

THESIS

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**ARCTIC LIGHTS PHENOMENA
AS AN ATTRACTION
IN FINNISH LAPLAND**

LAPIN AMK⁷
Lapland University of Applied Sciences

DEGREE PROGRAMME IN TOURISM

LAPLAND UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
Degree Programme in Tourism

Thesis

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2014

Commissioned by Regional Council of Lapland

Supervisors Ulla Kangasniemi, Petra Paloniemi

The thesis cannot be borrowed.

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The primary aim for this research was to examine what arctic lights phenomena are and how they could be seen as an attraction in Finnish Lapland. Furthermore the aim was to find the attraction factors from Finnish Lapland and to examine if the arctic light phenomena could decrease the strong seasonality in tourism business. The thesis was commissioned by The Regional Council of Lapland, which is responsible for the development work of the Lapland region.

The methodology used in this research was a qualitative method, including a silent ethnographical approach, data collection as a theoretical background and semi-structured interviews. As the research phenomena were new and held no previous researches, it was vital to understand the concepts and thus a thorough theoretical part was essential. The interviews were conducted with people who had a relevancy to the examined problem through their work. In total there were eight interviews and the interpretation of the results was based on the background information as well as the interviews.

The received data showed that nature with its many features is the main attraction in Finnish Lapland. In addition, arctic lights are seen as mystical phenomena, which are seen as defining factors for Lapland. The various stories and myths emphasize the attraction factors and together all these are seen as features which make Finnish Lapland as strong and unique as it is. However, the arctic lights are not seen as a sufficient attraction alone, hence tourism product development is needed. Furthermore the summer products in tourism are seen to have many possibilities. They could be offered to new target groups and to respond the emerging demand of a slower life.

In this work the focus was on relevant issues in tourism and the results give a new perspective to the product development approach. Moreover the examined issues can offer a strong base to further research of the topic or they can be utilized in related researches to the Arctic as well.

Key words Arctic lights, Northern lights, Midnight sun, Experience tourism, Tourism, Product development, Downshifting

Matkailu-, ravitsemis- ja talousala
Matkailun koulutusohjelma

Tekijä	Outi Autere	Vuosi	2014
Toimeksiantaja	Lapin Liitto		
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Tämän tutkimuksen ensisijainen tavoite oli määrittellä mitä arktiset valoilmiot ovat ja tutkia niiden mahdollisuuksia vetovoimatekijänä Suomen Lapissa. Lisäksi tarkastelussa olivat Suomen Lapin vetovoimatekijät yleisesti sekä arktisen valon hyödynnettävyys Lapin matkailun vahvan sesonkiluotoisuuden minimoimiseksi. Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana toimi Lapin Liitto, jolla on vastuu Lapin alueen kehitystyöstä.

Työssä käytetty metodologia pohjautuu kvalitatiiviseen tutkimukseen sisältäen hiljaisen etnografisen lähestymistavan ja tiedonkeruun sekä teoreettisen taustatutkimuksen että teemahaastattelujen kautta. Koska tutkittava ilmiö on käsitteenä uusi, sen ja siihen vaikuttavien tekijöiden ymmärtäminen oli ensisijaisen tärkeää. Aiheesta ei ole tehty aiempia tutkimuksia, joten perinpohjainen teoreettinen taustatyö oli välttämätöntä. Haastateltaviksi valittiin henkilöt, joiden työ katsottiin olennaiseksi tutkimusongelman kannalta. Tulosten tulkinta perustui taustatutkimuksen sekä kahdeksan haastattelun kautta saatuihin tietoihin.

Kerätyn tiedon pohjalta luonto sen monine ominaisuuksineen on Suomen Lapin vahvin vetovoimatekijä. Sen ohella arktinen valo nähdään mystisenä ilmiönä, joka puolestaan on Suomen Lappia kuvaava ominaisuus. Moninaiset tarinat ja myytit vielä korostavat Lapin vetovoimaisuutta ja yhdessä nämä tekijät tekevät Lapista ainutlaatuisen ja vahvan kohteen. Tästä huolimatta arktista valoa ei koeta yksinään riittäväksi vetovoimatekijäksi ja tuotekehittelyä tarvitaan edelleen. Kesän matkailussa koetaan kuitenkin olevan potentiaalia ja sen tuotteilla paljon mahdollisuuksia. Niiden uudenlainen hyödyntäminen voisi suuntautua uusille kohderyhmille ja vastaamaan lisääntyneeseen kysyntään hitaammasta elämästä.

Tämä työ keskittyi matkailussa kohdattaviin ajankohtaisiin asioihin ja ilmiöihin. Työn tulokset antavat uuden näkökulman tuotekehittelyyn ja tutkimustulokset tarjoavat vahvan pohjan lisätutkimuksille aiheesta. Tulosten voi nähdä hyödyntävän myös muita arktisiin alueisiin liittyviä tutkimuksia.

Avainsanat Arktinen valo, Revontulet, Keskiyön aurinko, Elämysmatkailu, Matkailu, Tuotekehitys, Downshiftaus

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1 INTRODUCTION

The essential idea of this paper is to research what arctic lights phenomena are and how to see them as an attraction in experience tourism in the Arctic. The research is focused on Finnish Lapland. Initially the concepts need to be defined in order to examine them, subsequently they are researched with the support of theoretical literature background and conducted interviews, and finally the results are presented.

In tourism the northern lights are already seen as a strong attraction and they are well utilized in winter tourism. The midnight sun is a strong phenomenon but summer tourism in Finnish Lapland has not yet had a breakthrough. This research focuses on the possibilities of delimiting the strong seasonality, which is partly seen negatively in tourism business. There are multiple other light phenomena in the Arctic and most of them are unique only to this region. The polar day and the polar night are exquisite in the region and it is all because of the natural light phenomenon occurring due to the Sun's and the Earth's movements. This could be seen as a great advantage. Utilizing the arctic lights phenomena could lead to strong year-round tourism, which could be seen also as an expected change in the tourism business. That would decrease seasonality and prevent negative impacts in employments and economy derived from it.

In experience tourism the key element is to focus on the experience itself. Conducting a memorable experience needs no or only few obligatory activities. This is a way of producing and consuming tourism products or services in a sustainable and long lasting way to carry on nature's natural attractiveness.

Arctic lights phenomena are similar in the areas and countries in the arctic region; hence the competitive advantages in tourism need to be found elsewhere. In this thesis the focus is on Finnish Lapland and for this reason the strengths and weaknesses of the area are examined as well. The

Lapland brand and the Lapland Tourism Strategy are present in this research.

Nature and culture in Finnish Lapland are the strongest attractions. The operating environment in both is authentic and this should be taken into account in the tourism development. Sustainability and reflections to our nation's origins could be seen in storytelling. The light phenomena have carried many myths and stories throughout the history and by utilizing them in tourism; more a regional approach can be seen.

The Regional Council of Lapland commissions this thesis. It is a joint municipal board, which is responsible for the regional development of the Lapland. They have had wide marketing campaigns, which in parts promote both northern lights and the midnight sun as natural phenomena. The Regional Council of Lapland is also responsible for the Lapland Tourism Strategy. In the latest Tourism Strategy 2011–2014 it can be found how strengthening winter tourism and developing summer tourism are some of the major issues. (Regional Council of Lapland 2014.)

This research is strongly relevant to the current issues in tourism: development, seasonality and sustainability. The topic choice was comprehensively based on the author's personal interests towards nature and its phenomena. An ethnographical approach is used silently throughout the thesis. Participating observation has led to the will to examine the light phenomena and to solve whether they can be seen attractive enough to propose travellers to come to Finnish Lapland.

2 RESEARCH

2.1 Research Background

This thesis was conducted and the topic choice was made based on the author's interests towards, and her personal experiences from nature, in addition with the relevancy of the topic to the tourism business in Finnish Lapland. Nature and its phenomena in general are used to some extent in tourism but the market share could be bigger. There are no better surroundings to offer a memorable experience to travellers than in clean and beautiful nature of Finnish Lapland. The biggest challenge is how to turn the existing to an attraction.

Nature is somewhat the same in the entire Arctic, with the climate and the landscapes and all the natural light phenomena that are seen only in this region. These are the factors that this research utilizes to find their competitive advantages in the field of tourism. However, since the area is so wide and there are differences in tourism among the Arctic countries, the research focuses on the Arctic in Finland, Finnish Lapland.

There can be seen a year cycle in the tourism business in Finnish Lapland; the peak season is around Christmas and the overall winter season, the late spring months are good in Finnish markets, as well as the time around autumn colours in the autumn (Matkailun edistämiskeskus 2014). However, there are gaps and silent times in the business that create a strong seasonality, which affects companies and employment. Though this kind of seasonality is already seen partly as a defining factor in the business, the change could also have an impact on the inhabitant rates and future perspectives of the area. So far the main attractions have been various activities as well as the northern lights (Regional Council of Lapland 2014) but nature's own supply is much wider. This research examines whether the missing links could be found in the natural nature phenomena – light – and decrease the seasonality.

Neither have there been previous researches on the concept of the arctic lights in general nor their usage in the tourism. Northern lights have been an emerging attraction in tourism in the past years but they have always been studied separately. This research aims to define the arctic lights phenomena as a whole over the seasonality borders and examine them in the light of tourism.

In order to start and complete this task with a meaningful outcome, there need to be certain issues defined. Purpose, goal and outcome are the key starting points in the project plan for this thesis (Richard 2005, 9–13). In other words the research problem needs to be clear and the research questions help to find the answers to them (Grix 2010, 35-40). In the introduction and along this section the purpose and goal are defined. They have met the expectations of the commissioner, which are opened more clearly in the next section. The wanted outcome from this research would offer new and useful information on the topic that could be utilized in the tourism business as an inspiration or a support to developments, where it could awaken new ideas.

As a research is made to solve problems, finding the answers to the problems usually aims for improvement. The problem that has already risen from the text includes the seasonality in the tourism business, the ability to utilize the arctic light phenomena and to turn the existing into attraction. These problems could be answered by “what” and “how” questions, which help to understand what the phenomenon is about and how the connections are between the examined issues. The research approach and the method were chosen only after defining the research phenomenon. As there are no previous researches made of the topic, everything starts from understanding the phenomenon and the concepts. By setting the following research questions, the aim is to solve the research problem:

What are arctic lights?

What attracts travellers in the Arctic (Finnish Lapland)?

How could arctic lights be seen as a year-round attraction?

2.2 Commissioner

This thesis was commissioned by the Regional Council of Lapland, a regional, politically steered joint municipal board (Regional Council of Lapland 2014). Each of Finland's 19 regions has their own regional council, where promoting the social and economical welfare are their key interests along with the development work (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities 2014). The choice of having the Regional Council of Lapland as a commissioner to this project is based on their regional development work in the area of Lapland, and it was an excellent possibility of having this research offered to a direction who can utilize the achieved results along with the current issues of developing the seasonality. Maiju Hyry, the Director of External relations, signed the contract and Satu LUIRO, the Tourism Coordinator, was the contact person in charge.

The Regional Council of Lapland is also responsible for the regional land use planning and the coordination of the regional development strategy. The Lapland Tourism Strategy is the strategy needed to coordinate the development actions and projects in the field of tourism as well as to determine the mutual vision and goals, and to secure sustainable growth (Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011–2014). The other named tasks for the Regional Council of Lapland are operating as the administrative authority in the region, financing development projects, being in charge of international cooperation efforts and managing the regional safety and rescue operations – The Regional Rescue Services of Lapland (LUIRO 2013).

