



**Research of the Travel Preferences of Young Finnish Adults in
Transportation and How They Are Affected by Sustainability**

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Abstract

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Degree programme Tourism Management
Thesis title Research of the Travel Preferences of Young Finnish Adults in Transportation and How They Are Affected by Sustainability
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<p>This is a research-based thesis about the travel preferences of young Finnish adults in transportation and how the travel preferences are affected by sustainability. The purpose of this research is to find out what are the travel preferences of 18-26-year-old Finnish adults in transportation and how sustainability factors affect their choices in traveling.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of this research consists of sustainability, tourism, tourism trends, sustainable tourism, transportation in the tourism industry, sustainability in transportation and other consumer research about sustainability.</p> <p>The research was conducted as a quantitative research using a survey made with Google Forms in November 2023. The survey reached a total of 71 respondents.</p> <p>The results of the research show that young Finnish adults are interested in sustainability and they take it into consideration when making choices regarding their travels. However other factors, such as convenience, comfort and price were more important to the respondents. It was also found out that young Finnish adults prefer to travel abroad instead of traveling inside Finland and they mostly use a plane when travelling to the destination. On the other hand, when traveling inside Finland, most of the respondents use train as their transportation method.</p>
Key Words Sustainability, Tourism, Transportation Industry, Consumer Research

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<p>Tämä tutkimuksena suoritettu opinnäytetyö käsittelee nuorten suomalaisten aikuisten matkustustottumuksia; mitä kulkuvälineitä he valitsevat ja kuinka kestävä kehitys vaikuttaa matkustustottumuksiin. Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on selvittää, millaisia matkustustottumuksia suomalaisilla 18-26-vuotiailla aikuisilla on liittyen matkustuksessa käytettyihin kulkuvälineisiin ja kuinka kestävä kehityksen tekijät vaikuttavat heidän valintoihinsa matkailussa.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu kestävästä kehityksestä, matkailusta, matkailun trendeistä, kestävästä matkailusta, kulkuvälineistä matkailualalla, kestävästä kehityksestä liittyen kulkuvälineisiin ja kestävään kehitykseen liittyvästä kuluttajatutkimuksesta.</p> <p>Tutkimus suoritettiin kvantitatiivisena tutkimuksena käyttäen Google Forms:lla tehtyä kyselyä marraskuussa 2023. Kyselyyn saatiin kerättyä yhteensä 71 vastaajaa.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että nuoret suomalaiset aikuiset ovat kiinnostuneita kestävästä kehityksestä ja he ottavat sen huomioon tehdessään matkailuun liittyviä valintoja. Muut seikat, kuten mukavuus, käytännöllisyys ja hinta ovat kuitenkin heille kestäväää kehitystä tärkeämpiä. Tutkimuksessa saatiin myös selville, että nuoret suomalaiset aikuiset matkustavat mieluummin ulkomaille kuin Suomen sisällä ja suosituin kulkuväline on lentokone kohteeseen matkustettaessa. Suurin osa vastaajista kuitenkin sanoi, että Suomen sisällä matkustettaessa suosituin kulkuväline on juna.</p>
Key Words Sustainability, Tourism, Transportation Industry, Consumer Research

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1 Introduction

This research-based thesis will investigate what are the travel preferences of young Finnish adults in transportation and how much sustainability factors affect them. The choice to pick this topic was because the authors found it interesting and important as sustainability is essential in order for the tourism industry to continue. (UNWTO s.a.) The choice to focus on especially transportation came from the idea that transportation is an essential part of the tourism industry as it makes travelling possible. (Gross, Klemmer. 2014.) Transportation has a rather big ecological impact as the transportation industry is responsible for one fourth of all carbon emissions coming from the combustion of fossil fuels. (United Nations, 2021)

This thesis consists of this introduction including the purpose and goal of the research, the theoretical framework consisting of sustainability, tourism, trends in tourism, sustainable tourism, transportation in the tourism industry, sustainability of transportation and other consumer research about sustainability. After the theoretical framework, the implementation of the research is presented, including the research method, implementation of the survey, research process and reliability and validity of the research. Following the implementation of the research, the research results are presented. In the final chapter, the conclusion and evaluation of the process is introduced.

Even though the language of the authors' study programme is Finnish, this research is done and written in English. Writing in English was considered more convenient for the authors because most of the sources used are written in English and the authors have had many courses and studies in English. The authors also wanted to improve their English writing skills during the research. This could help the authors to work in international environment better and find new international opportunities either abroad or in Finland in for example international business.

1.2 Purpose and Goal of The Research

The purpose of this research is to find out whether sustainability factors affect the consumer behavior of our target group and to what extent and whether they are making sustainable choices and in what part of planning their travels. The research will be conducted by a survey made in Google Forms using a quantitative research method. The results of the research offer up to date information after the COVID-19 pandemic when tourism is recovering to what it was before. The results could be used by tourism companies that target young adults as their customers and that are interested in developing their company in a more sustainable direction.

The main research question is; do sustainability factors affect the consumer behavior of young Finnish adults when they are choosing transportation methods while travelling. The sub questions of the research are: does the sample group prefer domestic or international travel, what

transportation methods are used inside the travel destinations, are sustainability factors influencing the decision-making process, what are the biggest factors for choosing a certain transportation method and finally, if the respondents consider sustainability factors and in what parts of travel planning or if they find them important.

In addition to the findings of the research the goal for the authors is also to learn how to plan a research, how to conduct it and how to analyze the results of the research in a critical way. The goal in data collection was to get 100 answers from a diverse sample of respondents. The sample group was limited to young Finnish adults so that it would be possible to get reliable data considering the sample size.

The research design matrix (table 1) was used to visualize the questions and problems of the research, the theoretical framework, the questions of the survey and also the results. Research design matrix is a structure that includes columns and rows, representing the goals, objectives, definitions, analysis methods, variables, theories and results/conclusions of the research project. (Choguill, C. 2005)

Sub-question	Theoretical framework	Questions of the survey	Results
Does the sample group prefer domestic or international travel?	2.2	5	4, 5
What transportation methods are used inside the travel destinations?	2, 2.5	7, 8, 10	4, 5
Are sustainability factors influencing the decision-making process?	2, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7	4, 6, 9, 12	4, 5
What are the biggest factors for choosing a certain transportation method?	2.5, 2.6	6, 9	4, 5

Do the respondents consider sustainability factors and in what parts of travel planning, and do they find sustainability factors important?	2, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7	4, 6, 9, 12	4, 5

Table 1. Research Design Matrix.

2 Sustainability in Tourism Industry

This research will focus on how sustainability factors affect the decision making of choosing transportation for traveling and travel planning. In this chapter the relevant theory and concepts will be explained.

2.1 Sustainability

Sustainability means the ability to support or maintain a process continuously over time. (Investopedia, 2023.) Sustainability is important because humans cannot continue to function the same way or maintain Earth's ecosystems if sustainable choices are not made and taken into consideration. If nothing changes, the Earth will run out of fossil fuels, the atmosphere will be damaged, and many animal species will become extinct. (TWI Global, s.a.) Sustainability is often divided into three core concepts: economic, environmental and social. The figure below (figure 1) demonstrates the three concepts of sustainability.

