that average respondent of this question has visited 8, 7% of all the domestic disc golf courses. Helsinki, the largest municipality in Finland, only hosts seven unrestricted courses. That adds only up to 1,6% of all the courses in Finland. Adding the number of courses on the areas of the nearest municipalities that do not require over-night trips to visit, Espoo and Vantaa, the number rises only to 2, 8%. These figures clearly show that the average respondent has had to travel outside his own municipality to gather up experience on 37 different courses.

### 9 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a technique to map out the internal and external factors affecting on an outcome of a planned and predefined project. The name is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Strengths and Weaknesses consist of internal factors of the project. Internal factors are capabilities and resources already available for use in the project. Opportunities and Threats are external factors that have either positive or negative effects on the outcome of the project. SWOT analysis is generally used to predict the

applicability of a new project, business plan or an organizational modifications for example, but is also used for personal development  
(Goodrich 2015.)

Using the data received by the questionnaire, factual information of disc golf and qualitative research done in a form of interview with Visa Ruuhinen, SWOT analysis can be formed to assess the applicability of disc golf for being a functional tourism service. Strengths and weaknesses consist of the positive and negative features the sport and its features have. Possibilities and threats form out of factors linked more to the companies providing tourism services.

### 9.1 Strengths

According to the results of the questionnaire, disc golf increases the urge to travel domestically. Around 60% of the respondents have already travelled in order to play the sport and around 90% of the respondents ranked their willingness to travel as very high. Like with tourism in general, relaxation and nature are considered very effective motivators to engage oneself with the sport. Disc golf is a sport that can be played by almost anyone from young to high age.

Like with other types of sports, disc golf tournaments and competitions can gather a greater amount of people on the same premises at the same time, also from a longer distance. Larger scale national tournaments usually require the people from other municipalities to seek accommodation since the competitions usually go on for more than just one day. In addition, the sport is very popular at the moment. Courses, registered clubs and players show rapid annual growth. The sport and related events get media coverage on national newspapers and television. It is a fact that disc golf is one of the most popular forms of past time and leisure at the moment in Finland, which makes it also a potential tourism service application.

### 9.2 Weaknesses

When assessing the weaknesses disc golf has as an applicable tourism service, it is essential to remember that some the weaknesses are also features of the sport making it popular in Finland. Therefore, some of the weaknesses listed cannot be altered to make the situation more favorable for a company trying to make disc golf function as part of their services.

Disc golf is comparatively cheap hobby. One only needs to buy discs to get started with the sport. The price of a single disc in Finland varies approximately between 10-15 euros.

Majority of the courses are free to play. From this it can be suggested that not much revenue can be created just by having a normal course on the premises of a company or organization. Customers are usually having Frisbee discs of their own. What is more, they are reluctant to pay for visiting a course. In order to attract customers, the course fees need to be kept relatively low or the course needs to be in excellent condition and provide something unique to the visitors. Therefore, the estimated revenue from having disc golf as one form of service mostly needs to come from indirect sources like accommodation, restaurant or other services provided on the same premises. When comparing with the possible revenue of a skiing center during winter season with ski tickets, equipment rentals and accommodation for example, the possible revenues from disc golf would be considerably lower.

Needed space and nature can also be considered as a weakness since it might be difficult and even impossible to find a fitting environment for a proper course. 9-hole courses and shorter do not require as much space as the full-length ones, but tend to be less interesting amongst the players. In addition, if the aim is to organize competitions or to form a basis for regular customers and registered club, the full-length is essential to have. Respondents also put high value on the aesthetics of a disc golf course; hence it is required to not only to have a full-length course, but to have one with distinguishable outlook. Some tourism service providers simply do not have the possibilities to build an attractive course on their premises.

### 9.3 Opportunities

The opportunities disc golf has, as a tourism service, are more visible on the long run. After building a course it takes times for the customers to find the venue and pass on the knowledge to other players. In case the course is considered as high quality and the customer flow increases, expansive business plans can be implemented. In this SWOT analysis, these expansive plans are considered as opportunities.

First of all, the customers drawn by disc golf-related services might want to take advantage of other services available on the premises. People arriving from a longer distance are more prone to invest their money on accommodation and restaurant services. However, visitors from close proximity should not be forgotten either. Provided with a good disc golf experience, people living close can have very positive effect on a business, which can be seen from the example of Peurunka. By offering a high-quality disc golf service on their premises, Peurunka has been able to attract local and close-by residents to form a registered disc golf club Puska-Puttaajat ry, currently with over 250 members. High amount of regular users naturally has an increasing effect on the revenue through single-entry fees, subscriptions and disc golf equipment possibly bought on the premises.

