

Creating an Internet travel platform about Finland for Russian customers

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<p>The aim of this thesis is to find out the potential to develop travel Internet platform about Finland for Russian customers. Finland is a particular attractive destination for Russian tourists. A massive market eager for travel, the Russian Federation has become Europe's third largest source market. The mission of new Internet platform would be to offer a more complete spectrum of services to Russian customers, make personal trips according to their preferences. In this paper we will address the problem to the situation at the Russian online travel market and behavior of Russian customers online. This research focuses on advantages of e-commerce in travel business, attractive features of the e-commerce for the customers. Most attention is put to the Russians online behavior when purchasing online and to their interest to Finland as a travel destination. The findings might be interesting to wide range of international online businesses.</p> <p>The theoretic framework of the study embraces topics about e-commerce and e-business, Information and Communication Technology in the travel industry, consumer's behavior and intention to buy online. There is also analysis of features of modern e-commerce and situation on online travel market in Russia.</p> <p>The empirical study used qualitative approach and was done in a form of online survey. The links to the questionnaire were distributed in social media. As a result, 161 valid responses were analysed using descriptive statistics and interpreted by themes.</p> <p>Obviously there are experienced and not experienced travelers among Russians with the different preferences and needs. The portrait of the Russian customers is very attractive for the travel industry: a significant number of people with good experience of online travel booking, who prefer to pay online and not fear the lack of Russian language. Guarantee of the security payment is the most important item in e-commerce. There is place in the Russian online travel market and there is potential to develop a new Internet travel platform about Finland for Russians.</p>	
Keywords E-commerce, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), eTourism, consumer's behavior, Russian travelers, online travel market	

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1 Introduction

Nowadays the Internet plays a significant role in the lives of humans. More over some areas of business are being transferred now to the virtual space of the global net. To buy things or services from Internet stores is not a wonder anymore. Internet shopping is a useful and timesaving tool that became more and more popular and covers different areas of market. Sitting at home or cafeteria we can easily buy any kind of food, clothes, electronics, as well as services and even travelling.

Since the emergence of the Internet, travel planning, travel information search and booking has always been one of the main reasons that people use the Internet. The revolution of the Internet and information and communication technologies has had already profound implications for the tourism industry (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 3).

1.1 The background of the Project

Finland is a particular attractive destination for Russian tourists. It is close territorially and has same boarder. Finland is the closest country to Russia with real European standards. The cooperation between Finland and Russia goes far to the history. The climate and culture has similarities, at the same time different way of living and state organization makes for Russians travelling to Finland interesting and wishful. Russians used to come to Finland by many reasons: shopping, holidays, medicine services, skiing and so on. Finland for them is closest Europe country with easy access, for those who live in the North-West of Russia it is very easy to get Finnish Schengen visa. Perhaps soon, Finland may cancel visas for Russian citizens. At least, this issue has been discussed and such an initiative opposed by a majority of Finnish officials, believing that it will strengthen the relations between Russia and Finland and will benefit the whole of Europe. (NTV News 2014.)

That is how came up the idea of creating the e-commerce for the Russian travellers to Finland. To create Internet platform where Russians could book and plan their trip to Finland by themselves without travel agencies. The point is to make the online platform, which gives opportunities to plan and pay all kind of services at once, from

transportation and accommodation to activity and restaurants. It would include hotels and camping, train and bus tickets, activities like fishing or riding husky and so on. If necessary it could also contain information about country, may be blog about own experience or information about traditional festivals and holidays. It will be the one full resource about services in Finland for Russian customers. This is a complex project, knowledge about e-commerce in travel industry would be dominate but also information and experience from another areas would be useful at this point such as branding, e-marketing, e-business, IT, management, customer service and others. Everything should be orientated to the Russian customer's preferences. Present and future demand of the travellers as well as trends of tourism industry and latest novelty of e-commerce should be considered while making this resource.

The mission of new Internet platform would be to offer a more complete spectrum of services to Russian customers in Russian language and according Russian mentality, let the tourist meet the real Finland and make personal trip according to their preferences.

The aim is to create ultimate Finnish travel e-commerce for Russian customers. Which will sell not the products and services only, but experience, way of living and success. "E-business requires a customer-centric view and a shift away from mass production to mass customization and from selling to relationship building" points Garland (2001 in Jago, L.). It is assumed that new service will allow the customers to compose their journey themselves from a variety of modules offered, choosing the style and pricing of services according their preferences.

There are potentially stakeholders such as Finnish Tourism Board, Finnish companies who will be involved to this business – their interests are clear – the flow of Russian tourists, the flow of money and easy access to the potential Russian customers. Finnish companies will get possibility to introduce them for the Russian customers without any big investment, just place their offers at the new platform. Finnish companies who do not have yet a Russian page would not need to spend money and time for the translation; they could use the new platform to reach the Russian customers. Such service is in interests of whole Finland because it would bring more tourists and incoming mon-

ey to the country. According to Laikari (2013) for European travel business Russia is a huge underutilized potential for many European countries.

Russia is one of the largest travel markets. A massive market eager for travel, the Russian Federation has become Europe's third largest source market. Proximity, easy access and modest cost of travel are important determinants of destination choice for Russians. This is an advantage for destinations in Europe (European Travel Commission 2014.).

Russia represents the fastest growing market for outbound travel, and Russian tourists demonstrate a preference for leading brands, opulent hotels, and exclusive restaurants. (Stark Tourism Associates 18 April 2013.) Russia is called "sleeping giant" according to the European Travel Commission (2015), 35,7 million tourists from Russia took a foreign trip in 2012, up from just 7,7 million in 2006.

The project of the Finnish travel e-commerce for the Russian travellers is huge and complex and could not be covered whole within one Master thesis work. In this paper we will address the problem to the situation at the Russian online travel market and behavior of Russian customers online while booking their travelling particularly to Finland.

1.2 Aim and research questions

The *aim* of this research is to find out the potential to develop e-commerce for Russian customers in the Finnish travel market.

The target audience of the research is Russian citizens or Russian speaking auditorium. Supposedly from the Northwest and Central regions of Russia – here is living the majority of population who wish and have possibility to travel to Finland, but also participants from other parts of country should not be ignored if they have willing to travel to Finland. Their age range could vary from 20 to 55 years old, both families members and single are interested for this research. We do not distinguish in the context of

this work leisure or business segment as both might be interested to use a new project to book their travel to Finland. Level of income should be middle or high.

In order to reach the aim of the study, the following *research questions* will be analysed:

- What is the modern travel e-commerce and what are the features of a successful one?
- What is the situation at the Russian travel e-market? Whether there is a place for a new start up?
- How do Russian tourists behave online while booking their travel? Is there behavioral pattern of Russian consumers when plan and book online travel?
- What is the portrait of potential Russian customers who travel to Finland and book their trips via Internet? What are their preferences?

The researches questions arise were there is a need for this kind of source and if yes, what kind it should be. There are many resources about Finland for Russians but all of them offer separate services. Some Finnish pages just straight translated to Russian language and don't consider differences in mentality and perceptions, so of course it does not work as it could.

May be the most important part of required data is the information about customer's demand, what they would like to see in Finland, where they would like to stay, for how long, what activity they would prefer in Lapland or middle Finland and so on. That knowledge would guide line to create a right content of the web resource.

This research will focus on advantages of e-commerce in travel business, attractive features of the e-commerce for the customers. Most attention will be put to the Russians online behavior when purchasing online. It is interesting to find out if Russians have specific preferences online. The findings might be interesting to wide range of international online businesses.

2 E-commerce

Since 1995 e-commerce get an extreme growth and popularity in technological developed countries. The future of e-commerce looks promising. E-commerce has brought new business opportunities to the global travel and tourism industry and has changed the traditional pattern of working model through travel agencies. Tourism-related institutions and Internet companies are joining to tap the potential market created by e-commerce.

This chapter will put attention to the definitions of main concepts and theoretical framework of the research by means of in-depth study of existing theories and recent studies addressing e-commerce and travel industry and finding possible connection between them. This part of the paper gives the closer observation of what is an e-commerce in general and how it is related to e-business and e-tourism.

2.1 E-commerce and E-business

Laudon and Traver (2014, 50) give the following description of e-commerce: E-commerce involves digitally enabled commercial transactions between and among organizations and individuals. Commercial transactions involve the exchange of value (money) across organizational or individual boundaries in return for products or services.

Electronic commerce traditionally refers to electronically mediated buying and selling. Electronic business is broader term, referring to how technology can benefit all Internet business processes and interactions with third parties. This includes buying and sell-side e-commerce and the internal value chain (Chaffey 2011, 43).

Turban defines e-commerce as the process of buying, selling, or exchanging products, services, or information via computer networks, including the Internet (Turban, King, Lee, Liang & Turban 2012, 38).

Laudon and Traver (2014, 53) mention eight features of e-commerce technology that are unique to this medium:

Ubiquity – means available just about everywhere, at all times, making it possible to shop from the desktop, at home, at work or even from airport or from the car.

Global reach – means permits commercial transactions to cross cultural and national boundaries far more conveniently and cost-effectively than in true traditional commerce.

Universal standards – shared by all nations around the globe. In contrast, most traditional commerce technologies differ from one nation to the next.

Richness – refers to the complexity and content of the message. The online seller could send the marketing message to the potential customers with text, video and audio and reach the audience of millions at same time, what is not possible in a way of traditional commerce.

Interactivity – it is about two ways communication between merchant and consumer. It enables the seller to engage a customer in way similar to face-to-face experience but on much more massive scale.

Information density – is the total amount and quality of information available to all market participants.

Personalization and customization – merchants can target their marketing message to specific individuals by adjusting the message to a person's interests, preferences and past purchases. The result of personalization and customization is unthinkable with previous existing commerce technologies.

Social technology – provides a many-to-many model of mass communications. Millions of users are able to generate content consumed by millions of other users. The result is formation of social networks on a wide scale and the aggregation of large audiences on social networks platforms.

The main business drivers for e-commerce and e-business are opportunities for increased revenues and reducing cost, but also many other benefits which improve customer service and corporate image. In new e-commerce is important clearly defined objectives, mix of skills, good partnership and organizational structure, right culture for exchange, easy and safe payment systems.

Ultimate e-commerce works beneficial for both organizations and consumers. Turban & al. (2012, 67) summarized the benefits of e-commerce for the organizations and individual consumers:

Benefits to organizations:

- Locating customers and/or suppliers worldwide, at reasonable cost and fast.
- Reduce cost of information processing, storage, and distribution.
- Reduce delays, inventories, and cost through supply chain improvements.
- Business always open (24/7/365); no over time or other cost.
- Customization/personalization at a reasonable cost.
- Seller can specialize in narrow field, yet making money.
- Facilitate innovation and enable unique business models.
- Rapid time-to-market and increased speed.
- Lower communication cost.
- Saves time and reduces cost by enabling e-procurement.
- Improve customer service and relationship through direct interactions with customers.
- May need fewer permits in business and be able to avoid sales tax.
- All distributed material is up-to-date.
- E-commerce may help small companies to compete against large ones by using special business models.
- Using customization inventories can be minimized.
- Reduce distributing cost by deliver online.

Benefits to consumers:

- Can shop any time from any place because of ubiquity.
- Large selection to choose from a variety of channels (e.g., vendor, products, styles).

- Can customize many products and/or services.
- Can compare and shop for lowest prices.
- Digitized products can be downloaded immediately upon payment.
- Easy finding what you need, with details, demos, etc.
- Do auctions any time and from any place.
- Sometimes no sales tax.
- Can work or study at home.
- Can socialize online in communities yet be at home.
- Can find unique products/items.

Considering numerous of provided benefits of e-commerce to individuals and organizations it might look that this kind of business has no drawbacks. However, there are also limitations and barriers in utilizing the Internet and ICTs. Turban & al. (2012, 68) classified barriers to e-commerce as either technological or nontechnological.

Technological limitations:

- Lack of universal standards for quality, security, and reliability.
- The telecommunications bandwidth is insufficient, especially for mobile commerce.
- Software development tools are still evolving.
- It is difficult to integrate Internet and e-commerce software with some existing (especially legacy) applications and databases.
- Special web servers are needed in addition to the network servers, which add to the cost of e-commerce.
- Internet accessibility is still sometimes expensive and/or inconvenient, for example in roaming.
- Order fulfillment of large-scale B2C requires special automated warehouses.

Nontechnological limitations:

- Security and privacy concerns deter customers from buying.
- Lack of trust in e-commerce and in unknown sellers hinders buying.
- People do not yet sufficiently trust paperless, faceless transactions.
- Many legal and public policy issues, including taxation, have not yet been resolved or are not clear.
- National and international government regulations sometimes get in the way
- It is difficult to measure some of the benefits of e-commerce, such as online advertising. Mature measurement methodologies are not yet available.
- Some customers like to feel and touch products. Also, customers are resistant to the change from shopping at a brick-and-mortar store to a virtual store.
- In many cases, the number of sellers and buyers that are needed for profitable e-commerce operation is insufficient.
- Online fraud is increasing.
- It is difficult to obtain venture capital due to the failure of many dot-coms.

Payment security and privacy concerns are one of the major nontechnological barriers that prevent consumers from completing transactions online. Business organizations must therefore pay more attention to protect themselves and their customers from losses due to cyber-crimes, such as auction fraud, vacation fraud, gaming fraud, spamming, identity theft and hacking booking details such as credit card numbers and card-verification codes (Buhalis & Law 2008, 612).

The Internet application Web 2.0 discussed as a more attractive tool for launching e-commerce. It represents huge opportunities for e-commerce revenues. Web 2.0 allows creating resources such as social media networks, photo and video sharing sites, Wikipedia, blogs, virtual travel stores and life style sites that support very high level of interactivity. Increasingly the Internet is becoming a platform of data, views, knowledge creation and sharing which harness the network to get better information to all users (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 7).

Among five major types of e-commerce for this research is more important B2C type, that involves business selling to consumers that most consumers are likely to encounter. The bulk of B2C type involves online market transactions between commercial enterprises and consumers (VanHoose 2011, 9).

Laudon and Traver (2014, 77) discussed the factors that will define the future of e-commerce. They predict e-commerce technology will continue to propagate through all commercial activity, with overall revenues from e-commerce, the numbers of products and services sold over the Web, and the amount of Web traffic all rising. E-commerce prices will rise to cover the real cost of doing business on the Web. E-commerce margins and profits will rise to level more typical of all retailers. Entrepreneurs will continue to play an important role in pioneering new social application that will rival search engines as advertising and e-commerce platforms. The number of successful pure online companies will continue to decline, and many successful e-commerce firms will adopt an integrated, multi channel bricks-and-clicks strategy. Regulation of e-commerce and the Web by government will grow worldwide.

E-commerce involves three broad interrelated themes. The first theme is *technology*. It means to understand e-commerce, we need the basic understanding of the information technology upon which it is built, including the Internet and the World Wide Web, and host of complimentary technologies – personal computers, local area networks, client/server computing, packet-switched communications, protocols such as TCP/IP, Web services, HTML, and relational databases.

The second theme is *business*. While technology provides the infrastructure, it is the business applications that create the interest and excitement in e-commerce – the potential for extraordinary returns on investment. New technologies present business and entrepreneurs with new ways of organizing production and transacting business. It is needed to understand some key business concepts such as electronic market, information goods, business models, firm and industry value chains, industry structure, and consumer behavior in electronic market.

The third theme is the *society*. Understanding the pressures that global e-commerce places on contemporary society is critical to being successful in the e-commerce marketplace. The primary societal issues are intellectual property, individual privacy, and public policy.

Researchers in areas of e-commerce and e-business bred those concepts. Both concepts might be interconnected and close related. E-commerce can be described as using the Internet to make a deal – more formally, transactions electronically between organizations and individuals. On the other hand, e-business can be described as the availability of electronic transactions and their processing within the firm, including information systems under the control of the company. In addition, if there are monetary transactions, the e-business applications turn into e-commerce. E-business is a whole complex of processes to guide visitors to online store and inside store, helping to find product according their demand and make a purchasing. E-business includes not only buying and selling of goods and services, but also servicing customers, collaborating with business partners, conducting e-learning, and conducting electronic transactions within an organization (Turban & al. 2008, 38).

E-business refers to the use of electronic networks within an organization. In contrast, e-commerce refers to exchanges goods and services in a market transactions between the parties (VanHoose 2011, 8).

To summarise all written above: e-commerce is a process that includes a number of external processes related to customers, suppliers and external partners while e-business includes the internal processes, such as production, inventory management, product development, risk management, finance.

2.2 Information and Communication Technology in the tourism and travel industry

Introduction of new technologies is rapidly changing our life styles affecting all aspects of our activities. The development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and emergence of the Internet have changed the models of tourism business and

a pattern of tourist's behaving. The emergence of the Computer Reservation Systems (CRSs) in the 1970s, Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) in the late 1980s and the Internet in the late 1990s have transformed operational and strategic practices dramatically in tourism (Buhalis 2003 in Buhalis & Law 2008, 609; Buhalis & Jun 2011, 4). The development of the Internet and ICTs has made many significant impacts on the operation, structure and strategy of organisations, as well as communication with consumers (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 10).

According to Farrokh Mamaghani (2009, 365) ICT have affected the travel and tourism industry for at least 50 years, particularly in the areas of automation and networking of distribution channels. For tourism businesses, the Internet offers the potential to make information and booking facilities available to large numbers of tourists at relatively low costs. It also provides a tool for communication between tourism suppliers, intermediaries, as well as end-consumers (Kim 2004, 1).

Local travel agents that used the global distribution system have adjusted marketing strategies and expanded services in order to realize increased competitive advantage. Local tourism business comprehension and utilization of the Internet has permitted increased visibility in additional market segments. Businesses have increased services globally by registering with online travel agents, online advertising agents, and inter-organizational reservation systems. In addition, many businesses have developed websites which offer planning, booking and payment services online for added consumer convenience (Mamaghani 2009, 366). Companies that do not present their businesses in the Internet cannot compete with those that are in the web. Organisations that compute will be able to compete in the future (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 29).