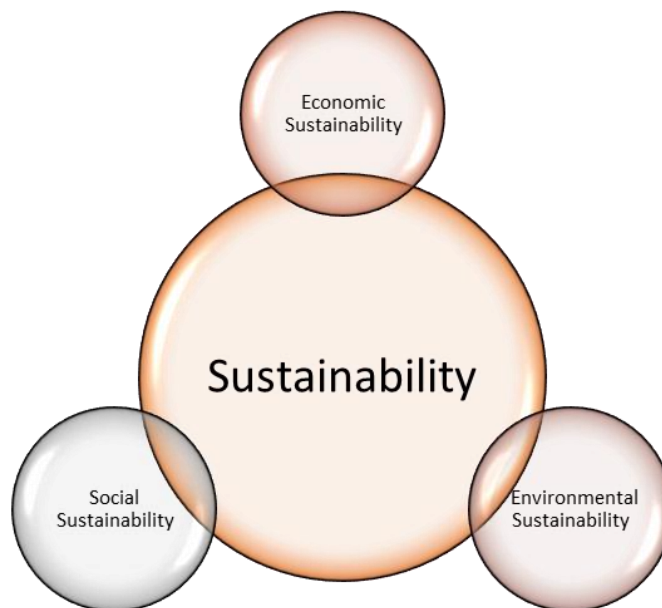


Figure 1. The three core concepts of sustainability.

Economic sustainability is when activities support financial growth in the long term and at the same time provide positive development and change for humanity and the environment. Economic sustainability is important for any business or company because taking sustainability in consideration creates customer loyalty and financial success and longevity. (Greenly, 2022.)

Environmental sustainability means reserving natural resources responsibly and protecting the global ecosystems now and also in the future. (Sphera, 2020.) The purpose of environmental

sustainability is to improve the quality of peoples' lives without neglecting Earth's ecosystems. Environmental sustainability is important because nowadays people use so much food, energy and human-made resources in a daily basis. Therefore, it is crucial for businesses to step in and do their part regarding sustainability, since they have more power than individuals and they can support in securing a livable future by investing in sustainable practices. (Inspired Clean Energy, s.a.)

Social sustainability means managing and identifying the positive and negative impacts that a business has on people. Companies influence what happens to its employees, the customers and people in local communities. That's why companies have accountability on how they manage the impacts in a proactive way. (UN Global Compact)

Sustainable development urges responsible production and manufacturing, including the pollution and waste. It encourages industries, companies and governments to conclude decisions based on long-term effects, rather than the cheapest or easiest option. (Inspired Clean Energy, s.a.)

2.2 Tourism

The definition of tourism is when one is staying outside their usual environment for no longer than a year and no less than 24 hours for leisure, business or other purposes. (UNWTO, 1995)

Tourism is often divided into domestic and international tourism. Domestic tourism meaning one travelling inside their home country and international tourism meaning one travelling abroad. Financially, domestic tourism will reduce the outflow of money out of the country. On the other hand, a country can get a great source of income from incoming international tourists and many countries depend on the tourism industry. (Camilleri. 2017.) The figure below (figure 2) shows the division of tourism.

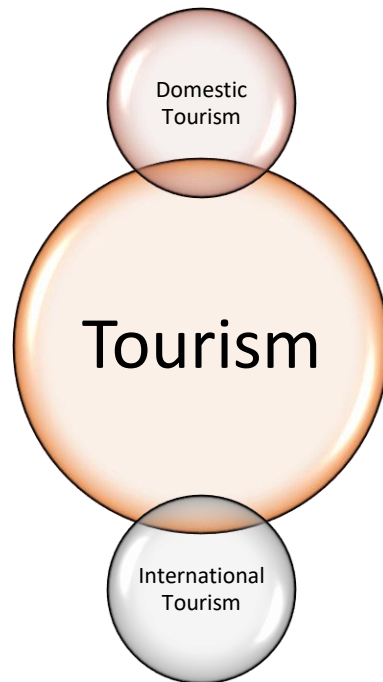


Figure 2. Tourism division.

Other category that tourism is often divided to is according to the purpose of the travel. Typically, the division is done between business travelers and tourists that are travelling because of other purposes. The two groups differ a lot in their travel preferences. The business travelers are most likely not in control of making the decisions regarding their trip. Their employer could also be paying for their trip so the matter of place or time or even the price doesn't necessarily affect their choices. The business trips are often arranged with little notice time and the traveler doesn't have a lot of free time in the destination. The travel times can also get long. Typically, the business travelers opt for the most convenient option for transportation and a comfortable accommodation. (Camilleri. 2017.)

The tourists that are traveling for other purposes are much more diverse group. They may travel for personal reasons such as visiting family or friends, explore new places, religious or health reasons or hobbies. They also have much more diverse reasons to choose in their travels. Many have a certain time off work or school when they can travel, and many might consider the price as they are most likely to pay for the trip by themselves. However, during the holiday season the prices of transportation are often higher because of the high demand. (Camilleri. 2017.)

Other thing that guides the decision making in tourism is the ability to travel. Free time and disposable income to spend on tourism are two of the most important factors in this. Other factors include age, the age can affect the person's health or mobility that guides their decisions, or sometimes their age can bring financial limitations, for example in students. Another factor is their stage in

their personal life, for example having small children can reduce their ability to travel to certain places. The third factor is political stability and peace. This can affect the safety of the destination and of course with reduced safety less tourists will choose the destination. (Camilleri. 2017.)

Motivations of leisure travelers are more diverse as mentioned above. However, generally they can be divided into four different categories. The first category is physical. The tourists that travel for physical reasons are looking for refreshment from their normal life. For example, shopping, partying, sports and having “fun” during their trip. The other category is the tourists whose main motivation is cultural reasons. They are interested to see other countries and the local culture and people. Often times also art, local food, music architecture and historical places. The third category is tourists that are travelling for personal reasons. They are often visiting a friend or relatives. Finally, some tourists travel for prestige and status. They might be looking for ways to pursue education or new hobbies or looking for new career opportunities or engaging in fashion etc. Often the travel motivation might also be a mix of these categories. (Camilleri. 2017.) The figure below (figure 3) demonstrates the purpose of travel and its dimensions.

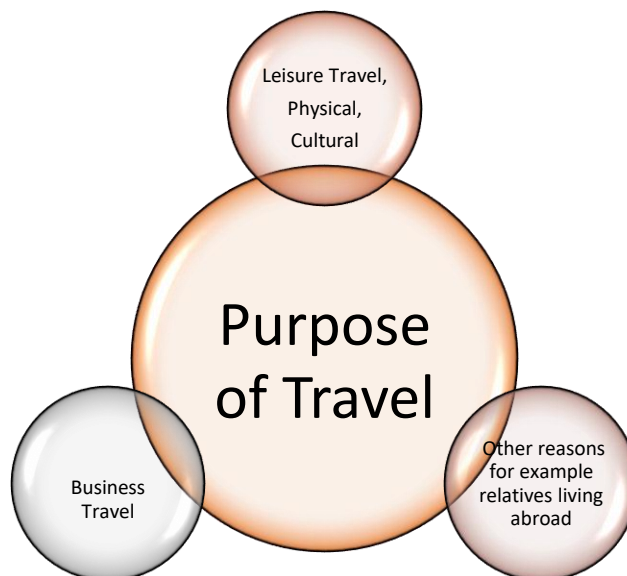


Figure 3. Purpose of travel.

The covid19 pandemic affected the tourism industry drastically. Before the pandemic the industry had been growing for a long time however, the pandemic caused the whole industry to stop. This was an unique situation for the industry as it had never had a crisis in this scale. (World Economic Forum 2022) The industry however took a quick recovery after the pandemic and the demand for travel started to rise rapidly in 2022.(UNWTO 2022)

Finally, there is the tourism product. The whole industry exists to serve customers and depends on the successful inter relationship of the different sectors. The four main sectors in tourism are: transportation, accommodation, ancillary services and sales and distribution. (Camilleri. 2017.) This thesis will mainly focus on transportation, and it will be discussed in more detail later.

2.3 Trends in Tourism

Nowadays there are multiple different trends in the travel industry and some of the biggest trends are presented in this section.

Sustainable tourism has been one of the biggest tourism trends in the last years since countries are advised to take climate change into account within the field of tourism. As the travelers get more and more information of the ongoing climate crisis, they have to take action and make sustainable choices in traveling in order to conserve the nature and planet and to maintain it for the future generations. Since sustainability is not only about the environment, but sustainable tourism also concentrates on making a positive effect on economies, cultures and the local people in the tourism destinations. By making sustainable decisions and actions, you can also gain loyalty and trust from the travelers that are aware of this trend and the climate change crisis. (Regiondo, 2023.)