In addition to the funding of projects, the Regional Council of Lapland has their own ongoing projects: Lapland Above the Ordinary and Lapland – The North of Finland, which are strengthening the brand and the image of Lapland. Lapland Brand Development Project, launched in 2011 aims to differentiate the Lapland region from the other regions and their vision statement is no less than "Above Ordinary". This statement includes five factors that describe Lapland and make it more attractive: "Rich in nature",

“Arctic magic”, “Creative madness”, “Open and Arctic”, and “Consider it done!”. Inkeri Starry, the Project Manager, also emphasizes the long term of the project and how the strong Lapland brand image is made by work that starts from the locals and continues nation wide and then abroad. (Regional Council of Lapland 2014.)

In this thesis the Lapland Tourism Strategy and the Lapland brand are used as a background support as there are many confluences between them and the research. Strengthening the winter products and developing the summer products in Lapland, and in this way enabling the year-round possibilities in tourism, are seen in the latest Tourism Strategy (Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011–2014, 46-51). The Lapland brand again, especially in the parts of “Arctic Magic” and “Rich in nature”, emphasizes the magical experiences in nature, the storytelling based on the Northern beliefs, shamanism and mythology and the times of different lights – the polar night and the midnight sun, the northern lights and other natural phenomena (Regional Council of Lapland 2014).

The aim of this thesis was set in the very early stage of the process, even before the commissioner was found. The clear vision of the structure and the goals met the expectations of the commissioner precisely. Satu LUIRO, the Tourism Coordinator from the Regional Council of Lapland listed their wishes towards this research as well as the possible ideas for the use of the results at the meeting in April 2014. Based on the Lapland Tourism Strategy the very same questions came to the fore: strengthening the winter tourism and developing the summer tourism. The ideas of using the light and the light phenomena as an attraction in tourism and marketing and creating the concept of the arctic light were found from the preliminary idea paper and were intriguing to the commissioner. LUIRO also suggested that the year-round tourism possibilities as well as the product development project ideas could be given to the regional entrepreneurs to inspire them to become more active and participate in developing the extensive projects in cooperation with each other (LUIRO 2014).

2.3 Research Method

2.3.1 Qualitative Research Method

Choosing the research method unfolded after the topic was chosen. After the research phenomenon, research problems and research questions were set, the method was justifiable. As the phenomenon was new, it was essential to define and understand the concept of arctic light first, then understand tourism in Finnish Lapland and the seasonality in the tourism business and finally examine the possibilities to utilize the light phenomena as an attraction.

A qualitative method helps to understand the reasons for the research and for the chosen method. Kananen (2011, 41) has created situations where the use of qualitative research is suitable, adapted from the classification by Trochim and Donnelly. The qualitative method is good to use if there is no previous knowledge, theories or research results available on the phenomenon or if the aim is to acquire a deep understanding of the phenomenon. In addition the recommendation for qualitative method usage is if the aim is to create new theories and hypotheses, a mixed research strategy is applied or the aim is to acquire a precise description of the phenomenon.

In this research the focus is on making data by gathering information via written sources and by interviews. Richards (2005, 34–42) presents that qualitative data are messy records. They are rich and complex as they are the ingredients what to use to achieve the results. The data expands rapidly and also in the process everything related to the topic is seen as a potential data until it is cropped away. In comparison with the quantitative research method, the data in the qualitative research is made rather than collected. The author conducts the interviews, the ethnographical participating observation establishes a direct relationship to the surrounding nature

(Silverman, 16–17) and the results are created based on the gathered information chosen by the author.

The flexibility and the liberty of setting the structure to the research were suitable for this thesis and the qualitative method offered this possibility. The prompt timetable, a clear vision of the topic and the will to gather the needed information by accurate data collection methods were emphasized in the use of the qualitative research method. Books, notes and online information were used as a written material source to set the background information as well as to support the interviews. Written material is more often reliable than interviews as the human mind is selective and restricted. Also written material helps to realise the phenomenon more carefully. (Hammond–Wellington 2013, 91-94; Kananen 2011, 61–64; Richards 2005, 67-72.)

2.3.2 Focused Interview

A focused, sometimes also known as a thematic or a semi-structured interview, is used to receive information from the selected participants by proceeding from general to more specific questions and reflecting the received answers to the previously gathered information (Hammond–Wellington 2013, 91-94). Interviews can be divided into three categories in a general level: structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow an open response in the participant's own words rather than yes or no answers. There is a ready set structure of questions but the interview is based on the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee and is directed more by the informant than the questions. (Longhurst 2010, 103–115.)

The aim in the focused interview is to find a way to understand the research phenomenon thoroughly. The manner of achieving this goal is to approach it from different angles by setting themes that are related or connected to the phenomenon. By this funnel technique, after one theme is covered with follow up questions, the next theme is brought to the process. The structure

with the theme questions gives a guideline what to follow but the received answers may raise many new questions. (Hammond–Wellington 2013, 91-94; Kananen 2010, 51-55.)

The interviewees to this research were selected to cover the research phenomenon from various perspectives. Hence the ones were chosen who are related to the phenomenon and to the field of tourism in different ways. The selection includes representatives from entrepreneurs, safari-companies as well as developing and tourism sectors. (See the detailed list in Appendix 1.) Ethical principles were taken into a special examination to prevent any frauds, lies or wrongdoings as well as strengthen the credibility of this research. Ethical issues shown in conducting these interviews are voluntary participation, information consent and professional integrity. (Hammond–Wellington 2013, 59-62.)

The questions were formed in non-dichotomous style but to prove the reliability of the work, leading or coercing questions were avoided (Kananen 2011, 54–55). The strengths of the focused interview are a positive interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee and a high validity. When the interviewee has time to frame the answers with their own words, the answers are usually true and based on a real life and complex issues or questions can be clarified. On the other hand interviewing with follow-up questions can be time consuming and difficult to analyse or find the relevant issues. Also generalizing the answers, which may be the result of different questions, may be challenging. (Gillham 2005, 70-79.) The frame of the interview questions is seen in Appendix 2 and the results of the interviews are analysed and presented at the end of this work.

2.3.3 Implementation of Interviews

In this research the qualitative data was made by gathering the written information and by interviewing the selected participants, who were relevant to this research topic. The selection was made by finding the most suitable

candidates who could help to understand the phenomenon and how to see it as an attraction in a greater scale and, in total, to help to find the answers to the set research questions. As the topic of this research is new in examination, the choice of the participants was challenging. Finally the selection was made based on the relevancy of the participant's work towards the phenomenon, eliminating the similarities, by recommendations of the commissioner and in order to find the different perspectives from the field of tourism.

The final number of the interviewees is eight, divided in the representatives from entrepreneurs, safari-companies and with developing and tourism sectors. The interviews were all focused and individual interviews, made either personally face to face or by phone and via e-mails. All the interviews were conducted in Finnish as Finnish being the mother tongue of each participant. Using their first language in the interviews the received data did not suffer from language barriers and the participants could speak more naturally. Before the interviews, each participant received background information of the work and they were let to know where the received information was planned to use. With their permission, all of the participants let their real names show in this research and it was agreed to give them an access to read the ready thesis.

The interviews were conducted in a random order, based on the accessibilities of the participants. Every interview was recorded and transcribed in the mix of word-for-word and standard language level (Kananen 2010, 56–58). Everything was saved in written form including some significant or outstanding gestures or tone of voices that could matter to the result but delimiting them only to the most central ones. During the interviews some notes were also made to avoid the risk of losing the gathered data in case of a breakdown of the recorder. This was used only as a support tool. Everything was systematically documented from the beginning and every stage of this research was saved. This can also advocate the credibility issues of this work as well as help to go through the process.

3 ARCTIC REGION

3.1 Definition for Arctic Region

As the arctic lights phenomena are seen in the Arctic region, the definition for the area is needed due to understand them thoroughly. Defining the Arctic is difficult as there is no common agreement how to do it. Depending on the factors the Arctic can be delineated in different ways. One way to examine the area is to divide the definitions into themes: Environment, Climate and Ecosystems; Natural Resources; Peoples, Cultures and Societies; and Socio-Economics and Politics (University of Arctic 2009). Climate and Ecosystems includes the physical and the natural world that comprises the Arctic. The main draw in this region is the natural landscape. The isolation of the area has helped to preserve the clean and in many places the primordial nature, which is favorable to unique and experience seeking travellers (Hall-Johnston 1995, 1-23). Also the harsh climate, mild summers, isolated areas and more difficult accessibility as well as aboriginal cultures, conservation areas and rich natural resources are defining issues in the Arctic (Hall-Johnston 1995, 4).

There are special factors in the climate in the Arctic. The weather may vary daily and monthly a lot and the seasonal differences are broad. One of the key elements is the Sun and its impacts. Sunlight warms and lights during the summer months around the clock and during the winter months the Sun does not rise at all (National Snow & Ice Data Center 2014). The importance of snow and ice is clear. One of the defining examples of snow and ice in the Arctic is permafrost, a permanently frozen ground that is under the zero degree line for more than two years (University of Arctic 2009).

Natural resources present the interaction of the wild and the permanent inhabitants, as reindeer herding is still a healthy livelihood (University of Arctic 2009). Oil, gas, mineral and fish are natural resource potentials in the region, more over tourism being one of them (Arctic Center 2014). The Arctic has also indigenous peoples and northern indigenous language groups

(Sami people in Scandinavia). Their habits and lifestyles as well as their stories and histories could be seen as attractions to travellers with their own participation, but they are in a lot of pressure under this modern and globalizing world (Arctic Centre 2014, Hall–Johnston 1995, 1–23). Though the North is seen as rich in nature, it is often exploited or managed from the South. Socio-Economics and Politics include economic relationships between the North and the South. (University of Arctic 2009.)

However, in its simplest the Arctic is defined by its borders. The clearest way to draw an arctic line is following the Arctic Circle ($66^{\circ} 33'N$). The Arctic is the region north of the Arctic Circle, which is also the actual line to the polar night and the polar day by the solstices (Arctic Centre 2014). National Snow & Ice Data Center (2014) offers also two other commonly used definitions for the Arctic based on an arctic tree line or a temperature. If the Arctic were defined by using the arctic tree line, only the northern most parts of Finland would be part of the Arctic as the line draws where in the landscape trees are turned into lichen. If again the Arctic was defined by using the temperature as a definition, Finland vanishes entirely from the region. With the Arctic temperature definition the average daily summer temperature does not rise above 10-Celsius degrees at any time. Hence, in this research the Arctic definition is followed by the Arctic Circle. In the following map (Figure 1) the three Arctic definition lines has been drawn by using the light blue dashed line to indicate the Arctic Circle, the green line to indicate the arctic tree line and the red line to indicate the temperature line. (National Snow & Ice data Center 2014.)



Figure 1. Three Geographical Definitions of the Arctic (National Snow & Ice Data Center 2014)

There are many qualities that are convergent in the Arctic based on the specific location. The theme classification is one way to categorize them. The Arctic is important to understand in this research, as the natural phenomena are similar in the entire region. There are also similarities to the Antarctic, but they are not examined in this paper. This research focuses on Finnish Lapland as part of the Arctic, but in the future this and possible future researches of the topic can be utilized in the entire Arctic region.

3.2 Finnish Lapland in Light of Tourism

In this paper, the research focus is on Finnish Lapland, hence, this background information is gathered to give an overall and general idea of the area, its markets and the tourism perspective. In the latter section, Tourism Development, the focus is even more on the tourism issues.

