

Overview of South Korean inbound tourism and its markets in Finland

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Abstract

Chinese and Japanese tourists are a fundamental part of the tourism industry in Finland, however South Korean tourist so far are yet unfamiliar with the tourism potential of Finland. After the travel restrictions that the Covid-19 pandemic forced on tourism industry have been lifted, Finland can start to recover fully again. This recovering period which is increasing the motivation to travel is ideal to assess tourism preferences of South Korean tourists which have been analyzed through an online survey and then compared to what Finland can offer to them in terms of a tourism destination. The online survey contained questions regarding the travel budget, previous knowledge of Finland, activities preferred and seasonality. The results were analyzed using deductive thematic analysis by discovering major themes that then allows the creation of generalized conclusion of the results.

Due to the excellent flight connections between these two countries Finland offers efficient transportation. Nature-based tourism opportunities in addition to food and culture activities altogether conclude to a well-rounded tourism experience for the tourists who are unable to stay for a long period of time.

South Korean tourists are interested and somewhat familiar with Europe as a tourism destination. However, they prefer exploring multiple countries during one trip. Budget wise they are flexible and the ideal travel period for most South Korean tourists in terms of seasonality is during winter or summer.

The natural phenomena such as aurora and white night are some key selling points of the country in the eyes of South Korean tourists who are willing to implement Finland as a part of their Europe travel itinerary.

Keywords

Tourism Market, Finland, South Korea, Tourist, Inbound tourism, Outbound, Destination



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Tiivistelmä

Kiinalaiset ja japanilaiset turistit ovat olennainen osa Suomen matkailuelinkeinoa. Kuitenkaan eteläkorean matkailijat eivät ole yhtä hyvin tietoisia Suomen potentiaalista matkailukohteena. Koronapandemian aiheuttamien matkustusrajoitusten poistaminen mahdollistaa Suomeen kohdistuvan matkailun normalisoitumisen. Tämä ajanjakso on ideaali eteläkorealaisten turistien matkailumieltymysten määrittämiseen, sillä yleinen kiinnostus matkustamista kohtaan on noussut. Matkailumieltymyksiä on selvitetty verkkokyselyn avulla, jonka jälkeen vastauksia on verrattu siihen, mitä Suomi voi tarjota heille potentiaalisena matkailukohteena. Kyselyssä selvitettiin matkabudjetti, jo olemassa oleva tietämys Suomesta, aktiviteettimieltymykset ja sesonkiaika. Tulosten analysoinnissa käytettiin teemoittelua, joiden avulla pystytään antamaan yleistävä johtopäätös.

Suora lentoyhteys mahdollistaa mutkattoman siirtymisen matkakohteeseen Suomen ja Etelä-Korean välillä. Luontomatkailu yhdessä ruoka- ja kulttuuriaktiviteettien kanssa takaavat monipuolisen matkailuelämyksen rajallisesta ajasta huolimatta. Eteläkorealaiset turistit ovat jossain määrin kiinnostuneita ja tietoisia Euroopasta matkakohteena, mutta yhden matkakohteen sijaan he suosivat usean maan sisällyttämistä yhteen matkaan. Matkabudjetti on joustava ja yleisten loma-aikojen vuoksi kesä -ja talviaika ovat todennäköisimpiä ajankohtia matkustamiselle.

Revontulet ja yötön yö ovat eteläkorealaisten matkailijoiden silmissä tärkeimpiä myyntivaltteja, joiden avulla Suomi voidaan sisällyttää Euroopan matkasuunnitelmaan.

Avainsanat

Turismimarkkina, matkailu, Suomi, Etelä-Korea, turisti, saapuva turismi, lähtevä turismi, kohde

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1 Introduction

The thesis discusses Finland's potential as tourism destination for South Korean travelers.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic South Koreans in general have increased the times of traveling since the end of 2008 fiscal crisis and resulting in nearly 30 million outbound travelers in 2018. (Statista 2022). Understandably the most popular travel destinations can be found in the near or neighboring countries such as Japan or Vietnam, however the desire to travel to Europe has increased. The reason for travel majorly relies on leisure purposes. Currently the most visited countries for South Korean tourists in Europe include Germany, Spain, and France and this is where Finland is added to the travel plan. (Visit Britain 2021) In many cases the tourist will transfer flights at the Helsinki airport, possibly staying in for a day or two. The study of South Korean inbound tourism and its markets in Finland aims to find out the reason for the lack of South Korean tourists demand for Finland as a tourism destination as well as seeks for solutions to change that. The main goal of this thesis is to help travel organizations and the industry to appeal for South Korean travelers. The research questions are "Why South Korean tourists choose other destinations other than Finland?" and "How to appeal as a tourism destination to South Korean tourists". The research was conducted through an online survey method by presenting questions in regards of the travel preferences of the target group and then analyzing the quantitative results and finding repetitive responses which concludes to a generalized overview of the possibilities on Finland's tourism market. Next the description of Finland as a tourism destination and its market overview, introduction to South Korean tourists and statistics as well as online survey analysis will be followed.

2 Overview to Finland as a destination

2.1 Happiest country in the world

Finland is a Nordic welfare state in Northern Europe surrounded by the Baltic Sea, Gulf of Bothnia, and the Gulf of Finland with 5.5 million inhabitants. Finland has three neighboring countries: Russia in the east, Sweden in the west and Norway in the north. In 2017, Finland celebrated its 100 years of independency. Before independence, in 1809 Finland became an autonomous part of Russian Empire for 108 years and the country became a Nordic society during 600 years of Swedish rule. (Häikiö et al., n.d.) During World War II, Finland retained its independence, and it has taken a neutral attitude in geopolitics since then until today. Finland is a republic and a parliamentary democracy, and it became a member of the European Union in 1995. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, n.d.)

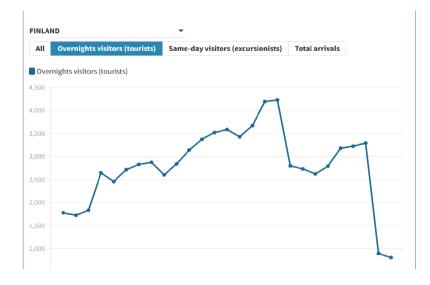
Named the happiest country in the world, around 75% of Finland's surface is covered in forests and Finland has the biggest archipelago in the world along with Europe's largest lake district as well as remaining untamed wilderness area, Lapland. (Visit Finland, 2023). Finland is becoming more valuable for today's tourism destination; with the pure nature and clean air combined with varying seasons are as amazing to visitors from all around the world as to Finns. Reasons behind the traveler's decision-making lies with the beauty of natural landscape, thus, spending time surrounded by forest and quietness which has also been confirmed to reduce stress levels and increase health benefits by several studies. (Finland Toolbox, 2021).

2.2 Inbound tourism market

The importance of tourism is growing significantly in Finland: the country recorded a total of 896,000 tourists in 2020 ranking it as 104th in the world. It is evident that smaller countries tend to perform lower in ranking in comparison with absolute number of guests. In contrast, setting tourism numbers in relation of the population of Finland, the comparison in between becomes

more valid: with 0.16 tourists per resident, Finland ranked 98th in the world and 10th in Northern Europe. (WorldData.info, n.d.) Tourism data is collected from countries by The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) through a series of yearly questionnaires that are in line with the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics (IRTS 2008) standard led by UNWTO and approved by the United Nations. (World Tourism Organization, 2022). The following figure shows the number of tourist arrivals registered in Finland each year starting from 1995 to 2021 (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Total Arrivals in country over time (The World Tourism Organization, 2022)

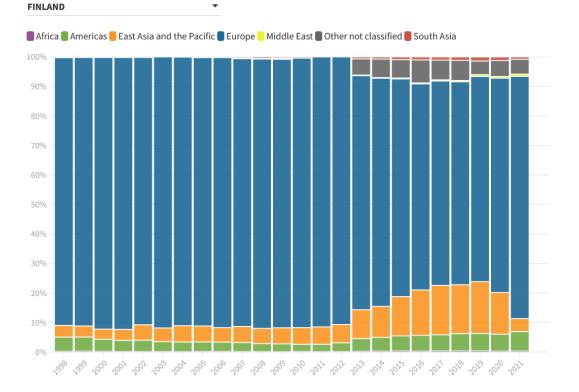


The visits reached their highest peak in 2012 when the number of visits was no less than 4,2 million. The chart indicates that tourism was growing steadily starting from 2015: the turnover and staff members of tourism sector have increased until the pandemic in 2020 spring, which caused tourism sector to collapse. In view of the fact what the pandemic caused, according to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, (2021) domestic and foreign tourists spent 9.3 billion euros in Finland in 2020, which represents a fall of 42% from the amount spent in 2019, which was 16.1 billion euros. (Valtioneuvosto, 2021). Despite the tourism deficit, the spending by tourists decreased rapidly. In proportion to measurements, the recovery of tourism sector will take a few years, placing sustainability and security among Finland's key assets in the future: Lea Marski (2021) states that Finland is a safe country and will stand out with sustainability actions to

obtain tourism growth. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2021). However, the impact on the industry could be long-lasting and wide.

As figure 2 shows arrivals in country by the region of origin starting from 1998 to 2021 (see figure 2). From 1998 until 2012 it can be seen that the visits to Finland from Europe have grown at a steady pace being around 90% of all visitors during that time. Second most visited continent is East Asia and the Pacific including countries in the South of China, East of India, and North of Australia. This includes South Korea as well. The chart shows that the visits have grown starting from 2012 when the percentage was 6.21% to 2019, when the highest peak was 17.55% of all visits. North and South America covers the most visitors (6.59%) in 2021, otherwise, the growth has been steady: around 5% of all visits starting from 2014. Lastly, Middle East remains the area of least visitors arriving to Finland the percent being at its highest 0.78% of all visits in 2021.

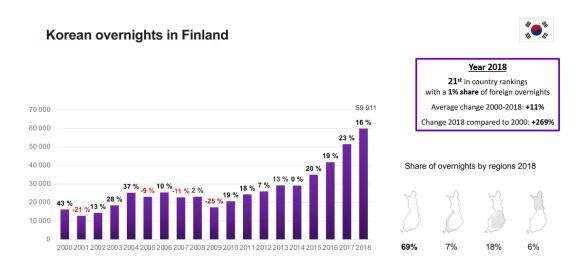
Figure 2. Arrivals in country by region of origin (The World Tourism Organization, 2022)



Arrivals in country by region of origin*

As mentioned in the previous chapter visitors from East Asia and the Pacific was the second largest group to visit Finland. In the case of South Korean visits, the chart below indicates that the country was ranked 21st most visited country to Finland in 2018 with 1% share of foreign overnight stays. Thus, the visitors reached as high as 59 911 during that year. It can be seen as well that the visits have increased expeditiously compared to the year 2000. The most favorable area in Finland for South Koreans was Helsinki region following Lakeland area, Coast and Archipelago and Lapland.

