

British tourists in Rovaniemi region:

Market Research on attracting overnight tourists from UK

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<p>Rovaniemi, located over 800km north from Helsinki, is the biggest city in the Finnish Lapland. The city has been named “The Official Hometown of Santa Claus”. The aim of this study is to gain more knowledge, whether there is a market for longer tours to Rovaniemi from the United Kingdom. As well as, what could Rovaniemi do to attract more British tourists, especially during the Christmas season.</p> <p>The theoretical scope provides information about Rovaniemi as a tourist destination, as well as the history and current situation of Christmas as a tourism product. British tourism behaviour includes the definition of customer behaviour in general, customer behaviour in tourism and reasons and possibilities of Finnish Lapland as a destination for British tourists.</p> <p>The market research is the main method of the thesis while netnography was chosen as the research strategy. The chapters include information of both, method and research strategy, and about the progress in general.</p> <p>Results were not as conclusive as wished for, due to various problems while researching online and with no willingness from the Thomson Holidays or TripAdvisor users to response to sent emails and messages. The results were gathered using netnography in TripAdvisor and researching the Thomson Holidays pages and feedbacks.</p>	
<p>Keywords Rovaniemi, Lapland, Tourism, British, Market Research</p>	

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1 Introduction

The thesis will focus on one day trips that Brits make to Rovaniemi region and research whether there would be markets for longer tours.

No previous studies has been written about this exact group of tourists, but the subject is of current interest, as Rovaniemi focuses on making the tourists stay longer (VisitRovaniemi 2006, 56). Getting the British day tourists choose a weekend or a week-long stay instead, would be a step in the right direction in achieving the goal, which Rovaniemi has set in the the travel strategy of the region.

The commissioner of the thesis is Rovaniemi Tourism and Marketing Ltd, which was founded in 2007. It is a tourism marketing company, which produces the image marketing, the media- and PR-services, the tourism information as well as the event marketing for Rovaniemi and Ranua regions.

Rovaniemi Tourism and Marketing Ltd has 7 permanent employees and two to three seasonal employees during the summer and Christmas seasons. The main object of Rovaniemi Tourism and Marketing Ltd is to strengthen the brand of Rovaniemi as the hometown of Santa Claus, to market Rovaniemi internationally as a tourist destination, to improve the coverage of Rovaniemi in the international media as well as to sell and produce tourism products and services.

The main values or Rovaniemi Tourism and Marketing Ltd are to keep the authentic story of Christmas and Santa Claus alive, while sharing and caring about each other, welcoming surprises and creativity and keeping Christmas all around, no matter the season.

The mission of the company is for Rovaniemi to become the World's leading winter and Christmas destination, including both domestic and foreign tourists. To attain that Rovaniemi Tourism and Marketing Ltd makes sure that the Christmas brand-value grows and the brand position is reached. (VisitRovaniemi.)

The objective and problem of the thesis is to study the one day trips to Rovaniemi region, from Great Britain around Christmas and to find out how big of a group these tourists are and whether there is a market for longer tours. The main problem during the writing process could be caused by the difficulty of contacting people who have been on day tours.

First the thesis goes through tourism in Rovaniemi followed by British tourism behaviour, focusing on the consumer behaviour. After the basic information of the location and the tourists, it moves on to the basics of Market research and netnography and how those are used to the advantage of the thesis. Subsequently comes methods as well as summary of the research.

The goal of the thesis include finding out what are the main attractions of the tours and what Rovaniemi region could do, in order to gain more overnight stays, if the market area is somewhere else.

2 Tourism in Rovaniemi

2.1 Tourism in Rovaniemi

Rovaniemi, the capital of Lapland province in Finland and the official hometown of Santa Claus, is located in the Arctic Circle, 800 kilometres north from Helsinki (VisitRovaniemi). The city is a home to over 65 000 people, including thousands of university students, and the biggest European city by area (Rovaniemi.fi).



Rovaniemi - location at Arctic Circle, Lapland, Finland (VisitRovaniemi).

The tourist flow to Rovaniemi has been stable during the past few years, with yearly estimates being approximately 500 000 tourists. The overnight stays in the area grew by 0,9% in 2012 from 2011, with the busiest times still being December, summer and the winter months after Christmas. (VisitRovaniemi 2012.) At the same time, the number of charter flights to Rovaniemi has remained unchanged with approximately 115

flights, most coming from Great Britain, during November and December (Ruokangas 2013).

Rovaniemi has three distinct tourism seasons, as mentioned earlier – Christmas, summer and the winter season excluding Christmas time. Each season is marketed differently and for different visitors. While Christmas time attracts mostly British families and is marketed in Great Britain and Russia, the rest of the winter season attracts South European couples and groups aged between 30 and 60 years. Summer, on the other hand, attracts domestic visitors and 30 to 70 years old tourists from Central Europe. (VisitRovaniemi 2006, 9.)



Location of Ranua zoo (ranuazoo.com - kartta)

While the tourist demographic changes depending on the season, the main four attractions stay the same, three of which are in a short distance from the town center. These are The Santa Claus Village, opened back in 1985 and located right on the Arctic Circle, Santapark located next to The Santa Claus Village and Arktikum located in the city (VisitRovaniemi 2006, 8). The only attraction farther away from the city of Rovaniemi

is the Ranua zoo, located 82 kilometres and approximately one hour drive away (Ranua zoo).



Joulupukin Pajakylä/Santa Claus Village (Santaclausvillage.info)

All four attractions draw thousands of tourists yearly; the Ranua zoo attracted over 150 000 visitors in 2012 with the birth of a polar bear cub Ranzo, while Santa Claus Village has approximately 400 000 visitors yearly. (VisitRovaniemi 2006.) SantaPark, a theme park located 50 meters under the ground in a cave, attracts approximately 55 000 visitors yearly while Arktikum, a science center and museum, has 75 000 visits. Rovaniemi also counts Ounasvaara as one of its popular destinations, with over 400 000 yearly visits according to just the chargeable activities. But as most visitors are locals, Ounasvaara is not marketed as much as the four aforementioned attractions (VisitRovaniemi 2006).

2.2 Christmas as a tourism product

In 2012 the CNN published a list of the very best Christmas destinations. To no surprise, Finnish Lapland and Rovaniemi were at the top of the list. Lonely Planet has mentioned Rovaniemi as well, as the best winter destination in Europe. (Lapin Kansa 2012.) Reaching such honour has taken time and its roots are in 1984 with the very first Concorde flight to Rovaniemi (Hakulinen, Komppula & Saraniemi 2007, 10).