Using informational technologies such as Internet and applying e-commerce and e-business to the travel industry emerge the concept of e-tourism. Electronic tourism is the case of the application of ICTs on the tourism industry (Buhalis 2003 in Buhalis & Jun 2011, 6). Buhalis (2003, 77) suggests that e-tourism reflects the digitisation of all processes and value chains in the tourism, travel, hospitality and catering industries. At the tactical level, it includes e-commerce and applies ICTs for maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of the tourism organisation. At the strategic level, e-tourism revo-

lutionises all business processes, the entire value chain as well as the strategic relationships of tourism organisations with all their stakeholders. E-tourism determines the competitiveness of the organisation by taking advantage of intranets for reorganising internal processes, extranets for developing transactions with trusted partners and the Internet for interacting with all its stakeholders and customers. The e-tourism concept includes all business functions (e-commerce, e-marketing, e-finance and e-accounting, eHRM, e-procurement, eR&D, e-production) as well as e-strategy, e-planning and e-management for all sectors of the tourism industry, including tourism, travel, transport, leisure, hospitality, principals, intermediaries and public sector organisations. Hence, e-tourism bundles together three distinctive disciplines: business management, information systems and management, and tourism (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 6).

To understand better the concept of e-tourism, Buhalis (2003, 77) illustrated the connection and relation between different fields of activities related to e-tourism in the figure 1 named “The e-tourism concept and e-tourism domains”.

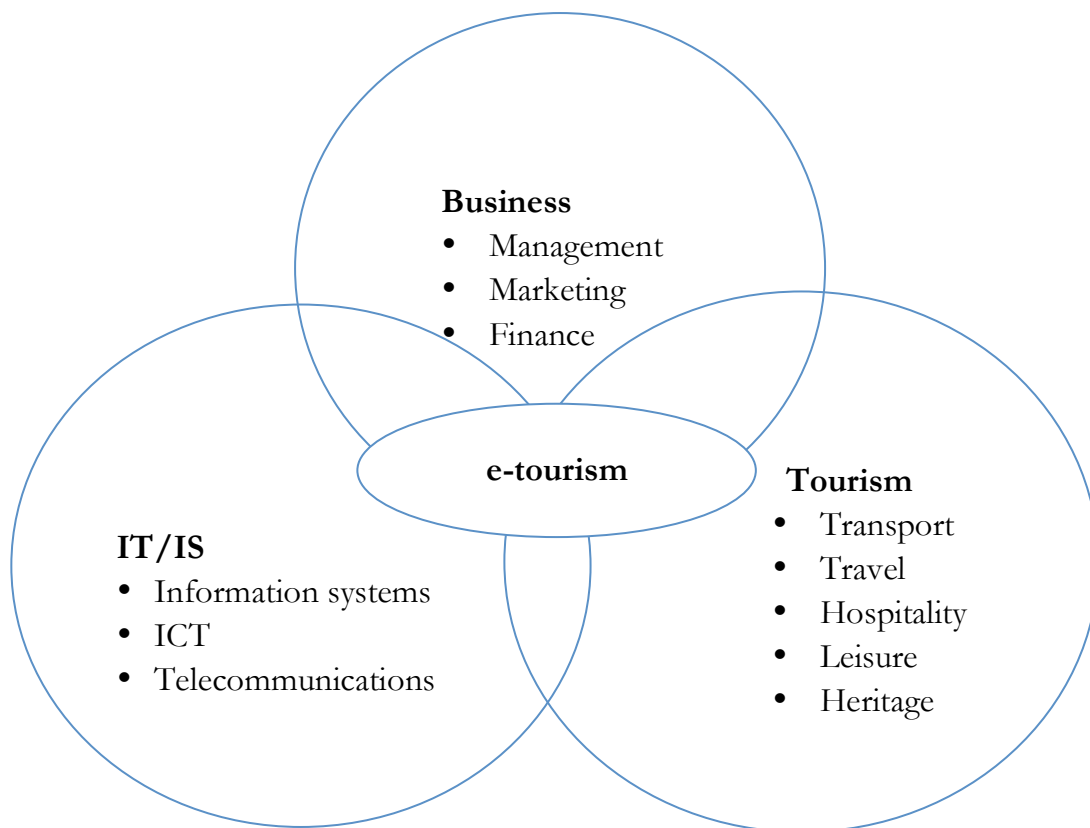


Figure 1. The e-tourism concept and e-tourism domains (Buhalis 2003, 77)

As we see e-tourism is an integration of business, information technologies and tourism. Creating e-tourism requires knowledge and skills from different fields: management, marketing and finance, informational systems and ICT, telecommunications, travel, hospitality, leisure and many others.

The technological revolution experienced through the development of the Internet has changed dramatically the market conditions for tourism organisations. ICTs evolve rapidly providing new tools for tourism marketing and management. They support the interactivity between tourism enterprises and consumers and as a result they re-engineer the entire process of developing, managing and marketing tourism products and destinations (Buhalis & Law 2008, 619). Many tourism-related organisations had to go through a major business processes reengineering to take advantage of the emerging technologies in order to transform their processes and data handling as well as their ability to operate and to compete in the emerging global marketplace (Buhalis 2013, 4). Those companies who managed to evolve according new online market conditions will become successful players of the travel market.

Mamaghani also consider that information technology has played a central role in the growth and improvement of the travel and tourism industry. The lasting effects of technology are improved information accessibility, a higher level of competition, and a larger market of consumers and businesses around the globe (Mamaghani 2009, 366). The use of ICTs is therefore driven by the development of complex demand requests, as well as by the rapid expansion and sophistication of new products, which tend to address niche market segments (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 26).

The Internet is revolutionising the distribution of tourism information and sales. An increasing proportion of Internet users are buying on-line and tourism will gain a larger and larger share of the online commerce market. Obviously, the Internet is having a major impact as a source of information for tourism (Kim 2004, 1). Information spreads faster and covering wider population of Internet users. Consumers have more options regarding vacation and budget planning (Mamaghani 2009, 365). In Europe, the Internet is now more than twice as important as travel agents as an information

source (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 26).

Tourists became more independent from one side and more demanding from the other side. The access to information and the wide range of offerings has made consumers more demanding. Buhalis & Jun (2011, 26) state that the Internet enables travellers to access reliable and accurate information as well as to undertake reservations in a fraction of the time, cost and inconvenience required by conventional methods. Thus, they improve the service quality and contribute to a higher tourist satisfaction. Additionally, the Internet provides access to transparent and easy to compare information on destinations, holiday packages, travel, lodging and leisure services, as well as about their real-time prices and availability. Increasingly consumers utilise commercial and non-commercial Internet sites for planning, searching, reserving, purchasing and amending their tourism products.

The tourism industry needs to become more *flexible*, more *efficient* and *quicker* in responding to consumer request (Buhalis 2003, 78). Also related to impact of ICT on the tourism industry Buhalis (2003, 80) point *time* as one of the important element in generating competitive advantage.

Since the emergence of the Internet, travel planning, searching travel information, booking accommodation or transportations became one of the main reasons that people use the Internet (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 3). It is evident that e-business is an essential prerequisites for successful organisations in the emerging, globally networked, Internet empowered business environment, especially for the tourism industry.

E-tourism increasingly determines the competitiveness of the organisation and therefore it is critical for the competitiveness of the industry in the longer term (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 6).

2.3 Features of modern travel e-commerce

To create online travel e-commerce with the long-term perspective means to predict the behavior and demand of future consumers. Nowadays young people are more familiar with the Internet and use it actively in everyday life. More likely when they grow

into the economically active population, the Internet will be the most influential medium in their life, influencing their preferences when they choose how and where to travel. That of course has impact on the future of the whole travel business. All beneficial features of e-commerce should be considered while creating a new resource.

Chan and Law (2006, 255) suggest that hotel websites are a basic requirement to an increasing number of communication and business strategies. The usability of a website, effectiveness of its interface, as well as its amount of information, ease of navigation, and user friendliness of its functions, are central to the success of these strategies (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 16).

When a visitor comes to a website, the first thing that catches his eye is the site design and navigation, as well as the presence of those elements that should help him find just what he was looking for. Required to have a professionally made website, equipped with the latest technology, which will attract the visitor's attention and will be appreciated by them. When a site has to deal with different kinds of monetary transactions, the first thing that drew the attention of the user is security. The client wants to be sure that their money will not be stolen. Purchasing travel products is associated with a higher level of perceived risks compared to tangible products. Consumers, therefore, search for a greater amount of information via the Internet to reduce the risks (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 26).

Specialists discuss the set of characteristics necessary for successful e-commerce. Travellers expect websites to be informative, interactive, and attractive point Chu (2001 in Buhalis & Law 2008, 616). Kim and Lee (2004 in Buhalis & Law 2008, 616) classified web service quality into six dimensions, namely:

- Ease of use
- Usefulness
- Information content
- Security
- Responsiveness
- Personalization

At the design stage of the resource should develop a strategy, how to keep the visitors. If visitors like the resource, they will often use it. The Russian online library Redov.ru suggests considering following rules when creating the site:

- Fast loading
- Quality content
- Ease of use and navigation
- Simple language appropriate to the audience
- Immediate feedback

With rapid data transmission on the Internet, the expected response time from organisations to customers has been greatly reduced. The reaction to online inquiries can thus influence customer satisfactions and booking behavior (Buhalis & Law 2008, 611).

A successful website should therefore take customers' interest and participation into consideration, to capture information about their preference, and to subsequently use the information to provide personalized communications and services (Chung & Law 2003; Doolin, Burgess & Cooper 2002 in Buhalis & Law 2008, 616).

The ICT developments have introduced new best strategic and operational management practices that lead organisations to shift their orientation from product-orientation to a consumer-orientation that customises products and services and adopt flexible and responsive practices to the marketplace (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 29).

Kevin Roberts (2012) discussing the marketing of new era notes that world has moved from an economy of attention to economy of participation. Everything we do must attract and engage. Older models of marketing and management do not work anymore. Now people want to participate in everything by themselves: write tweets, blogs, share pictures, ideas and experiences. From the era of information flow we are moving to an era of inspiration. Marketing needs to inspire people to action. It is happening in travel industry as well, tourists want to create their trips themselves, choose what they want and not satisfied with the ready offered tours. Innovative tour operators use the Inter-

net extensively to promote their products and to attract direct customers. They also use the Internet to decompose their packages and sell individual products (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 19). Personalization of the travel service will be at first place. Let customers be involved in the travel planning process, let them customize the service they want to buy.

Kim (2004, 4) points the two main factors for conducting successful e-commerce are 'security of the e-commerce system' and 'user-friendly Web interface', thus recognising that building customer trust and convenience for customers are essential to succeed.

Online retail has become immensely popular nowadays also in travel business. The web is brimming with different online stores, but there are certain features that give to online store an edge above the others. To summarise the information above there is six must-have features of an online store that should be considered:

1. *Multiple payment gateways.* It is an essential feature of a good online store. It makes the payment procedure hassle-free by offering the consumers an option of paying through a payment gateway they trust. Online stores targeting a single country must use the most reliable payment mode of that specific country. Choose trusted payment gateways demanding low transaction fees, popular in target country.
2. *Social Networking Integration.* Social Media has pretty much become an important part of our lives these days. To make online store popular and attract countless customers, it must integrate the social media means within online store.
3. *Privacy and Secure Checkout.* Privacy of customer's important and personal details must be maintained by an online store at any cost. Online stores often ask for phone numbers, address, etc. at checkout. This information must not reach the merchant so that it remains safe and secure. Privacy of personal details is an important issue for most of the online customers. Payment security and privacy concerns are one of the major nontechnological barriers that prevent consumers from completing transactions online (Buhalis & Law 2008 in Buhalis & Jun 2011, 12).
4. *Design.* Online shopping website must definitely look good. The products must

be described through text, catchy images and multimedia files. Web design in both functionality and usability senses is also becoming of critical importance (Buhalis & Law 2008, 616).

5. *Customer-friendly*. When customers visit an online shop for the very first time, certain aspects determine whether they come back to the site or not. The most significant features include, quick loading time, easy checkout, accessibility, and user-friendly features.
6. *Personalization*. Saving customer's data and preferences. Web service should be able to give suggestion and advices to the customers considering their previous interest and purchases.

Retailers aiming at running a booming online store should include these must-have features. Additionally, the web storefronts must be regularly innovated and enhanced as per the demands of the consumers. Those who move along with the pace of modification will certainly have success.

Sizintcev (3 March 2014) suggesting to include following services for the successful travel start-up:

- Convenient additional services
- Interesting content
- Tours and packages
- Dynamic packages
- Tourism and events
- Help - visitor services

There is opinion that each country and population has own preferences in web design. Changing web page interface accordingly the cultural demand might impact on the success of Internet resource and e-commerce. However Oshkalo (9 October 2013) considers there are two schools of thought on this issue. Some people contend that Russians expect more lively and congested sites, and also have a preference for red and yellow colors. Yandex.ru – main search engine in Russia, the company's home page in Russia, renders quite a bit differently than Google's. On the other hand, some of the

most popular sites in Russia are very similar to their US counterparts. VK is more or less a clone of Facebook, right down to the color scheme. Ozon looks very similar to Amazon in terms of the home page and product displays. Google, eBay, Facebook, Airbnb, Booking, Momondo etc. have not made any changes to their global visual standards for their Russian sites. If there was such a big difference in the way Russians interact with websites, these companies certainly have the resources to make Russian-specific versions of their sites.

Nevertheless some different features presented in the web service interface. Specifically for e-commerce, most of the Russian sites prominently display their telephone numbers in their headers. This would be rare for a US site (Oshkalo 9 October 2013).

Biggest issue in travel planning for most markets is perceived to be information overload. Summarizing information at a high level, then allowing consumers to drill for more detail can help cut the clutter (Rheem 2012, 2). Buhalis & Jun (2011, 30) assume that only creative and innovative principals and destinations which apply continues innovation in using intelligent e-tourism applications and adopt their processes accordingly will be able to achieve sustainable competitive advantages in the future.

2.4 Online travel market in Russia

To implement new e-commerce it is useful to look at the specific Internet market. Like in every field of human lives Internet area has also cultural characteristics and its own laws of progression. In this chapter we observe the e-travel market in Russia referring to the current situation on the market, consider some numbers, identify key players, trends and possible future projections.

Looking to the results of online sale of travel and tourism services in Russia in 2013 according to the Data insight report (Ovchinnikov 2014):

- 235 billion rubles or 7.4 billion USD were spent on online travel services
- Online travel market shows growth in 2013: in rubles + 38%, in dollar + 35%
- About 60% of the e-market - online air ticketing

- There are more than 8 million online buyers of travel services

Revision of the "consumption strategy" has not affected the tourism industry: the Russians buy less new cars and expensive electronics, but do not turn down their travel and holidays trips. If in the Russian tourism market there is a crisis that is crisis of business models and of confidence, but not the crisis of the demand (Ovchinnikov 2014). Another question whether there is a place at online travel market in Russia for new start-ups...

According to Ovchinnikov (2013) more than 50% of Russian online travel market takes air ticketing, next place has railway ticketing with 17%, then hotels with the 14%, tour packages has 13% and other travel services only 3%. See figure 2.

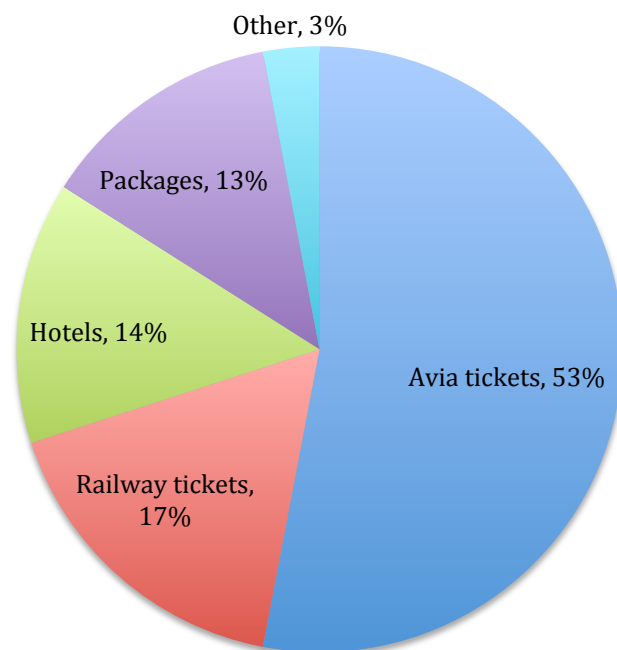


Figure 2. Online sales in Russian travel market in 2012 (Ovchinnikov 2013)

Air segment occupies more than half of the online travel market in Russia not being at the same time the most profitable type of business. Flight tickets segment generates the most sales now but margins are getting thinner. Following trend in air segment were observed in 2013: the growth is slowing down, reducing margins by reducing commissions from airlines, airlines starting to regulate the market (Zaretsky 16 October 2013).

Cross-sell between flight tickets and hotel booking is not working yet: top players need to figure out what is the most efficient way to cross-sell hotel booking. Offering to book a hotel after buying a flight ticket does not convert well.

The situation with hotels booking in the Russian e-market clearly shows that a single pacemaker dominates the segment while others are struggling to catch up. Booking.com is a dominant market leader with a strong brand.

Online package tours segment is just in the initial formation phase. Package tours market is extremely fragmented with hundreds of players not exhaustive with any clear leaders while online segment just emerging. Online travel agencies have a strong dependence on metasearches traffic. Relatively small number of Russians travels independently abroad due to language barriers and lack of experience, that explains strong preference towards package tours (Zaretsky 16 October 2013).

Among main players in online travel market in Russia there are companies with the international names like Momondo or Booking. Interesting that those services have not at all changed the interface of the web pages just translated the service into Russian language. Nevertheless they are performing successfully in the foreign e-market. But the majority of participants in Russian travel e-market are still Russian services, mostly made by Russians for Russian audience. See table 1.

Table 1. The main players in Russian travel e-market (Sizintcev 3 March 2014)

Segment	Players
Air and rail tickets	Onetwotrip, Anywayanyday, Ozon.travel, Agent, Biletix, Go2See, Senturia, Sindbad, Tickets, Trip, Tripsta, Tutu, Svyaznoi.travel, Avia-centr...
Hotels	Booking, HRS, Ostrovok, Oktogo, Ago-da...
Tour packages	Leveltravel, Travelata, Itour, Trip.ru,

	Onetwotrip...
Meta Search Engines	Aviasales, Skyscanner, Momondo, Kayak, Yandex, Rospisaniya, Buruki, Flytourist...
Excursions	Tripster, Excursiopedia...
Other	Paspartu, iknowtravel...