Figure 3 Korean overnights in Finland (Business Finland, 2019)



Referring to figure 3, tourism plays a big part in Finnish economy. Ministry of Economic Affairs and employment of Finland states the following: "Before the pandemic, the GDP share of tourism remained at 2.7% but, according to the preliminary data for 2020, it decreased by a whole percentage point to 1.7%." In 2019, foreign tourists' revenue in total was 5,3 billion euros whereas inbound tourism demand decreased in 2020 being 3,8 billion euros. Tourism industry has employed a total of 154 000 people in 2019 which is 5.8 percent of all employed people in Finland. The number of employees has grown by 6000 from 2018 to 2019. In relation to preliminary data from the year 2020 the number of people employed in the industry decreased to the total of 128 700 people. In addition, the number of hours worked was 22% which is 55 million hours lower than before the pandemic. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and employment of Finland, 2022). In the following section Finland's primary areas will be introduced.

2.3 Four main areas and their unique selling points

Finland is divided into four primary areas which are Lapland, Lakeland, Coast and Archipelago and Helsinki region. Each one of the areas has their own strengths and pull factors that attracts tourists to visit Finland.

Lapland

House of Lapland (2022) declares that Lapland is the engine of Finnish tourism since it is growing constantly by international tourism while being recognized around the globe. Tourists who are seeking once in a lifetime experience is exactly what Lapland has to offer with its Natural splendors such as the Northern Lights and the Midnight Sun which are known around the world. House of Lapland (2022) disputes that Lapland holds popular tourist destination stake since in 2019 over 50% of the visitors were international. Thus, over 3 million people stayed a night in Lapland. In addition, the total number of air passengers was 1.4 million. The largest group of tourists were from United Kingdom following countries from Western Europe; France and Germany being the second and third who preferred Lapland as a travel destination. As a further matter, the Asian market can be seen as significant grow in Lapland traveling since Chinese are the fifth largest group of tourists in Lapland. In addition to this, the House of Lapland concludes that international tourism has been growing in recent years. Furthermore, one of the factors of the growth is the ability for one to choose a direct flight on an international level throughout the year. In addition, Finnair operates daily direct flights between Helsinki and Seoul for it also being the smoothest route to travel to Europe from Asia which supports the decision-making process for people to travel to Europe. However, these flights operating by Finnair provides an amazing opportunity for passengers to feel Finland's magic even during the flight; the famous blueberry juice and other Finnish delicacies can be tasted on the way north.

"Overnight stays were recorded in Finland in 2019 and the total amount was 7,1 million. In addition, the overnight stays increased three percent compared to the previous year." Business

Finland (2020, para. 1). Vilan and Nowak (2022) maintain that the five largest countries of origin remained the same as last year, keeping Russia as number one following Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden, and China. However, many recent studies (e.g., Clausnitzer, 2022; Nowak, 2022) have revealed the correlation between tourism and overnight stays. The world is recovering from the pandemic which had major impact on travelling which can also be seen in 2021 number of overnight stays in Finland. "Tourists from foreign countries spent more than two million nights that year. The largest group of non-resident tourists came from Germany with over 258 thousand nights spent, followed by more than 257 thousand overnight stays by visitors from United Kingdom." (Clausnitzer, 2022, para. 1). Therefore, the hospitality industry is expected to be in recovery longer timescale than was thought in the first place. This is certainly true in the case of target markets switching tiers. In 2022 the top three target markets for Finland remain the same. Nevertheless, in contrast to Clausnitzer, Business Finland (2022) argues that the order has changed with United States taking the first place, Japan being the second, Germany sets on third tier and South Korea rises to 18th tier. (Business Finland, 2022). The following part of this thesis moves on to describe in detail about the three other primary areas in Finland.

All of Finland's four regions are exceptional in their own way, thus, each of them has varying activities to offer for tourists. The region of Finland which reaches from Kuhmo and Kajaani in the north to Savonlinna and Tampere in the south is called Lakeland which is Europe's largest lake district as well. Lakeland's formation dates back to the end of the last Ice Age and due to glacial melt, which plenty of people find a fascinating part of history. Therefore, it makes the visit to Lakeland more special and how it varies to other areas in Finland with more water than land making it perfect place for visitors who admire pure and clean waters. (Discovering Finland, n.d.)

Lakeland

Lakeland area have been in positive growth among tourists in 2019 reaching for 1.1 million overnight stays, which is 4% less stays compared to 2018. (Visit Finland Statistics, 2020). Most visitors came from Russia, Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden, and China. There are several similarities between the number of visitors oriented to Lapland and Lakeland in view of the fact that the five leading countries hold their tier in both areas. Lapland is considered a more popular destination, thus described as an Arctic getaway unlike any other. Hanna Baas (Lapland Above Ordinary) states in her detailed analysis that Lapland has a demand for high-quality accommodation and services suited specifically for high-end international tourists. "Here luxury does not mean gold and finery, but rather high quality, personalized service, experiences and privacy if desired." (Baas, 2022). Lapland has many matters that can be easily linked to the area, for instance igloo hotels, Santa Claus, and northern lights. All of these increase its popularity among tourists. Thinking on how Lakeland area could rise its desirability is to advance the nature tourism and enhance the awareness of its benefit since this area is full of lakes, islands, rivers, and canals, between forests and ridges. Thus, it is stretching for hundreds of kilometers in a spacious and beautiful expanse while offering activities to do all year around for instance cruises, fishing, ice swimming and skating not to mention spending summer in a cottage with sauna which is a perfect way to relax.

A notable example of Lakeland's significant place to visit is Koli which is the hill in the Koli National Park. It is a prehistoric geological site and the Ukko-Koli summit reaches 347m, which the highest peak in the southern half of Finland. During recent years Koli has become increasingly popular among international travelers seeking the great outdoors. In Koli one can swim in the summer, ski in the winter, and hike all year round, which makes it a year-round destination. (Visit Finland, 2023) "Finnish national parks were visited 3.55 million times last year. The most popular in terms of visits were Pallas–Yllästunturi, Urho Kekkonen, Nuuksio, Koli and Pyhä–Luosto national parks." (Nationalparks.fi) After the pandemic, visits to national parks have been balanced and the people are more pleased with the visit. Again, the war in Ukraine has affected a lot and changed the situation in 2022. This made people more aware how they are using money since financial uncertainty is rising as well as fuel consumption is decreasing due to high prices. Especially Russians have preferred the northern national parks that are located at a distance from growth centres or far away in the archipelago had less visits than before." According to visitor surveys

people are happier with their visits to national parks than ever, the customer satisfaction being 4.43 on a scale of 1 to 5. This is the result of improving the service structures and renovating the routes of national parks. (Jansson, 2023).

Coast and archipelago

Turning now to the world's largest archipelago; coast and archipelago area in Finland. Finland's coast is 1,100 kilometers long and consists of more than 50 000 islands outstretched around the sea. Thus, there are plenty of coastal cities with a relaxed atmosphere with maritime landscape. The coastline area reaches from Oulu to Kotka-Hamina until Hanko and the Swedish-speaking Åland islands. (Visit Finland, 2023). The most favored place for summer destination is Yyteri beach in Pori. Along long sandy beaches, tourists can let their eyes rest in barren Baltic coast and beautiful bays. (Outdooractive, 2017). Currently over 300 000 visitors visit Yyteri yearly. This can be considered as rapid growth since visitors have increased exceedingly fast during the last couple of years. (Visit Yyteri, 2023). The highest peak is in July, but more people are travelling to the area during other seasons as well. Due to visitor numbers growth Yyteri is moving forwards sustainable and responsible tourism meaning maintaining the area's authenticity as well as keeping it clean for the future generations. Tove Vesterbacka, (2023) declares that "We want to reach a healthy balance between locals, domestic and international tourists, the city of Pori, businesses in the area, and of course the magnificent natural environment".

When tourists are visiting archipelago, they frequently want to catch sight of a lighthouse. Therefore, a visit to a lighthouse is a must during their journey; one of the most famous is the 150year-old Södeskär lighthouse in the Porvoo archipelago near Helsinki. Tourists admire older buildings such as wooden towns, medieval churches, and castle ruins. Thus, historic ironworks are located in the Finnish coast. Ironworks played a significant role in the region before and during the industrial age. (Outdooractive, 2022). These kind of things takes tourist on a journey back to the old days; experiencing destinations as lighthouses, fishing villages and the forts tell history of man at sea. One can see the deep connection between Finnish people have with the sea from these cultural landscapes as well as maritime constructions. In addition, the weather phenomena and seasons can be impressive on the sea; to see the rotation between stormy and calm weather as well as winter capturing the sea under a thick layer of ice. Visit Finland statistics states that coast and archipelago has attracted tourists in 2019 for 1.1 million overnight stays. In addition, overnight stays have increased 6% compared to 2018. It can be seen from the statistics that Lakeland area together with Coast and Archipelago area are both enchanted the same amount of people for overnight stays. (Visit Finland, 2020).

Helsinki region

The capital city Helsinki which is also known as a pearl of Baltic with over than half a million inhabitants, is the meeting place of Western and Eastern Europe which makes it one of the most vibrant cities in Europe. Both city life and nature trails are close to the capital city, thus, Helsinki is said to be the culture hot spot in northern Europe since it combines both historical as well as modern architectural styles. The architecture in Helsinki appeals to tourists; the pieces of Alvar Aalto and Art Nouveau buildings make it a major city of architecture. The city center and around Senate Square for instance is famous for its neoclassicalism. In addition, close by the center one can find the Europe's largest Russian Orthodox church, Uspenski Cathedral. Elsewhere, Temppeliaukio church and Finlandia Hall represent early Modernism. In addition to Helsinki's rich architectural history and variety, the city was chosen as the World Design Capital in 2012 and was awarded City of Design status by UNESCO in 2014. (My Helsinki, 2023).

"In 2021, around 555 thousand foreign tourists visited Helsinki, the capital of Finland." (Clausnitzer, 2022). During that year Helsinki attracted nearly 77 thousand tourists from Germany which was pre-eminently the biggest nation of tourists to visit Helsinki. Moreover, the second most visited nation group was Swedish who reached over 41 thousand visitors to the city. Other major group of foreign visitors were Estonians, Americans and British. (Statista, 2022).