Between the start of Concorde flights and the end of those, in May of 2000, Concorde planes brought over 9000 tourists, mostly Brits, to Lapland and created the base for the current charter flights and the current Christmas product. The actual Christmas

product is built around Santa Claus, in which meeting Santa is the highlight of the tour, while all the other activities lead up to the meeting. (Hakulinen et al. 2007, 10-12.)



Santa Claus (Santaclausvillage.info)

For example, the one day tour to Rovaniemi, which Thomson Holidays offers, “Santa's Secret Grotto Day Trip”, includes elf school, biscuit decorating, a visit to Santa’s Post Office, sleigh rides with huskies and reindeers as well as many other short activities, all which lead up to the meeting with Santa Claus in his grotto (Thomson). These tours focus on the Christmas time, from November to January, mostly to the time before Christmas and can last from a day to over a week (Hakulinen et al. 2007, 11).

The actual tourism to Rovaniemi started in the 50s, at the Arctic Circle, with Eleanor Roosevelt’s visit to the region, but it took over 30 years for the Christmas tourism to start up. Some small German tourist groups visited Lapland in the 1970s but the promotion of Lapland as a destination in Great Britain started in 1981 with a children’s writing competition. The six winners were awarded with a trip to Lapland to meet up with Santa Claus. Afterwards, in 1982 and 1983, Lapland was starting to be marketed in the British television. (Hakulinen et al. 2007, 25.)

Marketing Santa Claus as a tourism product started in the early 80s by Finnish Tourism Board and he soon became the main figure of Finnish Christmas tourism. Nowadays, most foreigners recognize Finland as the home country of Santa Claus, and associate Rovaniemi as his hometown. After all, his village is located in the Arctic Circle, outside

of Rovaniemi and the official home place of Santa Claus, Korvatunturi, is farther away and no tourists are taken there.

The reason for marketing Santa Claus was to make Lapland unique and exotic. While it has its own nature and culture, the region does resemble other sub-arctic areas, especially the northern parts of the neighbouring Sweden, Norway and Russia. (Lavia 2006.)

The first Concorde charter flight to Rovaniemi arrived on Christmas day in 1984 bringing adult Brits to celebrate Christmas. These lonely adults normally spent Christmas on their own, so a day trip offered them a different Christmas experience. However, the tour did not go as planned, as the bus broke down, it was rainy and there was no snow on the ground. Despite of all this, the very first Christmas trip included a sleigh ride with reindeers, snowmobile driving and a Finnish Christmas dinner followed by a visit from Santa Claus.

The passengers of the first charter flights were adults and elderly but as some of the charters were flown to the area a week before Christmas from 1987 forward, the tours gained more popularity with families with children. Despite the fact that the tours were expensive and marketed for lonely adults, the charter flights had approximately 25 children in each trip from the beginning.

In the 1990s the tours continued by two agencies: Goodwood Travel, which also offered the very first Concorde day trip to Rovaniemi, and Superlative Travel. Other agencies offered similar tours, but due to the lack of reservations, the tours never succeeded. With nearly 10 years of experience in offering day tours to Rovaniemi, Goodwood Travel started to offer longer tours to Lapland in 1992, from one to three days.

After 16 years of success, the new millennia brought a huge shock to Goodwood Travel. The 2000 Concorde crash, that killed 113 people, forced Goodwood to cut the expenses, as Concorde planes were grounded right after the crash and retired in 2003. Due to the loss of the luxurious Concorde tours, which the agency was known for, and Goodwood not being able to recover from the loss, it closed down.

From the new millennia forward, Christmas as a tourism product has globalized and the competition has grown from the 90s near monopoly. With the globalization, the majority of Christmas tourists are still from Great Britain, but the numbers of Japanese tourists are growing. The number of Russian tourists were growing alongside with their Japanese counterparts, until 2014, due to the crash of ruble. The overall border crossing made by the Russian decreased in December of 2014 by 33 percent from December of 2013, in the northern Finland number of the crossings were nearly halved. (Leisti, T. 2015).

The main reason for the trip, the meeting of Santa Claus, has also changed from him coming to the tourists, but the tourists look for him in the nature of Lapland. The advertising of the tours has changed drastically. In the past, one of the main reasons was to be able to fly with the luxurious Concorde, nowadays the main points are Santa Claus, the atmosphere of Lapland, snow and last, but definitely not the least, the northern lights. (Hakulinen et al. 2007.)

The possibility of seeing the northern lights has been the highest in 11 years during the winter season of 2013-2014. The season focused on the northern light experience, as both husky and snowmobile safaris offered northern lights tours and Arktikum had a northern lights exhibition. (SEK.) This tourist flow of travellers, who are after the northern lights, started in a previous year with the Japanese tourists.

British clearly favour festive holidays, especially in Lapland, with the possibility to see northern lights, meet Santa Claus and even try cross-country and downhill skiing. Usually these tours are popular with the families, but in 2013 the growing demographic was couples (ABTA 2013.) Even though the numbers of British tourists are growing all over Lapland, the main tourist group in Rovaniemi consists of Russians (Ruokamo 2013).

Santa Claus is everywhere in Rovaniemi. The Rovaniemi airport is “the official airport of Santa Claus”, the city has both Santa Park as well as the Santa Claus Village, the lo-

cal gym is called Santa Sport, the football team is FC Santa Claus and last, but not least, the overnight stay can be done by sleeping in hotel Santa Claus or hotel Rudolf. (Bosworth 2012.)



Football team of Rovaniemi, FC Santa Claus. (Brillianttrips, 2009)

Nowadays there are two travel agencies offering day tours to Lapland, Thomson Holidays and Canterbury Travel. Canterbury Travel markets itself as “the UK’s leading tour operator for holidays to Lapland” and offers different tours depending on the length of the stay, from day trips to 5 days long tours. (Canterbury Travel.) Thomson Holidays on the other hand has many destinations and Lapland tours are just a small fraction of the possible options. And just like Canterbury Travel, Thomson Holidays offers tours from one to five days, with the exception that they have two different day tours, compared to only one that Canterbury offers. (Thomson Holidays.)

Canterbury Travel offers a tour to Enontekiö, which makes Thomson Holiday the only one offering tours to Rovaniemi. However, Canterbury Travel claims that it has a head start to the other companies with its 35 years of operation, as well as the highest quality and popularity, when it comes to tours to Lapland. The one day trip, which Canterbury Travel offers, is somewhat fractured, as the tourist can choose what to do – husky or reindeer sleigh rides, snowmobiling, tobogganing, visiting the snow castle, eating lunch, which is available throughout the day, and in the end, visiting the man himself, Santa

Claus. Canterbury Travel promises one on one time with Santa Claus and a present for each child. (Canterbury Travel.)