Leisure travel is another increasing trend in tourism, where the business travel is prolonged to leisure activities. Leisure travel is considered to be the future of business travel. Companies can offer tourist experiences/activities for their employees during work trips or people can plan a vacation on the same period of time as a work trip. Therefore, leisure trips are usually a pre-planned thing, but it can also come as an afterthought; after the work-related conferences and activities are done, people can prolong their stay in the destination for leisure. (Regiondo, 2023.)

Staycations have gained popularity as a trend during the COVID-19 pandemic. A staycation usually lasts a day or two and is a holiday spent in one's home city or home country. Staycations are usually spent exploring a local attraction or activity. This kind of a vacation is perfect for people who want to support their local companies and communities, who want to escape from the everyday life for a while whilst still feeling safe and secure in their vacation environment. (Regiondo, 2023).

Mobile bookings have grown as a trend since digitalization. Social media users have expanded their traveling in 2023 and therefore more guests have turned to their phones for travel research and also for mobile bookings when it comes to travel. The international market for mobile travel bookings is supposed to increase by 12.2% between the years 2021 and 2029. The main reasons

for the increased popularity of mobile bookings are the continuous growth of smartphone users and the launches of new, upgraded mobile devices. (Rezgo, 2023.)

Lastly, the tourism trend that will be presented is wellness travel which has been growing fast lately. The COVID-19 pandemic has left many people feeling exhausted and therefore the popularity of wellness tourism has been rising. People seek more and more overall health and wellbeing for both their minds and bodies. The purpose and meaning of wellness tourism is to lessen stress by concentrating on mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. This can be executed either with programs where the travelers are absorbed in a wellbeing experience or by making a trip full of wellness activities. According to The Global Wellness Institute, wellness tourism is anticipated to get bigger than any other wellness sector and it is expected to be increasing by 21% by the year 2025. Wellness resorts are considered as more unique than other accommodation options. Wellness travelers also appreciate eco-friendly facilities in this age of climate change. The Asia Pacific region is one of the most popular area for wellness travelers since it has many beautiful locations and instinctive practices for health and wellness. (euronews.travel, 2023.)

2.4 Sustainable Tourism

As mentioned earlier, one of the biggest and growing trends in tourism is also sustainability. Sustainability in tourism is nowadays widely considered as a priority as climate change is exceeding and mass tourism has impacted negatively on many popular destinations. (Regiondo, 2023.)

Sustainable tourism by the definition of World Tourism Organization UNWTO is: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts. Addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host-communities." (UNWTO s.a)

UNWTO has created guidelines for sustainability. They are applicable to every form of tourism from mass tourism to niche markets. The key to creating sustainable tourism is to take all three aspects of sustainability into account. Sustainable tourism should use natural resources in a way that allows to conserve the important ecological processes, conserve the natural heritage and biodiversity of the destination. Sustainable tourism should also take the host communities into account and conserve their traditional culture. An important aspect of this is also to contribute to intercultural understanding and respect between the visitors and host communities. Financially, the revenue needs to be evenly distributed and tourism should provide stable jobs and opportunities for the locals. That way tourism has benefited the host communities. (UNWTO, s.a.)

To achieve sustainable development in tourism it requires an informed participation from all the stakeholders, but also a political leadership to ensure participation and consensus-building. Sustainable development is a continuous process. Involving monitoring impacts and establishing the

preventative or corrective measures whenever necessary. On the other hand, it is essential that sustainable tourism also takes customer satisfaction into account. High-level of customer satisfaction ensures that the tourists still have meaningful experiences and at the same time they will gain awareness. (Zamparini, 2021)

Nowadays an increasing trend is self-objectivizing tourism where people visit destinations and capture it on social media. This is caused by the destinations becoming more accessible to a larger number of visitors and with the increasing popularity of social media. Generally, this kind of traveler's visits are short and they make negative impact with pollution, but don't benefit the destination economically a lot. (Breiby, Duedahl, Oian, Ericsson 2020)

On the other hand, there are an increasing number of tourists that are interested in the impact of their travels and in how to make it sustainable. These kinds of tourists often want to find a deeper meaning in their travels and make a connection with either the local culture or nature. (Breiby, Duedahl, Oian, Ericsson 2020)

This development has awoken interest to create sustainable experiences that can also be for advantage in the market. It is found that if the tourists have a positive experience with sustainable travel, it can make them feel a sense of novelty about a tourist destination and make them more interested about making sustainable choices in their travels in general. Therefore, sustainable tourism development is focusing more and more on the experiences of the customers. This means that it needs to be taken into account in experience design. The consumers should be seen as participants instead of just receivers in sustainable development. (Breiby, Duedahl, Oian, Ericsson 2020)

Breiby, Duedahl, Oian and Ericsson conducted a research about how the experience value can be added through sustainability dimensions. The research was conducted in 2019 in Norway as part of a larger industry-oriented project. The case study examines the experience value within a real-life context and accounting the rising sustainability issues. The study took place in the Mojsa region. This region was chosen for the study because of its cultural heritage and rich nature. The area extends across two regions and three cities. The region also has a large number of tourists coming in. At the first stage of the research the researchers used open interviews. The researchers interviewed both locals and the visitors. During the second stage a workshop was held to analyze the results of the interviews. The findings of the research indicated that there were four sustainable experience dimensions: interacting with the natural environment, interacting with cultural environment, insights and views and lake-based activities. (Breiby, Duedahl, Oian, Ericsson 2020)

2.5 Transportation in the tourism industry

Transportation is a vital part of tourism as it allows people to visit the destinations. The fact that transportation has developed into what it is today has enabled the tourism industry to grow as well. All tourism needs transportation services, but not all transportation is related to tourism. (Gross, Klemmer. 2014.)

Transportation is defined as moving something from one place to another. In tourism, this means travelling or alternatively the system that is used for that. Transport infrastructure on the other hand is the routes including roads and traffic systems and the facilities for transport vehicles such as airports and bus and train terminals. Similarly, transportation mode is the environment in which the transport happens. For example, on air, ground or on water. Finally, transportation or the type of carrier means the vehicle. For example, travelling by plane or car. (Gross, Klemmer. 2014.)

Transportation in tourism can be either only a mean to travel from one place to another or it can be an experience itself. For example, a vacation on a cruise or a scenic railway route are attractions on their own. The two forms of transportation are very different also in terms of what the customers expect from it. When it comes to transport where the focus is just moving from one place to another, the customers generally expect quick and convenient travel and a good price. Whereas, in transportation that is a tourist attraction itself the customers' priorities are also different. (Gross, Klemmer. 2014.)