In addition, regular activity on a course can lead to organized competitions and tournaments of which the smallest are weekly organized local competitions and the largest possibly being national or international multiple-day tournaments with web- and television coverage. Larger crowds can also be attracted by having instructed courses on disc golf. Possible customers would be children, work and rehabilitation groups and families.

Opportunities of disc golf as tourism service are more suitable for companies already having some other type of business on their premises; solely relying on disc golf is not currently a profitable idea. Seasonality is a factor heavily affecting on companies with services suitable only for certain types of weather like skiing centers, for example. When the annual revenue is not evenly created during the year, problems concerning the stability of work contracts can arise. The authors have visited two skiing centers, Laajavuori and Riihivuori, on where disc golf has been implemented to attract visitors also during the low season. Since skiing centers naturally need to be situated near hilly landforms, the layout of a disc golf course on the same premises differs from ordinary ones situated in municipality parks, for example.

(Puskaputtaajat 2015.)

#### 9.4 Threats

Threats of having a disc golf course as a tourism service are closely related on how disc golf is represented on the company's premises. Poorly generated service won't attract any visitors, local or distant. There is no shortage of supply on disc golf courses in Finland, so new courses always compete about the popularity with the existing ones. Courses that already host a home to a registered club and larger tournaments are more prone to get visibility in internet and social media than newer ones.

Lack of knowledge and passion towards the sport may result to a low quality course. That in turn, may not gather other than occasional visitors. A good course is at least 9 holes long, challenging, versatile and aesthetic. Since disc golf is an outdoor sport, the surroundings need to be kept under maintenance all the time. The growth of vegetation affects the outlook of the course negatively, but also might make the finding of discs more difficult. Without maintenance, there is no customers and vice versa.

Estimating the demand of disc golf-related service is important before taking any action. Close proximity of quality courses, the lack of space and bad design can lead to expenditures not providing any revenue on the future. There are companies that against a fee can take care of design and implementation of a disc golf course. In addition, training can be provided for the staff to make it easier to apply disc golf to a business. However, before using external help, the probability of a successful implementation has to be analyzed.

## 9.5 SWOT Conclusion

Through SWOT analysis, it can be seen that disc golf has potential as a tourism service application. Factual information shows that the sport increases the willingness to travel in Finland, quality courses attract competitions and tournaments and building a culture of regulars and a registered club, is possible. To reach this level, the company attempting implementation has to be dedicated to develop the service constantly, listening to the needs of the players. Not all companies are in a situation where highly successful disc golf product is possible due to their location. Disc golf course needs space and interesting terrain. But in case the premises show potential for building a course, disc golf through indirect revenue like competitions and events and regulars and their activity, can be highly positive service application for Finnish tourism-related companies.

## 10 Research Analysis

With the information gathered through questionnaire, interview and the SWOT analysis, it is possible to form an overview of the applicability of disc golf for the needs of Finnish tourism industry. In this research analysis, the target group is defined and features of a disc golf course are presented. From that basis, suggestions on how to form the most potential type of disc golf service, are presented.

### 10.1 The Target Group

Disc golf is a sport available for anyone. The sport is not physically strenuous or requiring any special type of skills to start. Technique is more required than strength and can be developed easily by regular contact with the sport. According to the questionnaire and the experience of the authors, most disc golfers are men. Still, since disc golf is an individual sport and the main focus being on playing for leisure, the gender statistics make no difference. Disc golf should be marketed to both women and men.

The questionnaire also showed that the Finnish disc golfers come from all the age groups. After analyzing the responses, no differing thought patterns worth mentioning was discovered. Naturally, the amount of experience with disc golf has an effect on the willingness to travel and visit new venues. Therefore, when considering disc golf-related events or competitions, it is not needed to market them to any specific age group.

A small majority of the respondents, 51,8% does belong to a registered disc golf club. Unlike age, the membership of a club or the lack of it, effects on the behavior and thought patterns

of the respondents. Respondents with a membership have more history of disc golf-related travel. According to the results, the amount of years spent with disc golf affected differently on the players with membership and the ones without. The amount of travelling increases more along the years among the players with membership. On the contrary, the travel patterns of the non-membership respondents stay almost the same. Part of the explanation are the competitions and tournaments. Registered members naturally take the sport more seriously and the need to compete and test their skill is higher.

