

Airline Merchandising: Focus on leisure travel on the Finnish market

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Degree programme Degree Programme in Tourism.	
Report/thesis title Airline Merchandising: Focus on leisure travel on the Finnish market.	Number of pages and appendix pages 52 + 14
<p>As competition in the aviation industry becomes tougher, airlines need to invent various ways to attract their customers while earning income. This thesis focuses on one of current trends: merchandising. The purpose of this thesis is to find out the experiences and opinions of leisure travellers and leisure travel agents in terms of booking ancillaries for flights. Based on those findings, the aim is to find out alternative ways to boost the sales of ancillaries. The commissioner for this thesis is Amadeus Finland Oy and the target group is the Finnish leisure travel market.</p> <p>Theoretical framework of this thesis consists of deep definitions of leisure travel, leisure traveller and leisure travel agency. Furthermore, this thesis includes a thorough explanation of merchandising. Reasons behind the phenomenon, effective ways to conduct it and future challenges of merchandising are represented.</p> <p>The research was conducted by creating two online surveys. One of them was targeted for leisure travellers and the other one for leisure travel agents. The method used in the research was mixed method, since both questionnaires contained quantitative and qualitative questions. Surveys were distributed separately, and the total amount of responses in the leisure travellers' survey was 206 whereas in the leisure travel agents' survey it was 40.</p> <p>The findings of the research were that leisure travellers are extremely price-focused. Even though their general opinions of ancillaries are positive, they are not willing to purchase ancillary services if they are not included in the price of the flight ticket. The results from the travel agent survey showed that travel agents have many doubts what comes to booking ancillaries. Firstly, they do not see the economic benefits of booking ancillaries for travel agencies. Secondly, they have insecurities in booking them and the complexity of the booking system prevents them from booking ancillaries more.</p> <p>Based on the results gained from the research, it is recommended that airlines focus more on marketing ancillaries by various means. Moreover, travel agents would be more motivated to sell ancillaries if they received incentives from the ancillaries they book. Lastly, updating the booking system and training the agents are also recommended in the future.</p>	
Keywords Ancillary services, airline merchandising, Amadeus IT Group, leisure traveller, leisure travel agency.	

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1 Introduction

The aviation industry has gone through massive changes since 1970s. New opportunities have risen especially along with the Internet. According to CAPA Centre for Aviation (2011), e-commerce was the first major change that revolutionized the whole industry. Through e-commerce, airlines were able to gain more profits and offer faster and more flexible service to their customers. Nevertheless, e-commerce was only the beginning in the digitalization of the aviation industry. (Boyle 1 April 2009.)

The past decade has brought several new opportunities and challenges to airlines. According to Graham and Forsyth (2010, 29.), flying has increased tremendously, along with customers have become more and more demanding in terms of standards and price. New price-driven market has created completely new airline operators: low cost carriers (LCCs). LCCs have displaced many airlines that were previously one of the leaders in the industry by unbundling their services and lowering prices. Together with the price-focused customers, natural disasters and terrorism attacks airlines are constantly struggling to keep their business blooming. (Boyle 1 April 2009; CAPA 18 July 2011)

This thesis will tackle the issue of how airlines could keep their customers satisfied and simultaneously create additional income. The focus of this thesis is on the current trend that LCCs created: unbundling their services and then selling them separately.

1.1 Research problem

The aim of the author was to find out whether there is a gap between what airlines wish to inform and gain through merchandising, and how ordinary travellers and travel agents perceive it in reality. Further, the author focused in finding out whether travellers and travel agents actively book ancillaries for flights. If they do not, the task for the author was also to find out the reasons behind that. Additionally, the author aimed at researching leisure travellers' and leisure travel agents' general opinions and experiences of booking ancillaries in terms of whether those have an impact on their behaviour. Besides the main problem of the research, the commissioner also wished to find out leisure travellers' trends and preferred booking channels, payment methods etc. concerning not only ancillaries but also flight booking in general. The target market in the research was the Finnish market.

The author chose leisure travel for her focus throughout the whole research. The reason behind her decision was her personal interest. Since she is still a student herself, nearly all the travel experience she has, has been for leisure purposes. Besides her own experi-

ences and interest towards leisure travel, the author acknowledges the overall popularity of it, which benefits in collecting the responses. Since the people in Finland mostly travel on their leisure time, the author strongly believes that the results gained from this research are interesting and beneficial for several companies and individuals.

1.2 The commissioner

The commissioner of this thesis is Amadeus Finland Oy, which is a Finnish department of a worldwide-known company Amadeus IT Group. The main aim of Amadeus is to provide its customers with functioning technological solutions to assist throughout the travel process. Amadeus Selling Platform is the leading Global Distribution System (GDS) worldwide, which is also the focus of this thesis. Through Amadeus Selling Platform, travel agents are able to book flights for 430 airlines and access flight schedules of 690 airlines. Besides airlines, Amadeus Selling Platform enables travel agents to book hotels and trains as well as access other important information such as the special rules of each fare. The author will explain more about GDSs in Chapter 3. (Amadeus IT Group 2015a; Amadeus IT Group 2015b.)