In this thesis we will cover all modes of transportation. First, we will investigate the air transport. According to the UNWTO 2013 statistic 52% of tourists enter their destination country by flying. Aviation is its own industry and includes the aerospace industry, aviation organizations and air transportation. Aerospace industry includes the facilities needed for producing the aircraft and the needed infrastructure like airports. Aviation organizations work on the legislation and transactional framework. Air transportation refers to transportation of people or objects by air. (Gross, Klemmer. 2014.) The air transportation has only been on the rise until the covid19 pandemic. The number of scheduled passengers has increased almost every year from 2004 up to the pandemic in 2020. The industry however started to recover quickly. According to the Statista air transportation has been growing due to few main reasons; the number of low-cost operators has been growing and the part of the middle class from the populations on many countries has also been growing. This has made air transportation accessible to more people in financial way. (Statista Research Department 2023)

Air transportation is generally done by passenger aircraft. They are the type of aircraft that is designed specifically for transporting passengers and their luggage. Most flights are commercial

which means they are available to book for the public. Different airlines operate the flights. As tourism in general, also flights are divided into domestic and international. (Gross, Klemmer. 2014)

Ground transportation includes cars, buses and trains. Ground transportation accounts for large percentage of all tourism transportation. (Gross, Klemmer. 2014.) Ground transportation is not only a mean to get to the main destination. Many visitors also choose a central place to be able to visit the neighboring destinations as well. Often if there is a good infrastructure with public transport it encourages people to use it instead of, for example flying to different destinations on separate trips. (Zamparini. 2021)

2.6 Sustainability in Transportation

The transportation industry is responsible for one fourth of carbon emissions coming from fossil fuels combusting. However, as in other aspects of sustainability in transportation is also a wider issue. Its objectives include accessibility, safety and reduced environmental and climate impact. In addition to the emissions caused, a big part of the world's population still lacks the access to an all-weather road and to public transportation. There are international goals for building a sustainable transportation industry by the UN that focuses on the issues, however, as we are researching the issue on behalf of the individual consumers we will mostly focus on the emissions and climate effects of transportation and the accessibility on behalf of infrastructure and public transport. (United Nations. Sustainable transport, sustainable development. Interagency report for second Global Sustainable Transport Conference. 2021)

Institute of Sustainable Studies defines sustainable transportation focusing on more climate factors. According to them, for a transportation method to be sustainable it has to be eco-friendly in terms of its environmental, social and climate impacts. The sustainability of a transport method can be measured for example by considering what is the used energy source, does and how much it causes harmful emissions and its social impact. Considering this, using public transport, walking and biking are the most sustainable transport methods. Also, growingly popular electric vehicles are a sustainable alternative to the "normal" cars. Despite transportation's negative impacts it is essential to have mobility and sometimes sustainable transportation methods are not available for transportation to certain places or times. (Institute Of Sustainability Studies, 2023)

As the aviation industry is needed in order to reach most tourism destinations it is considered separately. The aviation industry accounts for 2,5% and 1,9% of all greenhouse gases. However, there are other ways of how aviation is contributing for example to the climate change. Flying planes affect the concentration of other gases that are in the atmosphere causing reactions that overall cause a warming effect. Therefore, it is said that the aviation industry accounts for 3,5% of the

global warming. Since 1960, air travel emissions have increased significantly, but the volume of air travel has increased even more rapidly. There are not yet ways to cut on the emissions of planes, but most airlines have been focusing also on building efficiency on air travel. However, still only a small part of the world's population use flying as a way to travel. (Ritchie 2020)

The main theme of transportation in tourism is often the transportation method from the origin to the destination, but there are also other factors when considering the consumer behavior of tourists in terms of transportation. For example, the choices of transportation inside the destination are also important information when considering the sustainability of the whole travel industry. Often the availability of sustainable transportation within the destination comes hand in hand with the attractiveness of the destination. It also benefits the local community. The transportation inside the destination also includes vital parts of the journey such as transportation from the airport. (Zamparini, 2021)

It is also a phenomenon for tourists to visit several destinations during the same travel. As an example, they might choose a central destination and make excursions to the neighboring destinations which is a more sustainable way to visit the destinations versus for example flying to them separately. This is possible if the public infrastructure such as train or bus connections allow it. (Zamparini, 2021)

2.7 Other Consumer Research about Sustainability

As awareness about sustainability has been growing, people have been more interested in the sustainability of their travels. The COVID-19 pandemic also raised global awareness about the impact of travel as many areas that were highly impacted from over tourism were able to recover for the first time in years during the pandemic. Many wished that the tourism industry could have made a so-called green recovery where the focus would be on making the industry more sustainable as it is recovering. (CNBC Travel, 2021)

A travel company called Virtuoso has recently made research about how consumers feel about sustainable travel after the pandemic, and they found that 82% of the respondents found that they would like to travel in a more sustainable way after the pandemic. 72% of the respondents said that they find it important that tourism supports the local communities and economies and that it should protect cultural heritage and the environment. (CNBC Travel, 2021)

However, a similar study was conducted by the Vacationer in the United States and the results were a bit different. When asked whether sustainability in tourism is important, the majority (63%) of the respondents said that it is somewhat important to them. 26% said that it is very important and 17% said that it is not at all important for them. However, there were differences between the

age groups. Young adults (18-29) were reported to care about sustainability the most. (Jones, 2021)

However, when asked if the respondents will make more sustainable choices when planning travel, the majority (48%) responded that they will but only if it doesn't make them inconvenient. 26% said that they choose more sustainable even if it inconveniences them and 25% responded that they don't consider sustainability at all. The study found out that cost was actually the most important factor when booking travel and after that came time and convenience and only after that sustainability factors. To conclude, the study suggests that sustainability is commonly considered an important factor, but other factors like cost and convenience still come before that. (Jones, 2021

3 Implementation of the Research

The research was conducted by using a quantitative research method by doing an online survey. The survey was distributed on social media which suited well considering that our target group was 18 to 26-year-old young adults. The goal in our survey was to find out how our target group considers sustainability factors when they are travelling or what other factors might come in the way of making sustainable choices. The findings of the research could be beneficial when we think about how to make the tourism industry and especially transportation in tourism more sustainable.

3.1 Research method

Research method means the process of collecting data for research. For this research we used a survey with multiple choice questions and one open ended question. This method is called quantitative research. Quantitative research means collecting numerical data that can be measured. The research done by using quantitative research method will most often answer the questions how many, how often and to what extent. (University of Newcastle Library Guides s.a.)

The survey would be distributed online to our target audience and shared in social media where the following is mostly young adults between the ages of 18 to 26. Apps that are popular amongst the target group were used for the data collection, Instagram, Snapchat and WhatsApp. The link survey would be sent to people who are known to be part of the target group as well as informing the following about the research and the possibility to participate. The link was shared in Instagram and Snapchat posts. We decided to use this method because a survey utilizing quantitative research method would be effective in terms of collecting data. The survey won't take a long time to complete and that allows to collect and analyze more data for more generalizable and reliable results.

Online surveys are also increasingly popular and there have been found to have benefits in terms of reliability of the research and how the respondents felt about the process. Compared to face-to-face interviews and handwritten surveys, online surveys were found out to be less likely to get social desirability responding, easier and took less time to fill out or answer, there are also more ways to build the survey by using online tools. In addition, the online surveys were generally costing less while still remaining anonymous. The method also was found to have some disadvantages including that some respondents resented to be surveyed in a non-social manner and were uncomfortable using the digital tools. (Mudavath, Narayan, 2019)

3.2 Implementation of the survey

The survey of this research was implemented with Google Forms since you can make comprehensive yet simple surveys on that platform. The survey ended up having a total of 13 questions. The majority of the questions (12 questions) were multiple choice questions in order to get as much answers as possible since answering to multiple choice questions takes less time than answering to an open question. However, there was one open question as well to get broader answers from the respondents. The name of the survey was “The Research of the Travel Preferences of Young Finnish Adults in Transportation”. The sustainability part was left out so the name would not lead the respondents in any direction or affect their answers.

3.3 Research process

The research process began from choosing the topic and collecting the relevant theory to have a coherent theory base for the research. The chosen research method was quantitative research, and it was decided that an online survey would be the best choice for this research. The questions for the survey were formed according to the theory base and the focus was not too much on sustainability as we did not want that to guide the answers of the respondents. All of the questions were also multiple-choice questions except for one question was an open question the choice for this was due to the convenience of the respondents and therefore from the possibility of collecting more data.