Finnish Lapland is the northernmost province in Finland, which lies mostly above the Arctic Circle, thus being part of the Arctic (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2014). The defining factors of the Arctic are also seen in Finnish Lapland and are utilized in tourism as well. Lapland is size of over 100 000 km² but has the population only less than 200 000; it means a sparse density of inhabitants (Regional Council of Lapland 2014a). The more detailed figures can be seen in Appendix 3. Lapland is divided into 21 municipalities. They include over 300 villages and moreover 12 tourism regions, which offer various activities and services based on their location and attractions (Regional Council of Lapland 2014b).



Figure 2. Municipalities and Regions of Lapland (Regional Council of Lapland 2014b)

The Regional Council of Lapland has created the Lapland brand to increase the visibility of the area and diverse the region from others. The development project was launched in 2011 with now more than 2500 people being involved to the development work. The brand and vision statement is “Lapland – Above Ordinary”. It includes five factors that are used to describe and increase the attractiveness of the region: “Rich in nature”, “Arctic magic”, “Creative madness”, “Open and Arctic”, and “Consider it done!”. This vision strengthens the identity of locals and through them makes the region more visible and interesting nationally and internationally. The core is summarized in one sentence: “Lapland is spiritually, geographically and in its actions above ordinary”. (Regional Council of Lapland 2014.)

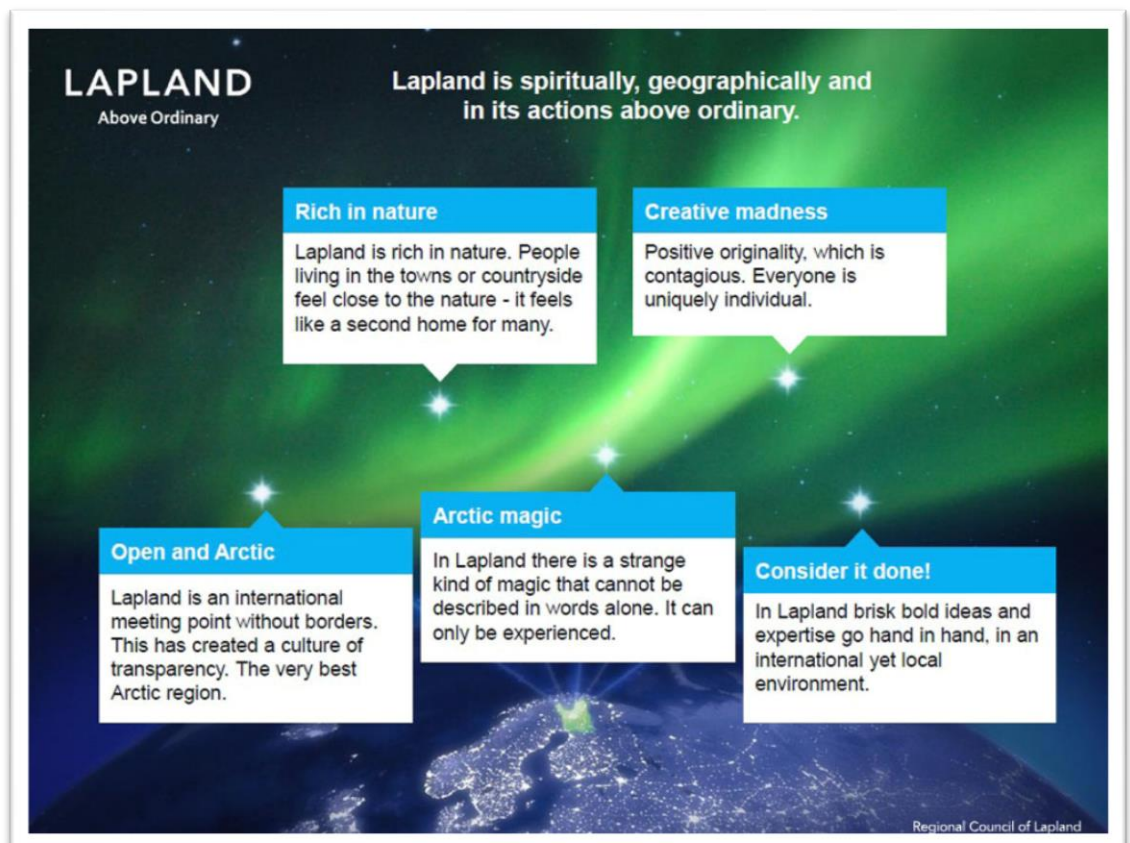


Figure 3. Lapland Brand "Lapland – Above Ordinary" (Regional Council of Lapland)

In addition, Regional Council of Lapland has an on-going project: Lapland North of Finland, the image marketing project. Image marketing operations are managed closely with the marketing plan and the operations are concentrated to create and share the image of Lapland. Their website has a

wide information bank of the tourism destinations in Lapland and one new marketing innovation, the online application “Laplication” is worth noticing. It allows smartphone users to experience Lappish phenomena, such as the northern lights and the midnight sun, in their own hands. In addition it allows users to change the background of their own pictures, as if they were experiencing the phenomena themselves. The application has already been downloaded in 79 countries after the launching date 2012. (Regional Council of Lapland 2014.)

Lapland is mentioned as one of the attractive tourism areas and diverse service offering destinations in Finland Tourism Strategy (Ministry of Employment and Economy 2014). The attractions of Lapland are various depending of the region and the tourist perceptions and motives. Ultimately the demand defines the attractions and often foreigners relate the attractions of Lapland to entire Finland (Lapin seutukaavaliitto 1991, 25). Other defining factors for attractions are based on resources, supply and marketing, which may also be by-products from each other (Järviluoma 2006, 97–105). Lapland brand itself summarizes the attractions of Lapland in clear and short but to get a more holistic picture of the current attractions, more examination is needed.

The nature and the landscapes are the main attractions in the Arctic, but cultural factors based on aboriginal lifestyles are significantly increasing (Hall–Johnston 1995, 1-23). Nature in tourism is most often related to experience tourism as it is experienced with senses. This offers a wide range of activities and possible activities to utilize the nature in the tourism business; they can be divided in natural environment experiences and nature experiences by the authenticity of the nature itself. (Järviluoma 2006, 51–61.) In addition, the operating environment itself has the cleanest air in Europe. Nature being renewable and safe, there are no or only few threats to this attraction (Peltola–Sarala 2012). More specifically based on Lapin seutukaavaliitto (1991, 26) nature attractions and destinations can be listed according to their location, landscapes, body of water, flora and fauna or nature reserves.

Location can be seen itself as an attraction or a factor of accessibility. The Arctic, the north of the Arctic Circle, is exotic in global and in national perspective. The climate is one of the key elements: strong seasonal changes in weather and the polar night and the midnight sun. Snow and ice may soon be rare attractions worldwide. Yet secure snow situation can be a great advantage for Lapland in the future. These seasonal factors are also seen in Lapland Tourism Strategy (2011–2014, 46) as current attractions but also factors that need to be developed more to secure the future balance and increase in tourism (Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011-2014). Geographical special points and abnormal landscapes and formations attract people. There is a boundary mark in Enontekiö, Lapland, where three countries' borderlines encounter. Also the only fells in Finland can be found from the region of Lapland. Water is clean and the flora and fauna are diverse in the area. Many nature reserves dominate the area imperceptibly. (Vuoristo–Vesterinen 2009.)

Accessibility can also be a challenge to destinations. If travel connections are poor, the impacts are seen in the business rapidly. Only few are ready to spend more time and money to achieve the experience they wanted if the conditions are not beneficial. Even if the infrastructure and roads are in relatively good condition in Finland, the distances are pretty long by car. Railways and sea access reach only Southern Lapland and though the connecting transfers are often offered, the timetables are not usually beneficial. Helsinki is most commonly seen the starting point as it has the connection to every transportation. Furthermore, it seems that there are currently too few flight connections to Lapland. Few flight operators are also seen as a problem, causing elevation of the prices. (Barents tourism 2014.) The development of the public transportation is essential and it should be able to answer to seasonal changes and focus on connection transfers. In order to grow internationally, the development of air traffic is vitally important. Without the well working flights there is no accessibility to Lapland from abroad. (Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011–2014, 51–54.)

Although nature is playing the main role in Lappish attractions, with natural environment experiences and nature experiences, the cultural factor in the region is strong. As nature, the cultural factors can be divided in natural and created attractions. Natural attractions in this sense would mean the indigenous heritage, the lifestyle and habits of aboriginals and their livelihoods and the old mythologies (Hall–Johnston 1995, 11; Regional Council of Lapland 2014). Created attractions in comparison could be for example Santa Claus and crossing the Arctic Circle (Vuoristo–Vesterinen 2009). Hence the cultural factors are interesting to travellers; the natural attractions should be productized in order to give the authentic cultural experience to them (Lapland Tourism Strategy, 50).

Varanka (2011, 19–31) claims that the authenticity of tourism can be divided in two in Finnish Lapland: the tourism Lapland and the real Lapland. The difference is between how the region is marketed and what is the everyday life for the region's inhabitants. These two stages together can be divided more into six stages as a continuous; three stages that play a scene for the tourism Lapland and three for the real Lapland. The latter scenes are out of reach or hard to reach to travellers as they include the actual weekday of the inhabitants and the first scenes are the first to reach when the destination is even set to Lapland. The line is blur whether the first scene is achieved after the traveller has left from metropolitan area thinking of Lapland or when he or she has actually arrived to the Arctic Circle. The next stage is the commercialized area of Rovaniemi, including the image of Santa Claus and reindeer. Rovaniemi region offers a versatile set of activities; the home of Santa Claus, elves, fake Sami people with the Sami costumes, husky- and reindeer safaris, cruises and skiing. Even though they are strong tourism attractions, they do not offer the real Lapland to travellers. Third and fourth stages are more difficult to separate, they consist the areas of tourism centers (3) and nature houses and museums of the region (4). The fifth stage is assumed to provide the realest real to a traveller. The real Lapland starts only at the height of Sodankylä (130 km north from the Arctic Circle) and it lets a traveller join the every day chores with the locals and experience the real nature behind the scenes. The new group of entrepreneurs, called lifestyle

entrepreneurs, appears to offer this stage of Lapland to visitors (Krieger 2013). This stage gives the memorable experience to a traveller, who after experiencing that may start to get interested in the sixth level. However, the sixth level in general may be too ordinary with the everyday life tasks and turn excitement to boredom. (Varanka 2011.)

4 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Experience Tourism

4.1.1 Experiencing with Senses

Experiencing the examined phenomena is in all based purely on senses. Arctic lights are natural phenomena that cannot be affected by human hands but they can be utilized in tourism business or become as an attraction for Finnish Lapland. They are in general something unique that can be experienced also “by accident”. This means that they can be consumed without any further tourism products around them, but by just focusing on the phenomena themselves.

Experiences are part of the modern entertainment economy, which also includes the tourism industry. The visible growth of tourism in western countries may be a result of the economical welfare and the increasing wealth, but also the changing models of tourism itself. New images and ideas are produced to increase the needs of consumers and through those needs the new services are produced. Tourism is an unneeded good to a biological creature. People do not need it in order to fulfil their basic needs (based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs): psychological needs, security needs, social needs, esteem needs, self-actualizing needs (Cherry 2014). In order to achieve these needs, it is not essential to travel but the tourism industry has created other types of needs that travelling can satisfy – they are called experiences. (Saarinen 2001.)