Thomson Holidays offers two day trips – “Santa’s Secret Grotto Day Trip”, the only day trip to Rovaniemi, which was already mentioned, and “Search for Santa Day Trip”, which takes place in Kittilä. Just like every other day trip to Lapland “Search for Santa” offers husky and reindeer sleigh rides and snowmobiling, with the exception of offering Arctic storytelling, an exclusive for only this tour. The tour ends with meeting Santa Claus and elves helping the tourists to thank him in Finnish. (Thomson Holidays.)

3 British Tourism Behaviour

3.1 Consumer behaviour

“The term consumer behaviour is defined as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs.” (Schiffman & Kanuk 2007, 3). The products include everything from cars to clothes and services that cannot be concretely touched, such as accommodation during travels. Consumer behaviour focuses on how, when, where and why people spend their resources on purchasing these certain products.

With the constant development of online shopping, from purchasing groceries to bidding on something in online auctions, the consumer behaviour continues to change at the same pace. In the past, people had to walk to the stores to look for the products they needed, ranging from everyday groceries to sport equipment, nowadays one can go and buy everything one might need with just a couple of clicks from various online stores. There is no longer a need to travel after a certain product, which has been sold out in local stores. Even the possibility of selling one’s possession, as well as purchasing school courses, has become available online. Everyone is now a consumer. People make a choice to purchase certain products daily, be it groceries, luxuries or vacations, and have an effect on supply and demand

Consumers can be divided into two groups; personal and organizational consumers. The personal consumers, also known as end users or ultimate consumers, are the ones who purchase the product for the final use, eat the food and wear the clothes. Organizational consumers include profit and non-profit organizations that have to purchase products in order to run the businesses. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2007, 3-4.)

Consumer behaviour is strictly tied to the marketing concept. Marketing concept focuses on the needs of the customers, who should always be the focus of the company. There needs to be a demand for a certain product before the marketer starts producing and selling the demanded product. Marketing concept has three approaches; the production concept, the product concept and the selling concept. The production concept

focuses on the mind-set that consumers purchase what is available now, instead of waiting until an expensive product is affordable. A fitting example is the current smartphone market. People prefer acquiring smartphones that are available, rather than wait for the ones that are coming in the near future. Continuing with the smartphones, customers want the product with the most features and of the highest quality. This is clearly seen in the aforementioned markets, with customers purchasing the newest model, even if there is no need. This is known as the product concept; the company strives to constantly improve the product in order to keep the consumers buying their products. The third and last concept is selling; it is marketer's main focus to sell the readymade product. It is believed that consumers are unlikely to purchase the available product unless there is persuasion. The problem with this approach is that, if consumers are forced to buy a product that they do not need or are not pleased with, they will not make another purchase. While marketing concept focuses on the needs of customers, selling concept focuses on the sellers. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2007.)

When implementing the concepts, marketers must keep in mind the market segmentation. Not all consumers are alike and people demand various products depending on their age, gender and culture. The only needs every market segment has are food and water, the necessities for life. When companies focus on the customer segment they want to have, for example families with children, the marketers focus on fulfilling the needs of this certain segment. This includes what customers want to and need to purchase, as well as location of the particular company, which offers the wanted product. For families with children the location could be next to a playground or a neighbourhood where these families live, instead of the areas where businesses and single customers are located. This is known as geographic segmentation.

Other important segmentations are psychographic, behavioural and demographic. Psychographic segmentation concentrates on the starting points of behaviour, such as personality, values, opinions, attitudes and interests and divides customer based on those areas. Behavioural segmentation focuses on the customers' behaviour, such as hobbies, eating habits and lifestyle in general. Last but not least, the demographic segmentation divides the customers according to their age, social standing and income.

While market segmentation is important, the companies have to keep in mind that customers change constantly by aging, moving and changing their preferences. For example, a family with children will not have the same needs or preferences ten years from now. This is why companies improve and evolve their products constantly, unless those are focused on a certain market, for example, baby powder, nappies or coffins, which are needed and bought even after losing former customers. Companies that have a wide segmentation, for example smartphones producers, need to improve the products constantly, as there is no certainty of new customers when the former ones are lost.

When there is a competition between products, such as in the smartphone markets, there is competition between Apple and Samsung, both of these companies are required to have their unique selling points; what the product of the company can do but the competitor's cannot. These points can be differences, for instance, the image of the product or a clear difference in usage of the product. (Blythe 2013.)

3.2 Consumer behaviour in tourism

Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) describe tourism as “a short-term movement of people to places some distance from their normal place of residence to indulge in pleasurable activities. It may also involve travel for business purposes.”

While business tourism focuses on work: attending meetings, seminars and training courses, and possibly include some leisure time after the work is done, leisure tourism cannot be described as clearly. Every leisure tourist has personal reasons to travel and pay for the trip and each kind of tourism has its consumers and market segments. These tourism forms could be hedonistic tourism, health tourism, visiting friends and family or even religious tourism, to name a few, and all could be categorized under leisure tourism. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007.)

While consumer behaviour focuses on the big picture, it can also focus on certain products, such as tourism. Consumer behaviour in tourism changes constantly with the

current situations all over the world. People do not tend to travel to problematic areas, for example, to Crimea, with its conflict between Ukraine and Russia, and Brazil and Turkey, where demonstrations are taking place. The customer behaviour changed drastically after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and the tsunamis in Asia in 2004 and 2011. People do not travel or offer tours to areas with possible threats, in order to preserve the security and health of the consumer, in this case a tourist. Companies cannot do anything to the natural disasters, but consumers can be instructed not to travel to areas with high risk or terrorism, as tourists have become popular targets for terrorist attacks and kidnapping. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, ix.) However, consumers tend to forget the disasters and terrorist attacks fast when cheap flights and accommodation is offered. For example, Japan suffered a strong earthquake and a tsunami in 2011 and the tourism has started to rise again, faster than expected due to the cheap prices (Boldt 2013).

The employees in tourism have to be customer oriented and have to be able to handle all sorts of situations. These situations vary from helping the customers find a market or a restaurant at the location, to warning and contacting all tourists in case of a disaster or a man-caused crisis. Responding to feedbacks is no different and employees should be able to respond without cracking no matter the feedback. Some well-known and widely spread complaints, which are available online are “No one told us there would be fish in the sea. The children were startled...”, “It took us nine hours to fly to Jamaica from England – it only took the Americans three hours...” and a tourist to Spain wrote a following feedback after the trip “There were too many Spanish people. The receptionist spoke Spanish. The food is Spanish. Too many foreigners.” (Blythe 2013.)