First questions from the survey were intended to get data from respondents. The first question was the age of the respondents, and the next question was their gender. This is important for the reliability of the research as with them it is possible to see how diverse the sample group is. After that the survey went to the travel preferences of the respondents. Next questions asked was how many times the respondents travel in a year and whether they prefer domestic or international travel. After this came the sustainability questions. The respondents were asked if sustainability factors affect their decision making and if so in what parts of travel planning. The next question was focused on the transportation and whether sustainability factors are the reason for choosing the transportation method or no or if other factors such as price or comfort still come before the sustainability factors even if the respondent would want to consider them. The following questions were to choose the transportation methods that were used to travel in both domestic and international destinations and if sustainability reasons were part of this decision or if other reasons are preferred. As the journey to the destination is only a part of the trip the survey asked what transportation methods are preferred to use inside the destinations. Similarly, to this the next question was whether there is an interest or the respondents have visited several destinations during the same trip. The following question was the only open ended question of the survey and it was for the respondents freely

describe what reasoning they had for visiting several destinations during the same trip. Finally, the last question of the survey asked the travel motivations.

The survey was shared in both of the authors' social media channels and the data was collected for eleven days. The period of collecting the data was from Friday the 10th of November 2023 to Monday the 20th of November 2023. The goal was to get 100 answers to the survey. A sample size that is large enough adds reliability to the research. At the end the survey was answered only 71 times. However, the answers were similar to each other and that is why it might be that the smaller sample size does not affect the reliability.

3.4 Reliability and validity of the research

Reliability refers to consistency of measurement in research. It can show how reliable the results are. The results are considered to have high reliability when the same results are found by using different methods or sample groups. Having a reliable research method leads to the results being valid. (Researchprospect.com s.a.) The data was collected through a link that was shared on social media and it might affect the reliability of the results as it is not known if the respondents answered the questions truthfully or that they are actually in the target group of the study. The target sample size was 100 answers to the survey, but the number of answers was only 71. The smaller sample size can also possibly be a limiting factor in terms of reliability.

Validity of research is defined to be the accuracy of the measurement. It shows if the results can be generalizable in other contexts. It is said that if the findings are accurate according to the researcher's situation, prediction and explanation and the method was reliable, the research is valid. (Researchprospect.com s.a.) One thing that might affect the validity of this research is that it could not be made sure if the respondents actually are Finnish or in the age range of 18-26 because anyone could access the link of the survey. However in the description of the survey it was mentioned that it is made for only young Finnish people aged 18-26 and this was also mentioned in the social media channels (Instagram, Snapchat and WhatsApp) when the authors were sharing the link for the survey. It is also not sure if someone gave invalid information of themselves when submitting the research (for example if they answered a wrong age intentionally or accidentally).

4 Results of the research

In this chapter, the answers of the survey are gone through and analyzed. The sample group was 71 people and most of the respondents (71,8%), were between the ages of 21-23. The second biggest age group was from 24 to 26 years old. The youngest age group, from 18 to 20-year-olds, made up only 7% of the respondents. Because most of the answers were from respondents between the ages of 21 to 23, it might limit how generalizable the results are to the other age groups. The age distribution of the survey can be seen below from the figure 4.

How old are you?

n=71

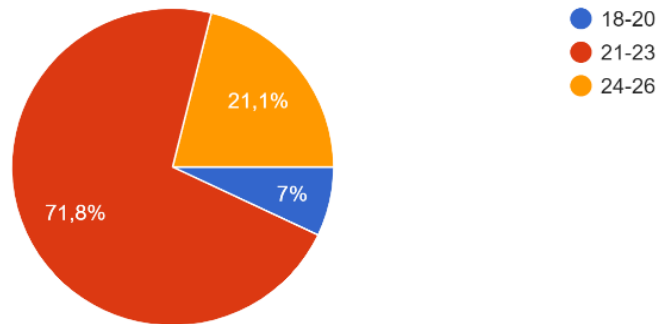


Figure 4. Age distribution of the survey.

The respondents were mostly 78,9% women and 18,9% men. Because the gender distribution is so focused on women it should be considered when generalizing the results. This can also be a limiting factor when applying the results. The gender distribution is seen below in the figure 5.

What is your gender?

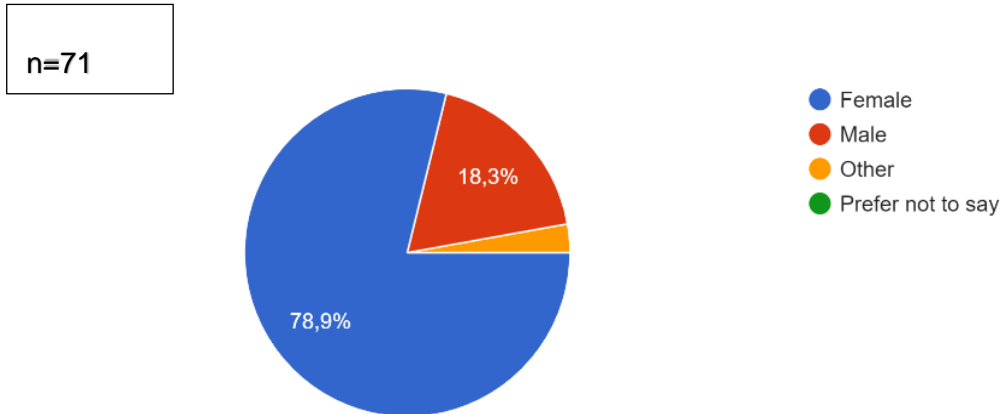


Figure 5. Gender distribution of the survey.

After that, it was asked how often the respondents are generally travelling. The majority (48%) of the respondents reported that they travel 1 to 2 times per year. 37% reported that they travel at least 3 or more times per year. 16% responded that they are travelling less than once a year. The results can be seen from the figure 6.

How often do you travel?

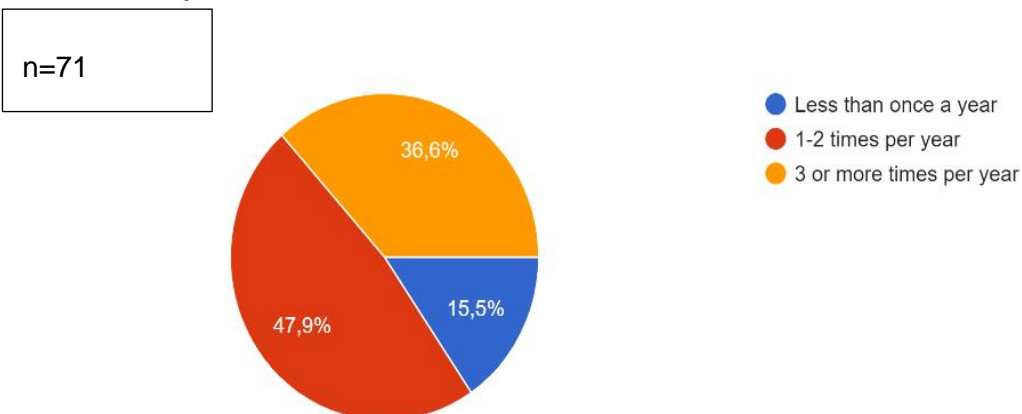


Figure 6. Travel Frequency.

Next the respondents were asked if sustainability factors affect their decision making when they are planning their travels. The majority of the respondents (44%) reported that to not really consider them. However, 28% of respondents answered that they consider sustainability factors in both choosing the destination and choosing the transportation. 22% of respondents said they

consider sustainability factors, but only in choosing the destination. The rest, 6%, said they consider sustainability factors but only in choosing the transportation. However, when added together the majority of respondents considered some sustainability factors and thought they are important. They reported to care slightly more about the sustainability of a destination rather than transportation. The results can be seen from the figure 7.

Do sustainability factors affect your decision making?