Beside Amadeus Selling Platform, the company offers numerous other solutions for their customers. According to their webpages, Amadeus has products that are designed to assist in various problems. Connecting, serving and managing are the three main functions of Amadeus' products, from which the customers of Amadeus can select the services that they wish to have. Some of the products that Amadeus offers to their customers are available also on mobile devices. (Amadeus IT Group 2015c.)

Amadeus is known from its responsible actions improving welfare in the world both environmentally and socially. Amadeus is constantly working in order to reduce the electricity consumption by delivering more energy efficient solutions to their customers. Additionally, Amadeus is fighting against global challenges such as poverty, which has a great impact on their brand as well. Amadeus is additionally cooperating with UNICEF. Amadeus has enabled its customers to donate certain amount of money to UNICEF simply by clicking a button simultaneously with each purchase. (Amadeus IT Group 2015d; Amadeus IT Group 2015e; Amadeus IT Group 2015f.)

Communication between Amadeus and its customers is constant in social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Amadeus has more than 22,000 "likes" on Facebook and more than 8,000 followers on Twitter. Amadeus has also a YouTube channel for posting their latest videos. In addition, Amadeus has its own blog, which includes information of

the latest trends in the industry as well as their conducted research results. Amadeus is also visible through other means such as sponsoring. It is often one of the main sponsors in most essential events concerning travel industry such as TTT Travel Awards 2014. (Amadeus IT Group 2015g; Facebook 2015; TTT Travel Awards 2014; Twitter 2015; YouTube 2015.)

Amadeus is widely used in Finland, which makes the majority of Finnish travel agencies customers of Amadeus Finland Oy. The offices of Amadeus Finland are located in Vantaa and the manager is Paula Punkari.

1.3 Thesis structure

The author has divided this thesis into six main chapters that are further divided into smaller subheadings. Airline merchandising in the Finnish market is the main topic throughout the thesis. The author has taken various insights in each of the chapters, including explaining theoretical background and the research itself.

Chapter 1 is an introductory part of the whole thesis. In this chapter, the author describes the phenomena that are occurring in the aviation industry that have led to the issues tackled in this thesis. After discussing the background of the thesis industry, the author continues further to describe the research problem and gives an insight of the commissioner of this thesis.

Chapter 2 deals with the concept of leisure tourism in general. The author clarifies several relevant terms such as leisure tourist and leisure travel agency. The author also explains their importance in terms of fully understanding the importance of this thesis.

Chapter 3 handles merchandising. First, the author explains the meaning of merchandising and the reasons why airlines are constantly practicing it. Furthermore, the author signifies various methods of how airlines can effectively apply merchandising in their strategies. The author reviews merchandising also in the perspective of customer. In addition, the factors influencing merchandising in the future are clearly explained. Furthermore, the author concludes the chapter with an explanation of how airlines can implement merchandising via GDSs. Finally, the author carefully considers the challenges that belong to it.

In Chapter 4, the author tackles the research methodology. Firstly, she defines the difference between the quantitative and qualitative methods and evaluates their features. The author also explain the reasons for choosing a specific research method in this particular

research. Furthermore, the author continues with the explanation of the specialities attached to conducting research using online survey. The last theme of the fourth chapter is data collection and analysis, which the author critically evaluates after decently explaining both the terms.

The author continues to Chapter 5, which includes an explanation of the research results. The author uses figures and tables to assist in explaining the findings of the research. Chapter 6 concludes this thesis. The author concludes her findings and ponders their importance in terms of research question.

After all the actual chapters, a list of references is attached. It includes an alphabetical list of all the external sources that the author has revived when writing this thesis. Besides that, English versions of the surveys used can be found attached in this thesis.

2 Leisure travel

This chapter will introduce several important terms concerning leisure travel. Understanding these terms is essential in order to create a truthful picture of leisure travel as a part of tourism industry. First, the concept of leisure travel is defined, after which the author moves forward in explaining leisure traveller and leisure travel agency. Since the aim of the research is to research the opinions, experiences and expectations of leisure travellers and travel agents, clarifying those terms is extremely important.

Leisure travel is a complex and multi-dimensional term. Graham, Papatheodorou & Forsyth (2010, 7, 9.) define leisure travel as all the travelling that takes place outside the working time. Leisure travel can be practised anywhere in the world by individuals or by groups. Especially in leisure travel, there are as many motivators as there are travellers. Swarbrooke & Horner (2007, 55-57.) express that behind each travel decision there is usually a mixture of motivators instead one clear motivator as in business travel. Travellers often share their motivators when travelling with someone or in a group. Motivators are not always visible if the traveller is not willing to express them for some reason. Swarbrooke and Horner (2007, 54.) state that the most common motivators in leisure travel are cultural, physical, social, emotional and personal.