3 Customer understanding of South Korean tourists

A deeper understanding of the target group is needed to conduct reliable research. South Korea's economy, average income of citizens and other relevant financial factors that affect opportunities for leisure traveling will be introduced. The differences between Finland and South Korea in terms of lifestyle, employment and culture are included to offer perspective.

3.1 Insight to South Korean economy and welfare

South Korea has experienced fast economic growth starting from being a country classified as poor. Lee, (2001) States that The Korean economy was depended on Japan during the Japanese colonial that ruled 35 years between 1910–1945. While maintaining the economy as an independent country South Korea and North Korea then separated during the Korean war in 1950–1953 and it had a major negative impact on both countries' economies. Although the Korean war started as a civil war between North and South, it soon expanded to a war where the West side such as China and Soviet Union supported the North and the East side countries such as America supported and aided the South. The economy then grew to its current state between 1960 s-1990s in less than fifty years (Cho et al.,2013). In 2023 the economy in the country is forecasted to grow 1,6 percent according to the Finance Ministry also due to weakening exports and investment (Lee, H 2022).

As of 2022, according to the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS) the average monthly income per household in South Korea is 4.825 million won and the expenditure on restaurants and hotels rose by nearly 14 percent since last year. The bank of Korea (BOK) has released the travel expense plan for South Korean nationals and the consumer survey index (CSI) is 91 as of October 2022 (see table 1). In contrast poverty is still visible in Korean society, especially the lives of elderly. The poverty rate has been steadily decreasing through better economy and after improved life standards were accessible to larger population however, still in 2021 the country's

poverty rate was 15.1 percent. This poverty rate measures the percentage of people who live with an income that is considered less than the national median disposable income (Yoon, L 2022).

Table 1 Average monthly income (BOK, 2022)

(Unit: 1,000 won, %, year-on-year						r-on-year)		
		Amount				Percent change		
	1Q 2021	Compo- sition	4Q 2021	1Q 2022	Compo- sition	1Q 2021	4Q 2021	1Q 2022
Household size (person)	2.37	-	2.36	2.33	-	-	-	-
Age of household head (age)	52.8	-	52.7	52.3	-	-	-	-
Income	4,384	100.0	4,642	4,825	100.0	0.4	6.4	10.1
Current income	4,300	98.1	4,539	4,737	98.2	1.1	6.1	10.1
Employee income	2,778	63.4	2,893	3,062	63.5	-1.3	5.6	10.2
Self-employment income	767	17.5	1,018	862	17.9	-1.6	8.6	12.4
Property income*	33	0.7	26	32	0.7	-14.4	3.9	-2.0
Transfer income	723	16.5	602	780	16.2	16.5	3.9	7.9
Public transfer	497	11.3	415	544	11.3	27.9	10.7	9.5
Private transfer	226	5.2	187	236	4.9	-2.4	-8.6	4.3
Non-current income*	83	1.9	103	88	1.8	-26.2	26.5	6.0

<Table 1> Average monthly income per household

* Pay attention to a high relative standard error (RSE).

3.2 Lifestyle and its relevance to tourism

Understanding the target customer and their lifestyle acts as a critical component in tourism as well. This chapter will provide an insight to South Korean lifestyle with the goal of suggesting as of how these factors are seen in the behavior of a tourist. National geographic information institute (NGII) have published *The National Atlas of Korea* which is a trilogy series of books addressing the South Korean economy, landscape, culture, education, and healthcare. In the 2021, the most recent edition, the changes in population and especially its age structure have been discussed.

The phenomena of aging population and dropping birth rates can be defined as a global problem, however South Korea and Japan have been one of the most visible countries to openly address this issue in public. The fertility rate rose significantly after the end of Japanese occupation and in the 1960s Korea reported having fertility rate 6 which then has continuously declined resulting in the total fertility rate being less than 1 in 2019 (refer to figure 5). Seoul, the capital city of South Korea is a home for millions of citizens, however this has not been the case always. The fastgrowing economy and smaller family sizes have driven netizens to live in urban areas. Previously in the 1970s, the number of people living in rural areas, not urban cities, was higher, but as of 2020, over 90 percent of population now live in cities.

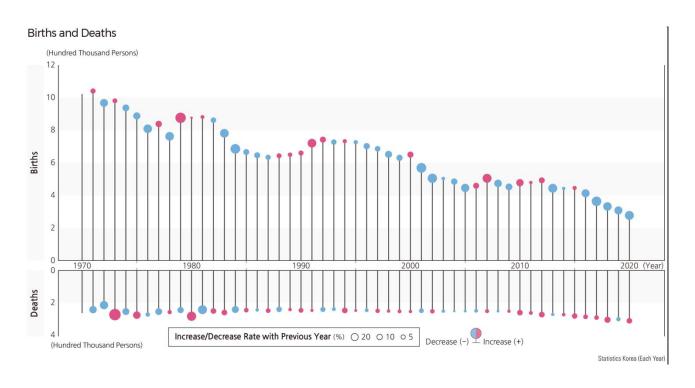


Figure 4 Population status (Statistics Korea, 2020)

3.3 Employment and mandatory military service

The change in urban and rural population has forced the cities to grow fast and to be fast paced with all necessary services being easily accessible and fast. South Korean employees on average have the longest working hours in all OECD countries which consist in total of 38 countries. The Korean government in recent years has been trying to reduce the workload and working hours of netizens. According to research conducted by the Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) the working hours of an average Regular employee was recorded to be 166.9 hours per month which is less compared to the 177.1 total hours of work recorded only four years earlier in 2016. Korean employees typically work overtime which is often not paid accordingly. The concept of overtime work has been widely discussed in Korean society and in research, it can be seen that the amount

of overtime working hours has also decreased from 10.7 hours a month in 2016 to 8.3 hours in 2020 (see table 2).

Table 2 Working hours at establishments (MOEL, 2020)

(3) Working Hours at Establishments

(in hour, per month, %)

		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All employees		169.4 (-1.2)	166.3 (-1.8)	163.9 (-1.4)	163.1 (-0.5)	160.6 (-1.5)
	Total hours	177.1 (-0.9)	173.3 (-2.1)	171.2 (-1.2)	170.3 (-0.5)	166.9 (-2.0)
Regular employees	Contractual hours of work	166.4 (-0.9)	163.2 (-1.9)	161.6 (-1.0)	161.3 (-0.2)	158.6 (-1.7)
	Overtime hours	10.7 (-0.9)	10.1 (-5.6)	9.5 (-5.9)	9.1 (-4.2)	8.3 (-8.8)
Temporary&daily employees		107.2 (-5.7)	104.7 (-2.3)	98.6 (-5.8)	96.0 (-2.6)	97.6 (1.7)

Note : Figures in () are year-on-year increase rates.

Source : Ministry of the Employment and Labor(laborstat.moel.go.kr)

The Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) has amended the labor standards act considering the annual paid holidays in the Korean Law information center article 60 recently in 2021. The annual paid holidays granted for employees depend on years of continuous work experience and attendance. If the employee has worked more than a year or attended work for more than eighty percent of the year, he/she must be granted 15 days of paid vacation time. In case of continuously working less than one year or being unable to attend the required percentage then one day of paid vacation is granted per every month of continuous labor conducted. An employee who has worked for more than three years continuously can receive up to 25 paid leave days, this including all additional paid leave days such as sick leave. The number of paid vacation days most likely will affect the decision process on choosing a travel destination as traveling far from the country also takes more time. The Korean Law Information Center (2019) states on the military service act article 3 implying mandatory military service duty for all male netizen of the service duty stated in article 18 depends on the military unit of three possible options; the army, the navy or the air

force and can be up to two years and three months of active duty. In article 70 the statement considering overseas travel restrictions can limit the number of South Korean male tourist who would be able to travel to Finland for leisure tourism purposes. The article states that all male netizens over the age of 25 who have not completed their mandatory military service, or an alternative must request a permission from the Military Manpower Administration (MMA) to travel abroad. In the case of traveling under the age of 25 permission must be received at the latest on January 15th of the year when turning 25 years of age.

3.4 Culture comparison of Finland and South Korea

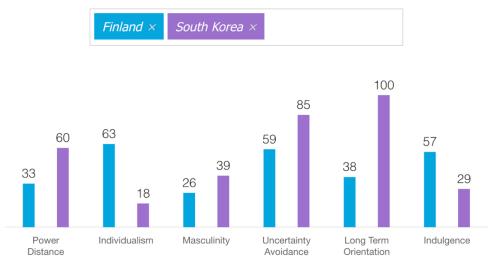
Professor Geert Hofstede (1928-2020) is one of the most known people to have impacted the development of cultural research and knowledge. He has defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others" and created a six dimensions theory and framework (Hofstede insights, 2023). The framework will be used in the context of comparing Finland and South Korea in terms of how these two countries are placed in the framework model.

The Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (1980) consists of six elements: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism -collectivism, masculinity-femininity and short- long-term orientation (Hofstede insights 2023). South Korean society shows significantly higher results than Finland when it comes to power distances. To describe simply this implies that the importance of hierarchy between, for instance parents and a child or a boss and an employee and how the individual is expected to behave in situations where someone is considered to have more power than the other. This strongly links the concept of overtime working hours to Korean culture as the employee is expected to work until the employees of higher status in the workplace have finished for the day. Finland in contrast values friendly relationship between a boss and an employee and such practices are less common in the working environment.

One of the major differences in culture between these two countries relies on individualism and collectivism. Finland is an individualist country meaning that the consequences of actions an individual makes in social settings only imply to that individual instead of for instance the whole family. The definition of close family is also often narrower and the decisions one makes in life are

more focused on personal goals in life. Korea however is a collectivist country and instead of thinking "I" they prefer to think it is "we" and blend to the society. Both Finland and South Korea are considered as feminine countries because the masculinity score are low. In society, both countries value healthy life balance and caring for each other instead of concentrating on competitiveness and achievements. The uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) is higher in South Korea than it is in Finland which presents the fact that the society in Finland is more relaxed when it comes to uncertainty and the attempts to try to control the future. The more major difference however can be seen in the short versus long-term orientation where South Korea very clearly presents the importance of preparing and living for the future whereas Finland prefers to improve the short-term success in the near future. Lastly indulgence measures the "strictness of social norms and the freedom of having fun, spending money on luxury and leisure activities "Hofstede, 2011). Compared to Finland, South Korea generally has more strict social norms and less freedom for leisure activities (see figure 5).