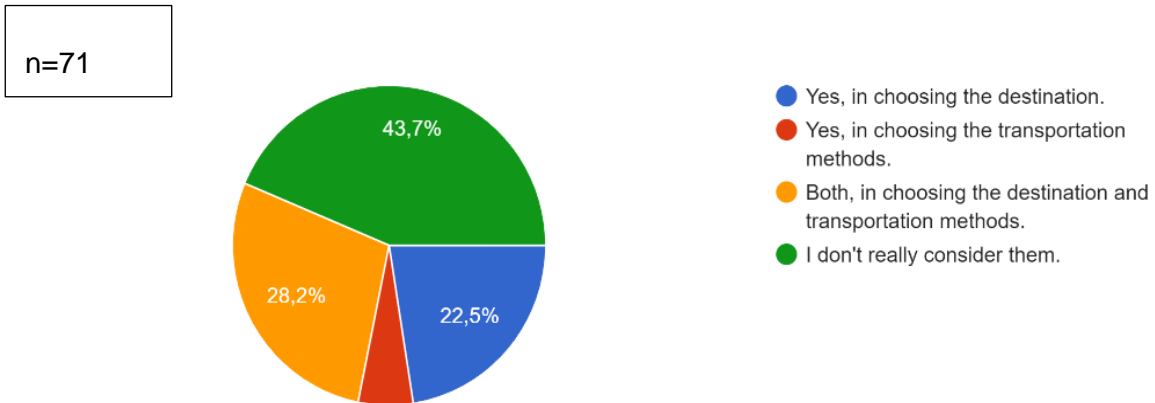


Figure 7. Sustainability Factors.

The next question was if the respondents prefer domestic or international travel. The vast majority of 84,5% reported that they prefer to travel abroad and only 15,5% said they prefer domestic travel. Domestic travel is often considered more sustainable as the distances are shorter and therefore the transportation to the destination requires using less natural resources and doesn't often require flying. The results can be seen from the figure 8.

Do you prefer to travel inside Finland or abroad?

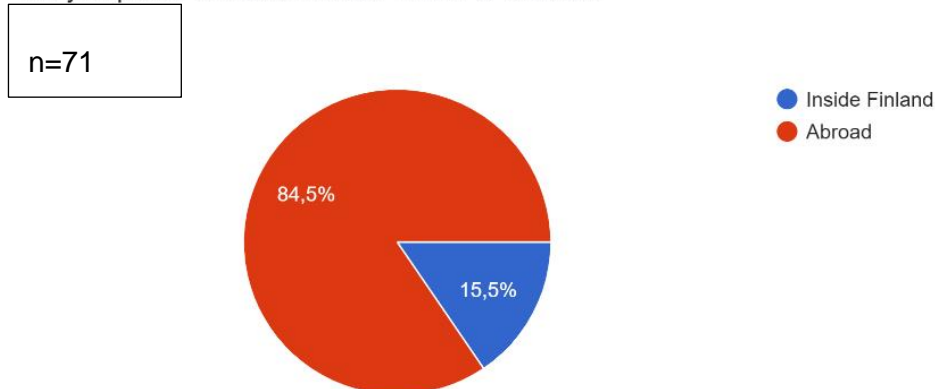


Figure 8. Domestic versus International Travel.

The next question was “Do you consider sustainability when you are choosing the transportation for your trip?” The majority of 69% of respondents answered that they do but other factors such as price or comfort come before it. 15,5% answered that they do even before other factors and the same amount, 15,5%, answered that they don’t consider sustainability at all. The results of this question were similar to the findings of study made by Vacationer in USA mentioned earlier in chapter 2.7 Other Consumer Research about Sustainability. Where the findings concluded that the consumers would consider sustainability, but only if it doesn’t inconvenience them. The results of the question can be seen from the figure 9.

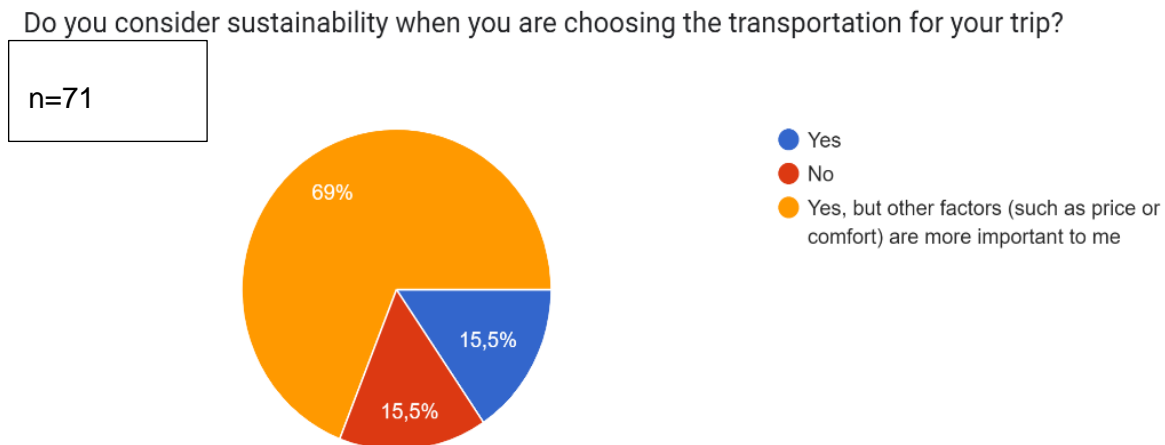


Figure 9. Sustainability Factors versus Other Factors.

The next question in the survey was “What kind of transportation do you use when travelling inside Finland?”. In this question the respondents could choose all the answers that apply to them. 90,1% of the respondents answered that they use train. 56,3% answered that they use their own car. 54,9% said they use bus when traveling inside Finland. The least used of these options was traveling by plane; this was the answer of 11,3% of the respondents. As mentioned in the theory section, trains and buses are part of public transport and are considered as more sustainable ways to travel than a car or a plane. (Institute Of Sustainability Studies, 2023) Therefore, it can be said that according to the answers, young adults mostly choose sustainable transportation for their domestic travel in Finland. The answers can be seen in the form of a diagram in the figure 10.

What kind of transportation do you use when traveling inside Finland? Choose all that apply to you.

71 vastausta

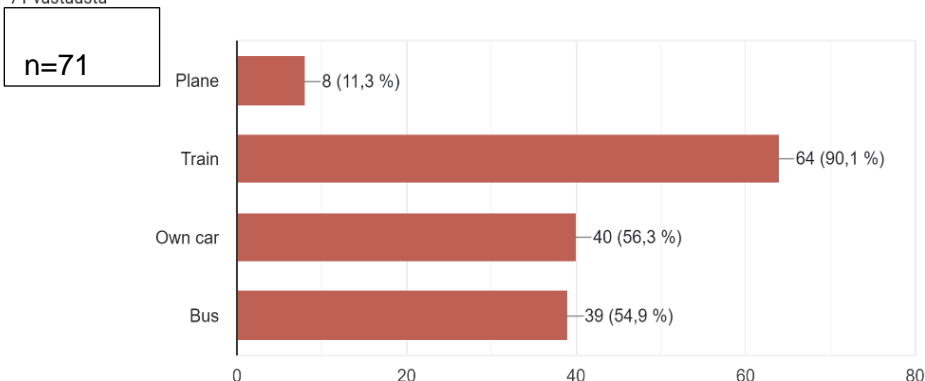


Figure 10. Transportation types used when travelling inside Finland.

The next question was “What kind of transportation do you use when traveling to a country abroad? Choose all that apply.” 97,2% of the respondents said they use plane when traveling abroad. 63,4% answered that they use a ship or a boat. 28,2% answered that they use train and 16,9% said they use bus when traveling abroad. Only 9,9% of the respondents said they use their own car. The plane, as most popular way to travel abroad, might not be considered to be the most sustainable, but many destinations are easiest to reach by flying. (Institute Of Sustainability Studies, 2023) There are only limited destinations that are easily accessible from Finland with public transport or even by using your own car. However, ship was the second most popular way to transport when travelling. Travelling by ship often means going on a cruise and it can be an experience itself and not a mean to travel to the destination. (Gross, Klemmer. 2014.) The ship is, however, considered to be a more sustainable way of transportation than a plane. (Institute Of Sustainability Studies, 2023) The results for this question can be seen in the form of a diagram in the figure 11.