In the future in the e-travel market in Russia expected “fighting” for every customer and reducing margins and the gap in sales. The dynamics of market growth slows down. It might be difficult for new Russian online travel agency to enter the travel market at the same time for western players with greater financial baggage such as Govoyages, Opodo, Edreams it seems to be easier. Difficulties in attracting investments will continue. The macroeconomic situation continues to affect the mobility of the Russian population (Sizintcev 3 March 2014).

Investigating deeper the Russian travel e-market it became obviously there are many problems of Russian travel start-ups. Sizintcev (3 March 2014) lists some of them:

- High barrier to entry.
- Low margins.
- The major share of the market is divided between several major players.
- Special conditions from suppliers for the old and the big players.
- Market trends are constantly changing.
- Many Russians still do not trust online reservations.
- The effect of “word of mouth” in the network can be disastrous.
- Low technology of the most tour operators.
- “The dark side” of the tourism market.

Sizintcev (3 March 2014) also points several threats what new travel e-business might face at the Russian market:

- Attraction of investments.
- Finding a niche.

- Competitive advantages and promotions.
- Management from the main office.
- Adapting to Russian realities.
- Rational expenditure budget.
- The constant emergence of new competitors.
- Fast changes.
- Low margins.

Zaretsky (16 October 2013) gives some forecast for the flight online travel agencies, hotel booking and package tours. How those three fields of online travel market in Russia will develop and what trends will have:

Flight OTAs

- Leading OTAs will continue increasing the gap with the rest of the players while fighting with each other for market share by marketing budgets and product/service innovation.
- Top OTAs will continue in their effort to decrease dependency on metasearches by developing stronger loyalty programs and investing in brand awareness.
- Top players will start entering hotel booking segment more aggressively in order to increase margins but most likely to do so via partnerships or acquisitions.

Hotel booking:

- Focus on growth.
- Continue localization of their product and service to differentiate from Booking.com.
- Use wider scope of marketing instruments to reach to the new customers before Booking.com.
- Corporate and B2B segments also could be opportunities for further growth.

Package tours:

- Focus on growth.

- Continue improving product and service to make the online shopping experience of package tours significantly better than offline.
- Expand to the regions more aggressively.
- More funding will be raised by existing players and possibly by newcomers.
- Offline agencies will start offering online payment options more to their clients but won't be able to match the level of required call center operations and IT sophistication.

There is definitely a huge potential in online travel market in Russia. Online population of Russia is growing with every year and intention to buy services online giving a promising future perspective. Among trends of Russian e-market is fast growth of e-commerce shopping habits and high penetration of debit and credit cards (Zaretsky 16 October 2013). Those of course stimulate people to buy more online. Most people are used to buying their vacation package in the travel agency office, so in order to start buying online they need to know that it's possible to buy online. They also need to believe that buying online a package is as simple and safe as buying a flight ticket (Zaretsky 16 October 2013).

3 The Russian travellers online

To understand what motivates Russian consumers to use a certain distribution channel and also what motivates them to buy travel online we have to look through existing theories and researches related to consumers online behaving patterns and correlate it with the Russian travellers' attitude online.

3.1 Consumers behavior and intentions to buy travel online

According to Cohen, Prayag & Moital (2014, 875 – 888) to understand consumer behaviour in the field of tourism usually used following key concepts:

- *Decision-making.* Consumer behavior researchers have not come to a definite conclusion whether to allocate decision-making when purchasing travel services as a separate category, or investigate it as part of consumer behavior in general.
- *Values.* It is what influence consumer's behavior when they choose brand, product attribute or service. In the tourism literature discussed two types of values external and internal. This concept is vague, because of transformation of values with time and another social and personal factors.
- *Motivation.* The push-pull approach investigates what emotional and biogenic needs push tourists. This concept might be connected with the other concepts like expectations and attitudes.
- *Self-concept and personality.* In this context, self-congruity theory, the perceived match between a product or its user personality and self-image, is mostly used to understand self-concept's applicability in tourism (Boksberger, Dolnicar, Laesser & Randle 2011, 5).
- *Expectations.* It plays one of most important role in consumers' behavior, especially post purchase behavior. It is about how travel service or product matches the desires and wants of consumers. According to the expectancy theory, a travel experience that meets or exceeds tourists' expectations will be remembered positively (Cohen & al. 2014, 884)
- *Attitude.* It is a favor or disfavor toward a destination or service, or purchasing travel online.

- *Perceptions.* Usually consumers perceive what they are expecting. Differences in perceptions often lead to variations in behavioural intent. In tourism it is applicable as perceptions, like attitudes, are crucial in constructing visitor involvement, satisfaction, destination image and service quality.
- *Satisfaction.* It is very important construct, the level of consumers satisfaction influence many factors as profit, marketing strategy, developing of services.
- *Trust and loyalty.* The most powerful tool to build relationship with the customers. Loyalty is impossible without trust. Trust is connected with confidence, reliability and much more with the satisfaction.

Amaro & Duarte (2015, 65–68) describe several features that affected consumers' intentions to purchase travel online; among them are communicability, complexity, compatibility, trust, relative advantage, risk, self-efficacy and controllability. Each of these concepts has positive or negative influence on intention to buy online travel products. Some of them match the key concepts of Cohen & al. (2014, 875 – 888).

Communicability is related to the influence of family and friends, in the sense that people are more likely to book online and to frequently book travel online if they know that other people are doing likewise. Consumers are more likely to trust information generated by consumers rather than product suppliers (Buhalis and Jun 2011, 28). Recommendation of family and friends is important to reduce the risk perceived with online travel purchases. Knowing that families and friends purchase online can relieve customer's anxiety in purchasing online and reduces perceived risk. Thus state that communicability positively influences intentions to purchase travel online at the same time communicability negatively influences perceived risk of intentions to purchase travel online. (Amaro & Duarte 2015, 66).

Complexity is connected with the problems that might appear while using Internet resource. Common sense and theories suggest that than easier and less complex innovative technologies to use than higher possibility of acceptance and use by potential customers. As a result perceived complexity of online travel shopping would be negatively related to attitude towards online travel shopping.

Compatibility to the consumers' believes that purchasing travel online fits their lifestyle, needs, and shopping preference. As Li & Buhalis (2006, 163), Amaro & Duarte (2015, 66) also found that perceived compatibility positively influence on the intentions to purchase travel online. This feature matches the Cohen's (2014, 883) concept of Self-concept and personality.

Trust is one of the most important factors directly impact on the willingness to purchase online. Higher trust would make consumer more loyal to the Internet resource. Consumers will hesitate to purchase if they feel uncertainty and risk and there is lack of trust. That puts trust to the central role in online purchasing. Trust in online travel shopping has a positive influence on intention and attitude towards online shopping. At the same time it has negative influence on perceived risk of online travel shopping. (Amaro & Duarte 2015, 68). Cohen (2014, 887) as well notes the trust as one of most important concept in issue of tourism.

Relative advantage according to the Amaro & Duarte (2015, 67) is broader concept than just usefulness. It is a degree to which online travel shopping provides benefits to consumers or is better than its alternatives, such as purchasing through traditional travel agencies or directly contacting travel suppliers by telephone or email. Relative advantage consist of several factors as a convenience, financial advantages, such as lower prices, time saving, enjoyment, and product variety. Bonus and discount programs for the regular customers should be under this feature as well.

Following Amaro & Duarte (2015, 67) perceived relative advantage of online travel shopping would be positively related to attitudes towards online travel shopping and intentions to purchase travel online. Moreover Amaro & Duarte (2015, 67) come to the statement that perceived relative advantage of online travel shopping would increase trust in online travel shopping.

Risk, perceived risk is defined as the potential loss perceived by a consumer in considering the purchase of travel online when compared to the purchase of travel offline. Under online travel purchasing circumstances risk related to the purchasing process,

not to the travel service in general. The perceived risk of online travel shopping has a negative influence on intentions and attitude towards online travel shopping (Amaro & Duarte 2015, 67). However, since payment is the one of the most important item in e-commerce, consumers are always concerned on payment security. Business organisations must therefore pay more attention to protect themselves and their customers from losses due to cybercrimes (Buhalis & Law 2008, 612).

Self-efficacy and controllability discussed as related factors and together called behavioural control. Self-efficacy is related with cognitive perceptions of control based on internal factors, while perceived behavioural control reflects both internal and external factors. It is about how people believe and look to the resources and opportunities and their ability to overcome possible obstacles when purchasing travel online. Self-efficacy is defined as consumers' self-assessment of their own capabilities to manage purchasing online travel, while controllability is defined as individual judgements about the availability of resources and opportunities to purchase travel online. Finally Amaro & Duarte (2015, 67) come to the statement that individuals' perceived behavioural control over purchasing travel online positively influences intentions to purchase travel online. But if individuals' perceived behavioural control over purchasing travel online it would negatively influences perceived complexity.

Among all concepts Amaro & Duarte (2015, 66) point that advantages and complexity are important predictors of favourable attitude towards online shopping. There are plenty of factors that consumers could perceive beneficial and that stimulate them to purchase online: such as time saving, convenience and financial aspects, different systems of discounts and member's bonuses. Nevertheless financial advantages are viewed as a major advantage. Therefore, online travel providers should guarantee the lowest price and offer other financial advantages such as discounts, coupons and other financial incentives.

The advantage of technological advances, by analyzing travellers' past behaviour to deliver personalised results and offer relevant promotions could also work beneficial. Furthermore, accounting present usage of mobile applications travel providers should

provide apps for mobile devices and tablets to purchase or correct travel plan.

Another issue what really matters for Internet users to purchase travel online is finding it compatible with their lifestyle. That lifestyle aspect is an interesting issue as it is connected with the image, brand and reputations of Internet resource.

There are several actions that could help to increase trust and lower perceived risk to online purchasing. For example, providers offer a warranty of refund to consumers, reassure that the information provided will remain confidential and private, provide formal guarantees of service and/or products, inform if the travel service is available at the time of purchase and welcome feedback and comments. Providing explanations of all the costs involved, offering reliable security measures, no disclosure of credit card details, using the latest encryption technology, explaining how the information collected will be used, providing a functional navigation and having a well designed website are other actions that can increase trust in online travel shopping. (Amaro and Duarte 2015, 74).

The most of studies concluded that majority using Internet for online communication and for searching information. It is more than appropriate for the tourism industry and tourism products, the online is used especially for searching information. The most searched information is about accommodation, but the most bought tourism service is transport, followed by accommodation. In Europe, the Internet is now more than twice as important as travel agents as an information source (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 26).

However it is well established that there are cultural differences within and between nationalities that influence what motivates tourists and how they behave (Dimanche, 1994; Kozak, 2002; Pizam & Jeong, 1996; Reisinger & Turner, 2002b in Cohen & al. 2014, 895). Moreover every tourist is different, carrying a unique blend of experiences, motivations, and desires. To an extent the new sophisticated traveller has emerged as a result of experience. (Buhalis & Law 2008, 610). The challenging mission of the travel e-commerce is to identify the needs of the e-tourism consumer and to personalize the online tourism products and services by following them up and adapting them to the modifications of the e-consumer's behavior.

In the survey for this study is used the concepts proposed by Amaro & Duarte (2015, 69).

3.2 Russian travellers behavior online

Among general characteristics of Russian consumers points Pesu (30 December 2013) Russia is expected to be the largest consumer market in Europe by 2025. Russians are travelling and spending a significant amount of money overseas, Russians spend in average 1,000 US dollars per head on their holidays and 72 % of tourists pay for their holidays in cash.

Russia is the biggest online audience in Europe. It is expected to be 80 million of Internet users in 2015 and 130 million users in 2025. 90% of Internet population use social networks. Already 50% of Internet users buy online. (Pesu 30 December 2013).

According to report of Ovchinnikov (11 April 2013) 5.6 millions of Russians has experience of buying transport or tourism services via the Internet in 2012. In same year 2012 Russians spent 160 billion of rubles buying travel services online.

Ovchinnikov (11 April 2013) points the non-obvious factor that impact on Russians willingness to buy travel online, it is the Internet experience. He found relationship between online experience of the Internet users and their intention to buy travel online. Among those who have never used online payment before, less than 1% will purchase online travel services in the next 12 months. Only 10-15% of the users of online shopping make their first payment for travel services. Standard time lag between the beginning of usage of online payments and the first purchase of online travel services is up to 3-5 years. But among those who have been connected to the Internet during last 5-7 years and have already experience in online payments for the goods and services even not related to travel, the share of online buyers of travel services will grow annually by approximately 8-10%. This segment - users recently connected to the Internet and purchainsing travel online - provides about half of the total growth of consumer audience of online travel market.

Stark Tourism Associates (18 April 2013) also mentioned that Russians frequently use the Internet to compare prices of flights, hotels and package prices but very few actually book over the Internet - partly because e-commerce is still not well developed in Russia and partly because they need the support of travel agents for their visa applications. A small number of Russians do book hotels directly. These tend to be more experienced and independent travellers. A number of surveys in recent years have noted a shift from group to Flexible Independent Travel (FIT).

Russians are slow to trust new companies and won't easily divulge their credit card details. Russian consumer is not as developed and accustomed to e-commerce as the Western one but in Moscow situation is different states Pesu (30 December 2013).

Among advantages of Internet usage according to the report of Data Insight for PayPal (19 May 2014) 92% of Russians point *time saving*. More than 85% agree that the Internet helps to make a choice because it provides a *sufficient variety* of goods and services. There was also opinion that Internet helps *saving money* as online products cost less than in real shops and Internet gives the opportunity to *compare pricing*.

To *lower price* and *time saving* Pesu (30 December 2013) adds *convenience* – shopping from any location and anytime – and *online customer reviews* as a key advantages and reasons why Russians shop online.

Preferred sources of travel information for Russian customers according Stark Tourism Associates (18 April 2013) are:

- Internet - Internet users also prefer personal recommendations for travel information.
- Word of mouth
- Travel agents
- According to travel trade, the main sources of travel information are printed materials, such as catalogues, booklets and leaflets, outdoor advertising (banners, billboards), and radio and television.

That fits with the trusted sources of Russian tourist when gathering travel information by Laikari (20 May 2013):

- Relatives, friends, acquaintances – Word Of Mouth
- Other traveler's ratings online – User Generated Content
- Social media – User Generated Content
- Official tourist office websites
- Media: documents on TV, articles in print
- Travel agencies
- Advertising

Oshkalo (9 October 2013) also notes the importance of the customer reviews, forums and similar types of user-generated content for the Russian travellers. This all goes under the heading of word-of-mouth. People don't generally trust banners, and don't trust what's printed in fashion magazines, because they understand that whatever they read was pre-determined and paid for by advertisers, states Oshkalo (9 October 2013).

Price and recommendation of friends were pointed in the report of Hotels.com (2014) as two strongest reasons driving Russians to choose hotels. Highlighting once again the declining influence of travel agents in the decision-making and booking process, only 16% considered travel agency recommendations as important. Friends were seen as a much more reliable source on 45% (Hotels.com 2014).

Moreover Laikari (20 May 2013) suggests remembering important cultural aspects while dealing with the Russian customers. Important things to understand - the trip has "a long tail" – the travel experience will be shared with friends and relatives. For Russian tourists customer service is the key factor for better customer satisfaction. Russians appreciate an in-depth understanding on history, sightseeing etc. They require more information, preferably in Russian.

Stark Tourism Associates (18 April 2013) reports that more than 40% of all Russian outbound travellers live in Moscow followed by St. Petersburg. Demand from big pro-

vincial cities such as Yekaterinburg and Novosibirsk had been growing faster than that from the capital, but it suffered more from the economic recession in 2008-09.

According to the research prevalence of online tourism services shopping dependence on the level of income and the online experience determines the geography of the audience: 48% of buyers are from Moscow and St. Petersburg – capital and former capital, both are the biggest cities in Russia respectively with higher income of their citizens. Another 8% is from the suburbs of two capitals. The rest of Russia accounts only 44% of buyers. In Moscow and St. Petersburg online travel services buys 17% of the population (aged 18-65) versus 7% in other cities over one million and 4% in other cities (Ovchinnikov 11 April 2013).

By the statement of Laikari (20 May 2013) 80 % of Russian tourist traveling to Finland are from Moscow and St Petersburg area. They spend in average 111 euros per day. 71 % of them do not speak English and 76 % book their trip without a travel agency but online. Main cities has more opportunities for the travel e-commerce.

96% of e-tourism customers have credit cards and 86% use them in particular to pay for goods and services online. Online purchasing with credit cards is dominating when buying travel services also for Russians (Ovchinnikov 11 April 2013).

While in general an online shopper in Russia is more likely to be female - 64% (Pesu 30 December 2013) in travel e-business 57% of online travel shoppers are men states Ovchinnikov (11 April 2013).

Age distribution of Russian online travel customers according to Ovchinnikov (11 April 2013) is following: 36% are aged from 25 to 35 years and 20% are under 25 years old. 19% is between 36 – 44 years old and 21% between 45 – 54 years old. Online buyers older 55 years old are only 4 %. That allows stating that the proportion of online buyers of travel services is maximum among the Russians 18-35 years (Ovchinnekov 11 April 2013).

According to the report of Hotels.com (2014) Russian travellers prefer travel abroad with companions:

- 29% preferring the camaraderie of their partner or spouse without their children.
- 22% choosing other family members.
- 17% voting for their partner or spouse with children.
- 8% choose solo journey.

Hotels.com (2014) also mentions that these results were slightly different in 2013 when a partner or spouse without children was still the most popular option, although chosen by a higher percentage – 32%, followed by friends on 19%, family members on 16% and partner or spouse with children on 15%.

According to the report of Hotels.com (2014) most popular activities when asked what were the main activities that Russian guests enquired about during their stay, respondents report that sightseeing and shopping are the two top priorities, followed by dining and visiting beaches. Russians spent the most money in the restaurant and the bar during their stay, with Wi-Fi and the minibar also proving popular. The least productive facilities, as far as Russian guests were concerned, were the gym and in-room entertainment.