Figure 5 Country comparison tool (hofstede-insights, 2022)

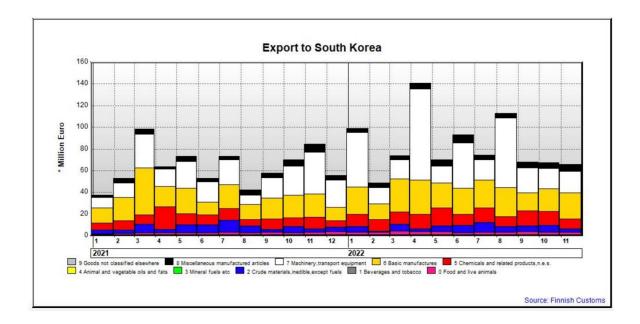




4 South Korean and Finland relations

The relations between Finland and South Korea have progressively strengthened over the years and according to the Ministry of foreign affairs Finland and the Republic of Korea have officially acknowledged co-operations between the two nations since 1973 and currently South Korea is the third biggest trading partner in Asia. Finland has focused on exporting especially machinery and paper products to South Korea but the latest trends in the trading industry have challenged Finland to include service-based innovation and solutions related to the welfare systems and renewable energy (see figure 7).

Figure 6 Export to South Korea (Tulli, 2022)



The growing desire to bring these countries together has also inspired the establishment of other organizations and associations such as Finland Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Korea

(FCCIK) which is a business council established in 1989 with the goal of promoting trade and business co-operation between South Korea and Finland. They offer information and consultation in business-related matters including investments, business partners and trade by organizing meetings or other social gatherings and educational tours to companies. The headquarters of this association is located in Gyeonggi-do, South Korea (FCCIK, 2013).

In Finland then The Finland-Republic of Korea Association was established in 1981 and currently maintains their headquarters in the capital city Helsinki. The association mainly focuses on activities promoting cultural exchange between the two nations and conducts exhibitions, seminars, and lectures to share knowledge on issues such as social- and economic development. The Finland-Republic of Korea Association is approved and sponsored by the ministry of education and culture of Finland (Suomi-Korean tasavalta- yhdistys ry, N.d). Finland Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (MEAE) reports the president Moon Jae-In to have visited Finland most recently in 2019 and during the visit the two countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of clean or renewable energy production. One of the main aims of this is to enhance talent exchange between the countries in Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SME) and Start-Up.

Finland has also been represented in the South Korean media more often in the recent years. Business Finland South Korean advisor Jani Toivanen (2018) states that media coverage especially television plays a major influence in the public in South Korea and in addition Finland's' education, xylitol products and the Tove Jansson created character *Moomin* are said to be the most popular topics when the country is being discussed. However, while the number of South Korean tourists traveling to Finland has been on the raise it is still far less than the number of tourists from the neighboring countries Japan and China. In an article YLE (2018) reports of a television program *Welcome, First Time in Korea?* ($\mathcal{O} \land \mathcal{A} \ \mathcal{A} \sim \ \mathcal{E} \ \mathcal{A} \ \mathcal{B} \ \mathcal{O} \ \mathcal{A} \ \mathcal{A}$) which is an example of how television can also promote tourism in Finland. The show started airing for the first time in 2017 through the broadcasting channel MBC every1 with the idea of a foreigner living in Korea inviting friends from their home country to explore and learn about the Korean culture while a panel of four people including the inviter friend make commentary on the groups' trip. During the first season of the show Finland was also featured. In the episode Petri Kalliola, an employee from the Finland's embassy in South Korea invited three of his childhood friends from the city of Jyväskylä to visit him on a five-day trip in the country. The episode first showed the friend group enjoying their life in Finland doing typical activities popular during the Finnish summer such as spending time at a summer cottage drinking beer in sauna, swimming in a lake and picking mushrooms and berries in the forest. South Korean panelists showed great interest in the Finnish ways of living, which is represented as carefree, peaceful, and full of nature activities bringing contracts to their own home country. The Finland featured episodes were one of the most popular episodes during the show's airing time attracting 2,5-3 million viewers. All four Finnish men then gained a celebrity like status in South Korea and Kalliola has commented on receiving daily messages from individuals asking for tips and recommendation when traveling to Finland and therefore the show can be said to have had a major impact on the promotion of Finland as a tourism destination to South Korean travelers and due to the popularity the episodes have been aired again while the Finnish members have also exceptionally received and participated in the second season special episode aired in 2019.

5 Outbound tourism statistics overview and the current Finland market overview

In this chapter the tourism statistics of the target group are presented with additional elements of tourism activities preferred by them. The current marketing strategy for the South Korean market is introduced in addition with unique selling points of Finland as a destination and marketing channels most suitable for the South Korean market.

5.1 Tourism statistics

The Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS) informs South Korea to have reported nearly two and half million departures that were made from Incheon international airport in 2022. The gender classification of the outbound tourists' states that there is no significant difference between the number of male and female travelers. 1.3 million travelers identified as males and approximately 1 million as females. However, one of the limitations with this research is that it does not offer any other gender classification beside from male or female. Out of the reported outbound travelers, about 530,000 were between 31 to 40 years old, 470,000 between 41 to 50 and 450,000 from 21 to 31 years old. According to this data, we can infer that the travelers over the age of 61 are the least reported age group to travel abroad.

Business and leisure travelers tend to seek distinct types of activities during the visit, and the reason for travel must be understood to appeal to the target group. Research shows that the travel motives by South Korean outbound tourists heavily rely on leisure tourism. Out of 48,000 survey responders in 2019, over 80 percent of the tourists reported that enjoying nature and scenery was the main activity they were seeking during the trip while rest and leisure accounted as the secondary reason. (Statista, 2022).

According to research South Koreans prefer to travel to other neighboring countries in Asia such as Japan, Vietnam, and Thailand. However, the most popular travel destination recorded in 2022 was the United States of America (Statista 2023). The U.S. Department of Commerce National Travel &

Tourism Office (USDOC, NTTO) states that South Korean tourists are the sixth largest group of travelers contributing to the tourism revenue as on average a tourist would spend 4,900 USD per one trip. The reasoning for popularity in the destination is stated to include national parks, fine dining, and American style shopping as well as interest in amusement parks or sports such as golfing while the mass media, movies and popular culture significantly boost motivation to travel to the destination. The internet usage in Korea is one of the best in the world and nine out of ten people own a smartphone. For this reason, also half of the travel bookings are done via smartphones which brings out the importance accessibility and easy usability of travel business platforms.

5.2 Current market strategy overview

Visit Finland (2023) has created a market strategy overview on their official website and this information is being updated twice a year the most recently done market overview has been published in March 2023. According to this market overview Finland is often mentioned in documentaries or entertainment programs and generally the most significant channel for promotion of Finland is television. In contrast, the country is mentioned less on other channels like papers or social media. This phenomenon can be seen in the case example mentioned previously where Finland gained major popularity through the television program *Welcome, First Time in Korea?* (어서와~ 한국은 처음이지?).

According to Visit Finland one of the key advantages that Finland has compared to other European travel destinations is the accessibility. Accessibility in this context means the ease of travel to a destination. The official Finnish airline company Finnair currently operates straight flights to Helsinki from Seoul, which is the capital city of South Korea and from Busan which is one of the biggest cities in the country right after its capital. The research also discusses the difference in travel during various seasons and how competitiveness with other destinations changes. They have stated that often Finland is being included in multi-country itinerates with Nordic countries during most seasons. However, during the winter season Finland is gains popularity as a single-country destination. During the wintertime instead of fellow Nordic countries, Canada and Iceland are mentioned to be the main competitors while Switzerland shows steady popularity in all seasons. The trends in consumer behavior have changed during the Covid-19 pandemic, and this

can be seen in the decision-making in tourism. As the pandemic restricted and limited many of the tourist destination options that were available many travelers preferred domestic travel. The growing appeal of going for staycations inside the country gained such popularity it has been acknowledged as a tourism trend. The main reason for the popularity of avoiding overseas travel was stated to be the quarantine and vaccination requirements that one must comply to in order to travel abroad. The pandemic restrictions have since been slowly lifted allowing the South Korean tourists to start traveling abroad again although the expected pace of exceeding previous interest in overseas travel will take time to recover.

5.3 Preferred marketing channels and unique selling points

Visit Finland (2023) state in their marketing strategy that South Korean tourists are looking "oncein- a-lifetime" and "healing" experiences such as the aurora phenomenon. The contrast between a densely populated cities and hectic lifestyle in South Korea and Finland is often what thrives the interest in Northern European countries including Finland. The lack of English language skills, however, stress the importance of finding information for traveling to Finland in their native language Korean. The marketing channels for South Korean market is explained further in the following chapter.

The statement of South Korean travelers preferring to book the trip independently through platforms such as international Booking.com and trip.com and South Korean based Yanolja.com should be considered. When marketing for South Korean people specifically the search engines commonly used affect the distribution of information and marketing content as the country does not rely on same platforms as Finland. Furthermore, according to SEO consultant John Yoon (2022) while Google is commonly referred as the most used and most global search engine it is not widely used in all parts of the world, South Korea being one of them. Google is available in the country, but the preferred search engine has been Naver since its launch in 1999 although the gap between usage percentage has started to subside throughout the years. One of the differences between these two search engines is that Naver has been specifically designed for the Korean market whereas as mentioned previously Google acts as a global search engine. Naver also considers the

complexity of Korean language and content creating an algorithm most suitable for local businesses to use and this tech advantage still is the reason for its popularity. Korean consumers use Naver and its services daily through multiple different platforms and applications such as Naver pay which essentially is a mobile payments service, Naver Mail is the most used email service, Naver maps which is the most accurate navigating app in the country and Papago that South Koreans use as a translating app because it translates Korean language most accurately compared to other similar apps. The Korean digital advertising market therefore relies on using Naver adds and appealing to the 45 million users of it. Foreign businesses should be aware that the algorithm supports posts that are created through their own platform such as Naver Blog which is the most used way to gather information for travel purposes as these blogs are written by individuals offering honest reviews and tips. Currently there are more than 30 million blog posts available in the Naver search engine for consumers to read.

The market overview by Visit Finland (2023) also discussed the best distribution channels to appeal for South Korean tourists and Hanatour, Modetour, Yellow Balloon Tour, Interpark Tour were mentioned to be the major travel agencies that act as distribution channels. A key point when it comes to distributing marketing content to South Korean consumers is the importance of using specifically content that has been published in Korean language instead of for instance English. Furthermore, when it comes to creating a marketing strategy for the South Korean consumers the way Finland is perceived by the people must be taken into consideration.