However, also non-members are travelling. The importance of competitions is lower, but an interesting course makes both members and non-members to travel. Non-members are more eager to engage with disc golf-related travel if they have some connections to the visited areas. For example, summer cottages, friends and relatives increase the willingness to travel for disc golf. Three provinces, Etelä-Savo, Pirkanmaa and Varsinais-Suomi, all have over over 40 000 summer cottages on their land areas.(STAT 2015) These provinces especially hold potential value for new disc golf courses and businesses using disc golf as their services. The slow pace, social aspect and nature make disc golf very fitting to be played by people spending their summer vacations, a “cottage sport” so to say.

Hence, both registered members and non-member make a potential visitor segment for a disc golf course. Only the motives differ. To attract both, the importance of a quality course has to be highlighted. The features making disc golf course popular are defined in the next section of the analysis.

## 10.2 Disc Golf Course as a Tourism Service

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the applicability of a disc golf course is seen as very potential. What is more, 90% of the respondents consider a disc golf course to be highly motivating factor towards domestic travel in Finland. Certain qualifications are needed in order to grow the service to its full potential.

A disc golf course and its outlook are tightly bound with the nature and the topography of the terrain. A course is designed so that the trees, hills and declines and the possible bodies of water on the area function as obstacles and shape the appearance of the course. Building a course on a flat terrain with no trees and other topographical factors is not advisable. Obstacles and variations are needed to keep the interest of the players.

The free comments of the respondents showed that variations and challenges are strong factors increasing the willingness to visit a course. A disc golf disc can be thrown with a back-hand and forearm throws. The disc can be thrown straight forward, up, with a spin and so

that it rolls on the ground towards a basket. A good course challenges the player to use all these variations and his or hers skills in order to reach the optimal result. This can be managed with the right type of land use and by proper placement of the teeing pads and baskets. Also, the course being full-length 18 holes affects positively on the attractiveness and possible ways of usage. For example, national and international competitions need a venue with 18 or more holes to be properly functional for greater amounts of people using the course simultaneously.

Since most of the courses in Finland can be played free of charge, disc golf course itself is not a service that one can expect to get notable revenue from. Therefore, the importance of indirect profits has to be pointed out.

91,4% of the respondents stated to be very willing to do overnight travel in order to play disc golf. Disc golf-related travel does not occur due to the lack of disc golf venues on one's own municipality, but due to the interest to visit different courses and have new challenges. Based on this factual information, there is potential market value for offering disc golf services and accommodation on the premises of a company operating on the field of tourism.

Consequently, disc golf is a service that has potential of attracting visitors to spend money on other things available on the same premises. 90% of the respondents travelling have been using some kind of paid accommodation during their trips. Among the registered members hotel was the most popular form of paid accommodation, hostel and camping sites being the second favorite. Among the non-members the level of difference between the types of accommodation is not as high. Hotel is also the most favored one, but not as clearly as with the registered members. This can be explained by the suggestion that the registered members compete more. Larger competitions are usually organized at venues which have a possibility to accommodate larger amounts of people to nearby hotels. Activity and sport centers like Kisakallio, Eerikkilän liikuntaopisto and Peurunka have high-quality hotels on their premises, for example. Accommodation possibilities do not only increase the possible revenue of the service provider, but also make the venue more interesting amongst the Finnish disc golfers and competition promoters.

In case a course is of full-length, under frequent maintenance and has enough variations and challenge, low entrance fee can be asked. The respondents were not positive about the price between 5-10 euros. Although, some stated that if in top condition, they would be willing to pay 2-5 euros for playing a course. Day ticket and annual subscription were also considered as possible solutions by some of the respondents. A disc golfer is willing to pay for playing the sport if he sees that the money is at least partly spent on the improvement and maintenance of the course in question.

### 10.3 Disc Golf Experience

The aim of this chapter is to describe what factors make disc golf reach its full potential as a tourism product. It combines the demographic information of the respondents, the particulars of a quality course and the factors motivating people to play the sport.