Following Hotels.com report (2014) Russian travellers take a wide variety of factors into account when deciding which foreign country to visit on holiday. The report announces the availability of a cheap holiday is the number one factor, together with a rich heritage, both on 34%. Good beaches as well as country and nature are close seconds on 33% each. Ease of travel is highlighted by 34%, with 16% citing visa-free destinations, 10% naming short travel times.

Online shopping trends of Russians consumers match the features of a good travel e-commerce discussing in chapter 2.3. That means Russian travel customers understand what they want from the e-commerce:

- Good service
- Easy and quick to find what needs

- Constant product availability
- Good quality/price ratio
- Friendly shopping environment

Nevertheless according to Oshkalo (9 October 2013) Russian consumer behavior is different from the Western. She points that the differences are becoming less acute over time. And that is a logical result of the environment. Russian people are slow to trust new companies and won't easily divulge their credit card details. They are also afraid that their banks and credit card companies won't compensate them in the event of issues with the online merchant. In general, Russian consumer is not as developed and accustomed to e-commerce as the Western one. Moscow and Saint Petersburg are different as they are a country in itself. People there travel more, they have debit cards, so have an option to pay online. Otherwise if business is planned to be addressed to the mass market in Russia it has to be offered cash on delivery stated Oshkalo (9 October 2013).

3.3 Russian intentions to Finland as a travel destination

Where do Russians typically go? China & Finland are popular day-trip destinations for shopping states Paspartu Travel (12 November 2013).

For such a small country like Finland to be the one in the top 10 the most popular destinations for outbound leisure and business travel for Russians (Zaretsky 16 October 2013) even taking the last place – is very promising. Of course, this is mostly due to the large flow of tourists coming to Finland for shopping. But as Finland and Russia share a common border and in proximity to it is the second large city of Russia with millions population St. Petersburg, the right marketing and new ideas might cause an interest in visiting Finland by Russian citizens with the objectives besides shopping.

Finland was chosen the best winter destination for Russians in annual Russian award in the field of tourism ZvezdaTravel in 2015. The award is held annually and has 72 nominations. This is one of the oldest tourist awards in Russia. It is performed on a non-

commercial basis, taking into account the preferences of consumers. This year competition attracted more than 1,100 candidates. Results of the award are important for the participants in terms of assessing the prospects of the business. They reflect the mood of the most active users of tourism industry. Already second year in a row Finland wins the nomination "The best place for a winter holiday abroad". In the next year Finland promising to fight for the nomination associated with the summer season. That shows the high interest among Russians and willeness to visit Finland.

Finland topped the list of the most popular destinations in 2014 among Russian tourists according to statistic results are given on the official website of Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and Federal Tourism Agency. Despite the economic crisis and the rate of the ruble last year, the number of visits from Russia to Finland amounted to 4.8 million. As stated in the explanatory notes of the Federal State Statistics Service, the counting was carried out using the new method. Under a travel the agency understands the trip that have committed any purpose, except employment and long-term studying. Into account of the calculations were not taken the trips, committed by the military, diplomats and service personnel of public transport for example, the crew of the aircraft.

According to the visitfinland.fi Finland remains the Russian largest tourist destination as well. Following the data the Russians did 4.8 million trips to Finland in 2014. That put Finland to the first place of travel destinations for Russians. Travel to Finland, however, decreased by 13% compared to last year, when the total number of trips was 5.5 million. Russian outbound tourism in 2014 plunged into crisis and decreased by 15% from the previous year. All in all, the Russians did last year 45.8 million trips abroad (54.1 million in 2013).

Russiatourism.ru – official agency for tourism affairs part of Ministry of Culture of Russia proves that mentioned Finland is visited mostly by residents of St.Petersburg who benefit from simplified visa requirements from Finland consulate and travel with a car for short trips and shopping.

Jukka Laikari gives the following figures in his presentation about Russian travel customers. Data refers to Russian travellers in Finland in 2011:

- 5,1 million visits from Russia per year
- 3,1 million Russian visitors per year
- Russians amount 50 % of foreign visitors in Finland
- Russians book 25 % of foreign hotel nights
- Russians make 39 % of foreign tourism income
- Russians spend 1,15 billion euros per year

The portret of Russian tourist in Finland by Jukka Laikari: 80 % from Moscow & St Petersburg area, spends 111 euros average spending per day, 71 % do not speak English, 76 % book their trip without a travel agency.

From the beginning 2015 is very sluggish and difficult year for Russian tour operators. International tourism demand has decreased, and at the same time the Russian Duma will address the new tour activities governed by the law. The bill, which went to the State Duma in the first reading through a significant increase in the number of tour operators guarantee payments to the various funds. If the bill proceeds in its current form, it is anticipated that the majority of the existing operators would not be able to continue their activities. Russian travel industry associations, however, do everything to ensure that the law would not change. Since the new law is expected to come into work at the earliest in the summer, will tour operators get the current law in accordance with the collateral again to keep up with the tour operators so far in the registry. Most of the license is to expire during the spring and because many insurance companies now refuse to provide a new insurance for tour operators, even more than a thousand players are already threatened by relegation tour operator register. (Visit Finland 2015).

The Russian government put effort to encourage Russians in 2015 for a domestic tourism. Domestic tourism in 2015 is projected to increase by 30-50% from the previous year. Ruble exchange rate has been quite good incentive for many of Russian, which in the past has been focused on their journey to foreign destinations. Despite difficult

times, Visit Finland will continue in 2015, a strong marketing in Russia, in order to retain the number one position in Finnish tourism statistics in the future. (Visit Finland 2015).

The vast majority of Russian online travel agencies represents Finland for Russian travellers as one-day bus tours or ferry tours for 2-3 days. Another segment of the e-market are the sites offering to rent variety of cottages. But there is very few resources who offering something more than bus shopping tour or ferry tour to Stockholm for example good holidays in Lapland. Nevertheless the Saima area is represented quite well on the Russian e-market by variety of activity and accommodation. There are plenty informational resources about Finland in general and it's capital Helsinki but not holidays providers or tour organizers. Some of Finnish travel market players have their page in Russian language offering their services straight to the customers.

The research of Russian search engine Yandex.ru shows that most popular search for the words "Finland" + "Tour" is among people living in Saint-Petersburg area. The monthly request for these words coming up till 17 000 times.

Finland has had a committee researching questions relating to the possible eventual removal of visa restrictions between EU and Russia, which ended in October 2014. As the RITM (Russian International Travel Monitor) went to print, the committee's findings and recommendations had not been published and the EU-Russia visa facilitation agreement of 2007 remains in force (Hotels.com 2014).

There is defenetly a huge potential for the developing Finland as a travel destination for the Russian travellers. Russians show up the hight interest to the neighbor European country not only with the shopping reason but also as a leasure destination. Despite the low ruble rate, Russian still continue to visit Finland, that allow to suppose that after recession Finland will become even more popular and desirable travel destination for the Russians.

4 Research approach and methods

The research questions of the study dictate the kind of research approach and methods used in order to collect data. Along with the widely known types of research approaches to achieve the goal set in this paper the most suitable is the quantitative research as we need to measure variables, assess the impact of these variables on an outcome and apply results to a large number of people. (Creswell 2005, 65.)

4.1 Quantitative approach

According to Creswell (2005, 39) quantitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher decides what to study, asks specific, narrow questions, collect numeric data from the participants, analyse these numbers using statistics, and conduct the inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner. If the study research problems requiring a description of trends or an explanation of the relationship among variables by Creswell (2005, 45) it is best to use quantitative research.

Quantitative approach is used to quantify the problem by way of analysing numerical data. Data used in quantitative research should be transformed into useable statistics information. Quantitative approach is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables – and generalize results from a larger sample population. For the quantitative research studying of the literature plays the major role. The broad literature review is done in the beginning of this thesis and it presents a wide theoretical part.

According to the problem set for this study expecting explaining and predicting relationship among variables the quantitative approach is most appropriate.

Collecting data in the quantitative research involves collecting data using instruments with preset questions and responses, gathering numeric data, and collecting information from a large number of individuals. (Creswell 2005, 47.)

Quantitative data collection methods include various forms of surveys, for this study it was chosen to conduct a survey research.

4.2 Conducting a survey research

In order to reach the aim of this study it is chosen to conduct a survey research. According to Rea & Parker (2014, 4) the ultimate goal of a sample research is to allow researcher to generalize about a large population by studying only a small portion of that population, what fits perfectly to the circumstances of the study. We need personal and self-reported information that is probably is not available elsewhere and for the desired generalization of findings to a larger population sample survey research is the most appropriate method as survey research involves soliciting self-reported verbal information from people about themselves (Rea & Parker 2014, 4). The primary focus of the survey is the respondent's attitudes and opinions about variety of conditions and circumstances (Rea & Parker 2014, 6).

Survey designs are procedures in quantitative research in which researcher administer a survey or questionnaire to a small group of people (called the sample) in order to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of a large group of people (called the population) (Creswell 2005, 52).

To reach the aim of the study and answer the research questions of this work it have to be collected information from wide population of Russian people from the target group and then the results of the survey can be applied to larger group of Russian customers. One of the objectives of the study is to describe the potential customers, their behavior pattern and preferences online. Surveys researches typically collect three types of information: descriptive, behavioral, and attitudinal (Rea & Parker 2014, 6) – what is needed to achieve the objectives of the study.

According to Creswell (2005, 355) the most popular form of survey design used in education is a cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional survey design means to collect data at one point in time. This form of survey design is chosen for this thesis.

There are a lot of forms to conduct survey research, to collect data for this study an online self-administrated questionnaire was chosen as a research instrument. “Questionnaire is a form used in a survey design that participants in study complete and return to the researcher” (Creswell 2005, 360). The possibility to conduct questionnaire online have a number of advantages according to Rea & Parker (2014, 12) such as:

- Convenience
- Rapid data collection
- Cost-effectiveness
- Confidentiality and security
- Specialized population

4.3 Data collection process

According to Creswell (2005, 10), “collecting data means identifying and selecting individuals for a study, obtaining their permission to study them, and gathering information by asking people questions or observing their behaviour.”

The survey was created, conducted and analysis via Webropol online survey software. The planning phase of the survey took about two weeks. On 10th of October 2014 the survey was put online for one week in order to pre-test the questionnaire. The questionnaire was pre-tested in order to check it’s clarity, comprehensiveness and acceptability (Rea & Parker 2014, 95) and that all understand the questions same way. The feedback was collected from the participants of questionnaire pre-testing and some minor modifications were done. The actual survey was conducted on 24th of October 2014.

Open link to the survey was placed in the social media platforms Facebook and V Kontakte (the Russian copy of international Facebook). The social networks were chosen as data collecting technique because it seemed to be the easiest and quickest way to get enough answers from the target group in order the survey to be meaningful. The survey was online for four weeks. Once per week an invitation to participate in the survey

was placed again to catch those who has missed announcement before and to remind others who delays filling the questionnaire.

Fearing that distribution through the social networks does not provide the necessary coverage of the target group additionally the link to the survey was placed in the page of Finnloma – company which offering renting cottages in Finland – as a attempt to attract to the research people who is interested in travelling to Finland. As well as in two online travel blogs Yaturistka.ru and life-in-travels.ru – to cover population interesting in travelling in general. At these three resources open link to the survey was placed once and was opened for two weeks.

“A sample is a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population” (Creswell 2005, 146). Due to limited time and resources and considering the need to participate in the study, representatives of different regions of Russia, people traveling to Finland and those who are just planning to, in order to cover the different attitudes and opinions about online travel planning and Finland as a tourism destination a nonprobability sampling was chosen as sampling method. The strategy of the nonprobability sampling was chosen a convenience sampling. “Convenience sampling is a nonsystematic approach to recruiting respondents that allows potential participants to self-select into the sample” (Sue & Ritter 2012, 44). Considering that the target group of the research is sufficiently broad this sampling method looks appropriated.

The respondents were selected among Russians using Internet from different age groups representing both females and males. The aim was also to get respondents with different socio-economic status and from different regions of Russia.

4.4 Questionnaire design

The research instrument for the survey was chosen unsupervised self-administrated online questionnaire, as it seems a logical and easy option as a way of collecting information from people. When designing the questionnaire the aim was to formulate questions in a way the research problems and questions announced in the study are cov-

ered. We wish to collect descriptive, behavioural, and attitudinal data so that we may fully understand the differential complexities of the population from which sample has been drawn. (Rea & Parker 2014, 6)

Following the recommendation of several resources (Sue & Ritter 2012, 44; Creswell 2005, 369; Rea & Parker 2014, 94) the questionnaire was developed especially for this study.

Several assumptions have been developed based on theoretical part of the thesis and on the base of the research questions and aim of the study. These assumptions were taking into consideration while drawing up the questions:

- Assumption 1: Russian travellers are an active users of Internet and use Internet to plan and book their travels
- Assumption 2: There are some features that could enhance the trust and usability of the Internet resource for the Russian customers
- Assumption 3: Russian people are interested in travelling to Finland
- Assumption 4: People living in St-Petersburg and Moscow travel to Finland more often

The key variables of the study are:

- Respondent's background information
- Travel experience in general and travel experience to Finland
- Russian preferences while planning and booking travelling via Internet
- Russian preferences while travelling to Finland

The questions in the questionnaire are united into three blocks that followed each other in a logical order. According to Rea & Parker (2014, 6) socioeconomic characteristics provide important information that enable the researcher to better understand the larger population represented by the sample.

The questionnaire begins with simple background information. For the sake of the survey it was relevant to know the gender and age of the participants, as well as marital

status and place of living. After the personal questions it is block with the questions about planning travelling via Internet. In the end of the questionnaire are placed questions related to travelling to Finland.

The questionnaire is build mostly from closed-ended questions with the multiple-choice of answers. At some questions is left field for the open answer to have possibility to receive opinion of the respondents and as assumed at some questions it was very useful. The questions related to an importance and trust is done in a form of ranking questions answering which is offered in a Likert scale to get a degree of the relationship. The most difficult questions that required a bit more involvement were placed in the middle of the questionnaire.

The questions were designed so that the answers can be calculated in numbers. Final variation of the questionnaire has 17 questions. The questionnaire was conducting in Russian language and then results were translated into English to be announced in the study.

4.5 Data analysis process

Data analysis process was done in the same analytical tool used for creating and conducting questionnaire – a Webropol software. In the beginning of the analytical procedure all the responses were checked for the relevance. The place of living was the filter question.

Conducting analysis of the research survey data first using Webropol reporting tool all collected data were displayed in graphs and tables. The responses on every question were analysed and the most appropriated figures were chosen to be presented in the reporting part of the study. Then interpreted results were placed with the relevant figures at the same time the comparison and matching with the theoretical part, trends and predictions, confirmation or disconfirmation with the assumptions was done.

After that following the research questions were done the correlation between places of living of the respondents with another results of the survey to see if there is differences in preferences of people living in St-Petersburg, Moscow and other parts of Rus-

sia. And finally the comparisons of two groups – who travel to Finland often and who is just planning were done to get data for the conclusion and recommendation.

Finally accordingly to the results of the study and following the research questions conclusions and recommendation were presented.

4.6 Reliability and Validity

Two factors of reliability and validity are important to consider when making a research. The instrument reporting the individual scores has to be reliable and valid (Creswell 2005, 162).

According to the Creswell (2005, 162) the goal of good research is to have measures that are reliable. *Reliability* means that results resived from the research are stable and consistent and can be repeated.

Creswell suggest factors that lower the reability:

- Questions on instrument are unclear
- Procedures of test administration vary and are not standardized
- Participants are nervous, guessing the answers, misinterpret questions

The application of these factors to our study allows the following conclusions:

- The research instrument – the questionnaire – was pre-tested before implementation to avoid all possible unclearness. After pre-testing phase it was done some small corrections to make the questionnaire clear for everybody.
- The procedures of test administration was same within the whole period of survey - unsupervised self-administration of the online questionnaire.
- Participants choose themselves if they would like to participate in the survey what allows to assume about low level of nervous and guessing the questions. Misinterpret questions was avoided by pre-testing the questionnaire.

Following the above we can conclude that the level of reliability of this research is good enough for the aim of the study. Of course it would be interesting to examine the reliability of the research instrument using all five procedures suggested by Creswell (2005, 162), but we are limited with time frame and the aim of this Master thesis.

The *validity* of the research means that the individual's scores from the research are meaningful and let to draw a good conclusions from the sample have been studied to the population (Creswell 2005, 162). According to Sue & Ritter (2012, 52) the validity of a measure can be evaluated only by examining the connection between the question and the attitude, behaviour, or fact it purports to measure. Validity refers to the link between individual questions and the concepts they seek to measure.

Sue & Ritter (2012, 52) describe the respondent-centered threats to validity:

- Social desirability
- Inaccurate estimates
- Nonattitudes

In the study presented we try to avoid factors that might compromised the validity of the questionnaire. The respondents should not feel any pressure in socially desirable-ways to fill the questionnaire. In the invitation to participate in the survey it was announced that filling the questionnaire is anonymous. Respondents decide themselves if they wish to participate in the survey or not. Questions were not obligatory nevertheless almost all participants completed all the questions. To avoid inaccurate estimates respondents were asked about their own behavior and opinion, and about specific behavior within limited time. The questions in the questionnaire were designed to minimize the nonattitude factor. Closed-ended questions has field for the open answer if the respondent has own opinion about subject. Ranking questions have enough detailed scale of answers.

Greater reliability and validity of the results are always the aims of the researcher nevertheless it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study. The reliability and validity of present research might be limited by several circumstances. The non-

probability sampling method represented by convenience sampling is known to be less reliable than probability or random sampling. Unsupervised administration of the on-line surveys, which is highly standardized and therefore less biased (Creswell 2005, 170), but at the same time cannot be controlled by the researcher. For example, the amount of female respondents participating in the survey is much bigger than amount of male respondents. Also the amount of respondents living in St-Petersburg is proportionally bigger than amount of respondents from another parts of Russia but in our case this issue considered more as advantage.

Taking into account the listed circumstances it can be assumed that the results of this study are not sufficient for reliable and valid generalizations. Hill (1998, in Sue & Ritter 2012, 47) noted that it is better to have collected some data and gained some insight than to have collected no data and gained no information. Nevertheless we hope that the findings of this work will be useful for creating e-commerce for Russians, give tips how to deal with Russian customers and enhance Finland as a travel destination as well gives ideas for future studies.