When it comes to unique selling points of Finland as mentioned previously in multiple context South Koreans appreciate the Finnish nature and way of living. The unique selling points (USP) were identified as safety & healthy travel, reconnect with nature, and find your happiness. As explained in more depth in other chapters especially natural phenomenon nonexistent in South Korea offer a great strategy for attracting the tourists. These include for instance aurora in the winter and white nights during the summer. The UPS of Finland and the accuracy compared to this statement and research survey results have been compared later in the results and analysis chapters.

6 Implementation

6.1 Methodology

Survey is a research method which gathers quantitative information. Quantitative results are gathered through close-ended questions but the decision to include open-ended questions was made to seek for the words that come up to the minds of the target group when asked specific questions regarding Finland and/or travel preferences (JYU,2022). These words are then used to create a conclusion as of which themes, activities, or financial preferences influence the decision to travel to Finland as a tourist and seek for a reason for why it might have not happened so far.

This thesis uses deductive thematic analysis which aims to find major themes that are used to then support the hypothesis and create a generalized conclusion by referring to the already existing knowledge (JYU, 2010). The thematic analysis especially the deductive approach was chosen because Finland's key selling points and Asian tourists' interest on them such as white night or aurora are basic knowledge to Finnish tourism companies, but proper research is needed to offer a valid statement.

This thesis will use secondary data and refer to other studies published from the topic and supporting topics needed to complete the research. Secondary data sources in this thesis refers to various sources such as governmental websites, news articles, written journals, and statistics published by other researchers. There will be quantitative data such as tourism statistics included in our thesis database. In addition to other published papers, a survey was conducted to further research into our customer group. Originally, the plan was to start gathering survey answers from the time of finishing the thesis planning stage; however, it was later delayed due to changes in the survey questions and the translation process.

6.2 Data collection and analysis

A research survey was conducted to gain insight from the target group. Participants of the survey in general were South Koreans, currently living in South Korea which led to the decision to hold this research survey online. More than 96% of the Korean population has access and uses the internet which totals more than 47 million people (Jobst, N 2022). The survey was available for our participants starting from January 29th and the results will be analyzed during February 2023. The answers were gathered in three weeks from January 29th to February 21st. The survey included in total 18 questions that provided information that can be used to compare the statistics mentioned previously. The survey was conducted through Wepropol for the sake of professionality, convenience, and responsible data collection.

Everytime, Instagram and Kakao Talk, these platforms increase our visibility and therefore appeal to our target group. One subgroup of the target group that has been researched in this thesis are young adults and for that reason a suitable channel for reaching the targeted people must be thought carefully. The data collection process focused on finding and using the most suitable distribution channels for South Koreans and to gather reliable data of the travel preferences of South Korean tourists. This data then can be used to offer a generalized overview of the possible tourism market that Finland can offer to this specific target group.

Everytime is a popular South Korean based phone application meant for university students. As of 2022 the Everytime app had a total of 5,82 million users and it is mostly used for sharing information in the online community (Lim,M 2022). The decision to collect data through Everytime relies on the fact that it reaches especially South Korean people as the app requires the user to be enrolled as a full-time student in a South Korean educational institute. The data collection done in this application was conducted by posting the link available to all students in the community. Instagram is a widely used social media channel which enables the user to gain visibility internationally. The data collection through Instagram was done by sharing the link for the online survey with an appropriate message in Korean language explaining the purpose. We also partly relied on personal networks in the destination to help find the target group online. Kakaotalk is the most used mobile messaging app in South Korea (Statista, 2022). The wide use of this

specific messaging app amongst the target group naturally resulted in sharing the link of the online survey through it. The link was shared to four individuals who then forwarded the message in multiple chats. Participants were not required to share confidential information such as name or address, but we collect information about age, family status, common travel history and goals. This information is used and published in the thesis. The survey is translated into Korean to avoid confusion and misunderstanding of questions or not understanding the questions and therefore refusing to participate. The survey was available for our participants starting from January 29th and the results will be analyzed during February 2023. The answers were gathered in three weeks from January 29th to February 21st. The survey included in total 18 questions that provided information that can be used to compare the statistics mentioned previously.

7 Results

This chapter presents the results gathered on the online survey implemented for the sake of this research. The total number of respondents was 48 individuals. However, a technical issue was encountered during the period when answers were gathered which affected the total number of actual responses. Out of the 86 participants, only 48 could submit the answers, for which only the fully submitted responses will be considered as results. Further analysis of the results is included in the following chapter. Out of the 18 questions all of them were classified as mandatory but there was still some inconsistency in how many responses were gathered per question. Overall, the questions were answered by 48 to 46 people per question.

The main goal was to find answers to the questions: "Why South Korean tourists choose other destinations other than Finland?" and "How to appeal as a tourism destination to South Korean tourists?". However, as for the first question it was found out that the results are complex and no clear answer on how to prevent this from happening can be presented in this research. Appealing to South Korean tourists on the other hand resulted in many suggestions which are covered in the following chapters.

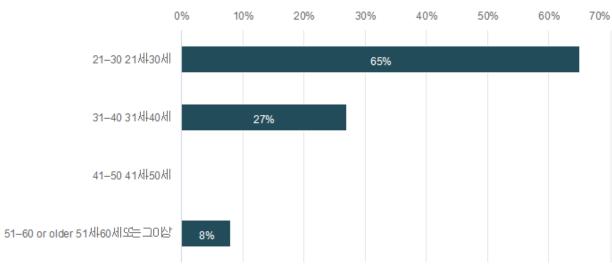
The survey is divided in to five parts. The first section of the survey consists of questions regarding general personal information of the respondent such as age, employment, or budget. Secondly, questions about the ideal type of destination were asked as well as the type of leisure travel. The respondent could choose between beach, city or resort destination and state the reason for travel such as visiting family or a vacation. The third section aims to gather data on how South Koreans view Finland as a country and what is their knowledge base when it comes to traveling to this destination. Next, the previous travel history was implemented by giving a set of continents as options to choose from and an open question which is included to offer the participants an

opportunity to explain as to why they have not considered Finland as a tourism destination or have chosen to travel to other north European country. The last and fifth segment is about the activities that the tourists would prefer to take part in while on their travel to Finland and what kind of activities must be offered for them to consider Finland as a destination.

The first four questions (see figure 7) in the research survey consisted of general personal information about the target group. Out of the 48 participants 31 were between the ages of 21 and 30. Secondly 13 of the participants were between the ages of 31 and 40. Four people were between 51 and 60 and there were no participants between 41 and 50. The gender distribution of participants resulted in major gap between female and male. The male respondents accounted for in total of 32 and the female for 14 individuals including one person who did not disclose the information. Family status was asked and the majority, 34 people, answered being single without children. Married with children was the second largest group of participants with 7 answers. Out of all the answers 5 people said to be married without children and no results for single with children was gathered. The question regarding the general personal information represented the employment status of the target group. Out of all the respondents, 31 stated being an employee while 10 were students. The number of unemployed participants was 2 people. No participants were retired. This question seemed to have caused confusion as 4 people chose "other, please specify" but only one of them specified and did not give the right specification.

1. Age 나이

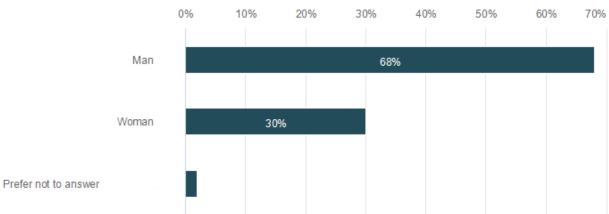
Vastaajien määrä: 48



	n	Percent
21–30 21세-30세	31	64,6%
31-40 31세-40세	13	27,1%
41-50 41세-50세	0	0,0%
51–60 or older 51세-60세 또는 그 이상	4	8,3%

2. Gender 성별

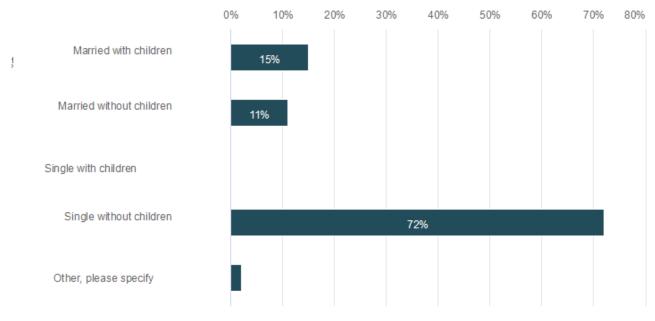




	n	Percent
Man 남자	32	68,1%
Woman 여자	14	29,8%
Prefer not to answer 대답을 원하지 않음	1	2,1%

3. Family status 가족 상태

Vastaajien määrä: 47

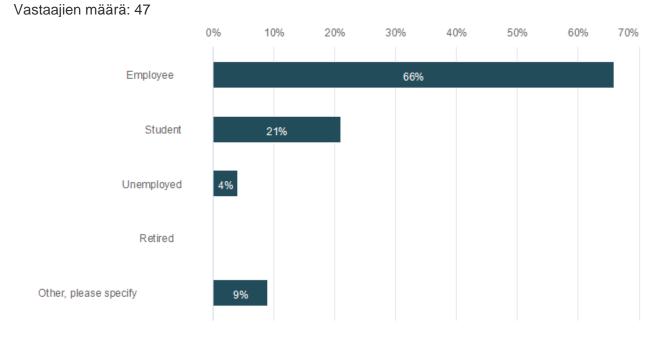


	n	Percent
Married with children 자녀가 있는 기혼가정	7	14,9%
Married without children 자녀가 없는 기혼가정	5	10,6%
Single with children 자녀가 있는 미혼가정	0	0,0%
Single without children 자녀가 없는 미혼가정	34	72,4%
Other, please specify 기타 (작성 필요)	1	2,1%

Lisätekstikenttään annetut vastaukset

Option names	Text
Other, please specify 기타 (작성 필요)	Self-employed

4. Employment 직업



	n	Percent
Employee 직장인	31	66,0%
Student 학생	10	21,3%
Unemployed 무직	2	4,2%
Retired 은퇴자	0	0,0%
Other, please specify 기타 (작성 필요)	4	8,5%

Lisätekstikenttään annetut vastaukset

Option names	Text
Other, please specify 기타 (작성 필요)	Self-employed
Other, please specify 기타 (작성 필요)	자영업
Other, please specify 기타 (작성 필요)	개인사업자
Other, please specify 기타 (작성 필요)	Teacher

To gather information of the most appropriate time of travel for the target group, the time of vacation and the number of paid vacations have been included in the survey (see figure 8). The most common number of vacation days is approximately 3 weeks per year as 20 people chose this option. The second option given to the target group was less than 10 days or about 1,5 weeks and 14 chose this option. Lastly, 12 participants answered to have more than 30 days or I month of vacation per year.