What kind of transportation do you use when traveling to a country abroad? Choose all that apply to you.

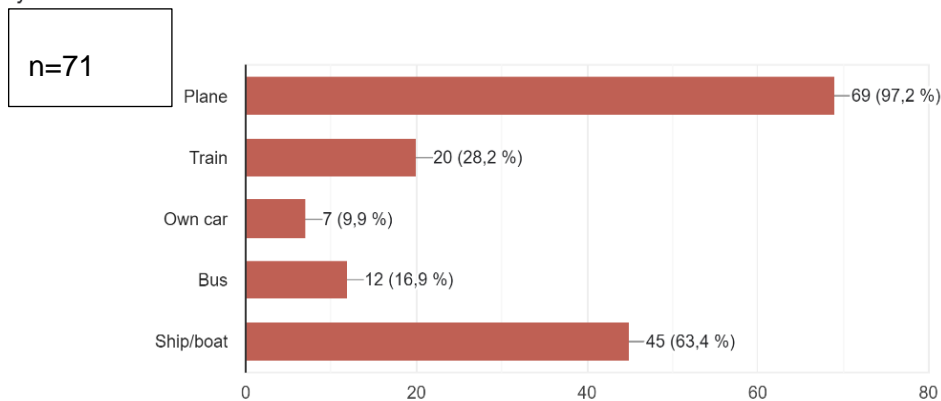


Figure 11. Transportation types used when traveling abroad.

The next question was “What are the reasons for choosing that transportation?”. A majority of 67,6% of the respondents answered that their main reason for choosing transportation is practicality and/or comfort. 62% of the respondents said that price affects their decision making mostly considering transportation. 16,9% answered that sustainability is their reason for choosing transportation. As the most popular transportation methods were a plane and a ship, it could be suggested that the sample group might also find these ways of transportation most comfortable and practical. Main consideration for sustainability factors was the lowest as was in the question and other factors were proven out to be more important. The results can be seen from the figure 12.

What are the reasons for choosing that transportation?

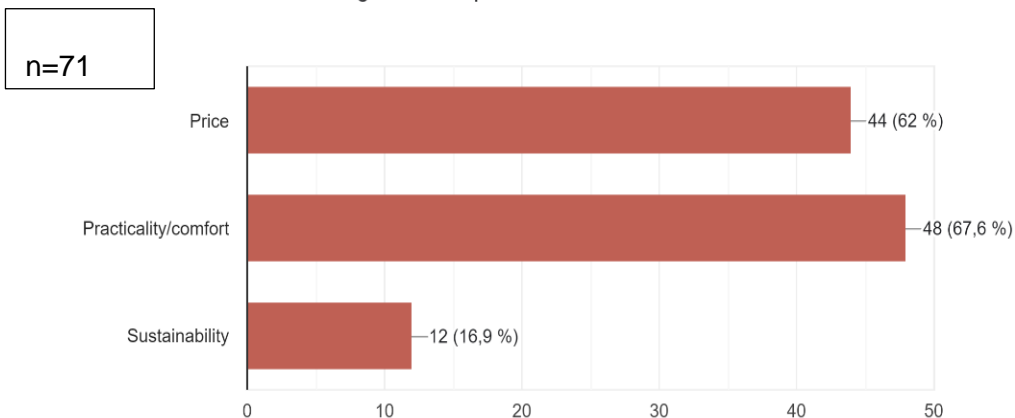


Figure 12. Reasons for choosing transportation.

The following question was “What transportation do you mostly use within your destination?”. Most of the respondents (40,8%) answered that they mostly choose to use walking or biking as their transportation method. 36,6% of the respondents answered that they mostly use public transportation within their destination. 21,1% said they use mostly taxi and only 1,5% said they are used to renting a car in the destination.

The most popular ways of transportation inside the destination; walking, biking and public transportation, are more sustainable compared to the other options given in the question of using taxis or renting their own car. (Institute Of Sustainability Studies, 2023) Based on the answers, the young adults use sustainable ways of transporting inside their travel destinations. However, it is not clear whether the reason for this is not necessarily sustainability factors, but it is still an indicator that most of the travel destinations make it possible to use sustainable ways of transporting. (United Nations 2021) The answers can be seen from the figure 13.

What transportation do you mostly use within your destination?

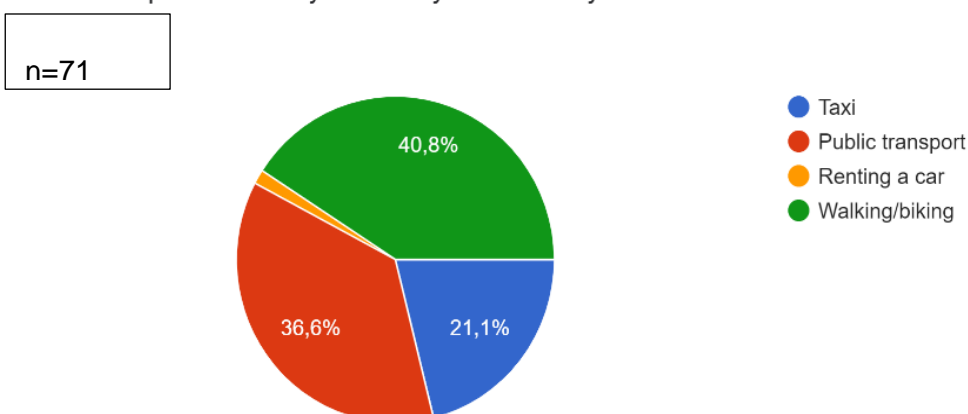


Figure 13. Transportation types used in the destination.

The next question was “Do you usually visit more than one destination during the same trip?”. More than half of the respondents (50,7%) answered that sometimes they have visited more than one destination during the same trip, or they want to do so. 21,1% said they prefer to stay in the same place. 16,9% said they prefer to visit at least two places during the same trip. 11,3% said that they want to stay in the same place.

The choice to ask this question was based on the theory that visiting many destinations during the same, maybe longer travel period, is often more sustainable than visiting the destinations on separate trips and maybe taking separate flights to the destinations. This is highlighted especially when

the destination is further away. (Zamparini. 2021.) The answers can be seen in the figure 14.

Do you usually visit more than one destination during the same trip?

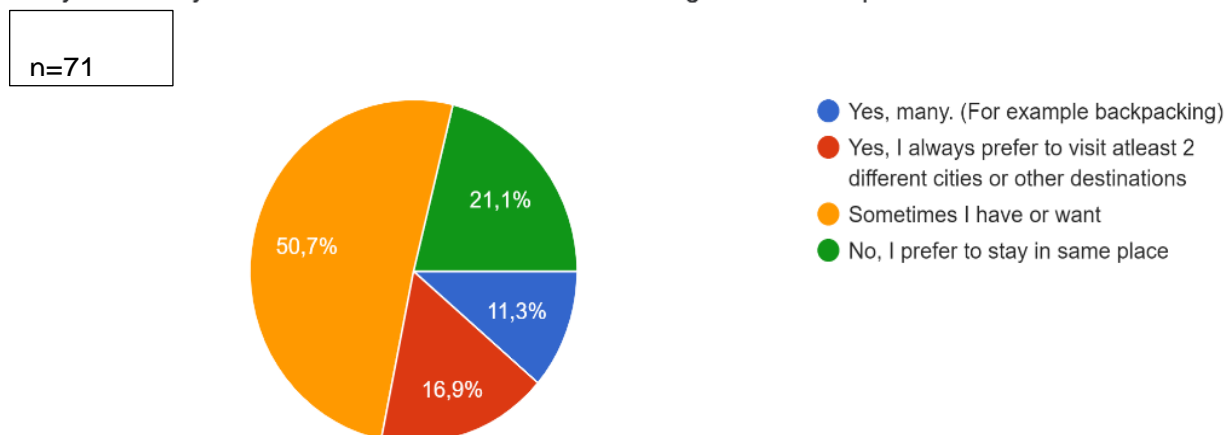


Figure 14. The amount of destinations visited during one trip.