With tourism, the companies must focus on the market segment: what to sell, to whom and when. Families with children are more likely to have week-long trips to Southern Europe in the summer, than a weekend trip to a big European city in the middle of the winter. However, not every family with children fits this mould and companies should focus on consumer behaviour research, which is still at an early stage, being more difficult to carry out. Consumers do not purchase plane tickets because those are a necessi-

ty, but for the sake of gaining new experiences and enjoying themselves. Buying a week-long trip around a certain country, or a week-long stay at a resort, is a large spend for each and every one of the customers. The purchase is influenced by the need to get away from work, price, as well as the overall image of the product and the company, in this case airline, hotel and destination. This also takes time and is more emotional than purchasing an everyday item from a local store. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007.)

Travel agencies should keep in mind that the beginning of all behaviour lies in dissatisfaction. If there is nothing to complain about, people are satisfied and will not try to change or purchase anything different. This is easily put into use in tourism – if people are not happy staying at home during their vacation, they become dissatisfied and want to travel. The more people purchase a certain product or service, the more likely it is to satisfy the needs of the customers. However, one clearly shown dissatisfaction about the product, for instance, a bad rating online in a well-known site or blog, can affect the fellow customers. A bad rating on a package tour, or a clear complaint on a small hotel, can affect the customers more than the positive ratings and marketing. Accidents, such as the incidents with Malaysia Airlines MH370 and MH17, especially within a small time frame, take a toll on the companies.

As people no longer need to worry about survival or security needs in the Western countries, they are more likely to focus on enjoyment and luxury. People have more money to spend and can easily purchase luxury items if they so please. For example, in a small country like Singapore, with only 5.2 million inhabitants, every sixth household has more than \$ 1 million US of disposable wealth. The Singaporean Airline is one of the few national airlines from small countries that has not been affected by the hard airline business and low-cost carriers taking their customers. It was the first airline to order A380 Airbus, a super jumbo for 850 passengers. Instead of using all this space to carry passengers in economy, business or first class, they created a fourth class, “a class above first”. This luxury class offers a personal suite for the passenger with an arm-chair, a full-length bed, a telephone, a 23-inch LCD TV and a 110-volt power supply which accepts most plugs. This luxury class costs over 12,000€. Of course, Singaporean Airline also has a competitor, Emirates, that offers on-board showers, a first-class

bar and a lounge in the upper deck as well as personal mini-bars in each suite on their A380. (Blythe 2013.)

3.3 United Kingdom and Brits in Finland

The United Kingdom is known as one of the most popular and visited countries in Europe. The country has nearly 30 million visitors each year, losing only to Italy, Spain and France, which are the main destinations of the Brits. Some of the reasons for the latest popularity of the country, are the wedding of Prince William in 2011, the birth of Prince George in July 2013 and Princess Charlotte in May 2015 as well as the Olympic Games of 2012 (RoyalCentral.co.uk 2015). The main attraction is still London, no matter the high prices, while the popularity of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is on the rise. (St. George 2014.)

Not only does the United Kingdom have a high inbound tourism, there is also a high outbound tourism and more potential as the time goes by with the, currently, 63 million Brits. Out of all the foreign overnight stays in Finland in 2012, 405 000, or 7%, were Brits. This was 4,2% more than the previous year and over half of the British visitors arrived to Finland for the first time. Most of the visitors are leisure tourists and come from the Greater London area. (Visit Finland 2013.)

Currently the trend for summer tours in Finland is on the rise and the most popular tours include cycling, hiking or both. Until now Finland has focused the marketing for Great Britain on the Christmas product. Finland is the country of Santa Claus and has northern lights during the winter. However, now that the focus is slowly changing to the summer time Brits request more nature related activity tours, from animal watching to photography and from hiking to berry-picking and mushrooming. The most popular nature related activity is animal watching, while cultural products that sell are music events, such as Sibelius Festival. Wellness packages with special themes are also requested, such as meditation and saunayoga. (MEK 2014.)

Some of the reasons why Finland has had a steady stream of British tourists is the fact that the Brits do not want to abandon their tendencies to travel and the package tours

are still the most popular way of travelling as everything is taken care of for the customers. The age group of 55-64 is also more interested in travelling as the economy seems to get better once again. This is clearly shown in the fact that the number of overnight stays by Brits grew by 12,5% in 2013.

The biggest growth has come from independent travellers and snow tours. The flight prices have been favourable and Great Britain did not have any big events in 2013, apart from the birth of Prince George. The tour operators have also added summer holidays to Finland and marketed those online. The interest has also risen thanks to the northern lights and short visits, which have been offered earlier. The travel agencies have more faith in Finland becoming a popular holiday destination and offer more tours than earlier.

Finland can expect the Christmas tourism to stay at the same level or to even grow, but the northern lights are and will stay as the main product at the peak of demand. The northern lights tours are offered, not only during winter, but also during autumn and spring. The problems lie in the insufficient flights to Finnish Lapland – from United Kingdom the customers are required to change planes at least once to reach Finnish Lapland. If this problem will not be solved, Finland might lose British tourists to Sweden or Norway that also offer aurora borealis tours and are closer with non-stop flights to Tromsø in Norway and one-stop flights to Luleå and Kiruna in Sweden (The Independent). With northern lights, our competitors are Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Canada, all of which, offer northern lights as their tourism product. In order to gain some tourists from the aforementioned competitors, the flight connections should be fixed and Finland should not only rely on the northern lights, but to develop other tourism products at the same time. (Balza 2013.)

Even though the closest competitors also have eight seasons, which Visit Rovaniemi mentions online, the competitors, nor Rovaniemi region, have not fully taken the chance with the fact. Most areas only have four seasons but in the Lapland area the Sami and Lapp people and their traditions add summer-autumn, autumn-winter, winter-spring and spring-summer to the list of the seasons, and have given special names

for those. Right now Rovaniemi and Lapland in general only take near to full advantage of four out of eight seasons – Christmas, Midnight sun, autumn leaf color and crusted snow. The eight seasons, from winter to Christmas, that Visit Rovaniemi lists are: Frosty winter, crusted snow, ice break-up, midnight sun, harvest, autumn leaf color, first snowfall and Christmas.