The definition of an experience is varied. The core is still based on an emotional experience of an individual human being (Borg–Kivi–Partti 2002). Also, the experience is often experienced with many senses (Saarinen 2011). Experience tourism can be almost seen as a defining term to all tourism nowadays. Everything is offered by courting the senses. The tourism product is defined by the positive and memorable experience of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and feeling the product. (Borg et al 2002, 25–30; Saarinen

2011, 10–15.) According to Tarssanen (2005, 132–152), experiences can be examined from two perspectives: on the level of specific elements of the products and on the customer’s own experience. Below the Experience Pyramid in Figure 4, the factors of a customer’s experience are defined and in the pyramid the elements of a product take customers closer to strong emotional experience, which can lead to a personal change. Pine (2009) also suggests that is time to move to a new economic level of value, going beyond the experience. That is because according to Pine (2011), the experiences can be commoditized as easily as services and goods. He exemplifies that an experience that is consumed the second time can never be as good as it was when it was consumed for the first time. By the third time it cannot be even nearly as good as it was even in the second time, and so on. The “been there, done that” expression cannot take the tourism business forward, so Pine has suggested to customize the experience making it to “Life transforming experience – transformation” (Pine 2011). It is beyond the experience or as Tarssanen and Kylänen (2005) see it, it is simply called a change. As people want to improve themselves constantly, the key question is how to make them achieve their aspiration. With the transformation, the customer is the product (Pine 2011).

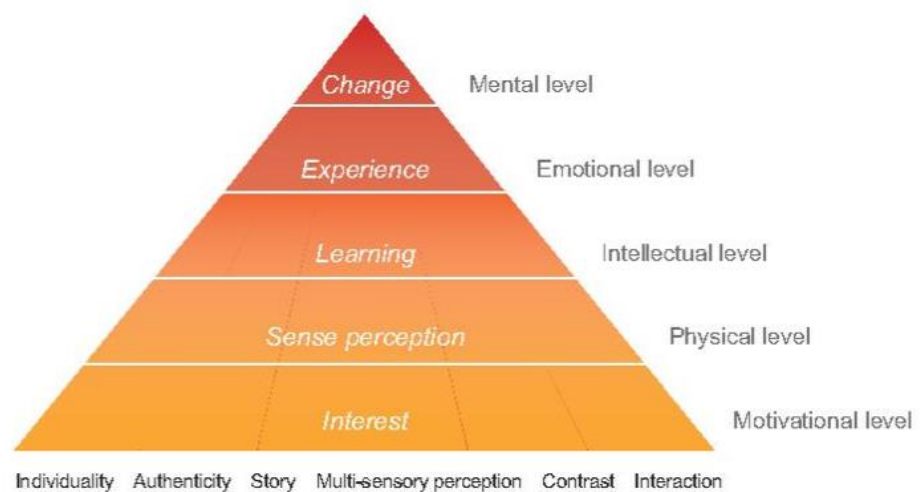


Figure 4. Experience Pyramid (Tarssanen–Kylänen 2005)

Experience services and products are marketed as parts of the attractions. The elements set place in some specific location, which is seen an attraction, the reason why the tourism business is possible there. Attractions need to be attractive; otherwise they would not be attractions. In other words, all destinations or events that are attractive to travellers are attractions (Aho 1994, 38). In more detail, Aho explains how the choice is made for experiencing a specific attraction: first there is a motive, which is built by inner needs or sociocultural environments, the reason why a holiday is spent at the first place. Then preferences and goals are set to cover why and how the holiday is spent. The economical situation and time can set certain limits here but the final choice is not made only based on these factors. The background of every traveller reflects the previous experiences to their future hopes. The knowledge of existing attractions or seeing and hearing the marketing in public or via friends and relatives create a silent net from where to pick a destination or an event. Lapland in general is seen as an attraction and it can be divided into many other attraction destinations or phenomena. (Aho 1994, 42–45.)

“Lapland is the leading destination for sustainable nature and experience tourism in Europe by 2020” (Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011, 26–27). As examined earlier in this paper, the attractions of Lapland are various. The unique landscapes and silence in Finnish Lapland offer multiple possibilities for experiencing the true nature but the nature can be even more than the nature. According to Saarinen (2001), nature can be part of a traditional cultural environment; hence the nature tourism in Lapland includes its cultural aspects as well. Due to the remote location of Lapland, one of its attractions silence, is seen as invigorating. The invigorating experience is defined with four typical factors: enchantment of the place, secession of the ordinary (e.g. weekdays), feeling of cohesion with the nature and the suitability of the surroundings. It is an alternative to tourism products, such as snowmobiling or white water river rafting but they all could be seen as experience attractions. (Haanpää–Veijola 2006.) Based on a research made by Metsähallitus (2014), nature is not only seen as an attraction but a beneficial

element to a health. In addition to a physical health, mood and self-esteem were improved after spending some time in nature. Moreover, negative feelings were eased and social wellbeing was improved. In general, nature is a holistic cure for body and mind. (Metsähallitus 2014; Tourula–Rautio 2014). As the experience in the tourism business is seen more and more as a vital element, the new perspectives of attractions are needed. The utilization of the arctic lights could be attached to both soft and sensitive products as well as more extreme products.

4.1.2 Storytelling and Sustainability

Consumers increasingly seek experience and adventure, things that entice the heart rather than the brain (Jensen 2002). The ordinary products and services are not enough anymore. Experience tourism has given the possibility to escape from the reality, continue the childhood's games and dive into a fantasy (Huttunen 2004). Hence, stories can strengthen the power of an experience. Stories are bought along with the products (Jensen 2002). Content for tourist products is drawn from the arctic nature, local culture, traditions and beliefs in Finnish Lapland and the sources are several (Tarssanen 2007, 38). They are all part of the Lappish story, which is utilized in tourism business. Stories can complete a service or a product as they offer a deeper meaning and memorable experience to a customer. The stories can be based on historical happenings or they can be inspired by myths. Even more important is how the stories are told. They can be used in marketing but given image needs to be completed by a real experience, that is called authenticity (Tarssanen 2007, 40–43). Huttunen (2004, 27–31) explains that the authenticity in tourism means the capability to utilize it in creative ways: sometimes even an imaginary story can be authentic, if it is presented in a suitable place, in a suitable way and in a relation to an offered product or service (Huttunen 2004).

The historical perspective in storytelling can be the cultural heritage. Travellers from foreign countries come to Finnish Lapland in order to

experience something different from their cultures. Wintry activities alone could meet their expectations, but when they can be offered with information of their long-standing tradition based on the cultural heritage, customer expectations are exceeded. If this activity is more completed with mythical stories of legends, surroundings, flora and fauna and habits of the indigenous people, in which a customer can even take part, the experience has gone beyond and reached its goals as offering a memorable experience. Lapland has a strong ground for tales and myths of ancient gods, holy sites, spirits and phenomena as well as animals and witches (Tarssanen 2005, 58–70). In the Arctic, a central factor of life and survival for native peoples was the shamanistic world-view. Shamans were the “witches” of the society who had a spiritual connection to nature and who could travel between the different parts of the world. They used drums to make these journeys or to call spirits to help them. Until present day, the shamans have attracted people to hear their stories (Tarssanen 2005, 67–69). The tourism industry has realized the mystic and attractiveness of shamans, and has utilized their storytelling skills and created a whole product on it. Even today there can be found two different types of shamans in Lapland. One is focused on tourism business and the other tries to avoid it. Despite their concentration, they both utilize the natural phenomena in their journeys, the sound, the light, the colours and the movements of the Earth. Based on their knowledge and experience, they have an access to a wide range of mystical stories that can attract any traveller. (Pystynen–Rantama 2014.)

Among the storytelling, the sustainability has become an emerging trend. Due to the global concern about the climate change, pollution, food safety and natural resource depletion and their visibility in different medias, have led to a change in consumer behavior. In many countries consumers are already seeking for sustainable products and services or leaning on companies to change their outcome of sustainability issues. As in the end the consumers create the markets, the companies need to change their strategies in order to stay competitive in the business and the ignorance is no longer acceptable. (Lubin–Esty 2010.) In tourism, storytelling can also be

used as a key teaching strategy (Unesco 2010) and itself it can be seen as a sustainable form of product development.

4.2 Product Development

In tourism, a product is most often referred to services. Tourism product is then anything a customer experiences: transportation, accommodation, dining, activities and sights. The tourism product is always produced and consumed at the same time, as the customer is a part of the product. (Huttunen 2004, 41–43.) The customer's role in consuming the product can be active or passive. The passive role appears in traditional approach to a customership, where customer consumes the services produced to him or her. A customer, who plays an active role, interacts with producers, stakeholders or locals and is a part of creating the product, which is called co-creation. Co-creation is seen in a holistic approach to a customership and can offer stronger experiences to a customer. (García-Rosell 2014.)

According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and European Travel Commission (ETC) (2011), the key principles in a sustainable tourism development are:

- Being authentic
- Having the support of a host community
- Respecting the natural and socio-cultural environments by not damaging these in any way
- Being differentiated from competitors, avoiding “me too/ copycat” developments
- Being of a sufficient scale to make a significant economic contribution, but not so large as to create high economic leakage.

The experience tourism emphasizes the importance of an authentic tourism product. In experience economy a commercialization is still not seen a dubious or a problem. Tourism is part of the economy and commercialization is a key element to that. In order to offer an experience product to a customer, it needs to be commercialized. (Saarinen 2001, 14–15.) A tourism

product is produced based on the needs of a customer in a special target group. The structure of a memorable experience is set, destination, activity, meal or a route is there but a customer with his or her own presence create the experience and the experience is always subjective (Borg et al 2002, 129–133).

Developing a new product, the essential thought process should be: first there are expectations; they are followed by experiences; which lead to memories. Expectations come from a customer; they are built in advance by their previous knowledge, recommendations and marketing. Then they are consumed; each product contains a series of experiences, which are based on customer's feelings. As the products are most often intangible, there are no physical products to take home with; everything is focused to create positive memories. The core idea is to develop and present a product so that a customer is attracted to it but does not expect more than can be delivered. A determinant of success is how well the experiences match or exceed expectations made by a customer. (World Tourism Organization and European Travel Commission 2011, 7.)

A service design tool used in a service experience process is a customer journey (see Figure 5). A customer experiences the service as a journey, which consists of various service moments. The journey is based on the service provider's pre-programmed process and the choices that the customer makes as well as their interaction together. A customer journey includes pre-, venue- and post-experiences. A product is then not only evaluated by the time of the activity but by the whole journey including the pre-expectations and post-memories. (Tassi 2009.)

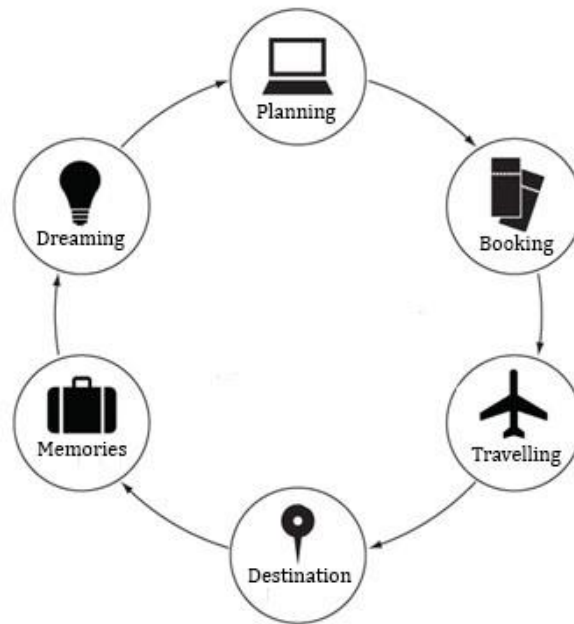


Figure 5. Customer Journey (Autere 2014 after Childs 2010)

4.3 Seasonality

Finland belongs to a northern territory, where the four seasons are clear, summers are mild and sunny, and winters are rather cold. “Four seasons, four reasons” has been a slogan for marketing Finland (Vuoristo–Vesterinen 2009, 25-32). Finnish Lapland belongs to the Arctic, where the sun does not set during the summer and the winters are snowy and cold without any or little sunlight. In Lapland the season changes are more dramatic and they guide the routines of people (Regional Council of Lapland 2014). The four seasons would not do justice for an annual cycle, where more seasons have their own characters. According to a Lappish culture, the seasons in Lapland are eight, four main seasons as elsewhere, and four other seasons, where main seasons are in their transitions. The eight changing seasons have been guiding the northern people through the history and setting the rhythm of life. (Visit Rovaniemi 2013.) The eight seasons can be named as follows: First Snow, Christmas, Frosty Winter and Crusty Snow (winter), Departure of Ice (spring), Midnight Sun (summer) and Harvest Season and Colorful Autumn (autumn) (Regional Council of Lapland 2014). These seasons look different

as their names may reveal and they all have different characters, which can be seen as a map for northern people but also as a tourism attraction.