In disc golf, a good spirit is essential. Whether playing seriously or for leisure, other players are respected and cheered for. The sport is growing its reputation as a “real” sport, but still manages to keep its reputation as a feel good sport, where the main point is to relax and have fun. That is why nature and surroundings are important for the sport. Courses situated in woods, hills and near lakes do not only provide visitor variations in the demanded technique, but also an aesthetic experience. Nature and aesthetics affect positively on stress and relaxation, which was thought to be one of the driving factors to play disc golf.

Disc golf is highly social means of exercise. Even though it is an individual sport, it is usually played with a group of people, competing more or less seriously against each other. The pace of the sport is very relaxed; everybody throws the disc on their own turn, breaks occur when moving from a hole to another and usually the game stops for a moment when waiting other people to finish with the next hole. Course with 18 holes usually takes approximately two hours to complete. That is to say that disc golf is an ideal way to combine exercise and spending time with friends, for example.

Half-length disc golf course takes under an hour to complete. When considering people traveling from distance to visit a course, it might not be worth it if the experience with the sport is short and in some cases, against a pay. Therefore, the length of the course is not important only because the possibility of organizing tournaments, but the length of the course also adds to the experience of a casual player.

Maintenance of the course effects on everything. Course growing long vegetation usually has a high rate of lost discs. The risk of losing one's disc naturally effects on how the disc golf is played on the course. Of course, obstacles formed by using water bodies always include a risk of disc loss, but it also adds excitement to the sport. Discs lost due to bad maintenance of the course cause nothing but frustration. The guide signs on the course help the players to navigate on the course and get the statistics of the individual holes. Sometimes the case is that the basket is not possible to be seen from the teeing pad, so it is vital to have enough information of the course presented on the premises. The level of how fluently the course can be played through can add to the experience either positively or negatively.

To conclude, disc golf is a leisure sport. It can have a good effect on personal health, physical and mental. Players are divided to registered and non-registered members, both of the types traveling actively to play disc golf. Well maintained, full-length courses attract people also from other municipalities and are possible venues for national and international tournaments. Aspect of aesthetics of nature makes it not only a functional outdoor sport, but also highly potential tourism service.

#### 10.4 Tourism Service Applicability of Disc Golf

This research proves that disc golf is highly applicable for being a service within Finnish tourism industry. Its strength lies in a fact that it is played equally for leisure and with serious objectives.

Tourism service providers fighting against seasonality, camping sites, nature, health and wellness-related companies are all potential beneficiaries from the possibilities disc golf offers. Also municipalities building courses on their region can, with a well-designed venue, attract new visitors. Different type of disc golf events are an efficient way to get multiple visitors on the same area at the same time. Creativity is beneficial; events differing from the regular type of competitions potentially arouse interest amongst Finnish disc golfers. For example 24 hour Discathlon, tournament in which the aim was to play the same course for one full day, attracted members of 17 different registered clubs to the premises of Frisbeegolf club Keinukallio. (Frisbeegolfliitto 2015.)

The optimal time to implement disc golf as one the Finnish tourism industry services is now since the sport is expanding its popularity, it has a positive, healthy public image and the Finnish media coverage of the sport is on the rise.

#### 11 Conclusion

In order to achieve the full potential of disc golf as a tourism service, the sport has to be thoroughly investigated and familiarized with. It can work well as one part of the services provided by a tourism company, but also grow to be one of the main attractions leading domestic tourists to visit an area.

The aim of this research was to study how applicable disc golf is for being part of the domestic tourism industry in Finland. By conducting an interview with Visa Ruuhinen from Peurunka spa and rehabilitation center and forming a questionnaire for Finnish disc golfers about their travel patterns and motivations, a positive result on the applicability was

received. SWOT and research analysis were formed to create a thorough overview of disc golf as a domestic tourism product.

As the questionnaire was answered by 535 people all over Finland, the authors can say with confidence that the research is reliable and the results would not vary if redone after a certain period of time. Disc golf is a sport in which the venue is highly important factor. Competing, nature and new experiences make Finnish disc golfers to travel and use paid accommodation and other services on the premises providing a disc golf experience.

The authors found disc golf in summer 2013 and already during first months of playing did some overnight trips around Finland and abroad, in order to visit alternative venues. The idea to this research became after realizing how fast the sport is growing its reputation. Other players in local venues were asked whether any disc golf-related travel occurs on their behalf. The answers being positive, subject of the research being topical and personal interest being high on the subject, idea for this bachelor's thesis was born.