Frosty winter is set around late December and mid-February with the coldest time of the Finish winter and long dark days that grow longer slowly but surely. Crusted snow is from late February to early April with the longer days and the time when the Finns usually travel to Lapland to spend their winter and Easter holidays in the ski centers. The weather is still cold but the days are longer and sun makes the snow blanket sparkle like diamonds. The spring starts with the ice break-up between April and May. During that time the days and nights start to become shorter and daylight lasts until late evening and sun rises early in the morning and spring starts with the break-up and melting of the ice and return of the migrating birds. The season of midnight sun is known all over the world and all the destinations that offer the experience use it to their advantage – the days last for the whole period of 24 hours and people stay out on the terraces and walk around the towns and nature enjoying the warm summer nights. The harvest, which lasts from July to August, is the time of hunting, berry and mushroom picking and fishing while the days grow shorter and Lapland and people living in there prepare for the long dark winter. Autumn leaf color, or autumn colors change the landscape of green to bright colors of yellow, red and orange. While the leaves change colors, the nature also brings the first frosty nights and domestic tourists enjoy the beauty of the nature before winter arrives. First snowfall takes place around October and November as schools have started and domestic tourism goes down after the short Finnish summer. People stay indoors and watch from their windows when the very first snow, dubbed “black snow” falls yet melts away quickly before the heavy frosts and proper snow cover arrives. Last but not least comes Christmas with the majority of tourists to Lapland area, including the day trips mentioned in the thesis.

On the webpage of Visit Rovaniemi, there are some activities mentioned, briefly, that are held around the time of each season but it could be better marketed and more visible on the site. (VisitRovaniemi.)

VisitRovaniemi has conducted a SWOT analysis of the Rovaniemi region back in 2006. SWOT analysis is a tool of examining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a company or even a tourism destination. In the analysis, the threat of other Nordic countries and Canada as competitors is mentioned, as well as the climate change and the nature affected by tourism. Weaknesses are mostly related to accommodation and profitability of the destination while strengths rely on all the possibilities of Rovaniemi. The clear strengths are the reachability of the city, apart from the flight connections from the United Kingdom, being a city in the middle of wilderness and Christmas tourism. The possibilities lie in the aforementioned summer and wellbeing tours as well as in congress tourism to the area. (VisitRovaniemi 2006, 54.)

4 Methodology

4.1 Market Research

Market research, in a nutshell, means gathering and interpreting information concerning individuals or organizations, in order to gain insight or support decision making considering the target markets and customers. Market research should not be mixed up with marketing research, which focuses on marketing process, as market research focuses on finding out information about the markets, target markets and the potential customers and the customers' needs. These can help the companies whenever there is a need to open a new store in a new location, or to find out what could be done better, in order to appeal to a larger clientele.

No high-quality product or service can be developed without a certain level of market research but there are misunderstandings with the concept. There is a tendency to avoid the word “research” as people might have a negative connotation with it and consider that only highly educated people can conduct it. The fear and belief of receiving tons of useless data in unread written reports, which are not used in real-life situations world, are also a cause of possible misunderstandings. Most people have conducted some level of market research at some point of their life, by conducting an actual research concerning the need of something, or even providing what a customer needs.

Market Research has multiple purposes and methods of data collecting (Free Management Library). The two main types of market research are primary research and secondary research. Primary research means that the researchers collect new and personal data about the subject. It can be subdivided into two other research methods – quantitative and qualitative. In quantitative research the focus is on the numbers of results, for example, if a research is conducted via questionnaire, the focus is on the number of interviewees. Meanwhile, qualitative research focuses on the quality of the results, for instance, the number of the interviewees is not as important as getting a proper insight of what the interviewees think about the subject.

Secondary research involves already collected data that is reviewed and reused in order to summarize and make a conclusion without conducting a research. In researches where the subject has been analyzed many times, this approach might be useful without having to waste time on making yet another interview or survey. Primary research is important in newer researches with next to non-existing data. (My Market Research Methods 2011.)

The biggest misunderstandings while conducting a market research could be the following: the numbers of the responders matter, while the research method does not matter. The number of the responders does not matter but the diversity of the responders, for example interviewing only business tourists does not give a full picture of the popularity of the destination or what people look for when travelling there. The research method does matter as not everything can be researched the same way. For instance, if one wants to know what people in Nepal and Sweden think about Finland, the research methods and strategies would have to differ. While it could be possible to conduct a research online for Swedish people, in the case of Nepal, the researches would get a better diversity of responses if visiting the country and actually conducting face to face interviews with everyday people. (Roose 2013.)

4.2 Netnography

Netnography is a research strategy used online to research the behavior of the individuals on the Internet, especially in the social media. It is a faster, simpler, less expensive and more natural way of providing a consumer insight nowadays, compared to ethnography, which it is based on. In a nutshell, netnography is technologically structured ethnography. People no longer get the majority of the required information from family and friends, but from sites based on the subjects in question (Kozinets, R. 2010). (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets 2013.)

People use the Internet daily, whether it is to check the bank balance, messaging on Facebook or shopping on Amazon, and encounter advertisement and corporate webpages (Belk & Llama 2013). However, they turn to fellow consumers when asking for opinions on products instead of visiting the webpages as consumers are seen as

more reliable and objective. The Internet allows people to freely express themselves, as well as hold on to the anonymity it offers. This allows researchers to obtain and keep record of the natural interactions of thousands of people between and within various social groups, whenever and wherever they might be located. (Belk et al. 2013.)

People use unique language created for and from cyberculture and the job of a netnographer is to decode, translate and analyze it. However, the task does not end there as the researcher must also explore, listen, understand and compare the texts and communication online. (Belk & Llama 2013.)

As Kozinets (2010) mentioned, netnography research has six partially overlapping steps: research planning, entrée, data collection, interpretation, ensuring ethical standards, and research representation. Data collecting from the Internet gives researchers a wide range of raw and natural data, which is detailed, relevant and easily obtainable when one knows where to look. This is why marketers have started building social media pages for the marketable items as well as taking social media into an account when campaigning and advertising. (Kozinets, R. 2010)

Netnography has two types of data collection, manual data capture and analysis and automated data capture and analysis. Both are effective and only differ from each other by the way of data collection. The manual version involves saving files on a hard drive, while automated version includes a data analysis software.

The four possible online community types, from which a researcher can search data, are newsgroups, independent webpages, lists and chat rooms. Newsgroups tend to belong to one certain product, for example, a trip to Lapland. When newsgroups are consumer oriented, those may reach over 100,000 daily views. Independent webpages include independent blogs, where a user can search for information from the owner of the said page or a fellow consumer. The daily view counts depend from webpage to another but the most popular ones tend to have thousands of daily to weekly readers. Lists include all sorts of e-mailing lists from hobbies to various services and the readership depends on the page, from which the list is offered. The least popular for

netnography researchers are chat rooms, as the content varies from user to user and chat room to chat room, but it tends to rotate around fantasy-oriented, social, sexual and relational themes. Depending on the nature of the research, these chat rooms can be of use, but the user base changes from site to site.