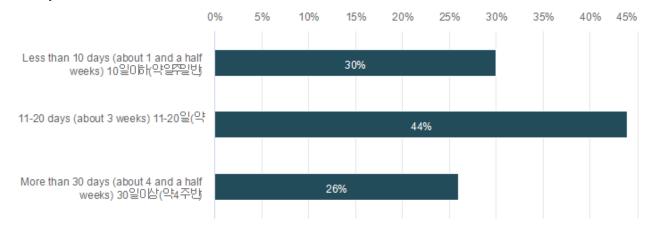
The time of vacation in this case was distributed through four seasons of the year. Most of the participants have a vacation twice a year, more specifically during winter and summer, and this option was chosen by 20 people. Having only a summer vacation was the second most common answer as 19 people picked the option. Lastly, 4 people said to have only a winter vacation, 2 people during spring and 1 during the autumn season. As Finland is the most appealing destination during the wintertime, having a vacation only in summer may affect the desire to choose Finland as the travel destination during the time of vacation.

In the third section of the online survey, there were questions about travel preferences. Firstly, the budget of the target group was considered. For one trip lasting for a week the possible tourists are willing to use 1000 to 1500 euros person. Out of respondents 21 people agreed on this given option. 13 individuals had a slightly smaller budget and were willing to spend less than 1000 euros. Spending 2000 to 2500 euros for the trip accounted as the third most popular option with 9 responses and a budget of over 3000 euros was the least common as only 4 people are willing to spend the amount. In research mentioned in chapter 5 this amount is significantly less although the difference could be resulted because of how the participant interpreted the question as in does the amount chosen also include transportation such as flights. A straight round flight ticket between Finland and Korea costs on average 1200-1300 in economy seat option (Finnair, 2023).

Figure 8 the travel preferences of South Korean tourists 5-7 (Webropol, 2023)

5. Vacation/paid vacation per year 연차 휴가 일수

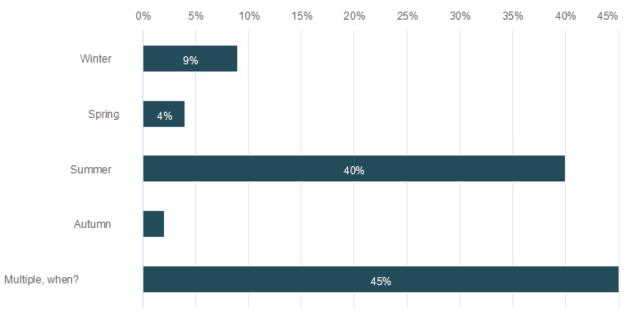
Vastaajien määrä: 46



	n	Percent
Less than 10 days (about 1 and a half weeks) 10일 이하 (약 일주일 반)	14	30,4%
11-20 days (about 3 weeks) 11-20일 (약 3주)	20	43,5%
More than 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) 30일 이상 (약 4주 반)	12	26,1%

6. Time of vacation/Paid vacation 연차 휴가 시기

Vastaajien määrä: 47



	n	Percent
Winter 겨울	4	8,5%
Spring 봄	2	4,3%
Summer 여름	19	40,4%
Autumn 가을	1	2,1%
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	21	44,7%

Lisätekstikenttään annetut vastaukset

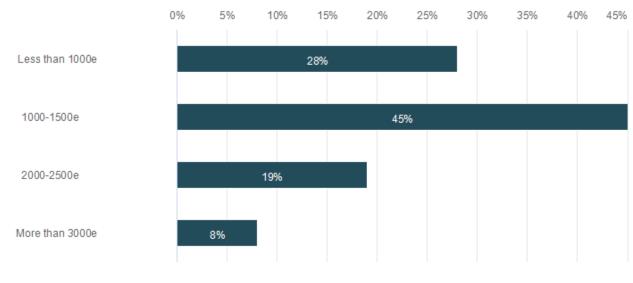
Option names	Text
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	봄 가을
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	Every month
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	Winter, summer
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	holiday
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	No
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	Whenever i want
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	at school vacation
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	시간날때
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	Coordinate with team members
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	자유 휴가
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	원하는날
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	Summer,Winter

Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	여름 겨울
Multiple, when? 다양 (언제?)	여름/겨울

7. How much money are you willing to spend for one trip abroad per person?

(1 week) 해외 여행을 갈 때 쓸 수 있는 1인 경비는 어느 정도인가요?

Vastaajien määrä: 47



	n	Percent
Less than 1000e 약 133만원 미만	13	27,7%
1000-1500e 약 133만원-200만원	21	44,7%
2000-2500e 약 200만원-334만원	9	19,1%
More than 3000e 약 334만원 이상	4	8,5%

Traveling to meet family or friends can be counted as a sub-category for leisure traveling and this option was chosen by 7 participants. Many, 8 people also showed interest in traveling around Europe and including Finland as a part of the travel itinerate. Surprisingly, no responses choosing a layover as a travel purpose to Finland were found. Looking at the results, the three most popular types of destinations are a city destination, nature-based destination, and an all-inclusive resort. The most popular of these given options was the city destination. The least popular option was a beach destination which was chosen by only 8 participants (see figure 9).

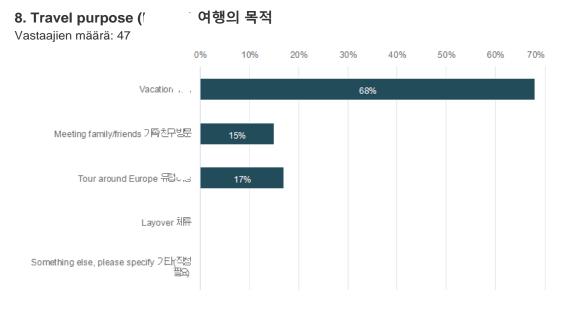
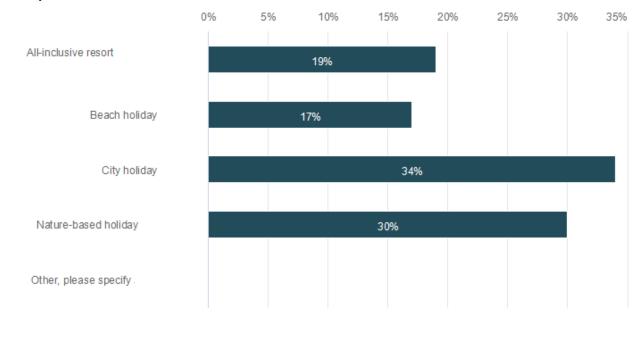


Figure 9 Travel prefrences of South Korean tourists- Online survey results 8-9 (Webropol, 2023)

	n	Percent
Vacation 휴가	32	68,1%
Meeting family/friends 가족/친구 방문	7	14,9%
Tour around Europe 유럽 여행	8	17,0%
Layover 체류	0	0,0%
Something else, please specify 기타 (작성 필요)	0	0,0%

9. Do you prefer... 다음 보기 중에 어떤 걸 선호하시나요?

Vastaajien määrä: 47



	n	Percent
All-inclusive resort 올-인클루시브 리조트 (모든 것이 포함된)	9	19,2%
Beach holiday 바다 여행	8	17,0%
City holiday 도시 여행	16	34,0%
Nature-based holiday 자연 경관 여행	14	29,8%
Other, please specify 기타 (작성 필요)	0	0,0%

The participants were asked about their knowledge about Finland or anyone who travelled to Finland as well as previous travel destinations and desire to travel to Northern Europe in general (see figure 10). Knowledge of Finland was based on natural phenomena such as aurora, winter, snow, and white night. Cultural aspects such as Sauna, Santa and Moomin were commonly mentioned. The school system, welfare and the happiness index were identified and found fascinating due to the contracts with their home country.

Most of the participants do not personally know anyone who traveled to Finland. Previous travel destinations concentrated on fellow Asian countries by far. However, Europe resulted as the second most visited continent. Many of the participants had never travelled abroad while Africa

was the least visited continent with only one respondent. Out of 47 people, 35 individuals of the respondents would consider Northern Europe as a travel destination while 12 individuals would not.

Figure 10. Travel preferences of South Korean tourists- online survey results 10-13 (Webropol, 2023)

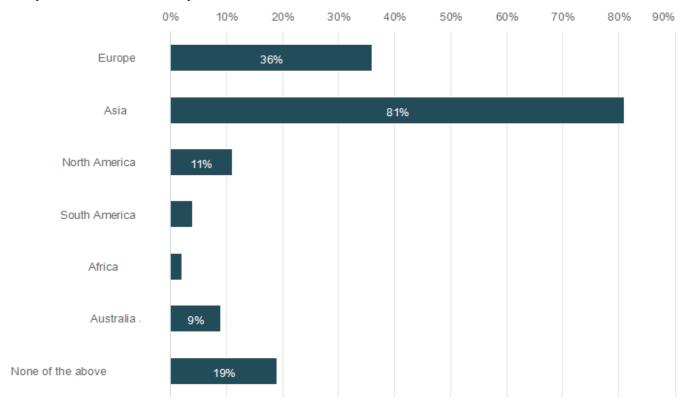
10. What do you know about Finland? 핀란드에 대해 어떤 것을 아나요?