The following question was the only open-ended question of the survey. The question was: “If you answered yes to the previous question, what are the reasons for visiting many destinations during the same trip?” The answers were divided into the following categories: seeing more than one place at once, sustainability factors, price, convenience and getting to know the whole area better. The most popular reason was to get more of the destination during the same trip. It was also mentioned that by visiting many destinations by using for example train and therefore don’t have to fly from Finland as it is difficult to use other transportation than flights to travel to many destinations due to Finland’s location. Some, even though the minority also mentioned sustainability reasons as not having to fly to the destinations separately. As an example, one of the answers said the following: “To see more places at once, so I don’t have to fly from Finland so often. It’s easier to see more places at once.” The rest of the answers to this question can be found in the appendix.

The last question of the survey was “What motivates you to travel? Choose all that apply.” 90,1% of the respondents said their motivation to travel is to see new places and get to know the local culture. 85,9% said that their motivation to travel is to have fun and relax. 28,2% answered that visiting family and friends motivates them to travel. 19,7% of the respondents answered that they want to travel for an event or a hobby. The answers are also seen in the form of a diagram in the figure 15.

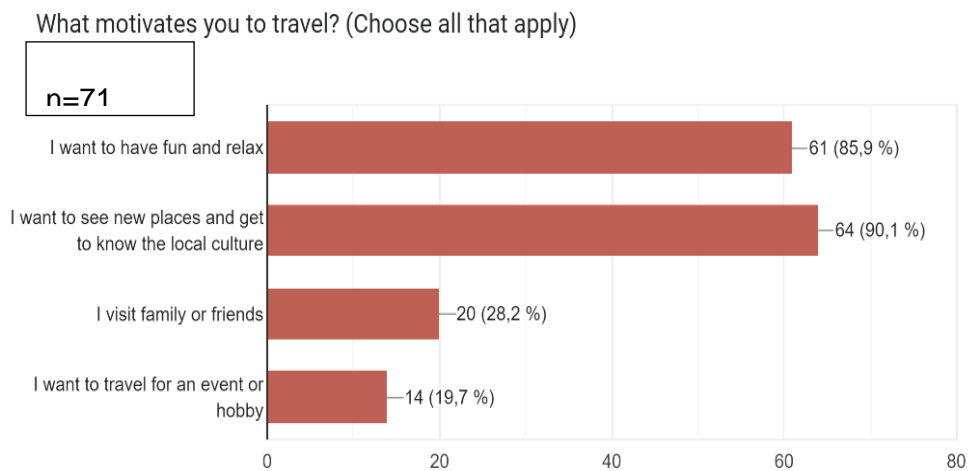


Figure 15. Travel motivation.

The results of the research indicate that the Finnish young adults care about sustainability and generally do consider it at some point when making travel decisions. However, when it comes to choosing transportation methods of travelling abroad, other factors come before it. On the other hand, inside of the destination they choose mostly sustainable transportation, but it is not clear whether the choice is due to sustainability factors. The majority of the respondents also were interested in or had visited before 2 or more destinations during the same trip, which is also a more sustainable way to travel. Many respondents also mentioned sustainability reasons as a reason for this.

5 Conclusion and evaluation of the process

To conclude the results of the research, indicate that Finnish young adults (18–26-year-olds) rather travel abroad and use mostly plane as their way of transportation. The young adults are mostly interested in sustainability and do consider it when making decisions. However, other factors such as price, convenience or comfort were still more important for most of the respondents. However, when travelling domestically, train was reported to be the most used transportation method. Inside the destination however, the most popular ways of transportation were walking, biking and public transportation.

When analyzing the results of the research it is good to notice that Finland's location north from the Baltic Sea makes it harder to travel abroad using public transport. Many of the respondents reported that they will rather visit more than one destination during the same trip; that way it is not needed to fly several times from Finland. When asking the reasons for this convenience due to Finland's location was also mentioned. Other most used reasons were that the respondents wanted to see more places from the destination during the same trip, found it more sustainable and money-saving by avoiding flying there separately. It was also found that the sample's travel motivations were that they want to travel to have fun and relax or they want to see new places and get to know the local culture.

It can be deduced that sustainability holds an important role in the young peoples' consumer behavior when it comes to travelling, but the other factors still come before it. The results that we got from our research support a similar study made by Vacationer in 2021 in the US.

This could be useful information, for example for travel companies whose target market is young adults and that are trying to create more sustainable travel services and products and to build their company to be more sustainable in the future. However, when using the results or generalizing them it should be kept in mind that there are some possible limitations of the study; the sample size was smaller than expected and the answers were mostly from women.

The research process began for interest to the topic of sustainability and tourism. As transportation is an essential part of the tourism industry, without transportation it is not possible to travel. We chose to focus on that. Like all the research processes, it started from collecting a good theory basis for the study and getting to know the topic in many different ways and perspectives.

After collecting a theoretical base, it was enabled to choose a research method that suited the needs that the authors had for the research. Choosing a quantitative method by doing an online survey was the most suitable choice for this as it allowed an easy way for data collection through

the authors' own social media platforms and to reach the target audience. However, the goal of getting 100 answers to the survey was not quite met, the answers were similar to each other and can be therefore seen as reliable. However, the answers were mostly from the same age group and the majority of the respondents were female. This could be explained by the data collection method through the authors' personal social media channels, and it can be a possible limitation to the study. However, if the research would be duplicated and similar results would be gotten with more diverse sample group, it would confirm that the research is reliable.

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Zamparini. 2021. Sustainable Transport and Tourism Destinations.

Appendix

Appendix 1

price and i prefer to make longer trips to see more places.

To see more places at once, so I don't have to fly from Finland so often. It's easier to see more places at once.

I want to see as much places in the same visit

It's more sustainable to take a train from one country to another than taking multiple trips by plane.

Saving money, especially if the other destinations are close by to each others.

Mahollisimman paljon samalla reissulla

I get to see and experience more.

Getting to know the country / area better

Why not see more, it's also more sustainable to see many places at once rather than going back and forth

I want to see as much different places than possible.

Pääsee näkemään monta kohdetta yhdellä kertaa.

More ecologic and i want to see More destinations

It's practical to visit more than 1 destination, if you fly to europe etc. It's cheaper to visit another city or country for example by train or bus which is more sustainable as well.

Its cheap traveling inside a country compared to the price of the flights it took to go there. Easier to experience more for less cost.

To see as much as possible in one area

I want to see as many places as possible in a short period of time.

For my own enjoyment and the want to explore

I want to see more at once

time- and cost-effective way to see different places,

if travelling far away then I would like to see few places at the same time but usually I go just in one destination because it is cheaper

To see different places as much as possible

Reissaisin suomestakin mielusti junalla kaikkialle, mutta suomesta on lähes mahdoton päästä junalla mitenkään, joten joutuu ottamaan lennon. Euroopassa yleisesti on todella helppoa käyttää junia ja busseja, sen takia käyn paljon reppureissuilla ja reissaan maasta maahan junalla tms. Jos menen esimerkiksi berliinistä prahaan, otan bussin. Mutta jollain reppureissuilla junamatka kestäisi 10 h ja lentäen

pääsee tunnissa, silloin valitsen lennon. Pysin käyttämään euroopassa matkustaessa julkisia mutta myös aika sekä hinta ratkaisee.

I rather see many places and travel inside the country more sustainable way than to fly multiple times.

Long trip so I have time to see other cities and I get bored if I stay too long in one city.

Budget friendly to see many places at once

SE-Asia

I want to see as many places as possible

See more on one trip

It's convenient and then there's no need to fly to those destinations some other time, instead you can use public transportation e.g. train.