Netnography also offers new insights on the lives of consumers, for example understanding the consumer choices, naturalistic views of brand meaning as well as discovering consumer innovations. (Belk et al. 2013.)

Netnography was the chosen research strategy as most of the research is done using the internet. The TripAdvisor comments have been collected and analysed using manual data capture. TripAdvisor could be considered as a mix between newsgroup, independent web page and a partial chat room as it has hundreds of thousands of visits daily, it does not have a clear focus on just one subject as it offers reviews and booking opportunities and gives the users the opportunity to chat and voice out their opinions and experiences for others.

5 Tour operators and Feedback

The methods used in the thesis are market research and netnography. Market research focuses on the Rovaniemi region and how to market it more successfully to gain overnight stays from Brits instead of having the tourists choose a day trip without overnight stay. Netnography is the research strategy that focuses on the customers, in this case, the British tourists that take the day trips, and collect data from the given replies and reviews. Reviews are collected from TripAdvisor.

5.1 Thomson Holidays and Canterbury Travels

Thomson Holidays is the only travel agency in Great Britain that currently offers one day tours to Rovaniemi, as well as to Kittilä, while Canterbury Travel offers tours to Enontekiö. Rovaniemi tour is one day trip built around the Santa Claus Village, while Kittilä option is offered as one day to even a week-long trip including sleigh rides, snowmobiling, storytelling and meeting Santa Claus.

Thomson Holidays has the schedules, itineraries and approximate prices for these tours on the internet page, which is where the most of the information is gathered. Canterbury Travel, on the other hand does not have clear itineraries but a description of the tour. Whatever cannot be found about the tours, will be asked via email from Thomson Holidays customer service. The first email, with questions concerning the popularity and rise or decline of the tours, resulted in a reply message with a link to the mother company of Thomson Holidays, the second email, which was toned down with questions of only the popularity and possible return of the tourists, resulted in a similar reply as the first one. The third and last one, copy of the second inquiry received the same copy and paste response as the earlier ones and I gave up on trying to contact the company.

5.2 TripAdvisor and contacting former tourists

TripAdvisor is the leading feedback site in the Internet and is counted as one of the most reliable. The site exist to bring opinions and feedbacks of tours, locations, hotels

and restaurants from one consumer to another. The site allows the former visitors to rate the hotel while giving feedback and advise whether one should go there with a family, as a couple, during a business travel or during honeymoon.

Even though people would expect a feedback site to be filled by complaints, most of the feedbacks are positive. The main problems on the site are hoteliers bribing tourist to write positive comments and fake comments written by the said hoteliers. From time to time the site also receives anonymous comments filled with malice towards a hotel, airline, restaurant or any location available in TripAdvisor. To counter these problems TripAdvisor reviews the comments, check the given emails and run the comments through a system that spots most faked reviews. (Blythe 2013.)

The customers of these package tours are hard to contact, which is why there is no questionnaire, but an email which was sent to some customers. Thomson Holidays has collected feedbacks of the package tours to Finnish Lapland from TripAdvisor and the customers were contacted this way. TripAdvisor offers a possibility to send a message to other users, which is how they were contacted. As there were next to no replies, the comments were taken into account.

When responses and comments were collected, those were browsed through and put together to see what Rovaniemi could offer or work on, in order to make the British tourists stay longer or return to the city.

5.3 Methods of the thesis

Market research was chosen as the method because the thesis work includes both primary and secondary research. The tourists that have already visited Finnish Lapland with Thomson Holidays were hard to contact, as only few have written feedbacks to TripAdvisor and even fewer response to messages sent on the site. The primary research is qualitative as the number of responses to the messages are low but have a clear pattern what the tourists think about the tours. Secondary research is used when looking through the already written feedbacks to TripAdvisor, which Thomson Holidays show on their site. These comments follow the same pattern with the responses, with more pleased than displeased visitors to both locations Thomson Holidays offers.

Thomson Holidays was chosen as the primary tour operator as its tours were easier to find online and majority of the feedbacks were from tourists that used Thomson. Only a couple had left feedbacks about Canterbury Travel and their Lapland tours.

6 Summary of the Research

6.1 Evaluating thesis project and personal learning

First of all, the thesis project took a lot longer than planned. The original deadline was in the middle of May, 2014 but due to the lack of motivation and change to a full-time job and work placement during and after May, thesis took the second place on the priority list. At first the subject was interesting but as I moved from place to place (Porvoo-Kimonkylä-Patong Beach-Kimonkylä-Jyväskylä), more and more time went by and I got the realization, that the subject is a lot harder than I first thought, I started postponing the finishing touches. The finishing of the thesis took place nearly a year after the original deadline, making the whole process of thesis writing last for one and a half years. After the work placement the thesis was the last thing left before graduation and with a full-time job on the way, there was a bigger need to get my degree, with already 6 months of extra time from the planned three and a half year studies.

After my trip to Lapland, to meet a friend, during my first year of studies, I knew that I wanted to write my thesis about some sort of tourism or tourism product around the region. I went through many possible subjects but landed on the day trips made by Brits, thanks to my best friend, who studies in the University of Lapland and heard someone doing a smaller project related to the subject. She knew I had a problem of not landing a clear subject for my thesis and suggested that for me and I ended up with the British tourists as I found the Thomson Holidays trips after a little bit of googling.

After the second meeting with my opponent, who had a relatively easy subject, I realized how hard my chosen thesis subject was, and how the thesis could possibly fail due to that. The market research is hard to make with the given consumers – only ones available to contact were the ones who had left comments on TripAdvisor and most of those only leave one review, be it positive or negative, and forget the site afterwards, even if there is a message for them. All in all I got a couple of responses for my 70-100 sent messages for the TripAdvisor reviewers and no proper reply from Thomson Holidays, as all three of their replies asked me to try and look for the answers for my questions from the internet site of their mother company, TUI Travels PLC. No matter

how hard I researched and tried to contact Thomson Holidays, no extra information was found on the day tours and I had to go with what I was given on the overviews on their site. I cannot claim that the thesis would be qualitatively or quantitatively research, or that it was done properly, as there was little information about the history and current situation of the Brits' day trips to Lapland and it was next to impossible to reach the former clients of Thomson Holidays.

To say the least, I do not personally expect to get a good grade from the thesis, due to the lack of motivation to finish it, after any sort of qualitative data collection seemed to be impossible, and a lack of proper results due to the aforementioned problems. However, I hope that someone could find the resources and motivation to conduct even better research and have a possibility to actually find and reach more travelers who have been on the Rovaniemi region day trip at least once, and possibly even interview them face to face or via email. One possibility could be to try and gain some sort of connection with Thomson Holidays and try to get short and clear interviews from the travelers right after their trip, for example on the plane.