The result of this research answered all the research questions and all the answers were as the authors had predicted, positive. Having made the research about a subject so close to personal interest, the authors are content with the work and its outcome.

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## Illustrations

Illustration 1: Inner directed Pull Factors (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 63)

Illustration 2: Disc golf during winter

Illustration 3: Peurunka Lakeview Disc Golf Course (Facebook, 2014, Peurunka Lakeview - frisbeegolfrata)

## Figures

Figure 1: Finns' leisure trips in January to April 2003 to 2015 (Statistics Finland 2015)

Figure 2: The age of the respondents

Figure 3: Respondents' motivation to play disc golf

Figure 4: Respondents' willingness to do overnight trips to play disc golf

Figure 5: Good/Interesting course as a motivational factor for disc golf-related travel

Appendices

**Rentoutuminen**

0 1 2 3 4 5

Ei ollenkaan tärkeää       Erittäin tärkeää**Uusiin ratoihin tutustuminen**

0 1 2 3 4 5

Ei ollenkaan tärkeää       Erittäin tärkeää**Frisbeegolf ja kotimaanmatkailu**

Lähtisitkö harrastamaan lajia oman kotikuntasi ulkopuolelle, vaikka se vaatisi yön yli majoittumisen?  
Oletuksena, että kohteessa puitteet lajille erinomaisessa kunnossa.

0 1 2 3 4 5

En lähtisi       Hyvin mielelläni

Mahdollisuudet harrastaa lajia omalla paikkakunnalla riittävät pitämään harrastamisen mielenkiintoisenä.

0 1 2 3 4 5

Täysin eri mieltä       Täysin samaa mieltä

Näen frisbeegolfradan estetiikan/ulkonäön tärkeänä osana lajia.

0 1 2 3 4 5

Täysin eri mieltä       Täysin samaa mieltä

Olen aikaisemmin tehnyt yön yli kestävä matkoja päättarkoituksenani harrastaa lajia

- En kertaakaan
- Yhden kerran
- Muutamia kertoja
- Toistuvasti

Mitä majoitusmuotoa olet käyttänyt matkustulessasi lajin parissa?

- En ole käytänyt
- Hotelli
- Majatalo (hostelli)
- Leirintäalue

Olen käyttänyt matkailualan palveluita (hotellit, leirintäalueet, kylpylät) käydessäni tutustumassa uusiin frisbeegolfratoihin tai osallistuessani kilpailuihin

- En, enkä uskoisi käyttävää
- Saattaisin käyttää
- Kerran
- Joitakin kertoja
- Toistuvasti

**Mikä saisi sinut matkustamaan ulkopaikkakunnalle harrastamaan lajia?**

**Hyvä / Mielenkiintoinen rata**

0 1 2 3 4 5

Ei vaikuta       Vaikuttaa erittäin paljon**Muu samalle alueelle vetävä tekijä (oma mökki, sukulaiset, ystävät jne.)**

0 1 2 3 4 5

Ei vaikuta       Vaikuttaa erittäin paljon**Alueen muut virkistäytymismahdollisuudet tai nähtävyyydet**

0 1 2 3 4 5

Ei vaikuta       Vaikuttaa erittäin paljon**Kilpailuun osallistuminen**

0 1 2 3 4 5

Ei vaikuta       Vaikuttaa erittäin paljon**Kilpailun seuraaminen**

0 1 2 3 4 5

Ei vaikuta       Vaikuttaa erittäin paljon**Frisbeegolf matkailupalveluna****Näen frisbeegolfradan toimivana palveluna suomalaisissa matkailualan yrityksissä, kuten laskettelukeskuksissa tai leirintäalueilla**

0 1 2 3 4 5

Täysin eri mieltä       Täysin samaa mieltä**Lajilla on minulle urheilemisen lisäksi myös henkilö arvoa (estetiikka, luonto, rentoutuminen)**

0 1 2 3 4 5

Ei henkilö arvoa       Erittäin paljon henkilö arvoa**Olisitko valmis maksamaan 5-10 euron kertamaksun hotellin tai muun matkailukohteeseen yhteydessä olevan radan pelaamisesta?**

Oletetaan radan olevan täysimittainen ja hyvin hoidettu.

0 1 2 3 4 5

En olisi valmis maksamaan       Maksaisin mielelläni**Vapaat kommentit**

**Vierailtujen ratojen lukumäärä**