5 Key results

In this part of the study will be describe the results of the survey. The results are devided on several topics to answer better the questions of the study.

The online questionnaire was visited by 312 visitors. And alltogether it was given 163 answers on the questionnaire. Two answers were removed from the overall analysis of the study because their respondents did not match the target group of the survey, namely they were the Russian-speaking citizens of Finland and therefore not considered Finland as a travel destination. So 161 answers were analysed.

5.1 Profile of the respondents

The first look to the survey results showing the age of the respondents. As we can see on the figure 3 – 87 per cent of the respondents are between 21 and 40 years old - those who are at the present moment the most common Internet users. The results of this survey almost identical to the numbers shown in the study of Ovchinnekov (11 April 2013) - the most active Internet users in Russia aged between 18 and 35 years old.

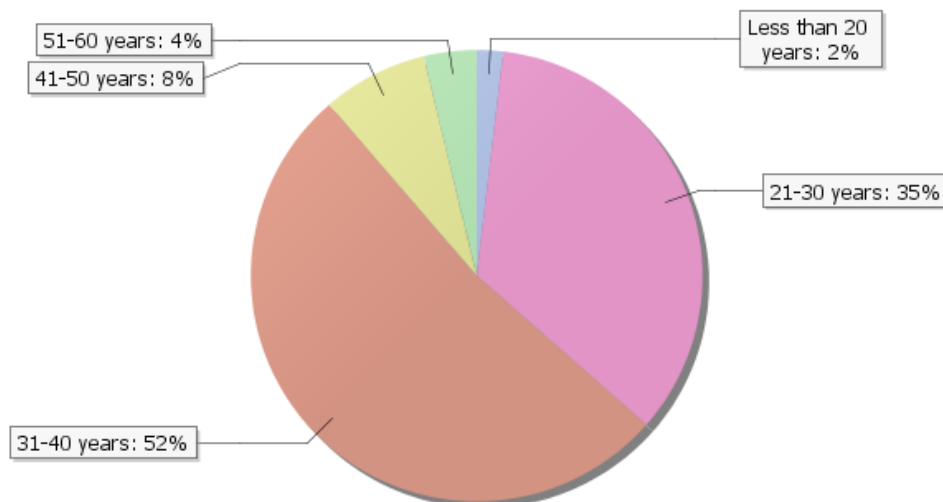


Figure 3. Age of the respondents (n=159)

Analysis of the marital status of respondents is shown in the figure 4 below. Most of the respondents are without children - 58 per cent and 42 per cent of the respondents

have children. At the same time 55 per cent of the respondents are married and 45 per cent are single. The biggest groups of the audience are single without children and married with children with the results of 40 and 37 per cent respectively.

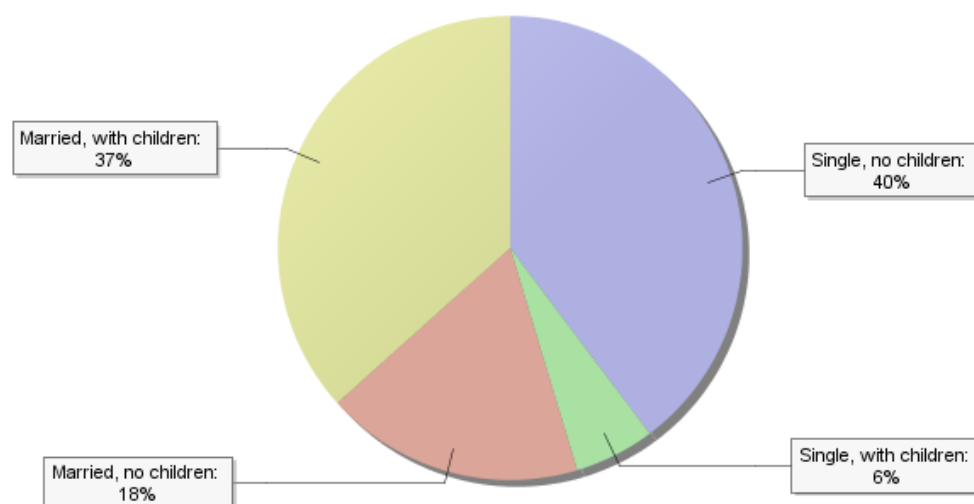


Figure 4. Marital status of the respondents (n=161)

Among respondents 83 per cent are female and 17 per cent are male.

The majority of the respondents live in Saint Petersburg – 60 per cent, plus 4 per cent from Northwestern region but not from Saint Petersburg. In Moscow lives 13 per cent of the respondents, plus 4 per cent from Central region but not from Moscow. Another regions showing up only 18 per cent of the respondents.

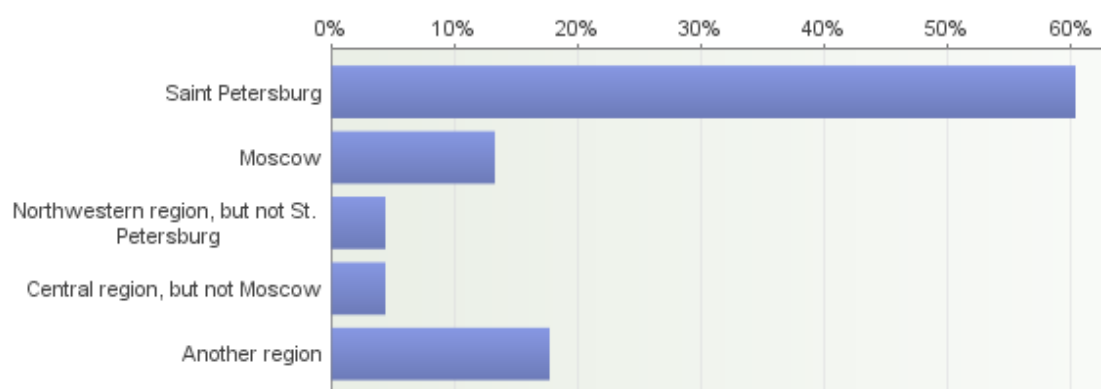


Figure 5. Place of living of the respondents (n=159)

The results of the survey show that Russian people travel quite much. In this study travel means to leave Russian Federation at least for one night. More than one time per year travel 79 per cent of the respondents and 55 per cent of them travel more than twice a year. And only 2 per cent of the respondents never use Internet for planning and booking their trips. Among all 69 per cent of the respondents pointed that always use Internet for planning and booking travel. Prefer to book their travel themselves 56 per cent of the respondents, and 37 per cent combine travel agencies and selfplanning, only 7 per cent of the respondents using help of travel agencies.

To summarise written above we can assume that Russian people are an active travellers and Internet users.

5.2 Russian preferences and behaviour online

The survey shows that while booking and planing their travelling respodents use different Internet resources. Even for the Russian users International metasearch engines *Booking.com* and *Skyscanner* are the most common resources with 35 and 21 per cent respectively. Among plenty of the Russian metasearch resources used for planning and booking travelling respondents more often point *Aviasales.ru* and *Anywayanyday*. *Airbnb* seems to be very popular resource to find accommodation even among Russians. In the field for the open answer several respondents mentioned that use different metasearch engines for the planning trip, but switching straight to the *home pages of the airlines and hotels* to book and pay flights and accommodations. Also many respondents notice that use *travel blogs and travel forums* for planning their trips and collect information about travelling. The most popular travel forum is so called “forum Vinskogo” - *forum.avn* – the Russian forum where independent travellers share their expirience, ask and give advices about travel plans for the whole globe.

When choosing the web resources for travel planning among three most important features for the Russian customers are: *good selection of offers* – for 67 per cent of the respondents, *possibility to pay online* – for 62 per cent of the respondents and *low prices* – for 59 per cent of the respondents. A sufficient variety of goods and services of online

resources as well as saving money through low pricing were mentioned as advantages for Russian customers by Data Insight (19 May 2014) and Pesu (30 December 2013).

The *reputation of the site* is also important for the Russian customers and has collected 57 per cent of the respondents. In the field for the open answer several respondents point the *easy usability* as a dominant when choosing the web resource. The less important option is *possibility to book everything at once* – only 29 per cent of the respondents point it as very important feature and 21 per cent state it is not important at all.

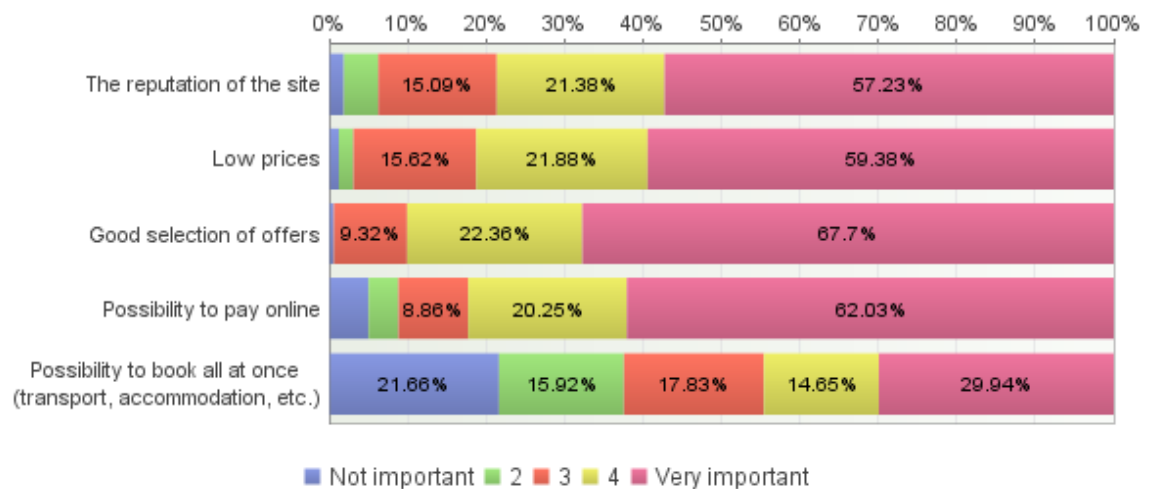


Figure 6. Important features of the Internet site when choosing Internet resource for planning (n=161)

About same results come up from the next question about what is the most important for the Russians when using the Internet service for travel planning, booking and payment showing at figure 7. The *easy and clear site navigation* is on the first place with the 56 per cent of the respondents. That corresponds with the suggestions of Kim and Lee (2004 in Buhalis & Law 2008, 616) who classified ease of use and usefulness as most important web service quality dimensions.

Next is the *fast response to inquiries* and *various forms of payment* with the 48 and 46 per cent respectively. It turned out to be the least important the modern style of the web resource and beautiful pictures 7 and 12 per cent respectively. *The opportunity to ask a ques-*

tion online and *discounts and bonuses programs* have a medium importance for the Russian auditorium with 22 and 31 per cent of the respondents respectively.

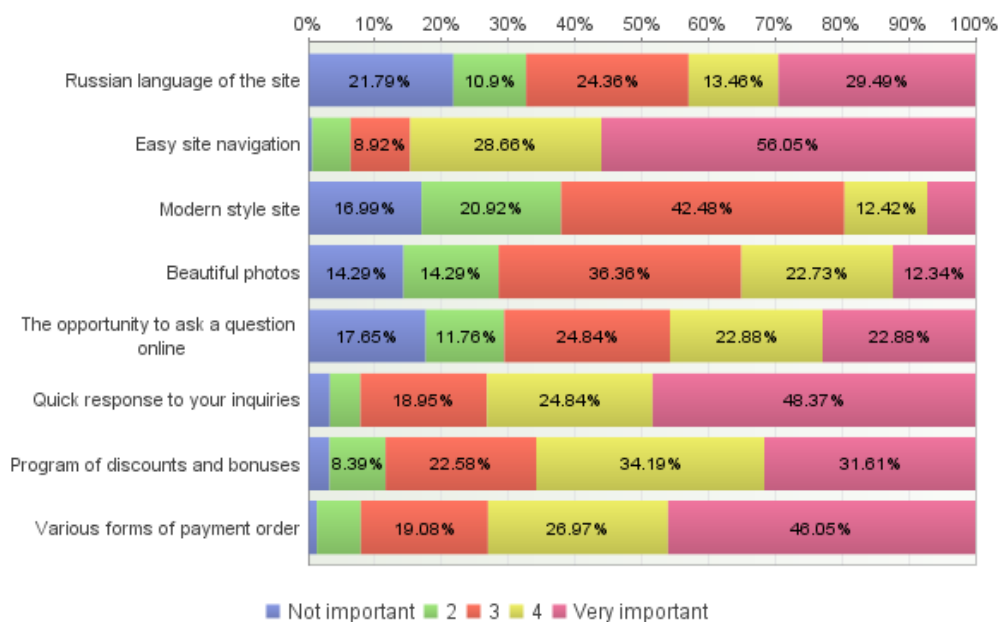


Figure 7. Important feartures of the Internet site when using Internet resource for planning (n=157)

Surprisingly for the Russian travellers at this point the *Russian language of the web site* is not so important as expected. Only 29 per cent of the respondents point is as a very important and 21 per cent of the respondents state it is not important at all. Same results showing up the question about Russian language services when travelling to Finland: only 16 per cent of the respondents state it is important for them to have services in Russian language and 29 per cent state it is not important. These results are unexpected, as Russians are known as a people who speaks only mother tongue. But probably the opportunity and experience to travel more often because of the development of the travel industry and economic growth of the Russian travellers does not make a problem anymore from communication in foregn language.

Absolutely for all respondents *the guarantees of secure payment* enhancing the trust to the online resource showing at figure 8. The guarantees of secure payment greatly affect trust to the Internet resource for 85 per cent of the respondents and for the rest 15 per cent of the respondents affect much or medium. That coincides with the opinion of

Kim (2004, 4) that ‘security of the e-commerce system’ and ‘user-friendly Web interface’ are most important and enhancing trust for the e-commerce users.

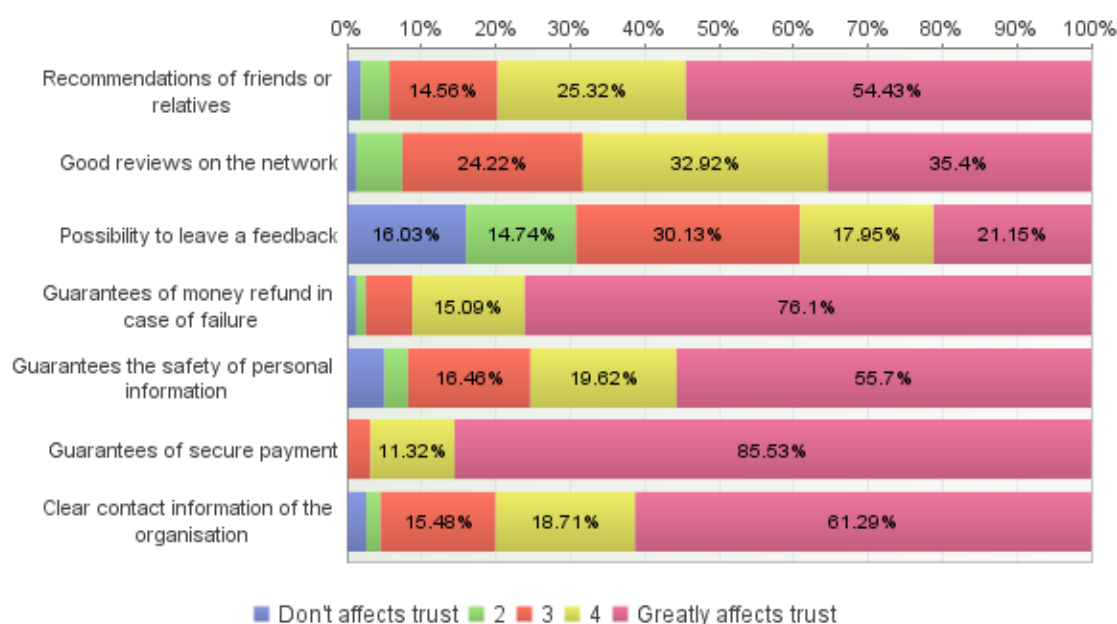


Figure 8. Features of the Internet resource that affect trust to it (n=161)

Next features that enhance the trust of the Russian customers to the online resource are:

- *Guarantees of money refund in case of failure* – very important for 76 per cent of the respondents;
- *Clear contact information of the organization* – very important for 61 per cent of the respondents;
- *Guarantees the safety of personal information* – very important for 55 per cent of the respondents;
- *Recommendations of friends or relatives* – very important for 54 per cent of the respondents. This feature is not important only for 1,9 per cent of the respondents, what proves the expectation and confirms the findings of other studies claiming that word of mouth is very important information resource for the Russians and influence their trust (Laikari 20 May 2013, Hotels.com 2014).

Good reviews on the network and *possibility to leave own feedback* are also very important for 35 per cent and 21 per cent of the respondents respectively. In the open answer respondents also mention *detailed information about services* and *conditions of the order* as an enhanc-

ing trust factors. Nevertheless one respondent living in Saint Petersburg states that doesn't trust the Internet at all doesn't trust in online payment and communication via Internet and is worry about online fraud.

For 73 per cent of the respondents the preferable method of payment is *online credit card* (Figure 9). This coincide with the results of Ovchinnikov (11 April 2013) – for the Russian customers most useful way of payment is a credit card online. To pay service with cash at the place still prefer 21 per cent of the respondents.