My personal growth as a learner has been rather minimal. I have written a thesis like paper before, in 2013, about a new possible package travel to Japan during the cherry blossom and autumn color seasons. I consider that having been an easier subject as Japan is more popular destination than Rovaniemi region, and I worked with Finns as the target clientele, not Brits. At some point of the thesis writing process I also hoped I had taken the 2013 subject again and deepen the research, for example on the trips during autumn colors. However, writing my thesis has taught me not to give up, even though there is next to no sources or people to reply to emails or questionnaires, and to dig deeper to collect as much information as possible, no matter how little it might be. I have also noticed that I work better under pressure and clear deadlines, especially since I have grown to get used to postponing things and procrastinating. Before my thesis I had never even heard of netnography and it was suggested as my research strategy by someone else, while I had problems of getting data and methods together.

The easiest parts to write and research on were definitely “Tourism in Rovaniemi” and “British Tourism Behaviour”. The only con about the tourism in Rovaniemi was the lack of the available history online. I had to rely on only a couple of sources, which is not preferable while writing a thesis like mine, but I did enjoy it and learned a lot. I also faced the problem of not having that many sources on consumer behaviour in tourism. There were books and papers on consumer behavior but only a few that focused on it in the point of view of tourism. This could be due to the ever changing travel industry and tourism being one of the few markets that keep growing, even during difficult market situations, for example the crash of both ruble and euro.

I had hoped to get more information and text on Market Research from the beginning but with me living and concentrating on everything but the thesis, I had to rely on internet based information, though the book selection on the subject at Haaga-Helia library was rather small as well. I found the basics from various websites but tried to focus on book sources whenever any were available for use. Netnography seemed to be a rather new research strategy when I started writing my thesis and only found some mentions of it from a couple of new books from the school library, other than that the rest of the information was hard to find. I focused on searching through the sources that Wikipedia used on its site of the subject and by waiting a while, more like letting the thesis be and focusing on everything but it, I found out that there were more information of it. However, the method parts, currently “Tour operators and Feedback”, became a mess in my mind as I felt that I was given contradictive information on how and what to add and focused mainly on TripAdvisor and Thomson Holidays on that chapter. What the companies are and how I used the information, provided on their internet sites, on my thesis.

Due to the lack of data as well as small amount of information on market research and netnography the results turned out to be rather inconclusive in my mind. But as someone said, no results and partial results are results, as long as those are explained and argued on properly. I consider going through the reasons rather conclusively and have nothing else to add.

All in all, I should have set personal deadlines and asked my loved ones to put the pressure on me by asking and checking my progress weekly or every second week, and chosen an easier or larger thesis subject. Focusing solely on Brits could have been a mistake on my part. I never felt pressured to finish the thesis as there was no clear deadline, apart from having to graduate by December 2015. After I finally got the push and a little bit of threatening from a loved one, I managed to pull myself together and finished the thesis with next to no reliable data. But no results are still results.

6.2 Summary of the results

Due to the lack of cooperation on Thomson Holiday's part, the results focus on the comments and a few messages received via TripAdvisor. The responses from the tour operator seemed to be automatic but signed by a person in charge of the customer service at that time, before sent to a customer or a person requesting more information about the package tours. The site that was offered, when asked about the tours that only Thomson offers, was TUI Travel PLC (<http://www.tuitravelplc.com/>), which offered no information of Thomson's one day tours and only some information of Thomson Holidays and its fellow companies, such as Finland based Finnmatkat.

Based on the number of comments and posts left on TripAdvisor, the "Search for Santa" day tour to Kittilä is more popular than the day trip to "Santa's Secret Grotto" in Rovaniemi. It is also more expensive with the 2015 prices being around £500 per adult and £368 per child, while "Santa's Secret Grotto" costs around £400 per adult, while the price of children stays the same. (Thomson Holidays.)

As stated, the tours are rather pricey. Many comments mentioned the price being high or even too high for what you get. Even a positive commenter in TripAdvisor wrote "Was it worth it? In value for the money spent, NO...". When trying to check for availabilities for the tours, the site only offers a few days on December (5 for "Search for Santa", one being right before Christmas, and only 3 for "Santa's Secret Grotto") and despite the price, all day tours seem to be sold or nearly sold out already. One responder and few TripAdvisor commenters wrote that their trips were booked nearly a year before the actual trip.

By May 2014 only one commenter wrote that no one should waste their money on the day tours, even though it was made clear that the whole group was disappointed. The reasons for this were a skinny and poorly dressed Santa Claus, which made their two children question the existence of Santa, long queues to every activity, not enough time there, though that was due to some problems with the flight, and the difference of the tour compared to what was promised in the brochure. During Christmas of 2014, there were more complains, both about the destination and the organizer, Thomson Holidays. Each reviewer commented on the price and the fact that one should only take part if there are small children included. Everything was short lived, especially the rides, a small taste of what the full experience could be like, but in an enclosed area, and the queues to every attraction were long. One commenter even ended his review with "I fear that, having built this up for the kids as being the real thing, I may now have ruined the magic of Christmas for years to come."

Both of the Thomson Holiday tours include exterior clothing that you require to visit Lapland – snowsuits, boots, gloves, hat and a scarf, the weather can be, and most of the time is, colder than in the United Kingdom. The changing happens at the airport after arriving, after which the tourists are taken to the destination where the only things scheduled are lunch and the meeting with Santa Claus. Between the lunch and meeting tourists are allowed to take taster sessions on husky and reindeer rides, drive a snowmobile and depending on the location, visit the stores and Santa's Official Post Office or visit the ice hotel and listen to stories told by a shaman.

The main complaint about the day trips are that the time in the destination is short, and in most cases a lot shorter than promised, for example, one family only had 3,5 hours to use, from which queuing to see Santa Claus took from half an hour to a full hour. In most comments and replies, the tourists wrote that they were promised 8 hours at the destination, but it decreased to less than 4 hours. The whole day, leaving from the United Kingdom to return there, takes approximately 15 hours, which is why many visitors seem displeased of the lack of time. One of the things that takes time, based on the comments, is changing to appropriate clothing that the tour operators

offer. This takes up to 45 minutes. One commenter said that they arrived right after midday but were in the destination two hours later. Another time consuming activity in Enontekiö, “Search for Santa”, is the bus ride from airport to the location, all in all just the changing and bus rides take one fourth of the time the tourists have in Lapland.