Seasonality is defined by Butler (2011, 5) as

a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as number of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment and admissions to attractions.

He also states that it has been seen as a problem and needs to be overcome (2011, 2). Lapland Tourism Strategy (2011–2014, 47–49) has set the promotion of year-round tourism as one of the key points in their strategic development. In order to achieve the year-round tourism, Lapland needs a strong summer product, which would help to balance the seasonality between summer and winter months. The product needs to be attractive enough to increase the amount of visitors in summer months and can be sold to international markets. (Regional Council of Lapland 2014.) This demands co-operation between companies to create and to promote a quality product that fits to a current trends in tourism: nature, sustainability, wellness and downshifting.

A foreign traveller has different needs than a domestic traveller. Both can be attracted by the Lappish nature, however the foreign traveller can be even scared of it, as if he or she comes from different (urban) environments. Hence, they need guidance and guided activities. Although winter products are strong tourism products, they should also be developed. The challenge is to renew well-functioning products so that the customers could experience them over and over again, and create totally new products with high level of attraction as well. Examples of the figures of seasonality in Lapland are seen in Figure 6. (Lapland Tourism Strategy 2011–2014, 47–49).

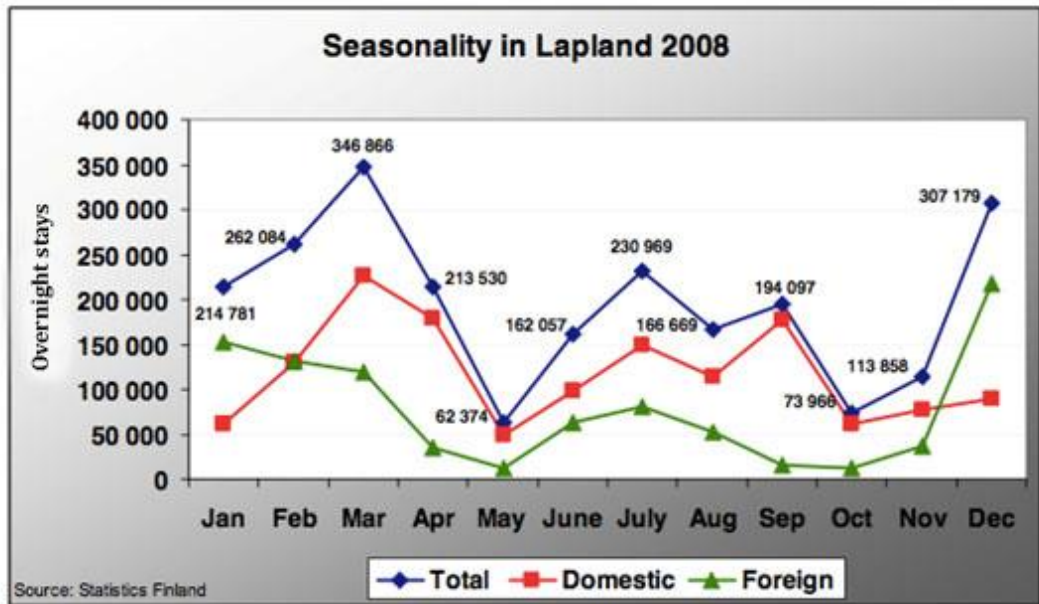


Figure 6. Seasonality in Lapland 2008 (Regional Council of Lapland)

The impacts of the seasonality are wide. They cover marketing (pricing), labour market (quality and sustainability of employment), business finance (cash flow, investments), stakeholder management (suppliers) and all operations (Butler 2011, 1). In addition to these, the seasonal tourism does not support sustainability in any level. The employments are short-term and therefore the professional employees can be difficult to find. They do not support the migration to remote, seasonal destinations either, as there are not year-round work opportunities. Land and nature use is far from sustainability as the areas are strained heavily in part of the year and left without use on the off-seasons. Many times the heavy seasonal use can strain the nature so much that it cannot be utilized anymore after one season. (Ympäristöhallinto 2014.)

Seasonality consists of both natural and institutionalized seasonality. Natural seasonality relates to the conditions and limitations of the environment, climate and weather by the seasons of the year, geographic location and weather that are typical to a specific destination. Institutionalized seasonality is a result of human actions and regulations, e.g. school holidays. Tourism related operators have an impact to this though. They follow the pattern of seasonality by focusing their services into high seasons. This pattern needs

to be changed in order to reduce the negative impacts of the tourism industry. Offering off-season products and creating new attractions to quieter seasons make the year-round tourism possible. (Tuokkola-Liljavirta 2008.)

5 ARCTIC LIGHTS

5.1 Polar Night and Polar Day

Although it is thought that there are eight seasons in Finnish Lapland, the seasons can be defined in different ways. A vernacular definition might base even on the snow situation; hence, it may vary depending on the year. Thermic definition is used among meteorologists when temperatures set the seasonal changing. But what sets the most unique characters to the Arctic is the astronomical definition, which is very precise. An astronomical spring is between a vernal equinox and a summer solstice; an astronomical summer is from a summer solstice to an autumnal equinox; an autumn again from an autumnal equinox to a winter solstice and a winter from a winter solstice to a vernal equinox. (Oja 2010, 111–115.)

The equinoxes and the solstices are every year on the certain days; similar from year to year, and in the Arctic they define the polar night and the polar day. At the North Pole the Sun rises (vernal equinox) and sets (autumnal equinox) once in each year making it six months continuous daylight and six months continuous night. The length of the continuous daylight and night depends of the latitude south from North Pole but north from Arctic Circle. (See Figure 7.) In the Arctic Circle the continuous light and the continuous darkness last only one day on the solstices. (National Snow & Ice Data Centre 2014.) Hence the Earth is tilted on its axis, the time when the sun is furthest in the northern hemisphere is called a summer solstice, and then the day is as it's longest in the Arctic. When the Sun is its furthest in the southern hemisphere it is called a winter solstice, and the day is then as its shortest (National Maritime Museum 2014).

Polar Day and Polar Night in Finnish Lapland

Polar day starting and ending days depending on the latitude			Polar night starting and ending days depending on the latitude		
Nuorgam	16.5.	29.7.	Nuorgam	25.11.	17.1.
Utsjoki	17.5.	28.7.	Utsjoki	26.11.	16.1.
Kilpisjärvi	21.5.	24.7.	Kilpisjärvi	1.12.	12.1.
Inari	22.5.	23.7.	Inari	2.12.	11.1.
Ivalo	23.5.	22.7.	Ivalo	3.12.	9.1.
Muonio	27.5.	18.7.	Muonio	9.12.	3.1.
Kolari	30.5.	14.7.	Kolari	20.12.	24.12.
Sodankylä	30.5.	15.7.	Sodankylä	20.12.	24.12.
Pello	4.6.	10.7.			
Kemijärvi	4.6.	9.7.			
Rovaniemi	6.6.	7.7.			
Ylitornio	8.6.	6.7.			
Posio	11.6.	2.7.			
Kuusamo	13.6.	1.7.			
Tornio	15.6.	29.6.			
Kemi	19.6.	25.6.			

Figure 7. Polar Day and Polar Night in Finnish Lapland 2010 (Autere 2014 after Oja 2010)

As the borderline for continuous light and dark periods goes in the Arctic Circle, it makes the Arctic a unique location to experience such phenomena. Summers are long and light and the Arctic is often called as the land of the midnight sun (National Snow & Ice Data Center 2014). The continuous sunshine is exceptional compared to the countries near the equator where the days are the same year round and during the days, a night and a day are as long. The same uniqueness is also seen in winter's darkness. It is said that winter lasts half of the year in Lapland. From the long period of winter, the polar night or the polar darkness lasts from one day to two months depending on the location as well as the polar day in comparison (Vuoristo–Vesterinen 2009, 27).

Biologically a human is a day active species, which has learnt to operate during the light time (Lyytimäki–Rinne 2013). Light is also a vital condition to nature's growth. In Lapland the adaptation to year cycles has been an imperative. Naturally during the light summer months people have worked more throughout the history, as the need for sleep is less. Again during the

dark winter months the sleep has been more important and the focus has been only in the most necessities in work. (Visit Finland 2014c.) However, somehow this has turned upside down in tourism. During the peak season in winter, the workdays are commonly around the clock and again the summer is off or slow season. The natural cycle of the year is not seen in tourism, which can give a false image of the real living in Lapland to the tourists.

However, although the Sun does not rise once during the polar night, the presumption of the total darkness is often wrong. One reason of the lack of the total darkness in Lapland is that snow reflects light from the stars and the Moon; hence any artificial light is seldom needed. In comparison with the southern cities of Finland, Lapland may have even more light during the winter months. A snowless ground and a cloudy sky make the winter in the South appear as grey, while the overall feeling in Lapland is bright and white from snow and the starry sky with a greenish shimmer from the northern lights. (Oja 2010, 124.)

5.2 Northern Lights

The current most popular attraction in the Arctic is the natural phenomenon northern lights or also called as the aurora borealis or the polar light. These spectacular colour light displays appear near the magnetic poles, in the north, usually between the North Pole and the Arctic Circle. In the southern hemisphere, near the South Pole they are called the aurora australis. The phenomenon is nearly identical but in this research the focus is on the aurora borealis, the *northern* lights.

Northern lights' formation start from a collision when electrically charged particles from the Sun enter the Earth's atmosphere. Sunspot activity blows a high-energy solar wind towards the Earth and when they collide with oxygen and nitrogen from the upper atmosphere, the gases are excited and the northern lights are born. Although the colour green is the most common colour seen in the northern lights, the spectrum of the colours may vary from

pink to blue and from green to yellow. Also the shapes of the northern lights can be various; they can appear as a clear arc, dancing curtains or anything in between. Depending on their form they can stay still in the horizon or move actively and fill the entire sphere. The type of the colour and the shape depend on the gas particles, which appear in different altitudes from 70 to 640 km. (Snow & Ice Data Center 2014; Northern Light Centre 2014.)

The northern lights are best seen in the northern hemisphere, on clear nights, in the areas that are not subject to light pollution (Northern Light Centre 2014). They appear in cycles in the ellipse zone near the North Pole. Due to the Earth's rotation, daily fluctuation causes that the best time to see the northern lights is between 10-11 pm. in the evening in Finnish Lapland. Yearly fluctuations are seen in the 11 years phases. In 3–5 years the lights are increasing to the maximum and in the next 7–9 years they are decreasing to the minimum, then it starts all over. Yearly the maximums are higher around the equinoxes and lower around the solstices. (Kaila 1998.) The last 11-year phase maximum was in 2013 (Northern Light Centre 2014).