Vastaajien määrä: 37

Responses
Cold
핀란드 수도, 숲이 많은 나라
It's cold, good health system, good school system, reindeers, housing first system for homeless people, expensive, Sami live in Finland, stickt migration policy, Helsinki is the capital
자일리톨, 산타, 자연, 사우나, marianne, salmiakki, Nokia, suomi
Santa Claus, Forced Enlistment, Aurora, White Night, Happiness Index, Welfare
Moomin, Xylitoli, Santa, NOKIA, woods
아이스하키
눈이 많은 나라
It has a lot of snow
스키 부대
자일리톨,산타클로스,오로라,백야
어서와 한국이지 라는 한국 TV프로그램에서 알게된 빌푸와 빌레 덕분에 핀란드라는 나라를
알게 되었습니다.
Sorry
N/A
Xylitol, Santa village
북유럽에 위치.
제 2언어로 영어 사용.
훌륭한 공교육.
눈 내리면 예쁜나라, 추운 곳, 외국인이 장기간 거주하기엔 별로인 곳, 자연이 예쁜 곳,
교육방식이 좋아 본받을만 한 곳,
북유럽 디자인, 무민, 훌륭한 자연경관, 산타마을, 마리메꼬
몰?루
Aurora
Santa, Moomin, Winter
santa, xylitol, winter
산타
자일리톨, 사우나
휘바휘바
휘바휘바
잘모름

백야
I dont know well
헬싱키
자일리톨
추운나라이다정도만 압니다
Snow
자연, 자일리톨
초콜릿
자일리톨, 교육으로 유명한 국가, 이케아
핀란드하면 자일리톨 껌이 생각납니다.
자녀 소개로 알았습니다

11. Where have you traveled previously? 어느 곳으로 여행을 다녀왔나요?



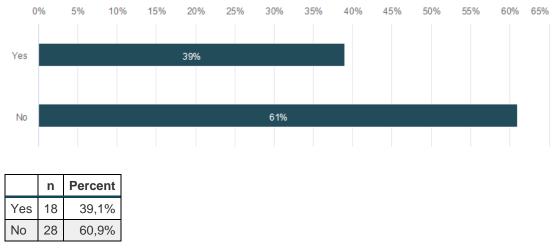
Vastaajien määrä: 47, valittujen vastausten lukumäärä: 76

	n	Percent
Europe 유럽	17	36,2%
Asia 아시아	38	80,9%
North America 북미	5	10,6%
South America 남미	2	4,3%
Africa 아프리카	1	2,1%
Australia 호주	4	8,5%
None of the above 보기에 없음	9	19,1%

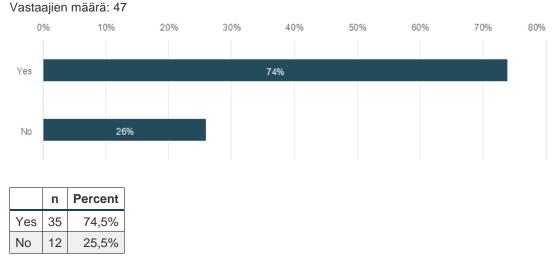
12. Have you heard of anyone who traveled to Finland? 핀란드를 여행했던

사람을 본 적 있나요?

Vastaajien määrä: 46



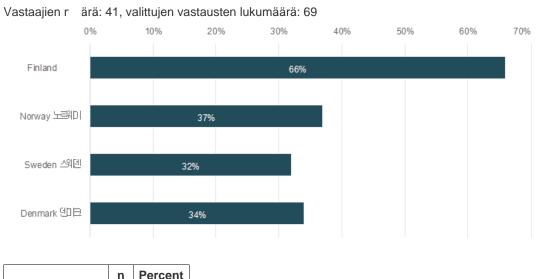
13. Have you considered North Europe as a travel destination? 북유럽 여행지로 고려해본 적이 있나요? (Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark) (핀란드, 노르웨이, 스웨덴, 덴마크)



Next the questions were narrowed down to Northern Europe (see figure 11). The participants were asked which countries in North Europe they would travel to or have already traveled previously. Finland acquired most of the popularity between respondents. The difference between the other options was not significant. If other countries were picked the reasoning was various. Some expressed traveling only to Finland as wasting money while some compared the activities and scenery between Finland and the other options. However, all who had been in Finland would choose to come again.

Figure 11. Travel preferences of South Korean tourists- online survey results 14-16 (Webropol, 2023)

45



14. Whicl of these countries have you traveled to/plan to travel? 다음 나라들

해보았거나 여행 할 계획이 있는 나라는 어떤 건가요?

	n Percent	
Finland 핀란드	27	65,9%
Norway 노르웨이	15	36,6%
Sweden 스웨덴	13	31,7%
Denmark 덴마크	14	34,1%

중에서

15. What made you choose other destination than Finland? 핀란드 말고 다른

나라를 여행지로 정한 이유는 뭔가요?

Vastaajien määrä: 20

Responses				
It would be wasting of money if I go to Finland only.				
My ex boyfriend was fascinated by north Europe so we went to Finland (Helsinki) I would go again to see the polar lights				
Wanna go other countries in north europe while visiting finland				
친구가 있슴				
경치가 아름다워서				
It's famous as a tourist destination (On the internet)				
스웨덴의 자연 경관이 아름답다고 들어서				
가깝고 비행기표가 저렴해서, 물가가 싸서				
몰?루				
Andersen's Fairy Tales				
Curios				
northernmost part of Europe				
가까운 지인이 핀란드에 지인이 있어서				
연어를 맛보기위해				
보기에 없음				
코펜하겐 거리가 너무 이뻐서				
평소에 인지도가 상대적으로 낮아서 배제함.				
경관을 보려고				
뛰어난 자연경관				
네덜란드				

16. Would you come back to Finland? Please shortly explain your decision. 핀란드에 다시 방문하고 싶으신가요? 간단하게 적어주시기 바랍니다.

Vastaajien määrä: 22

Responses
가고싶어요!
Yes. It was a really nice trip and I like the people I met (everybody was very friendly)
ool
Definitely yes
네 꼭 가고 싶어요
한번도 가본적은없지만 아름다운 경치때문에 가보고싶은 여행지
한번도 방문해 본적은 없지만 방문해 보고 싶습니다.
Yes!!
I've never been there, but I want to travel
방문하고 싶습니다.
갈 수만 있다면 가보고 싶은 나라
몰?루
Yes. amazing natural landscape.
Someday yes
안가봤어요
YES
안가봤음
방문 계획 없음
핀란드 나라가 궁금하다.
반면 거리가 멀어서 고민이된다
가보고는 싶습니다
한 나라를 알기에는 1번 여행으로 알 수가 없을것 같아서 다음을 다시 기약 합니다
네

The last two questions that were asked from the target group aimed to find out any preferences related to travel activities (see figure 12). First, they were asked to describe any tourism activities in a general matter that they would expect the destination to offer. The most popular option was nature-based activities including sightseeing, historical sites, photogenic sceneries and the second most popular included food culture activities such as visiting a marketplace. Secondly, the question was narrowed down to Finland's tourism activities. In regards of Finland the option of seeing the aurora was the most chosen. Enjoying the nature was the second most popular option while experiencing Finnish sauna came as third. Winter activities were in general more desired than summer activities.

Figure 12. Travel preferences of South Korean tourists- online survey results 17-18 (Webropol, 2023)

17. What kind of activities are you looking for when traveling in general? 보통 여행할 때 어떤 활동을 찾는 편인가요?

Vastaajien määrä: 38

Responses
Sightseeing historical places
휴양
Local experience
Hiking, swimming, exploring, museum
Activities, See the nature
Natural Landscape, Representative food
Some rides, Swimming
휴식
사진찍기에 이쁜 곳
맛있는 음식
경치이쁜곳
현지 체험
activity
Activities to enjoy the natural scenery
도시 여행(로컬 시장, 마트 둘러보기)
역사 문화 여행(유적지 탐방)
액티비티한 활동, 해당 국가에서만 즐길 수 있는 맛집 탐방, 예쁜 사진을 찍을 수 있는 곳 찾기
물가저렴, 예쁜도시, 사진찍기 좋은 곳
몰?루
museum visiting
경치? 분위기?
food, Scenery
휴식
휴식
자연경치, 음식
Landscape
식도락 여행
음식위주로 찾는편
나라 전통을 느낄 수 있는 관광지나 문화시설

쇼핑

주변 경치

문화체험

Activities, nature, historical sites

수영, 휴양, 맛집 탐방

쇼핑, 음식

액티비티, 멋진 자연경관, 맛있는 음식

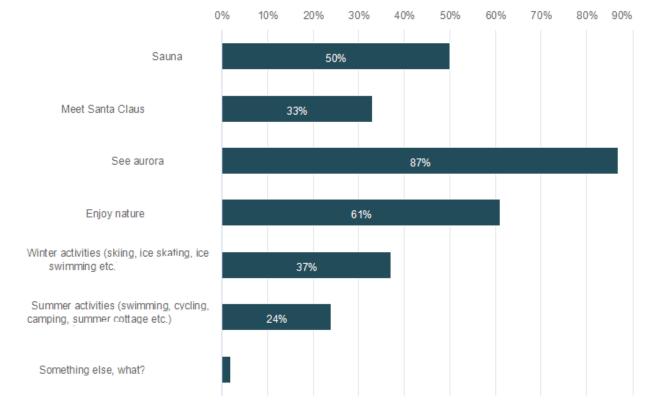
그 나라를 대표하는 자연경관을 많이 선호하고 그 나라 사람들의 삶의 모습을 볼 수있는 곳도 좋을것 같습니다.

문화재

18. What activities would you want to try in Finland? 다음 활동들 중에서

핀란드에서 해보고 싶은 활동은 뭔가요?

Vastaajien määrä: 46, valittujen vastausten lukumäärä: 135



	n	Percent
Sauna 사우나	23	50,0%
Meet Santa Claus 산타 클로스 보기	15	32,6%
See aurora 오로라 보기	40	87,0%
Enjoy nature 자연 경관 즐기기	28	60,9%
Winter activities (skiing, ice skating, ice swimming etc.) 겨울 활동 (스키, 아이스 스케이트, 겨울 수영 등)	17	37,0%
Summer activities (swimming, cycling, camping, summer cottage etc.) 여름 활동 (수영, 자전거 타기, 캠핑, 여름 별장 등)	11	23,9%
Something else, what? 기타 (작성 필요)	1	2,2%

Lisätekstikenttään annetut vastaukset

Option names	Text
Something else, what? 기타 (작성 필요)	현지인들이랑 축구하기

8 Discussion

8.1 South Korean tourist profile

In this chapter a generalized description of a South Korean tourist is defined.

As presented through the statistics in chapter 5.1 the most common age for South Koreans to travel is between the ages of 31 and 40. The survey results are partly similar as the most common age group that was chosen was until the age of 30. Ages between 31-40 came as a second most picked option. However, Visit Finland has identified the targeted age group as 20–30-year-old which is exactly in line with the online survey results in this research. Referring to chapter 3.3. if a male over the age of 25 wishes to travel abroad but has not completed the mandatory military service then a specific permission is required from the Military Manpower Administration (MMA) and this might have an effect in the age distribution. The statistics presented previously did not find a significant difference between female and male gender ratio between tourists, but our research suggested males to be more prone to travel. However, this topic must be reviewed cautiously as the survey simply identified the gender of the individuals who took part in the survive rather than all possible tourists.

The family status of survey participants commonly was referred as "single without children" which can be the result of younger adults as participants. By far the survey results suggest that most of the tourists are working and one reason for this can be concluded because of the lack of support for students or unemployed people as presented in the chapter 3.3. Visit Finland as stated in chapter 5.2, however, identify families as one of the key target customer group so the results must be viewed with caution as this online survey has limited number of respondents.