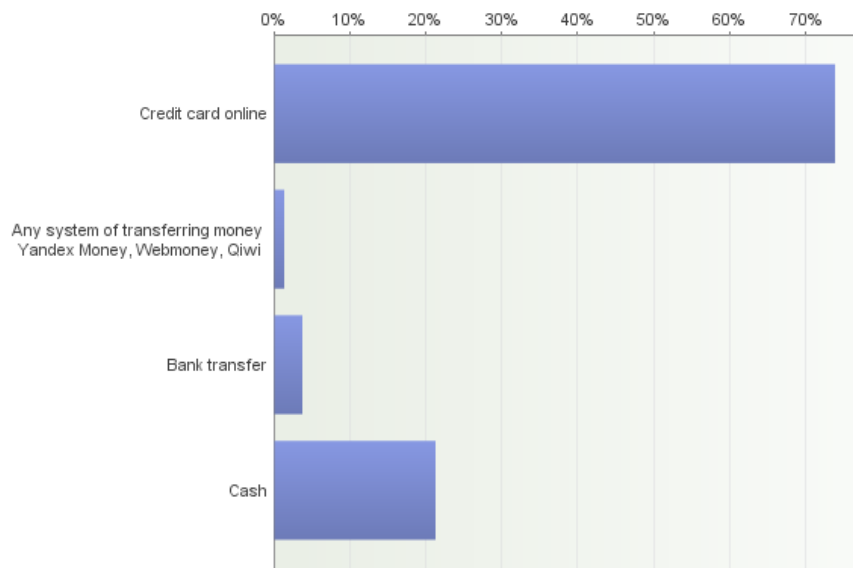


Figure 9. Preferable payment methods (n=160)

Russians more often book and pay online *transportation and accommodation*, 86 per cent and 83 per cent of the respondents respectively state that book and pay online airtickets and hotels, that corresponds to the results of Ovchinnikov (2013). *Tickets to the events* and concerts are also popular to book via Internet for over 57 per cent of the respondents. *Entertainment activities* are booked online only by 20 per cent of the respondents. *Restaurants reservation* via Internet seems to be not so popular yet among Russians, only 5 per cent of the respondents book restaurants online.

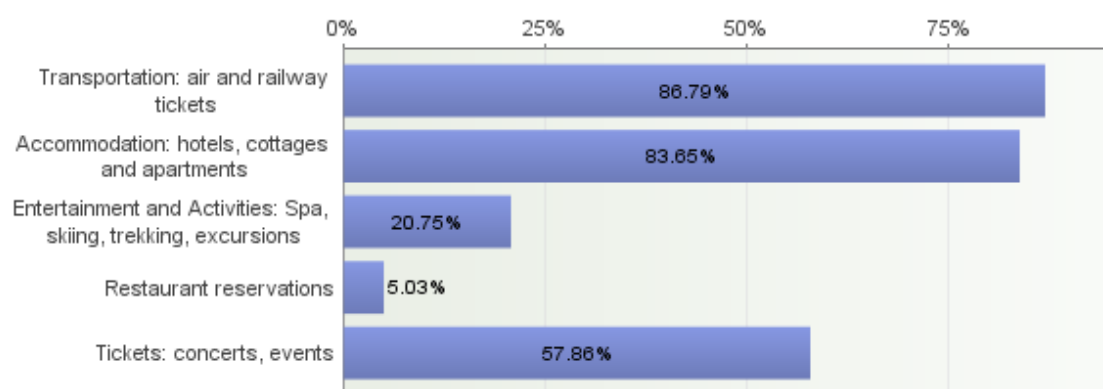


Figure 10. Russians book and pay online (n=159)

5.3 Russians traveling to Finland

Figure 11 showing frequency of travelling to Finland among respondents – 36 per cent of respondents regularly travel to Finland once or twice a year and 28 per cent visit Finland more than twice a year.

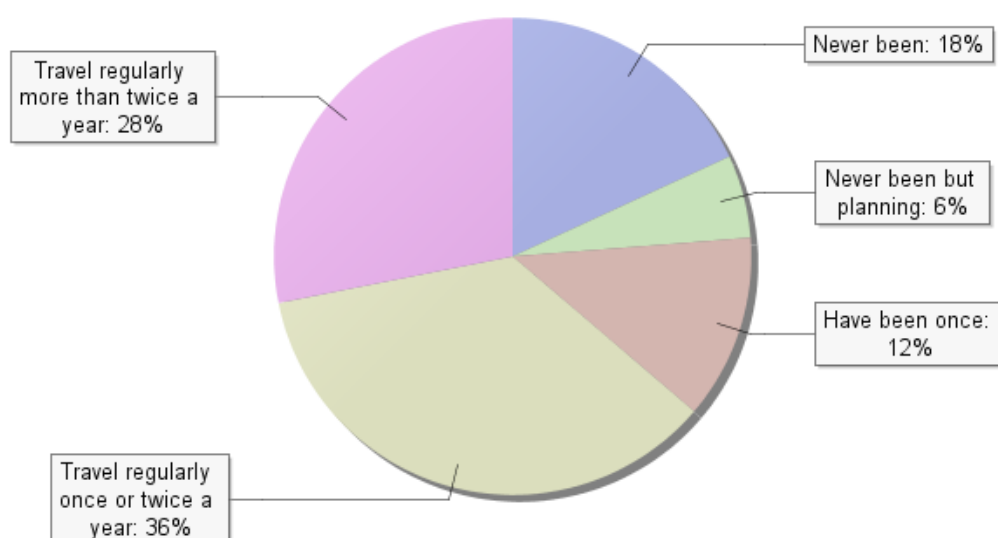


Figure 11. How often respondents travel to Finland (n=160)

The correlation between frequency of visiting Finland and the place of living of the respondents on the figure 12 showing that people living in *St-Petersburg* (blue color) and *Northwestern region* (red color) visit Finland more often. Among respondents living in St-

Petersburg 86 per cent regularly travel to Finland and from the Northwestern region 42 per cent of the respondents. The majority of the respondents from *Moscow* (green color) and respondents from the *Central region* but not from Moscow (yellow color) have been in Finland at least once and about 33 per cent and 28 per cent respectively of them travel to Finland regularly once or more a year. This corresponds to the statement of Laikari (20 May 2013) that majority of Russian tourists traveling to Finland are from St-Petersburg and Moscow area.

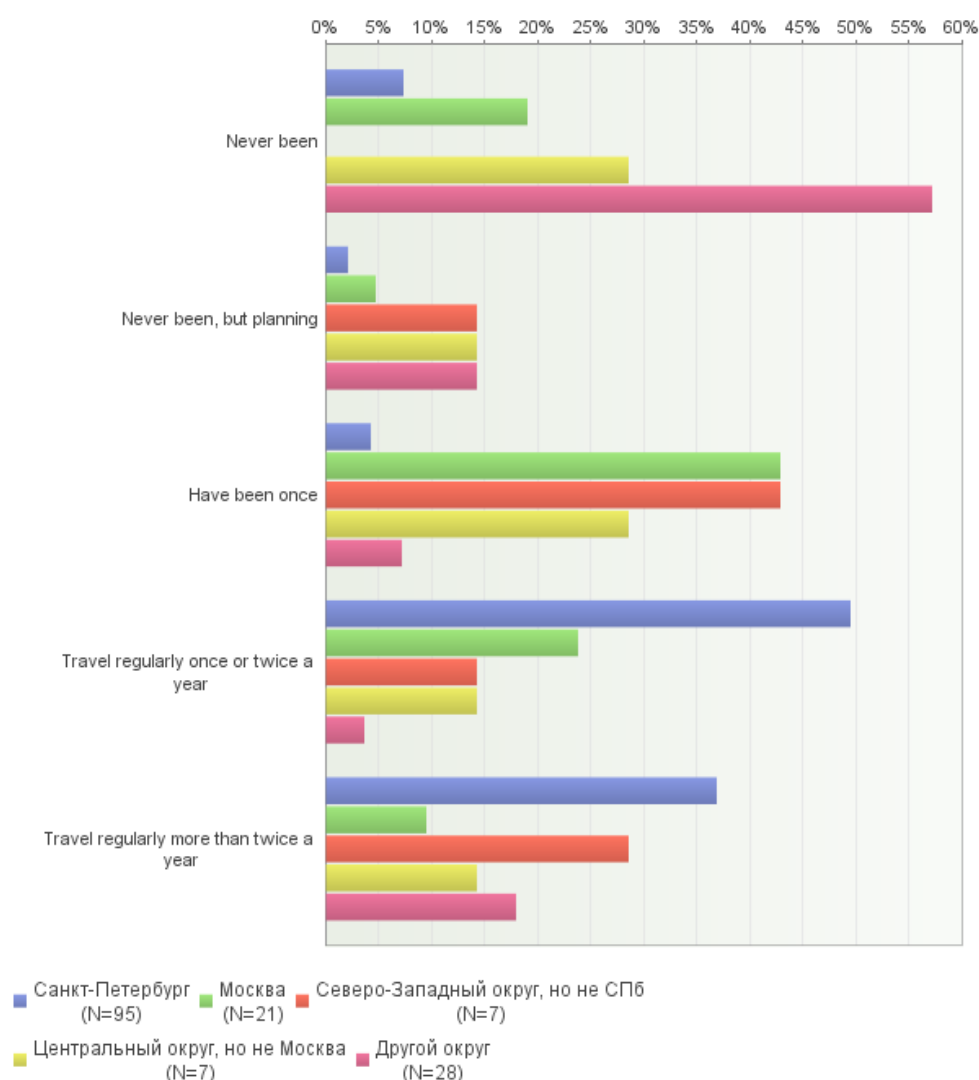


Figure 12. Correlation between frequency of visiting Finland and the place of living of the respondents (n=160/159)

Pink color at the Figure 12 shows the results of the respondents from the *rest of Russia*, over 55 per cent of them have never been to Finland but surprisingly still 18 per cent of the respondents from another regions of Russia (not St-Petersburg and Moscow) travel to Finland regularly more than twice a year.

In general 64 per cent of respondents stated that regulary travel to Finland, only 24 per cent never been from which 6 per cent still planning to visit Fnland.

Figure 13 shows where from Russians get information about Finland. The *opinion of friends and relatives* is used more often as a information resource about Finland by 65 per cent of the respondents what is relevant to the general question about trust and importance of word of mouth among Russians (Laikari 20 May 2013, Hotels.com 2014).

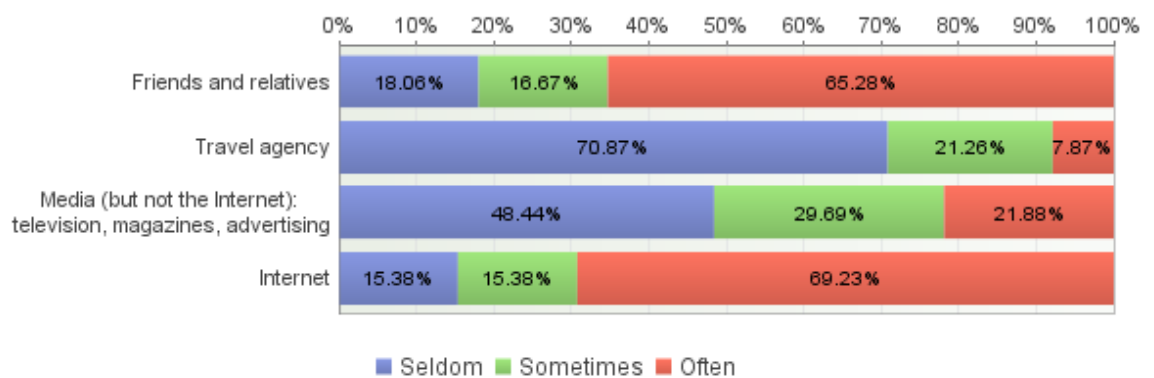


Figure 13. Resources of information about Finland (n=150)

Information from the *travel agencies* is used seldom by 70 per cent of the respondents. The lack of trust to this kind of resources might be connected with the crisis in the travel market and the bankruptcy of several large and well-respected players in tourism industry in Russia within last years.

Mass media excluding Internet is not considering as an information resource about Finland by 48 per cent of the respondents at the same time the *Internet* as an information resource about Finland is most usefull and important for 69 per cent. Among Internet resources respondents list related to Finland groups in social media, Visitfinland, travel blogs and Google as an information resource about Finland.

Figure 14 showing importance of the factors when travelling to Finland for Russians customers. The most important is *security* – 71 per cent of the respondents put it as an important factor among which 54 per cent of the respondents put it as very important. The possibility *to be in the nature* is very important for 42 per cent of the respondents and important for 31 per cent of the respondent, so together this factor is important for 73 per cent of the respondents. European standards are important for 70 per cent of the respondents and very important for 37 per cent. Ecology factor is important for 67 per cent of the respondents. Still good shopping is an important factor for travelling to Finland for the Russians – 51 per cent of the respondents put shopping as an important factor. Surprisingly service in Russian language is not important for 44 per cent of the respondents. Only 16 per cent of the respondent put it as very important factor.

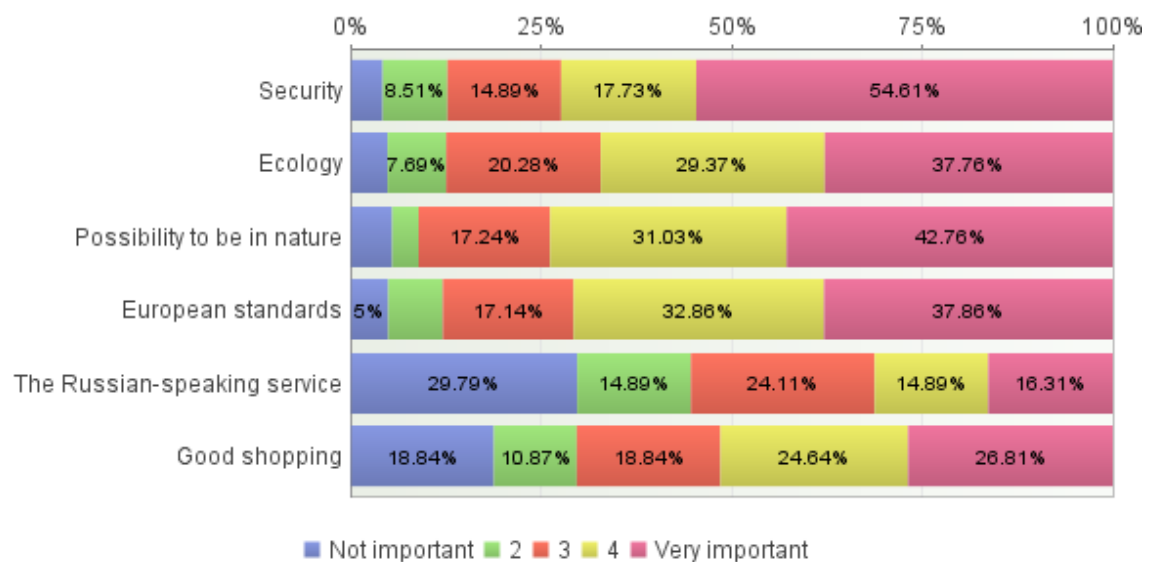


Figure 14. Important factors for Russians when travel to Finland (n=148)

In the field for the open answer two of the respondents point possession of *Schengen visa* as an important and motivating factor for traveling to Finland.

Russians travelling to Finland mostly for the *nature*. As shown at the figure 15 – 67 per cent of the respondents state that often or always choose nature holidays when traveling to Finland. *Family* vacation is chosen often or always by 50 per cent of the respondents when travel to Finland. Still *shopping* is popular and chosen by 45 per cent of

the respondents. For the *sport and active* types of holidays to Finland coming 43 per cent of the respondents. Less popular are *entertainment such as festivals, music and exhibitions*, this type of holidays popular only among 27 per cent of the respondents. *Spa* holidays are even less popular and interesting only for 12 per cent of the respondents.

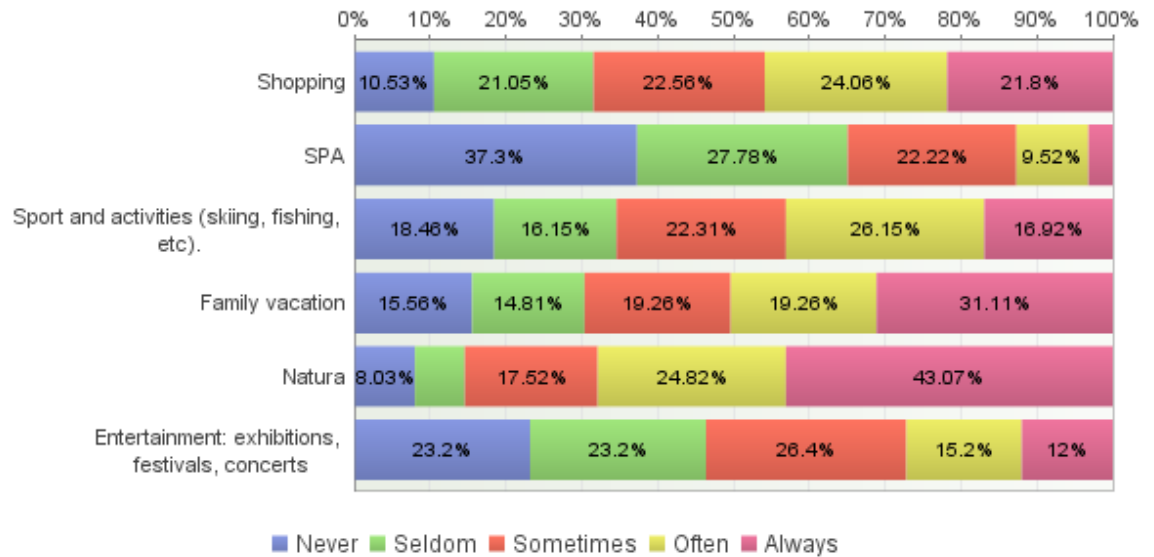


Figure 15. Russian’s preferable types of vacation in Finland (n=144)

5.4 The comparison of the respondents with different travel experience

Within the project of Finnish travel e-commerce for the Russian customers it looks important to draw the portraits of real and potential customers. In this chapter will be analysed the comparison of the groups of the respondent.

For the first comparison the amount of travelling per year of the respondents was chosen as a sampling factor. We consider that people who travel more often are more experienced travellers and people who travel once a year are not so independent travellers. In the circumstances of the study it is interesting if these groups have similarities or differences in their preferences and behavior about using Internet for planning travelling and perceiving Finland as a travel destination. So from the all respondents were chosen two groups those who *travel only once a year* and those who *travel over five times a year*. The number of the respondents is about the same in both groups 33 and 30 res-

pectively; in percentages it is 21 and 19 per cent respectively. The results of the correlation of these two groups with other questions are presented below.