As the northern lights have been a successful attraction in tourism, the accessibility to the information about them has increased massively and along that, it is easier to predict the most probably times to see them with a help of websites such as "Auroras Now!" (Ilmatieteen laitos 2014), "Aurora Forecast" (Geophysical Institute 2014), and "Aurora Forecast" (Astronomy North 2014). There are already readymade packages for travellers based only on the northern lights. One can travel to Finnish Lapland and spend a regular week doing the normal activities in wintry Lapland with only one exception, everything is happening in the night time when the prediction to forecast the auroras are higher (Aurora Zone 2014).

Before the northern lights were examined and known as phenomena, the northern people had various beliefs and stories about them. Some of these stories are yet so familiar to people that they are used in storytelling and taught to children and shared with travellers. The stories vary from the beliefs what creates such light phenomena to the sky to the prophecies and theories

how they interact with people. Finnish name “revontulet” indicates to two Finnish words: repo (which means a fox) and tuli (which means a fire). The name is thought to come from an ancient belief where the fox’s tail hits the ground while it is running on a snow and the sparks reflected to the sky are seen as the northern lights (Kaila 1998, 62; Nevanlinna 2000, 9). They have also been feared and respected. Through some beliefs they have been souls of late persons, they can predict cold weather or they have thought to bring luck to the child who is inseminated under their glow (Kaila 1998, 57–75).

Although the northern lights appear in the sky year-round, the dark period of the year is the only time when a human eye can detect them. The polar night in Lapland provides the most suitable settings to see them. The remote areas are many and the artificial light can still be evaded. In the silence of Lappish nature the possibility of hearing the northern lights increases to the maximum, even though there is no scientific proof that they make any sound (Kaila 1998, 75–85). The light and the dark cannot be without another and Lapland can offer the extremity of both. The light and dark periods are yet natural and the light pollution has not destroyed them. In a light of sustainability, protecting the night sky can be the next big trend in environmentalism. (Lyytimäki–Rinne 2013.)

5.3 Midnight Sun

After the polar night come the polar day and the midnight sun. The Sun that does not set in 24 hours or in two months depending on the location in Lapland is called the midnight sun. Sometimes midnight sun and polar day are used in same meaning but in this research, the polar day refers to the period of a light time and the midnight sun refers to the Sun that is constantly up in the sky. The nightless nights caused by the midnight sun are thought to be an opposite of a polar darkness and together they are the general natural phenomena of the Arctic. (Oja 2010, 121.) In comparison to the polar night, there is something very concrete in the sky during the polar day, the sun. It is more visible phenomenon when it is there than when it is not. On a clear day,

the sun can be seen around the clock and it is mystic how the entire nature bathes in light. Only the shade of the light changes, from white to yellow and orange, as if the Sun was setting or rising. (Visit Finland 2014b.)

In the Finnish culture July is a common holiday month, basically starting from the Midsummer (21 June). An old saying is that “Finland is closed in July” which reflects to this holiday period. Finnish people find their way to their summer cottages, where they swim, have sauna, listen the silence and downshift as much as they can (Visit Finland 2014a). During these light summer months, Finnish people start to sense their surroundings and let the experiences flow as they live the idea, which has become symbolic among them, the midnight sun experience (Haanpää–Veijola 2006, 33–34).

The midnight sun is a phenomenon that can be seen during the polar day in the Arctic. The Sun stays over the horizon 24 hours a day. It gives energy to the northern people after a long winter but also may cause insomnia, as it is light day around. The constant light can be utilized in tourism by offering any activities in the most unconventional times as the light or rather the lack of it, have no impacts to them. Some organizations have started their business based on the possibility to utilize the hours of a day as much as possible. Midnight Sun Canoeing from Muonio to Tornio (Midnight Sun Canoeing 2014) and Midnight Sun Film Festival in Sodankylä (Midnight Sun Film Festival 2014) for example market their supply even with the name of the midnight sun. But the supply under the midnight sun in general in Finnish Lapland is small. In comparison with other Nordic Countries, Finnish Lapland has not yet a strong ground for the midnight sun products.

5.4 Other Lights in Arctic

The special light characters in the Arctic are many, the northern lights and the midnight sun are only examples of them. During the year cycle, the colours change and create different looking surroundings and mystic landscapes. In each of the eight seasons in Lapland the colour is different. It

is unique for the arctic location and creates multiple light phenomena to nature.

During the First Snow the colour of the year is as its darkest. The polar darkness is ahead and snow has not set to the ground yet, sometimes it is called even as black snow. But as the sky is getting darker, the stars are getting brighter and the northern lights can be seen up in the sky and the colours are spectacular. In the Christmas the polar night is on but it is not all dark, the slight blue shade in the sky in the frosty days has a mystical charm, which is emphasized with the various stories of Christmas time. During the Frosty Winter the days are already getting longer and a hue of pink can be seen in the horizon. With the soft pink colour the cold weather is even thought to be visible. The Crusty Snow starts the spring in the eyes of the Lappish people as the Sun comes out and it starts to sparkle among the millions crystals of snow when its rays reflect from them. During the Departure of Ice the nights get lighter and very soon it is noticeable that the nights are only light blue and the deeper darkness has faint away. The Midnight Sun covers the entire Lapland in sunshine and white light until during the Harvest Season the days start to feel shorter and nights turn into nights again. Shades of the Sun are seen multiple and as the Colourful Autumn starts with its many autumn colours, the first stars appear in the sky and the magical blue takes over the evenings. (Regional Council of Lapland 2014; Visit Rovaniemi 2013.)

Moreover there is one different kind of natural light phenomenon in the Arctic, called the whiteout. It can happen only when the area is surrounded with snow and the sky is as white as the surroundings. The light comes behind the cirrostratus, altostratus or stratus clouds and is all pure white. This leads to an optical illusion where the horizontal line and the contrast between near and far objects blur and due to that, the observer loses all senses of perspective. (Snow & Ice Data Center 2014.) In safe circumstances the experience of whiteout is extremely memorable but as it can cause disorientation and even motion sickness it can be dangerous as experienced in fells and should be avoided if the area is not familiar to a receiver.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Analysing Results

In this research, it was important to understand the factors of the research phenomena before it could be examined. With thorough background information the ground was set and it was possible to start to analyse the conducted interviews. The interviews used in this research were semi-structured as they allowed the most suitable way to approach the research problem. The interviews were eight in total and they were conducted during April 2014 face-to-face or via phone and e-mails with people who have a close contact to the phenomena or a business around it. Along in this research were people from the different fields of tourism: Managing Director of Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort, Director of Finnish Tourist Board (Nation Brand and Marketing), Sales Director of safari company Safartica Oy, Managing Manager of Ylläksen Matkailuydistys ry, Tourism Coordinator of Regional Council of Lapland, Marketing Manager of Kilpisjärvi Hikingcenter, Programme Service Entrepreneur; Wilderness guide, Fisher, Cook, Shaman and Storyteller of Keimiön koukkaus and Operations Manager of Midnight Sun Film Festival (see more in Appendix 1).

The interviews were recorded and then transcribed between word-for-word and standard style. After transcription the data was compressed with a special attention to any key words, elements or phrases used along the interviews (Silverman 2011, 274-278). The analysis was made in order to structure, sort and compress the data so that only the essential stays and can be present as a result.

According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, 145-152) the description of the data can be seen as an analysis itself and the analysis is made by classification of the data. A successful interpretation can be executed by showing the reader the similar perspective than an author is writing from. A qualitative data analysis can be conducted from several different ways from the same data. The mean is chosen according to the wanted results, as they need to serve

the aim of the research. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000.) The results shown in this research are author's interpretation based on the analysis of the data and they cannot be confused with description of the interviews.

6.2 Interpretation of Results

6.2.1 Attraction Factors and Challenges in Finnish Lapland

Without a doubt, the clearest and the strongest attraction in Finnish Lapland is its nature in general. In the eight interviews nature was emphasized in all of them and it was highly complimented by its unique characters. Its cleanness and purity were mentioned as an advantage in comparison with other world. The measurement of the air quality in Lapland has even a scientific proof for it. It is one of the strengths in Lapland we cannot even see but what we can experience but which adds more pressure on marketing. Lappish nature is seen as a scene, which offers an endless amount of possibilities. It can be seen as a place which attracts people who seek quiet and harmony; which offers action without any created activities such as hiking, camping, berry picking and fishing or in comparably, it is a strong ground to any further programme service activity. Its relation to experience tourism is strong. Lappish nature is seen as a scene, which is even more emphasized in experiences.

Lapland is a bit like an extreme adventure, where nature plays the leading role (Jaatinen 2014).

Furthermore the words arctic, exotic and mystic were seen as important features with the image of nature in Finnish Lapland. Even more they were used as defining factors of the area, not only as an addition to create a more positive image. The concept *arctic* refers to the geographical location of Finnish Lapland with the following defining features: climate, light, nature (flora, fauna, land formation - especially fells) and culture, including the indigenous people. *Exotic* is something in between arctic and mystic. It includes the arctic features combined with the mystic features. *Mystic* comes

from the charm of Lapland. It has parts from the storytelling, the legends and the myths, the light phenomena and a Lappish ability to live in harmony with the nature.

We have this Lappish mystic. Stories, which have influences from nature, we have been utilized in services. You can even feel the presence of the spirits when you sit in the restaurant. It is not fake or bulk; here (in Lapland) we can create experiences this way. (Karinen 2014.)

The stories have an essential connection with the tourism products. The customer experience starts from the story and through the customer journey the story needs to go on with the customer expectations and fulfil what the marketing has promised. The story needs to continue all the way until the end of the service and it needs to be authentic. In the best scenario the story can exceed the customer expectations and a loyal customership is created. This leads to possible revisits and trust between a customer and an entrepreneur. At the strategic level the service quality needs to be contiguous from a manager level to the field. This creates not only the quality expertise but the authenticity as well.

The differences of the stories and the authenticity are seen between the destinations of Lapland. As Varanka (2011, 19–31) stated, the Finnish Lapland can be divided in two: the tourism Lapland and the real Lapland. The real examples came forth through the interviews as well. The Southern Lapland around the Rovaniemi region is based on the built tourism attractions, such as Santa Claus. It is a strong attraction factor, however, the “real” attractions are in the Northern Lapland, in the pristine forests and fells where the Lappish people actually live their lives through the traditions.

How many of locals in Rovaniemi have actually ridden with huskies or even sat on a reindeer sleigh. Or how many citizens own even a snowmobile. (Jaatinen 2014.)

Along the stories and the myths, the Lappish culture interests travellers. The traditional life with local people and local doings is seen attractive and interesting. Though cultural tourism has not yet been utilized well in Lapland, the researches and experiences show that there is a strong demand towards

it. For the Lappish people the interest towards their everyday life might be even a surprising element. The attraction may be too close or too ordinary to be even perceived as an attraction.

People constantly seek for different experiences as they have already experienced everything. Now there is time for original nature, original doings and local food. Enjoying the nature while skiing slowly in the fells, sitting around the fire and listening stories. Somewhere in between there was a time for hectic Lappish tourism with noisy motors, high speed and after ski, but luckily we are now going towards the genuine, real things. (Rossi 2014.)

Finnish can go to their cottages in the weekends, be near the clean waters, fish right from the dock, eat berries straight from the ground, swim in a clean lake without a need to be afraid that the polluted water needs to be washed away as soon as possible... We Finnish people cannot even think how special this might be to other areas of the World... (Jaatinen 2014.)