Vacation time was addressed in the survey to acknowledge the most likely time of travel. Most commonly South Koreans have a vacation time both during winter and summer however if only one vacation is provided then it is most likely during summer. Generally, the survey suggests the length of annual holiday to be approximately 3 weeks, or the second most common option was 1,5 weeks. Referring to chapter 3 The 3- week holiday must be granted for those who have worked

continuously for over 3 years and 1,5 years for those who have worked for more than a year and these results are compatible with the survey.

As mentioned in research presented in chapter 5 in regards of tourism statistics South Korean tourists are more likely to participate in leisure traveling. This online survey also supports these statements as 31 people agreed on traveling for leisure when asked about the travel purpose. Traveling to meet family or friends can be counted as a sub-category for leisure traveling and this option was chosen by 7 participants. Many, 8 people also showed interest in traveling around Europe and including Finland as a part of the travel itinerate. Surprisingly, no responses choosing a layover as a travel purpose to Finland were found. Looking at the results, the three most popular types of destinations are a city destination, nature-based destination, and an all-inclusive resort. The most popular of these given options was the city destination, but as stated in the research nature is one the main selling points of Finland and this can also be reflected on these responses as nature based- destination accounted as the second most popular option with 14 people. This suggests that South Korean travelers in general do not want to spend the whole time of travel outside of the activities and services that cities offer but wish to see certain natural elements during the visit. The least popular option was a beach destination which was chosen by only 8 participants. The data presented in chapter 5 and according to The U.S. Department of Commerce National Travel & Tourism Office (USDOC, NTTO) A South Korean would use nearly 5000 USD per one trip to the US. The survey results are somewhat similar as the one-week budget for one person would be 1000 to 1500 euros excluding flight tickets allowing the assumption that South Korean tourists are not very budget cautious when it comes to travel plans.

8.2 Knowledge of Finland

Despite knowing certain aspects of Finland, most of respondents did not personally know anyone who had traveled to the country previously and this result did not come as a major surprise. The knowledge base of Finland can be divided into three themes: nature, culture, and welfare state. Many also refer to having more knowledge of Finland because of a TV program called *Welcome*, *First Time in Korea?* (어서와~ 한국은 처음이지? which in two episodes showcased Finland and Finnish culture.

The knowledge base of South Korean tourists in regards of Finland as a country or as a possible or previous travel destination has been researched. When asked what they know about Finland in general there were few most common answers. The words that were mentioned the most in regards of the nature theme were *"winter," "aurora,"* and *"white night,"*. The cultural theme included *"Santa Claus"* and *"sauna."* And lastly the welfare state theme considered the Finnish *"welfare"* and *"education systems"*. These results are identical to what was presented as the unique selling points of Finland previously in chapters 2 and 5 where aurora, white night, winter were also included in the list of identified UPS of Finland as a tourism destination. Many also mentioned the education system and welfare of Finland and this could be a result of how Korean television, the channel that in chapter 5 was said to be the most influential in this case, presents Finland and the way it affects knowledge of the country in question.

In the travel statistics of South Korean tourists, it was stated that it is common for them to travel to especially neighboring countries such as Japan. This statement is agreed on as out of the survey respondents 38 people said to have travelled in Asia whereas only 17 travelled in Europe. The remaining options of South- and North America, Africa and Australia accounted for only a few answers while 9 of the respondents had not previously travelled abroad. Despite the lack of previous travel experience in Europe 35 individuals show interested in traveling to North Europe (Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark), 12 people have not considered North Europe as a possible travel destination. Out of all the options Finland was the most popular. The interest between Norway, Sweden and Denmark did not show any significant difference which is interesting considering the fact that Norway and Sweden for instance would be great options for experiencing aurora or white night. This result suggests that South Koreans may not have the best knowledge

on the differences between all North European countries and what they can offer to tourists. The reasons for choosing other destination other than Finland revolved more around the fact that they do not want to travel to Finland only when there are also other destinations nearby. In general, all the respondents would visit Finland again.

8.3 Activity preferences

As expected according to the survey results, the activities that the tourists want to participate in during their travel to Finland were highly concentrated in nature-based activities. The most popular activities included seeing the landscapes and nature, specifically to photograph the environment and historical sites. Another popular activity was to engage in food culture activities such as visiting a marketplace or trying traditional Finnish cuisine. Specific to Finland many were interested in experiencing the sauna culture and seeing Santa Claus. These results can also be seen in other research and statistics mentioned in chapter 5 where enjoying nature was considered the most desired activity during the travel. However, in chapter five it was suggested that Korean tourists would enjoy also fine dining and national parks which were not mentioned in these survey results. There were multiple options given in regards of tourism activities to choose from and seeing the aurora was by far the most popular option when it comes to tourism activities in Finland. Enjoying nature was the second most wanted activity and winter was preferred over summer in terms of seasonality. Preferring winter over summer is linked to the knowledge base of this tourist group as they have chosen activities naturally based on how they view Finland as a country which presented earlier heavily focuses on winter.

8.4 Conclusion

The research questions were "Why South Korean tourists choose other destinations other than Finland?" and "How to appeal as a tourism destination to South Korean tourists". The research was conducted to offer an overview consisted of multiple sources and research to those tourism industry businesses who are wishing to concentrate more on South Korean tourists when it comes to their target customer group. The results that were gathered from South Korean citizens did not present any particular reason for not traveling to Finland for which reason a generalized answer to the first research question cannot be included in the conclusion. The reason for this is because the reasoning for not traveling to Finland varied greatly between individuals. Some explained stated having no interest in travelling to northern Europe in general whereas some found other northern European countries more suitable for their travel preferences such as architecture. By using the thematic analysis research methodology, therefore certain themes could not be identified or presented. For the second research question it can be explained that South Korean tourists are interested in what Finland can offer as a tourism destination. The online survey results are consistent with what was expected on the beginning of the research and that allows generalized conclusion to be presented to this question.

In conclusion South Korean tourists are interested in traveling to Finland and they are willing to spend on average 1000-2500 euros during their one-week trip per person which means they are not very budget conscious. They would prefer to include Finland as a part of their Europe tour itinerary rather than spending the whole holiday in one place. When it comes to Finland and their tourism activities, they prefer going outside and taking photographs of the landscapes but also experiencing the Finnish ways of living through cultural activities in oppose to other tourism activities. The online survey results were somewhat as expected before starting the thesis project. On the other hand, there were some surprising points that are now discussed. In 2018 South Korean tourists ranked 21st on the top inbound tourists in the Finland' s tourism statistics which is significantly less than from the other neighboring countries such as China and Japan. This is slightly surprising considering the convenient flight connection between Finland and South Korea.

As supported through other research South Korean tourists appreciate and are interested in nature-based traveling when it comes to North Europe. The image of Finland heavily relies on the winter season and winter activities. Especially snow, aurora and Santa Claus are the key selling points that were identified with experiencing aurora being the most wanted activity. The only specific mention in regards of the summertime was the white night which is a natural splendor not existing in South Korea. Some aspects of Finnish culture and way of living are seemed as worth experiencing. These included especially the Sauna culture and how the welfare system is seen in society. Many also show interest in trying Finnish foods such as salmiakki and wish to visit a marketplace. As mentioned previously television is the main channel for introducing Finland to South Korean and some of the survey participants mentioned finding interest in Finland through the show *Welcome, First Time in Korea? (어서와~ 한국은 처음이지?)*. This television program aired in the country in 2017 with the idea of foreigners living in Korea bringing their friends or family to the country and this later on has said to have boosted many Korean tourists' motivation to travel to Finland. South Koreans especially the majority of those who are working in most cases will have at least a summer vacation of approximately 1.5 weeks which can hinder plans to travel to Finland where winter is the preferred season over others.

8.5 Reliability and ethicality

This thesis has been written in compliance with observance of good scientific and ethical practices, data collection as well as copyright. The data collection research method is a survey and thereby it will hold information of the target group who voluntarily take part in it by answering the survey questions. In addition, no data in regards of participants' names, social security related issues or any personal information that could disclose the participant's identity was gathered. The prevailed information consists of one's age, sex and family status which is used and published in the thesis in appropriate manner. Questions which held any personal information mentioned previously were gathered for the sake of research and no unnecessary information or information without a specific reasoning was gathered. All used sources, whether found online or in book form are stated in the references list and cited throughout the text to avoid any confusion about which research is done by other individuals. We do not own any credit from research done by someone else. The sources used in this thesis project are the most reliable sources in our understanding. Sources containing a summary of multiple secondary sources were perceived cautiously, and the more original sources were preferred. The comparison between statistics and the survey conducted for this thesis project are made in a cautious matter understanding that errors that may occur in case of comparing someone else's work to your own research. The research survey questions were translated into Korean, the target group's native language. The decision to translate all questions in the survey was made to further improve and support the understanding of the participants when answering the questions, which contributes to more reliable results. For

the sake of reliability in the contents of the survey, the questions have been translated in cooperations with a Korean native speaker who has a fluent English proficiency. The name of the online survey link was edited in a way that it describes the subject and attempt use of information which in this case is a thesis. For whom the link has been shared to has been informed privately how the answers are going to be used. However, the online survey was created through a public link and therefore any individual who encounters it can take part in it without prior notice and the link can be opened regardless of whether the person is suitable for taking part in the survey. Understanding the limited number of survey participants, a general conclusion of the results has been shared although a complete generalization in regards of the topic cannot be concluded with these limitations.

8.6 Development proposals

Thinking on how to enchant Koreans to visit Finland regarding the research question while considering South Korea's high population density; vast Finland can attract people who are used to crowded cities in Korea and this should be used as a marketing tactic for promoting Finland to South Korean tourists. As many Koreans have only summer vacation it should be appropriate to market Finland more as a summer destination as opposed to the current strategy which concentrates on the winter season as it is more known to these tourists. Furthermore, especially the concept of white night and the sauna culture could be used to attract tourists to the country during summertime. Since South Korean tourists are unsure to use time and money to come to Finland as the main travel destination it should be marketed as an ideal destination to stop by for a few days during the Europe tour. This strategy relies on the fact referring to this research that all the tourists who visited here would come again and this would over time be beneficial in promoting Finland as a tourism destination and creating positive word of mouth. The marketing channels that will reach the largest number of South Korean audience are television and Naver blogs and these should be used as the main channels for appealing to them. The key in marketing to this customer group lays in the language and using English or other languages other than Korean is not recommended. This research can be used by any tourism organization that wishes to attract more South Korean tourists by understanding their travel preferences and by using suitable marketing. After this research the suggestion for further research topic is made. The suggestion is

to study how the tourism experience of South Korean tourists differs in terms of seasonality especially the contrast between summer and winter seasons.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Online survey of the travel preferences of South Korean tourists