An old problem of not having enough time with Santa Claus has been fixed by giving the visitors fixed schedules for private face to face time with the man, at least in “Search for Santa” trip, while in “Santa’s Secret Grotto” newer reviews complain about not having any personal time with the main man. One former visitor described the time with Santa Claus at “Santa’s Secret Grotto” as following: “IN, PRESENT GIVEN, SMILE FOR THE CAMERA, GOOD BYE [sic].” The children were not allowed any time with the man to hear stories or even mention wishes for Christmas presents. The scheduled meetings or queuing to meet Santa takes time off from other activities, for example husky and reindeer rides. In TripAdvisor comments, it was clearly seen that the brochure promises proper rides with the animals, but in fact, the tourists are complaining that in fact those are only tasters of 2-5 minutes. Snowmobile ride is not an exception to this as some older children are not allowed to drive those themselves or with the company of an adult but have to be driven by an employee of the destination.



The original Finnish Santa Claus (english.cntv.cn - Santa Claus calls for peace in 2013)

Nothing bad was written or mentioned about the served food, which is usually something local. This was until winter of 2014-2015, when the reviews mentioned lukewarm food and options between lasagne for vegetarians and meatballs or chicken nuggets with wedged or mashed potatoes for others. The elves at the destinations were mentioned being helpful and caring, constantly checking whether everything is all right and making sure everyone has the Christmas spirit. Santa, on the other hand, was mentioned in the negative comments a couple of times, but mostly the visitors received a positive image of him. Children were pleased by Santa giving them wrapped presents and, in most of the cases, looking like he does in the brochure and adults were mesmerized by the happiness of their children.

The short trips were mostly pleasant, as one of the commenters put it, “the trip is what you make of it”. The trips also made Brits more curious about Finland and a recurring comment was that people would definitely return again.

In the end, however, it was not clear whether all of the “Santa’s Secret Grotto” visitors went to Santa Claus Village or Santa Park. From research, many of the new reviews, especially the negative ones, mentioned Santa Park while the earlier ones made it clear that the destination was Santa Claus Village, not Santa Park. But based on the reviews, the tourists should be taken to the Village as the admission is free and lines do not seem to be as long as in Santa Park. Santa Claus also has more one-on-one time with the visitors in Santa Claus Village and does not demand one to pay 20-28€ for a picture taken by a photographer. Santa Park is popular and does have fees on top of the entrance fee of 17,5€ for adults and 14,5€ for children between the ages of 3 and 12 and 57€ for a family ticket for two adults and two children. Those are prices for the summer season, while the tickets for the winter season are 31-33€ for adults and 25,5-27,5€ for children, the price depends on the time period, the more expensive price being between December 27th and January 9th. These given prices are listed to include activities such as Santa’s Office, Elves’ Post Office, Magic Sleigh Ride, Elf School with diploma and hat included, Entrance to Ice Gallery, Ice Bar and meeting with the Ice Princess, Undercrossing of the Arctic Circle and Gingerbread Bakery (Santapark.com). Howev-

er, most of the reviews mentioned that the activities are included to the price only to a certain extent, such as gingerbread bakery only including one heart shaped gingerbread and some frosting and a couple of sprinkles.

There were only a couple of responses to my sent messages via TripAdvisor to the reviewers of the trips and there are many possible reasons for that. For starters the messages were only available to be sent via the webpage, there is no guarantee that the site sent an email to the recipient of the received message, and if it did, was it put to the received or trash folder in their email, or did they just automatically put it to the trash themselves. Nowadays people receive various requests to take part and answer in polls, inquiries and questionnaires face to face, via email and even when visiting webpages. There is an overload of pleas so people are more likely to click no or disregard the plea unless there is something to be gained personally after the poll or questionnaire is filled, such as a possibility to win something. This is one possible reason there were no responses to my messages.

All in all, the results are indicating that Brits are interested in returning to Finnish Lapland to experience the Christmas product during winter and possibly examine the area during summer. For Rovaniemi to gain customers from Saariselkä, Levi and Ylläs, all of which Thomson Holidays lists as more popular destinations than Rovaniemi, the marketing should be focused in Greater London area, where most of the tourists come from, while not forgetting the North-Eastern England or Scotland. Growing the variety of activities available in Rovaniemi and possibly mentioning unique selling points of Rovaniemi, including the eight seasons of Lapland, to Brits, could bring the city more and longer overnight stays from the United Kingdom.

Based on the feedbacks and responses Brits are interested in tours to Lapland, especially in the Christmas time, which means that there is a market for longer tours. The problem is choosing the length of the tours, main sights and how it would be marketed. The Brits want to experience a Finnish Christmas and/or winter and experience the wild nature, not available in the United Kingdom. If the main focus is to get rid of the day tours and make the tourists that would choose a day tour stay a few days instead,

the package could be developed from what the day tours already include and add something extra to it. For example, the short-term packages could be for a two to four nights stay in Rovaniemi with three to four tries on seeing the northern lights, with or without snowmobiles, proper safaris, instead of the tasters that Thomson's tours and Santa Claus Village and Santa Park offer, a personal visit from or to Santa Claus and letting the tourists actually enjoy and see, both, the nature of Lapland and the hospitality and friendliness of the locals. Longer tours could take the tourists to the Ranua zoo and offer guided tours in Arktikum. Visits to local reindeer farms or downhill skiing centres, with an instructor for those who need it, could also be a possibility so that the tours would include all the popular and main sights of the region, instead of leaving those out like the daytrips do.



Arktikum (arktikum.fi – arktikum11)

The target market could be young couples and families/grandparents with children, or grandchildren, as they are, based on the reviews, usually after the actual Christmas atmosphere. The trips should be packaged ones as those are what the Brits tend to buy, everything ready or tailor-made for them. Meeting Santa Claus, preferably in the Santa Claus Village with the chance of letting their relatives watch the meeting online, could be included in the tour, with the emphasis on meeting the magical character without a hectic time schedule, so that everyone would have their time queuing to meeting Santa Claus or taking a husky or reindeer ride taster in the area.

To summarise, the main focus on the tours is meeting Santa Claus and experiencing an authentic Christmas atmosphere in the magical homeland of Santa Claus. And last but not least, Lapland, especially Rovaniemi region as it clearly is the least popular destination among the day tours, should be better advertised in the United Kingdom. The emphasis on Santa Claus should stay the same while also putting on more information about the other locations nearby, like Arktikum. The advertisement should not be left to just the Brits and groups such as Thomson Holidays, to market Lapland, or the Brits might not take chances to travel to the area on their own for a longer period of time, but concentrate on the ready-made day trips.

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