The importance of nature is seen throughout every attraction. Lappish culture is in so close contact with nature that they cannot be separated. Everything that is seen, felt or heard in Finnish Lapland is part of the most attractive attraction there is – nature. It is also seen important to preserve nature as clean and pristine as it is now; the nature heritage to future generations and travellers was seen as a valuable factor. The many national parks in Finnish Lapland secure the clean Lappish nature well and offer a ground to do nature activities in its most authentic form, individually but guided. The marketing for Lapland could be more on the national parks, as they already hold comprehensively a lot of information of the certain nature regions and offer a safer way to get familiarized oneself with nature. The national parks could be seen as a special tourist destinations and parts of various tourism products.

As nature with its features is the most attractive factor in Finnish Lapland, it is also seen as a challenge – it has not been able to be productized. The smaller attraction particles within the concept of nature that rose consistently from the interviews were such as snow, the midnight sun, the silence, the polar night and the northern lights. A similarity of the attractions named is that all of them are genuine, intangible natural phenomena, which are

unreachable for human hand to affect. However, only snow and the northern lights have been somewhat utilized in tourism, in winter tourism with winter activities. Summer tourism again in general is poor in Finnish Lapland although the midnight sun is seen as one of the major attractions in the entire Lapland area. New products are needed to develop summer tourism but the means are still mysterious to all. During the past years there has been some development but nothing so influential that it would have led to a visible change.

Winter tourism is based on the activities around the features of winter. Summer features are different. Maybe it should not be like winter after all – filled with activities; maybe the focus should be on totally different things... Nature itself is so exotic, Lappish people are friendly and there are many kinds of stories... Maybe there could be something different to offer as well. (Holmén 2014.)

Also the other challenges seen in Finnish Lapland are both challenges and possibilities. Accessibility with the public transportation has been a current topic in the media and it has been in discussion in Lapland quite much. Mostly flight connections and flights get the blames and the connection transportations could be better. On the other hand the weaker accessibility protect the wilderness as a remote place but without travellers there is no tourism. Cooperation between the entrepreneurs and tourism companies has both positive and negative opinions. Positive cooperation is seen with the wide range of services in the area and also as the will to make a difference. Lapland Tourism Strategy (Regional Council of Lapland 2011) is a good example of a successful cooperation. In order to have created the strategy in the first place and develop it since then, it needs a strong commitment. Due to that it has been seen as the common strategy with the common issues and the common goals. Yet better cooperation is a wish among many and it is also seen as a factor which could help to decrease the seasonality in Finnish Lapland. Mostly the focus should be on developing summer tourism, hence the impacts affect to entire Finnish Lapland.

6.2.2 Impacts of Seasonality

Finnish Lapland has clear seasons and the difference between a summer and a winter is like the difference between a night and a day. The simile itself describes the seasons well as the polar night in winter is a dark period of time and the polar day in comparison is all light. These differences in the tourism business create the seasonality. Finland and Finnish Lapland are perceived more as winter destinations rather than summer destinations. This perception is based on the location and the long-lasting marketing as well as on more advanced product development for winter products and services. Moreover winter is seen as a more exotic season as there are less wintry and snowy destinations in the World. All of the mentioned reasons have created a strong peak for winter tourism in Finnish Lapland. To make it even stronger, the greatest created tourism attraction, Santa Claus, is a winter character. Strong and constantly increasing winter tourism is certainly a positive factor for Finland but not without having a down side. One weakness in tourism is the extremely strong winter tourism. It is not even contradictory; the more effort is put into the winter the less effort is left to put into the summer.

Decreasing the seasonality would be beneficial to all parties in Lapland. It has also been added to Lapland Tourism Strategy (Regional Council of Lapland 2010) as to develop summer tourism along with winter tourism. Decreasing the seasonality would affect entrepreneurs, employees and the municipal economy. Entrepreneurs would gain more professional and committed employees, employees would have secured living around the year, which could settle in one place and have families, which again would finally lead to an increased population and higher tax revenues.

The seasonal work force needs to be trained every year from the start and many times the commitment and the quality is poorer compared to the permanent work force. Every year a piece of silent knowledge and experience is lost when the employees change. (Luiro 2014.)

The seasonality has not only impacts to working life but to the operating environment as well. The nature is suffering from the seasonal building and usage for only few months' sake. In addition, it gives no ecological image to travellers from our own behaviour towards nature, which in fact should be highly sustainable and advanced as our own traditions and heritage come from the close contact with nature. Nature has proven to have possibilities for year-round tourism but they need to be found, understood and developed in order to attract travellers. Everything should start from the locals. If the locals would start to utilize and appreciate the summer and its capability for stronger tourism flow, it would spread to elsewhere more naturally. Stronger cooperation would have foothold here as well. In order to increase the summer tourism, the image of the seasonality would need to be changed – Lapland needs to be open year round. Regionally the entrepreneurs could offer services graduated with each other and with joint marketing the entire region would benefit and the costs would be smaller.

Between the winter and the summer there are many seasons without utilization. “Eight seasons, eight reasons” after Vuoristo and Vesterinen (2009, 25-32). There is a reason for the amount of seasons in Finnish Lapland. Nature offers its best month after month and the best changes among the year cycle. Not many, if any, negative issues are perceived into Finnish Lapland, however there are many positive issues as proven earlier. Changing the existing is a long work and many times even too expensive, hence the existing should only be strengthened.

Maybe it is more than enough to admit that this is who we are here and these things happen what happen here and these things we just do here. The focus should be on strengthening the strengths. (Holmén 2014).

Decreasing the seasonality would also affect tourism as a business in a larger scale. Tourism development is being followed also based on its impacts to the economy. Although tourism is a major livelihood in Finnish Lapland, the four peak season months during the winter season are not enough to become as a serious business and have an impact to the state

finances. The Government's and other influential operators' support would help to create the constant change in the business.

Tourism is a very important form of livelihood in Finnish Lapland. It would be essential to understand that even if every flight would not be full, it cannot be thought that the flight connection is not profitable for Lapland. It has other impacts as well – the travellers will with a most certainty bring money here in another form. (Pöykkö 2014.)

6.2.3 Arctic Light as Attraction

As part of nature, light is thought to be one of the defining factors in Finnish Lapland. In addition, the midnight sun, the polar night and the northern lights are thought to be more specific major attractions of the region. The possibilities for utilizing them seem to be endless in an idea level and there are no weaknesses seen in them. The northern lights are already utilized as an attraction in tourism and their impacts are seen well in winter tourism. Although it is impossible to predict whether they are seen in a specific time, it has not been seen as a weakness and it has not affected negatively into tourism. On the contrary, it has even increased tourism in the early winter months and the visits of the northern lights watchers may be various if the northern lights did not appear in the first time. In comparison to the northern lights, the midnight sun and the polar night are not under any influences whether it is possible to see them or not. They are very certain and predictable even by an hour. Yet it is not known how to utilize them in tourism and even if they are seen as powerful phenomena what would be interesting to market, the ways are mysterious. Powerless marketing or no marketing is thought to be one reason of the lack of a high interest towards them but on the other hand, no one seems to know exactly *how* to market them. Beautiful pictures and videos do not seem to tell enough about the unique light. However, the light itself and alone is not seen attractive enough.

Light phenomena are natural, real, different, rare and strong (Saarinen 2014).

Light phenomena are easy to describe with positive words, they are spectacular and special but they are rare only in comparison with other world. In the Arctic, the light phenomena are the same. The light in Finnish Lapland needs to be an attraction focused on this region. The northern lights are marketed well by the Regional Council of Lapland but the lights of the summer have so far been in a background of any possible activities. Product development has been thought around summer tourism for a long time but so far nothing strong enough has risen to make summer tourism successful. Even less the light during the summer months has been able to be productized or commercialized. Safari products such as fishing, canoeing and white water rafting are good summer products, but they are not emphasizing the presence of a mystic light, which could offer possibilities for much more. The subtle light with its many shades awakens the idea whether we even realize what we have in our hands. Through the history there have been stories of the light and the darkness and the living has based on the light time and it has guided people's lives. The Nordic light changes colours and each colour has a special spirit and feeling. It is so subtle that it can escape if it is not focused on. But yet, the usage of the light stays in mystery.

So the possibilities are thought to be many and the light phenomena are seen as major attractions but new perspectives are needed in order to discover successful products. If locals are too close to the phenomena, the potential ideas could come straight from the target groups.

Why something is seen as an attraction comes usually from the heritage and the tradition of different cultures. We cannot change their (customers) minds as it is built in them. But what we can do is deepen the message what they already got. (Eiramo 2014.)

Based on the target group the attractions should vary. It is possible that summer tourism and winter tourism in Lapland cannot be marketed for the same target groups. If the services were different in the summer, they could find a totally new customer group that would increase the overall tourism. The polar day and the polar night are seen as exotic and the cultural aspect

how people can live in the total lightness or in the total darkness awakens curiosity. The year of the arctic light should be emphasized (see Appendix 4).

It is somewhat difficult to explain. In the entire thing there is a strong emotional feeling presence. It is hard to put into words but somehow you just know that, ok, now it is August and soon it will be September, you know it because of the colour. It cannot be understood if it has not been experienced. (Rossi 2014.)

Even if the northern lights have already their loyal fans worldwide, the spectacular light phenomena could be united more with the concept of the arctic lights. They together could start a totally new attraction in the Arctic and more specifically in Finnish Lapland. The advantage would be that there is yet no competitive marketing based on the year-round light phenomena and Finnish Lapland could be a pioneer to create one. The light is seen as subtle and mysterious and somehow very delicate. It happens despite any human act and one way to see it is that we are here only to witness its beauty. The market could be created to new and different target groups, to travellers who are looking for the real, genuine moments in nature. They have experienced places and activities before and they are not looking for a hectic holiday anymore. The key idea could be in silence and awareness and as the slower life, so called downshifting, seems to be more important to people in everyday more hectic world, there is a direction where to focus on.

Finnish Lapland with its remote location and sparse habitation is an ideal place for different retreats and slower life services away from the everyday life. According to the research made by Metsähallitus (2014), nature itself has already many healing influences and the Nordic peoples' roots are in nature. Cultural (historical stories, legends, myths) and environmental issues are then supporting the arctic lights usage in such a deeper way. During the winter and the polar night, the focus could be on the importance of rest, the vitality received from silence and quieting down. Earlier the farthest idea of holidays was to rest and avoid busy lifestyle but during the years when everything needs to be experienced immediately the original reason has been forgotten. The polar night and its darkness should encourage people to come to Lapland to spend an actual holiday and learn how to sleep and rest

enough. In marketing this kind of theme based holidays could be easy to realise and they would not need extra activities.

The resting holidays or retreats could be refined into tourism products, which would follow the natural year-cycle; in winters the focus would be on rest (sleep) and in summer the slower lifestyle in general would be emphasized in nature. The Lapland brand "Above Ordinary" includes features such as Arctic magic and Rich in nature (Regional Council of Lapland 2014), which can be seen clearly in nature. Travellers can be taken into the wilderness instead of ordinary hotels and resting retreats or survival camps could be held outdoors, under the starry sky or the midnight sun. The holiness felt in nature in a quiet sub-zero night under the northern lights would offer the change searched for (Pine 2011). In contrary, the summer could be a continuum for that. The fells of Lapland offer an ultimate environment of experiencing the midnight sun. The fell lakes and rivers invite to drink the clear water and fish the fresh food to eat.

The summer in Lapland is extraordinary and can be presented to travellers in an authentic way. All together the product based on silence and deeper meaning is not dependent on the seasons and could be marketed as a year-round product. As nature being the most valued attraction in Finnish Lapland, the product would emphasize the sustainable usage of it. The most notable change with the arctic lights would be the lack of created activities. Everything would happen with a reason based on the old lifestyle of our ancestors and the *real Lapland* would be presented to a traveller.