Figure 16 shows the *age distribution* of the groups. Here and below blue color means respondents who travel once a year and green color means respondents travelling over five times a year. As shown at the figure 16 the majority of the groups aged between 21 and 40 years old. Additionally 13 per cent of the respondent from the group who travel over five times a year are aged between 41 and 50 years old. At the same time people aged less than 20 years old and over 50 years old travel once per year in proportion of 9 per cent in each age group.

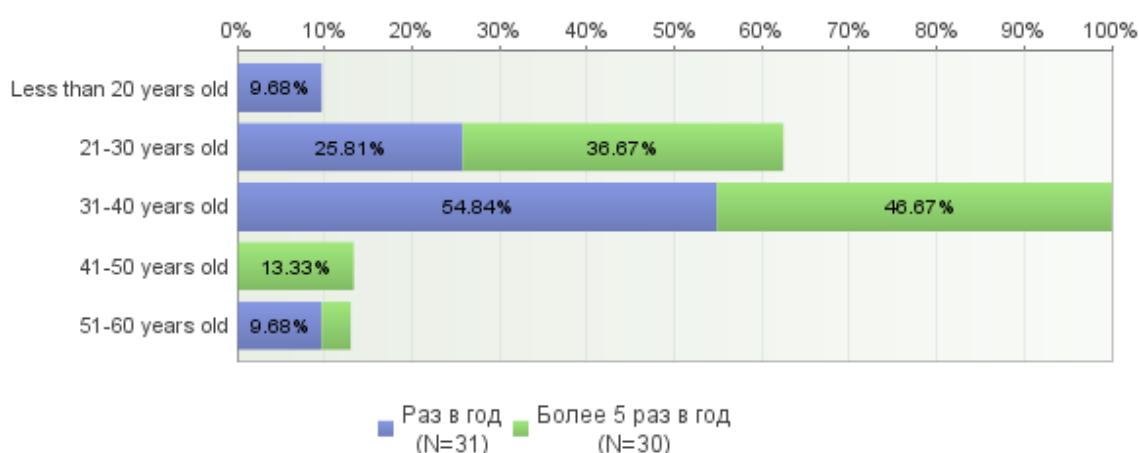


Figure 16. Age distribution of the respondents who travel once a year and respondents travelling over five times a year.

The *marital status* of the groups is shown at figure 17. The half of the respondents – 50 per cent – travelling over 5 times a year is single without children. This result is understandable as people without children are more independent and have spare time and money to spend for travelling. Nevertheless the largest travelling audience is represented by single people without children and married with children. Among respondents who are married and have children 33 per cent also travel over 5 times a year.

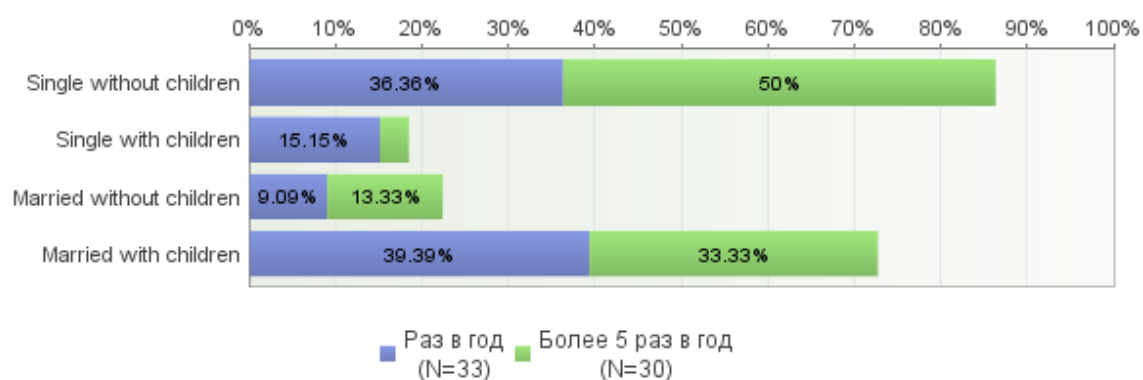


Figure 17. The marital status of the respondents who travel once a year and respondents travelling over five times a year

From figure 18 and figure 19 we can estimate how respondents from sample groups planning and booking their traveling. Figure 18 showing the *usage of the Internet while planning travel*. The majority of the respondents who travel over five times a year – 76 per cent always use Internet for the booking and planning their trips. Among people who travel once a year Internet use less than half – 48 per cent of the respondents, and 9 per cent never use Internet to plan their travel.

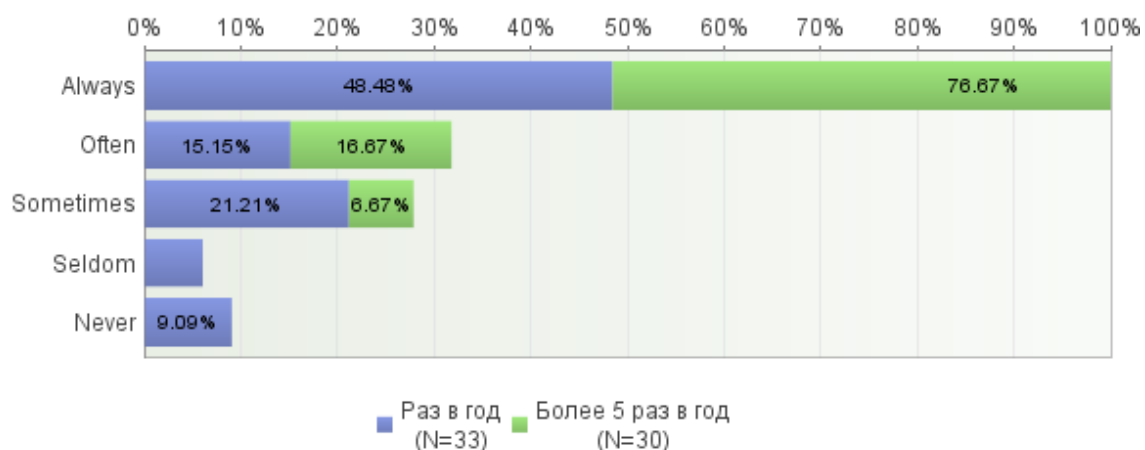


Figure 18. Internet usage while planning travelling by respondents who travel once a year and respondents travelling over five times a year

From the graph we can clearly see the lack of green beside the answer options “Seldom” and “Never”, and the presence of the blue, it suggests that people who travels more often are more active users of the Internet for travel planning.

Similar conclusions - namely that people traveling more often are more independent and willing to take responsibility for planning their trips themselves, while people with less experience of travel are likely to resort to the help of tour agencies, we can make from the figure 19.

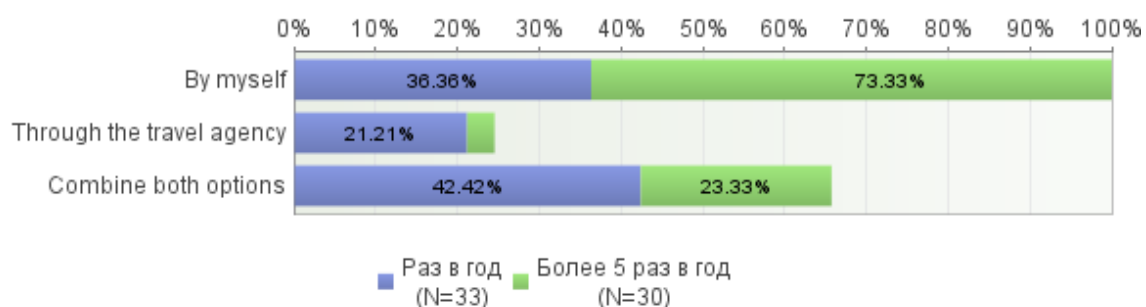


Figure 19. Way of planning and booking travelling by respondents who travel once a year and respondents travelling over five times a year

The majority of the respondents travelling over five times a year 73 per cent prefer to plan and book their travel themselves. About 23 per cent from the same group combine self-planning with the help of travel agencies and less than 4 per cent book their trips through the travel agencies only. At the same time the majority of the respondents travelling once a year prefer to combine self-planning with the help of travel agencies – 42 per cent. Still self-planning was chosen by 36 per cent of the group and 21 per cent use the help of travel agencies for planning and booking their trips.

At figure 20 is shown what *resources respondents used for planning and booking trips*. Respondents traveling over five times a year use an international giant such a Skyscanner and Booking with 70 and 96 per cent respectively. Looking to the figure 20 we can notice the predominance of green color in the percentage of practically all options of answers. Which allows suggesting that respondents traveling over five times a year use these Internet servers more active. Only option that is dominated by blue in the percentage is OzonTravel – the Russian airtickets search engine. All other servers offered are international and might be not so familiar in use for unexperienced Russian travelers.

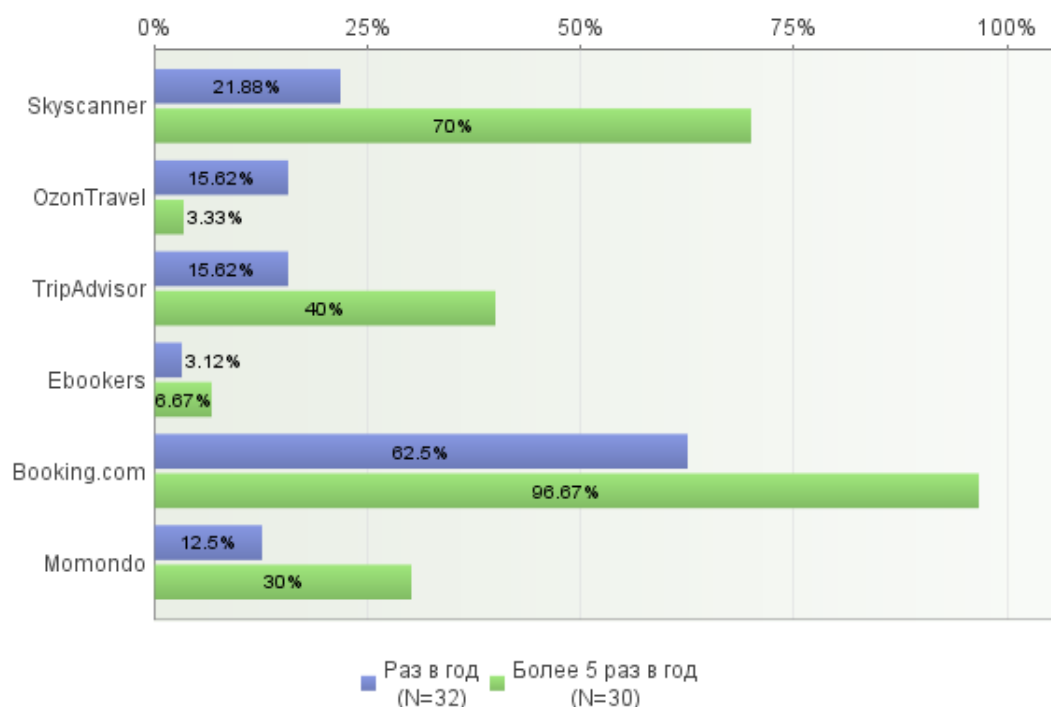


Figure 20. Internet resources usage for planning and booking travelling by respondents who travel once a year and respondents travelling over five times a year

For sample groups of respondents when choosing a resource for travel planning various factors have different importance. The most important features of the Internet platform when choosing the resource for planning and booking traveling for the respondents traveling once per year is *the reputation of the site* – 72 per cent of the respondents point it as a *very important* and the rest of 28 per cent of the respondents from the same group point it as an *important*. Next factors are *good selection of offers* and *low prices* 69 and 48 per cent respectively. *The possibility to pay online* is very important factor only for 36 per cent of the respondents who travel once a year, but for the respondent traveling over five times a year this factor is dominant – 82 per cent of the respondent state is as a very important factor and 14 per cent state as an important factor. At the same time small amount of the respondents from same group note the possibility to pay online as a not important factor – 4 per cent. Next two important factors for the respondent traveling over five times a year are *good selection of offers* – very important for 73 per cent of the respondents and important for the rest 27 per cent, and *the reputation of the site* – 55 per cent state it as a very important factor and nobody point it as an not important.

It should be noted that for both groups *a good selection of offers* seems as the most important factor. All the respondents state it as important factor at some level, there is no one points it is not very important or not important.

Possibility to book all at once (transport, accommodation, ect.) point as an important factor 66 per cent of the respondents who travel once a year and only for 32 per cent of the respondents traveling over five times a year this feature is important.

Among important features of the Internet resource when using it for the travel planning different proportion of importance is given to different features by sample groups. *Russian language* is stated as a very important feature by 53 per cent of the respondents from the group who travel once a year. Native language of the Internet site is important for the 40 per cent of the respondents from the same group. And only about 7 per cent of the respondents traveling once a year state it as less important factor when using online platform. At the same time for 31 per cent of the respondents traveling over five times a year Russian interface of the Internet service is not important at all and more 17 per cent note it as not very important feature.

Easy site navigation has equal importance for both groups 53 and 51 per cent who travel once a year and who travel over five times a year respectively state this feature as a very important.

The modern interface of the Internet platform and *beautiful pictures* has medium importance for both groups.

The opportunity to ask a question online is mentioned as important feature by 63 per cent of the respondents traveling once a year. For the same group of the respondents *the quick response to inquiries* is important for 86 per cent of the respondents. And for the rest 14 per cent the quick response to inquiries has medium importance. For the group of the respondents who travel over five times a year only 7 per cent of the respondents mention the opportunity to ask a question online as a very important feature, for 28 per cent this feature is important and for 35 per cent has medium importance.

About *program of discounts and bonuses* and *various forms of payment* as an important feature of the Internet server both groups of the respondents has same opinion. Discount and bonus program 37 per cent of the respondents traveling once a year note as a very important feature and 35 per cent as an important. From the group traveling over five time a year 32 per cent of the respondents state the feature as very important and 39 per cent as important feature. Different variation of payment available is very important for 44 per cent of the respondents traveling once a year and 39 per cent of the respondents traveling over five times a year.

Talking about trust to the Internet services and factors that inhance it absolytly all respondents point *guarantees of secure payment* and *guarantees of money refund in case of failure* affected their trust in positive way. For 93 per cent of the respondents traveling once a year and for 86 per cent of the respondents traveling over five times a year guarantees of secure payment is very important. Guarantees of money refund in case of failure point as very important 87 per cent of the respondents traveling once a year and almost 69 per cent of the respondents traveling over five times a year.

Recommendations of friends or relatives and *clear contact information of the organisation* affecting trust very much for 75 per cent and 75 per cent of the respondents from the group traveling once a year. *Good reviews on the network* and *possibility to leave a feedback* affects trust very much for 45 per cent and 29 per cent respectively in the group of respondents traveling once a year.

For the respondents traveling over five times a year the features affected trust very much collect another numbers: *guarantees the safety of personal information* get 53 per cent, *clear contact information of the organisation* 42 per cent, *recommendations of friends or relatives* 37 per cent, *good reviews on the network* 30 per cent. *Possibility to leave a feedback* affected trust mildly for 24 per cent of the respondents from the group.

Online credit card is *preferable payment method* for 89 per cent of the respondents traveling over five times a year and only for 42 per cent of the respondents who travel once

a year. For the same amount 42 per cent of the respondents who travel once a year cash is still most preferable method of payment.

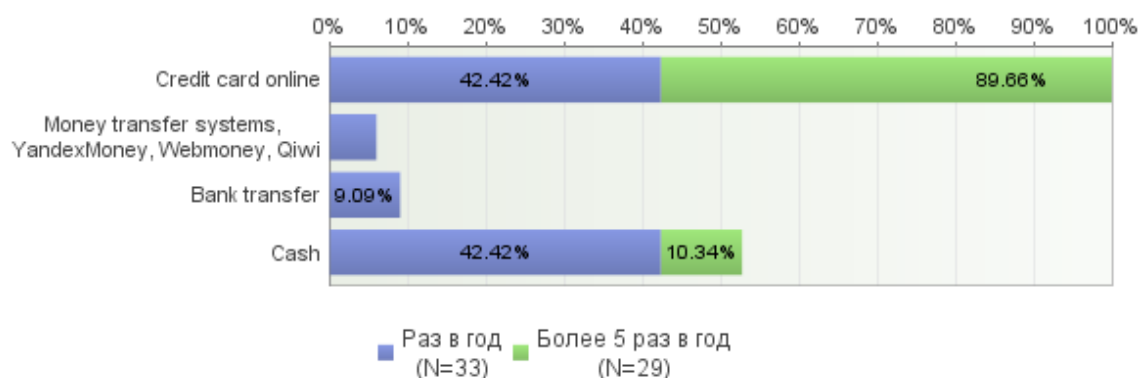


Figure 21. Preferable payment methods for respondents who travel once a year and respondents travelling over five times a year

Figure 22 showing the *frequency of trips to Finland* of respondents who travel once a year and respondents travelling over five times a year. As we see regularly travel to Finland more than twice a year those Russians who in general travel over five times a year – 62 per cent state that. And surprisingly 36 per cent from the group of the respondents traveling once a year travel to Finland once a year. It allow to conclude that some amount of people traveling once a year choosing Finland as their regular travel destination that is quite likely considering that the majority of the respondents for the survey are from Saint-Petersburg and Finland is their nearest foreign country.

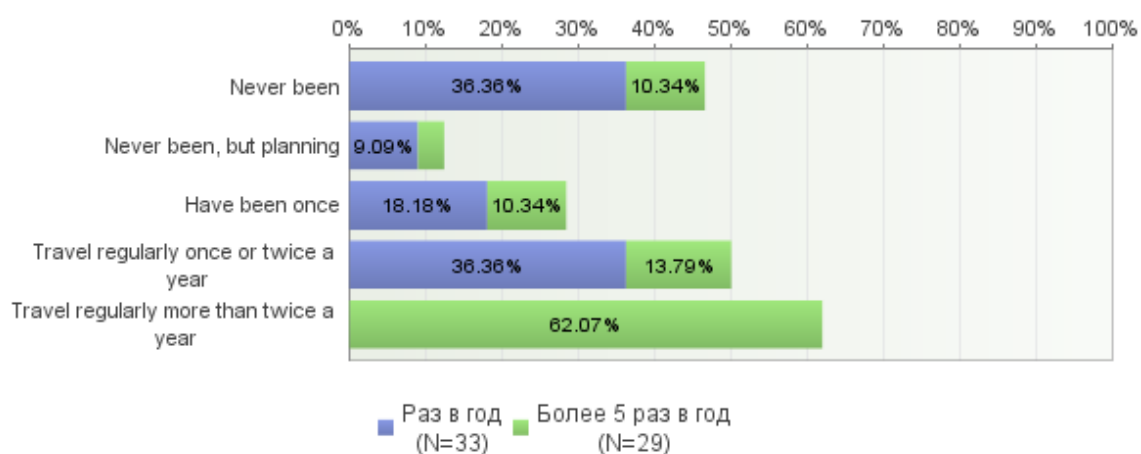


Figure 22. Frequency of trips to Finland of respondents who travel once a year and respondents travelling over five times a year

The main *resource of information about Finland* is relatives and friends for 76 per cent of the respondents who travel once a year and Internet for 77 per cent of respondents travelling over five times a year.