It seems to be unavailing to recreate similar products that already exist and market them to the same target groups, which have not shown interest before. The aim should be to renew the entire perception of seasonal tourism by focusing on the phenomena and issues that are not dependant on any specific season alone. The concept arctic lights can be expanded if needed or narrowed down into the most essential light phenomena depending on the purpose. The subtle changes of the light need more delicate and softer

services and products and the focus could be away from activities and more on experiences, which awaken different senses.

6.3 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are important issues in the research to prove it scientific. Reliability is a measurement of consistency and validity refers whether the right questions were made and if they were achieved. (Hammond–Wellington 2013, 131, 150–152.) As a human being is not constantly stable and free from the impacts of his or her surroundings, the more reliable data is usually collected from written information. In this research everything was systematically documented from the beginning and the thorough background information was collected using various sources to advocate the credibility issues as well. No issues examined in this research came immediately from one source; they were always checked from other sources as well, if possible.

The methods used in this research were explained and reasoned clearly at the beginning of the thesis. All the conducted interviews were done openly; the names of the interviewees are public and the approval to use the received information was allowed by the interviewees. The choice of the specific interviewees was a result of their works' relevancy towards the examined phenomena. They were chosen also in order to avoid overlapping with similarities and to receive different perspectives from the field of tourism. The amount of interviews (8) offered versatile perspectives, which lead to results that are transferability.

7 CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND IMPACTS FOR THE FUTURE

The essential idea of this paper was to research what the arctic lights are and how to see them as an attraction in experience tourism in the Arctic. The main focus was on Finnish Lapland and the aim was also to examine if this attraction could decrease the strong seasonality in Finnish Lapland. Based on the research problem the research questions were set. What are arctic lights; what attracts travellers in the Arctic (Finnish Lapland); how could arctic lights be seen as a year-round attraction?

As the examined phenomena was new and there were no previous research made from it, it was essential to first understand the research phenomenon thoroughly. The research was conducted with qualitative method, with a usage of silent ethnographical approach (participating observation), strong background information and semi-structured interviews. The results are author's interpretation of the data received from the previous sources.

As a result the nature with its many features is the main attraction in Finnish Lapland and assumingly in the entire Arctic. In addition the light phenomena are playing the major part of the mystic and exotic what is defining the Arctic. The light phenomena that are seen as the arctic lights are the midnight sun and the polar day, the polar night and the northern lights. Furthermore the different shades of the light throughout the year are seen as part of the arctic lights. Among the arctic lights, the stories and myths from Lappish culture attract people. Lappish culture and nature are inseparable and the stories only increase the value of the arctic lights.

Seasonality has many negative impacts in Finnish Lapland and stronger summer tourism is needed in order to decrease the seasonality and make the business more serious nation wide, also from the perspective of the economy. Winter tourism is strongly based on the arctic location, snow and strong winter products. In order to have a strong summer in tourism, the target groups should be thought over. Summer has different possibilities than winter thus it should be marketed differently to potentially totally different

target groups. Silence and authentic factors are seen as increasing potential in Finnish Lapland and they could be utilized with summer rather than creating similar safari products that winter has. Year-round the light changes making the Arctic what it is. The arctic light itself is not enough to attract travellers alone but it is a key factor what to be utilized throughout and with any or all winter and summer products. The increasing interest towards a slower life taken into account could create more memorable tourism products based on silence and awareness.

To the commissioner this research can give a perspective how to guide entrepreneurs to approach new summer or other off-season products based on the attraction factors. The challenge has been that there are no innovative ideas to support the summer and people have put all their effort into the winter season. A tighter cooperation between entrepreneurs would give a marketing and an economical advantage. However, the product development needs to focus more on a customer perspective and utilize the possibilities of co-creation even so far that the customers would actually create the very product. In addition, the commissioner gets recent information of the current topic, which is valid to be utilized with other research phenomena as well.

Further research of the topic would be advisable as the topic is examined in this research for the first time. A qualitative analysis can be conducted in various ways from the same data. There could be variables already in the data depending on the interviewees or the written data chosen to be relevant to the research.

For further research a proposition is to examine the customer (traveller) point of view. An example would be a survey including personal customer interviews and the more anonymous questionnaire that would focus on receiving multiple replies to strengthen the validity of the research. Based on the examined results the further research of preserving the Arctic characters could support the future possibilities to utilize these factors. As an example, the impacts of a light pollution are not yet known widely and they have a straight impact to utilizing the arctic lights.

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APPENDICES

List of Interviewees	Appendix 1
Research Question Structure (Autere 2014)	Appendix 2
Lapland in Figures, Land area and Population Lapland In Figures, Land area and Population (Regional Council of Lapland 2014a)	Appendix 3
Experience of the Light Phenomena (Rossi 2014)	Appendix 4

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Appendix 1

- Eiramo, J. 2014. Interview of Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort's Managing Director on 7 April 2014.
- Holmén, M. 2014. Interview of Visit Finland – Finnish Tourist Board's Director (Nation Brand and Marketing) on 9 April 2014.
- Jaatinen, T. 2014. Interview of Safartica Oy's Sales Director on 2 April 2014.
- Karinen, J. 2014. Interview of Ylläksen Matkailuydistys ry's Managing Manager on 2 April.
- Luiro, S. 2014. Interview of Regional Council of Lapland's Tourism Coordinator on 3 April 2014.
- Pöykkö, A. 2014. Interview of Kilpisjärvi Hikingcenter's Marketing Manager on 5 April 2014.
- Rossi, J. 2014. Interview of Keimiön koukkaus' Programme Service Entrepreneur; Wilderness guide, Fisher, Cook, Shaman and Storyteller on 3 April 2014.
- Saarinen, J. 2014. Interview of Midnight Sun Film Festival's Operations Manager on 22 April 2014.

RESEARCH QUESTION STRUCTURE

Appendix 2

Name, company and title/position in a company?

Can your name and answers be used in the thesis?

- 1) What are the strengths and weaknesses in the tourism business in Lapland
 - a) In summer
 - b) In winter?

- 2) What do you think about the seasonality of the tourism business? Open the concept and describe also the possible development ideas.

- 3) What does the brand image of Lapland represent to you and would you like to change or develop it?

- 4) What are the possibilities of experience tourism in Lapland?

- 5) How would you describe the light phenomena in Lapland?

- 6) What are the possibilities and the weaknesses of the light phenomena
 - a) In summer
 - b) In winter?

LAPLAND IN FIGURE, LAND AREA AND POPULATION Appendix 3
(Regional Council of Lapland 2014a)

SUBREGION / Municipality	Land area 1.1.2012						Registered population			The population forecasts of Statistics Finland to the year 2030 1)		
	Total km ²	Land km ²	Lakes and rivers km ²	Sea km ²	Population density inhabitants/km ² of land area	31.12.2011	change-% 2010-2011	31.10.2012 [e]	the self-sufficient calculation	emigration included calculation	to the year 2030 1)	
KEMI-TORNIO	6 422	4 915	122	1 385	12,3	60 355	-0,3	60 106	61 352	59 077		
Kemi	747	95	7	645	34,9	22 399	-0,6	22 279	21 611	21 465		
Keminmaa	646	625	21		13,7	8 572	0,0	8 580	9 083	8 145		
Simo	2 086	1 446	20	620	2,4	3 441	-1,4	3 435	3 346	3 101		
Tervola	1 594	1 562	33		2,2	3 387	-1,7	3 345	3 281	2 889		
Tornio	1 349	1 187	42	120	19,0	22 545	0,1	22 467	24 031	23 477		
EAST LAPLAND	21 726	20 548	1 178		0,9	18 291	-1,9	17 976	14 926	14 376		
Kemijärvi	3 931	3 506	426		2,4	8 295	-1,5	8 129	6 767	6 517		
Pelkosenniemi	1 882	1 836	45		0,5	973	-3,5	960	736	807		
Posio	3 545	3 039	506		1,3	3 818	-1,4	3 749	3 172	2 975		
Salla	5 872	5 729	143		0,7	4 052	-2,6	3 999	3 220	3 091		
Savukoski	6 496	6 438	58		0,2	1 156	-2,0	1 139	1 031	986		
THE VALLEY OF TORNIO	4 076	3 766	310		2,3	8 561	-1,7	8 377	7 419	6 562		
Pello	1 864	1 738	126		2,3	3 912	-1,7	3 832	3 268	2 963		
Ylitornio	2 213	2 029	184		2,3	4 650	-1,7	4 545	4 151	3 599		
NORTHERN LAPLAND	35 121	31 893	3 228		0,5	16 849	0,0	16 839	16 281	15 769		
Inari	17 334	15 052	2 282		0,4	6 754	-0,4	6 723	6 448	6 364		
Sodankylä	12 415	11 697	719		0,8	8 806	0,3	8 831	8 576	8 101		
Utsjoki	5 372	5 144	228		0,3	1 294	-0,2	1 285	1 257	1 304		
THE REGION OF ROVANIEMI	11 712	11 036	676		5,9	64 881	0,7	65 135	69 191	70 913		
Ranua	3 695	3 454	241		1,2	4 262	-1,7	4 226	4 851	3 254		
Rovaniemi	8 017	7 582	435		8,0	60 637	0,9	60 909	64 340	67 659		
FELL LAPLAND	21 310	20 503	807		0,7	14 371	0,5	14 423	13 582	15 774		
Eronntekiö	8 391	7 946	446		0,2	1 893	0,9	1 882	1 773	1 817		
Kittilä	8 263	8 094	169		0,8	6 279	1,6	6 324	5 893	7 476		
Kolari	2 618	2 559	59		1,5	3 836	-0,1	3 832	3 581	4 168		
Muonio	2 038	1 904	134		1,2	2 369	-1,3	2 385	2 335	2 313		
LAPLAND	100 367	92 662	6 321	1 384	2,0	183 330	-0,1	182 856	182 751	182 471		

Source: Statistics Finland, Maanmittauslaitos 1.1.2010 [e] preliminary data 1) The population forecasts of Statistics Finland on year 2009

“Light phenomena” is somewhat silly phrase. It is just this certain natural light we have here (Finnish Lapland), completely different than is south. There were visitors who had been travelling lastly in Africa and in the evening they could not even see their own feet, that was how dark there was. But here in night time, even during the polar night, you can see far as the snow reflects the light from the stars. Of course in early winter the light is weaker, but it is different, it is blue and it has a hue of pink there among. The word polar night is misleading, as it is not completely dark. It is just this blue-pink moment and if you go to the ice of a lake, you can see far and there is no other time when the sky is so beautiful than in this frosty day of December. Then when the amount of light increases in the spring, when the Sun firstly comes out after the polar night, it starts to shine more and more and it is funny how in comparison with eight seasons there are eight or even more different lights during the year, and the light is totally different throughout the year. And when we are closer to summer, the Sun starts to shine continuously. First the overall light is somewhat light green in the beginning and then it turns into dark green and again when we get closer to fall, the light turns into yellowish. It is somewhat difficult to explain. In the entire thing there is a strong emotional feeling presence. It is hard to put into words but somehow you just know that, ok, now it is August and soon it will be September, you know it because of the colour. It cannot be understood if it has not been experienced. That is how the colours of the light are. And of course there is yet November. That is strange and wonderful, the light is then so bright but it is no longer bringing any warmth. It brings a certain spectacular glow to the surroundings. It is one of the most beautiful months in light and it has not been utilized in tourism at all. If we would get travellers to come here in already early November, they would be overjoyed of this light.

Text is after Rossi's interview 2014, translated from Finnish to English.