The most important factors when traveling to Finland are *security* and *ecology* for the both groups. For the respondents traveling over five time a year is also very important the *possibility to be in nature* 48 per cent of the respondents state so and plus 40 per cent state it is important factor. *Europeanian standards, good shopping and Russian language service* are important for the respondents traveling once per year with 79 per cent, 55 per cent and 51 per cent respectively. For the respondents traveling over five times a year same factors collect 68 per cent, 43 per cent and 4 per cent respectively. Russian language service in Finland is not important for 50 per cent of the respondents traveling over five times a year.

The most popular type of vacation in Finland is *nature* – 64 per cent of the respondents traveling once a year often or always choose it and 76 per cent of the respondents traveling over five time a year. *Family holidays, shopping and sport types of vacation* often or always chosen by 48 per cent, 56 per cent, 37 per cent respectively of the respondents traveling once per year. For the respondents traveling over five times a year same types of travelling collect 54 per cent, 40 per cent and 48 per cent respectively.

To summarise the above results we can conclude that respondents traveling once a year needed more support and feedback from the web platform they use for planning and booking trip and during their travel. This might be explained by their limited experience in the independent travel planning.

It would be interesting to compare groups of the respondents according their experience travelling to Finland, but the groups were not equal in numbers and it does not seem credible to compare such different in the number groups. Nonetheless the results of such comparision could be very interesting and useful for the future devel-

opment and useful in business. However this idea can be extended by other researchers interested in this issue.

6 Conclusions

Among the top ten source markets, the Russian Federation shows up the strong growth in recent years, as a result of which Russia has moved up from the 12th largest outbound market in 2000 to the 5th largest in 2012 spending 43 billion US dollars for travelling (UNWTO 2013). Though a lot of Russians still do not have an international passport. However, with a population of more than 140 million, there is still a huge untapped market for foreign travel that will create demand for different types of holiday and new destinations that are bound to make an impact on the pattern of world tourism. The opportunity to attract more Russian tourists to Finland looks very tempting.

Online travel retail sales is one of the driving factors of the travel industry now. Growing Internet and mobile Internet penetration, better consumer awareness and a growing number of online travel agencies in Russia impacted the department development significantly. Moreover, technologies have changed not only the way of purchase, but also the whole consumer experience. Various Internet platforms including social media have become a more important tool for travel and tourism companies to communicate with their customers, organise promotional activities, publicise offers and retail a variety of different products. Based on that growing popularity, Internet travel retailers showed significant expansion in Russia. Despite all the economic issues that Russians face, in the long-term tourism and traveling in Russia is still expected to perform positively. In these conditions the Russian online travel market looks more than attractive for launching new Internet platform representing traveling to Finland.

Considering the theoretical conclusions and results of empirical research it became more obviously how the new Internet platform should look like and what offers to contain. Reaffirming the results of previous studies the result of present work put the *garantee of the security payment* at the first place. Since payment is the most important item in e-commerce, consumers are always concerned on payment security (Buhalis & Law 2008, 612).

The success of the new platform will depend on how it will meet the needs of both regular travelers as well as those who are just planning their trip to Finland and considering options offered by Internet travel server. The Russian Internet travel market is full of different resources offering travelling but not all perform clearly and responsibly and deserve trust of the customers. So there is always a place for a better one. The platform with the narrow specialization offering variety of leisure but only in Finland can be a significant competitor for travel agencies offering a one-day or three-day bus or ferry tours to Finland.

To attract customers, retain their interest and motivation to purchase on the server, as well as the positive feedback after and talks to friends and family members about good experience - which is an important marketing factor in Russia - there are a number of features that must be taken into consideration when creating new platform about travelling to Finland. The top three of these features are *good selection of offers, low competitive prices and possibility to pay online via credit card. Easy usability and clear site navigation, detailed information about services and conditions of the order*, as well as *fast response to inquiries and various forms of payment* as a features of internet server would give additional advantages in the eyes of the Russian customers.

To enhance the trust of the visitors there are some features must be presented in the new Internet travel platform along with the guarantee of the secure payment: *guarantees of money refund in case of failure, clear contact information of the organization and guarantees the safety of personal information*. All these would help to win the trust of Russian customers.

It is not visible that Russians have a specific behavior online, but obviously that there are experienced and not experienced travelers among Russians with the different preferences and needs. The suggestion that people who can travel only one time a year unlikely chose Finland as a travel destination fail as comparison of the two groups of the respondents shown that people travel to Finland even they have opportunity to travel only once a year. There is a larger value of the place of living of the respondents as study shown that people living closer to the border with Finland travel there more of-

ten due to the distance factor and people from main cities such as St-Petersburg and Moscow due to the bigger income and economical condition.

So among Russians travelers there are people who has ability to travel several time a year, those who are from Saint Petersburg and surroundings, those who visits Finland several times a year, they are independent travelers and plan their own trip using the Internet. They are potential customers of the new platform about traveling to Finland. It is logical to conclude that people who travels often, use Internet and travel to Finland, would also use special Internet platform for planning their traveling to Finland.

However, do not forget about the small percentage of inexperienced but interested in Finland travelers. For them a new platform should contain additional information, special offers, and flexible ready-made tours with the ability to change something according to the customer's preferences. Especially for inexperienced travelers coming from emerging markets, there is a need for better roll-ups and condensed snapshots of information such as seasonal temperature/precipitation and price ranges. Freshness and accuracy of destination information is also an issue, particularly for emerging markets. (Rheem 2012, 2.)

Summing up the portrait of the Russian customers it is very attractive for the travel industry: a significant number of people with good experience of online travel booking, who prefer to pay online and not fear the lack of Russian language.

The results of the survey show that Russians are most interested in nature vacation in Finland. The most attractive in Finland for them is security, ecology and possibility to be in nature. So shopping as a reason to visit Finland passed its position to nature and family holidays. There is defenetly a potential to change the shopping attitude of Russians towards another types of traveling in Finland. This is important especially now when rate of rublle makes shopping in Finland not so interesting for Russians as it was before. Perhaps some additional appropriate action might be taken to change the image of Finland as a one-day trip shopping destination in the eyes of a Russians.

Summing up the description of the new Internet travel platform it should respond to the Russian market demand, be convenient in use; give to customers satisfaction and tendency to use and purchase through this recourse again, make the booking and payment processes easier and nicer, offering special places and special activities, not only for the mass market, but also unique and hidden places of Finland. Looking forward, successful tourism organisations will increasingly need to rapidly identify consumer needs and to interact with prospective clients by using comprehensive, personalised and up-to-date communication media for the design of products that satisfy tourism demand. Thus, destinations and principals need to utilise innovative communication methods in order to maintain and increase their competitiveness. (Buhalis & Jun 2011, 29.)

A travel Internet platform would be a new server for independent travelers to Finland, that offers for the Russian market dynamic package tours filled with desire to take into account the interests of individual customers, creating the opportunity to organize their own travel by making the trip unique to each. The customer will create his own unique travel to Finland part by part as a puzzle. The platform would provide accurate and useful information about most interesting place in Finland and try to help to find interesting activities for each customer. Among the online tools needed to prepare for the trip, accomodation reservation system, excursions and activities.

Planning a new Internet business in Russia it should not be underestimated the economic and political situation in the country. The unstable situation in Russia and rates of ruble certainly influence Russians traveling willingness and interest and at the moment it might look not very promising but in long term Finland will always be attractive for the Russian customers as the closest European country with better standards of services and quality of goods. Of course the current political and financial situation in Russia create doubts in the travel possibility of Russians at the moment but the general features of Russian economy and the results of past years make us to think that this crisis will be overcome like all of them but willingness and possibility to travel will grow anyway.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Questionnaire in English language

Using Internet resources for travel booking

1. Your age?

- ☐ Less than 20 years old
- ☐ 21-30 years old
- ☐ 31-40 years old
- ☐ 41-50 years old
- ☐ 51-60 years old

2. Your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

3. Your marital status?

- ☐ Single, no children
- ☐ Single, with children
- ☐ Married, no children
- ☐ Married, with children

4. Your home place?

- ☐ St.Petersburg
- ☐ Moscow
- ☐ Northwestern region, but not St. Petersburg

- ☐ Central region, but not Moscow
- ☐ Another region

5. How often do you travel?

** Travel outside of the Russian Federation with at least one overnight stay **

- ☐ One time a year
- ☐ Twice a year
- ☐ 3 - 4 times a year
- ☐ More than 5 times a year

6. Do you use Internet for planning and booking your trips?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

7. You prefer to book your trips...

- ☐ By myself
- ☐ Through the travel agency
- ☐ Combine both options

8. What Internet resources do you use when booking your trips?

- ☐ Skyscanner
- ☐ OzonTravel
- ☐ TripAdvisor
- ☐ Ebookers
- ☐ Booking.com

☐ Momondo

Other, please specify what

☐

9. When choosing Internet resource for travel planning what is the most important for you?

* Please, rate each factor on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 - means it is not important, and 5 - very important *

	1	2	3	4	5
The reputation of the site	○	○	○	○	○
Low prices	○	○	○	○	○
Good selection of offers	○	○	○	○	○
Possibility to pay online	○	○	○	○	○
Possibility to book all at once (transport, accommodation, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
Other, please specify what _____	○	○	○	○	○

10. When using the Internet service for travel planning, booking and payment what is the most important for you?

* Please, rate each factor on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 - means it is not important, and 5 - very important *

	1	2	3	4	5
Russian language	○	○	○	○	○
Easy site navigation	○	○	○	○	○
Modern style site	○	○	○	○	○
Beautiful photos	○	○	○	○	○
The opportunity to ask a question online	○	○	○	○	○

Quick response to your inquiries	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Program of discounts and bonuses	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Various forms of payment order	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Other, please specify what _____	○ ○ ○ ○ ○

11. What features enhance your trust to online resource?

Rate each feature on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 - means only a slight effect on your trust, and 5 - strongly influences your trust to the web site.

	1	2	3	4	5
Recommendations of friends or relatives	○	○	○	○	○
Good reviews on the network	○	○	○	○	○
Possibility to leave a feedback	○	○	○	○	○
Guarantees of money refund in case of failure	○	○	○	○	○
Guarantees the safety of personal information	○	○	○	○	○
Guarantees of secure payment	○	○	○	○	○
Clear contact information of the organisation	○	○	○	○	○
Other, please specify what _____	○	○	○	○	○

12. How do you prefer to pay for your trips?

- ☐ Online with Credit Card
- ☐ Any of money transfer systems, YandexMoney, Webmoney, Qiwi
- ☐ Via bank transfer
- ☐ Cash at the place

13. What do you usually book and pay online?

- ☐ Transportation: air and railway tickets
- ☐ Accommodation: hotels, cottages and apartments
- ☐ Entertainment and Activities: Spa, skiing, trekking, excursions
- ☐ Restaurant reservations
- ☐ Tickets: concerts, events

Other, please specify what

☐

14. How often do you travel to Finland?

- ☐ Never been
- ☐ Never been, but planning
- ☐ Have been once
- ☐ Travel regularly once or twice a year
- ☐ Travel regularly more than twice a year

15. Where do you find out information about Finland?

* Please rate each option on a scale from 1 to 3, where 1 - means in less degree, 3 - more degree*

	1	2	3
Friends and relatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel agency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Media (but not the Internet): television, magazines, advertising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internet, please specify what resources _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify what _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Travelling to Finland, what is the most important for you?

* Please rate each factor on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 - means it is not important, and 5 - very important *

	1	2	3	4	5
Security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ecology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Possibility to be in nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
European standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Russian-speaking service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify what _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. What types of recreation you choose travelling to Finland?

* Please rate each option *

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SPA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sport and activities (skiing, fishing, etc).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family vacation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entertainment: exhibitions, festivals, concerts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify what _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attachment 2. Questionnaire in Russian language

Использование Интернет ресурсов
при планировании и заказе путешествий

1. Ваш возраст?

- ☐ Менее 20 лет
- ☐ 21-30 лет
- ☐ 31-40 лет
- ☐ 41-50 лет
- ☐ 51-60 лет

2. Ваш пол?

- ☐ Муж.
- ☐ Жен.

3. Ваше семейное положение?

- ☐ Не замужем/не женат, без детей
- ☐ Не замужем/не женат, есть дети
- ☐ Замужем/женат, без детей
- ☐ Замужем/женат, есть дети

4. Где вы живете?

- ☐ Санкт-Петербург
- ☐ Москва

- ☐ Северо-Западный округ, но не СПб
- ☐ Центральный округ, но не Москва
- ☐ Другой округ

5. Как часто вы путешествуете?

Выезжаете за пределы РФ минимум с одной ночевкой

- ☐ Раз в год
- ☐ Два раза в год
- ☐ Три - четыре раза в год
- ☐ Более 5 раз в год

6. Вы используете Интернет для планирования и заказа своих путешествий?

- ☐ Всегда
- ☐ Часто
- ☐ Иногда
- ☐ Редко
- ☐ Никогда

7. Вы предпочитаете бронировать путешествия...

- ☐ Самостоятельно
- ☐ Через агентство
- ☐ Совмещаю оба варианта

8. Какие Интернет ресурсы вы используете при планировании путешествий?

- ☐ Skyscanner
- ☐ OzonTravel
- ☐ TripAdvisor

☐ Ebookers

☐ Booking.com

☐ Momondo

Другие, пожалуйста, укажите какие

☐

9. При выборе Интернет ресурса для планирования путешествия, что для вас наиболее важно?

Оцените каждый фактор по шкале от 1 до 5, где 1 - значит не важно, а 5 - очень важно

1 2 3 4 5

Репутация сайта

○○○○○

Низкие цены

○○○○○

Хороший выбор предложений

○○○○○

Возможность оплатить онлайн

○○○○○

Возможность забронировать все сразу (транспорт, проживание и тд)

○○○○○

Другое,

пожалуйста,

укажите что

○○○○○

10. При использовании Интернет сервиса для планирования, заказа и оплаты путешествия, что для вас наиболее важно?

Оцените каждый фактор по шкале от 1 до 5, где 1 - значит не важно, а 5 - очень важно

1 2 3 4 5

Русскоязычный интерфейс сайта	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Понятная навигация по сайту	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Современный стиль сайта	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Красивые фотографии	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Возможность задать вопрос онлайн	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Быстрый ответ на ваши запросы	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Программа скидок и бонусов	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Предоставление различных форм оплаты заказа	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Другое, пожалуйста, _____ укажите что	○ ○ ○ ○ ○

11. Наличие каких признаков вызывает у вас большее доверие Интернет ресурсу?

Оцените каждый признак по шкале от 1 до 5, где 1 - значит слабо влияет на ваше доверие, а 5 - сильно влияет на ваше доверие Интернет сайту.

	1	2	3	4	5
Рекомендации друзей или родственников	○	○	○	○	○
Хорошие отзывы в сети	○	○	○	○	○
Возможность оставить свой отзыв	○	○	○	○	○
Гарантии возврата денег при отказе	○	○	○	○	○
Гарантии сохранности персональной информации	○	○	○	○	○
Гарантии безопасной системы оплаты	○	○	○	○	○
Указание места и контактов для обратной связи	○	○	○	○	○

Другое,

пожалуйста, _____ ○○○○○

укажите что

12. Как вы предпочитаете оплачивать ваши путешествия?

- ☐ Кредитной картой онлайн
- ☐ Любой из систем перевода денег, YandexMoney, Webmoney, Qiwi
- ☐ Банковским переводом
- ☐ Наличными на месте

13. Что вы обычно покупаете и заказываете через Интернет?

- ☐ Транспорт: авиа и жд билеты
- ☐ Проживание: отели, коттеджи, апартаменты
- ☐ Развлечения и занятия: СПА, лыжи, трекинг, экскурсии
- ☐ Заказ столика в ресторане
- ☐ Билеты: на концерты, события

Другое, пожалуйста, укажите что

☐

14. Как часто вы путешествуете в Финляндию?

- ☐ Никогда не был/была
- ☐ Никогда не был/была, но планирую
- ☐ Был/была один раз
- ☐ Регулярно езжу раз-два в год
- ☐ Регулярно езжу более двух раз в год

15. Откуда вы узнаете информацию о Финляндии?

Пожалуйста оцените каждый вариант по шкале от 1 до 3, где 1 - значит в меньшей степени, а 3 - в большей

Друзья и родственники

Тревел агенства

СМИ (но не Интернет): телевидение, журналы, реклама

Интернет, пожалуйста, укажите, какие ресурсы _____

Другое, пожалуйста, укажите что _____

16. При путешествии в Финляндию, что для вас наиболее важно?

Пожалуйста, оцените каждый фактор по шкале от 1 до 5, где 1 - значит не важно, а 5 - очень важно

	1	2	3	4	5
Безопасность	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Экология	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Возможность побыть на природе	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Европейские стандарты	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Русскоязычное обслуживание	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Хороший шопинг	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Другое, пожалуйста, _____ укажите что _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Какие виды отдыха вы выбираете при поездке в Финляндию?

Пожалуйста, оцените каждый вариант

	Никогда	Редко	Иногда	Часто	Всегда
Шопинг	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
СПА	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Спортивная и активная деятельность (лыжи, рыбалка и тп.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Семейный отдых	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Природа	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Развлечения: выставки, фестивали, концерты	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Другие, пожалуйста, укажите какие _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>