The demand for leisure travel varies for several reasons. Economic issues do have an impact on leisure travel, even if, not as instantly visible as in business travel. Issues that have greater impact on the demand for leisure travel are, for instance, terrorist attacks and natural disasters. Simultaneously a clear rise in the demand for leisure travel can be seen for instance during holiday seasons when families are enjoying their free time. Issues such as rates of exchange also have an effect on leisure tourism, making it either more beneficial or more disadvantageous to make purchases in the destination. (Graham & al. 2010, 10, 22.)

However, according to Swarbrooke and Horner (2007, 201-210), there are certain markets that will become more popular and change the industry in the future effecting the demand of leisure travel (Figure 1). The whole concept of vacation is slowly changing when customers become more interested in comfort and all-inclusive hotels especially in destinations that are associated with popular culture. The phenomenon of separating hotels for families with children and for adults becomes a desired trend among travellers. The motivators for travelling are also slightly changing especially along with the growing interest in travelling for health and religious reasons. Because the transport between various countries and continents becomes easier, the habit of visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and

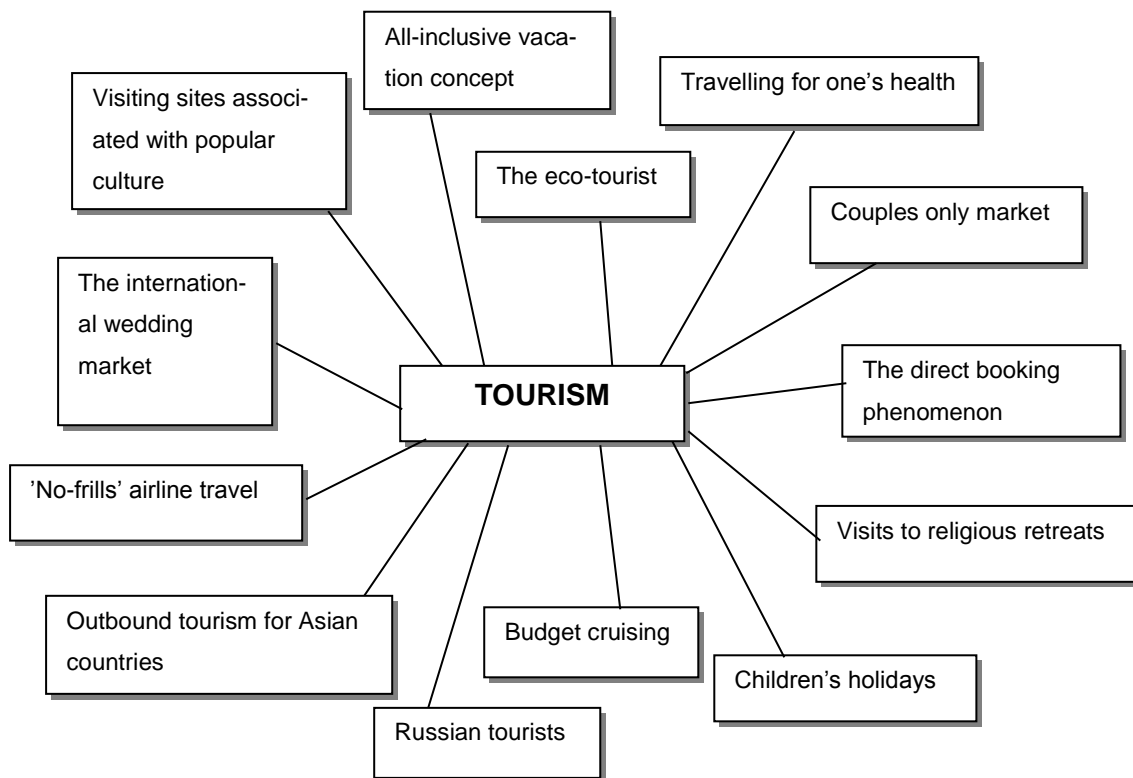


Figure 1
Thirteen major changes in the demand of tourism market

international wedding market keep continuously motivating tourists in leisure travel. Travellers wish to be ecological when they are making their holidays, which has contributed in the change of the preferred booking method, which is direct booking. Along with LCCs, budget holidays are more significant and frequent than ever, creating low-budget concept in another fields such as cruising. Besides these major trends in the industry, Swarbrooke & Horner (2007) state that especially Russian and Asian travellers will travel more and more on their leisure time.

2.1 Leisure traveller

Because of the difficulty of defining leisure travel, the term leisure traveller is equally complex to define. Researchers often categorise leisure traveller as a traveller, who travels on his/hers free time to any place and for any reason. Swarbrooke and Horner (2007, 202.) have distinguished leisure traveller from business traveller. Figure 2 depicts the differences between these two variables.

The main difference between business traveller and leisure traveller is the purpose of the trip and their behaviour at the actual destination. Leisure travellers often start to plan their trip long beforehand, in certain cases even several years earlier. They book everything themselves as well as pay for everything they consume. Compared to business traveller,

leisure travellers travel more infrequently but spend longer periods in their destinations. Differentiation between these two concepts is not as simple since it is widely accepted that in the evening, after business traveller has taken care of the business, he/she becomes a leisure traveller. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 202.)

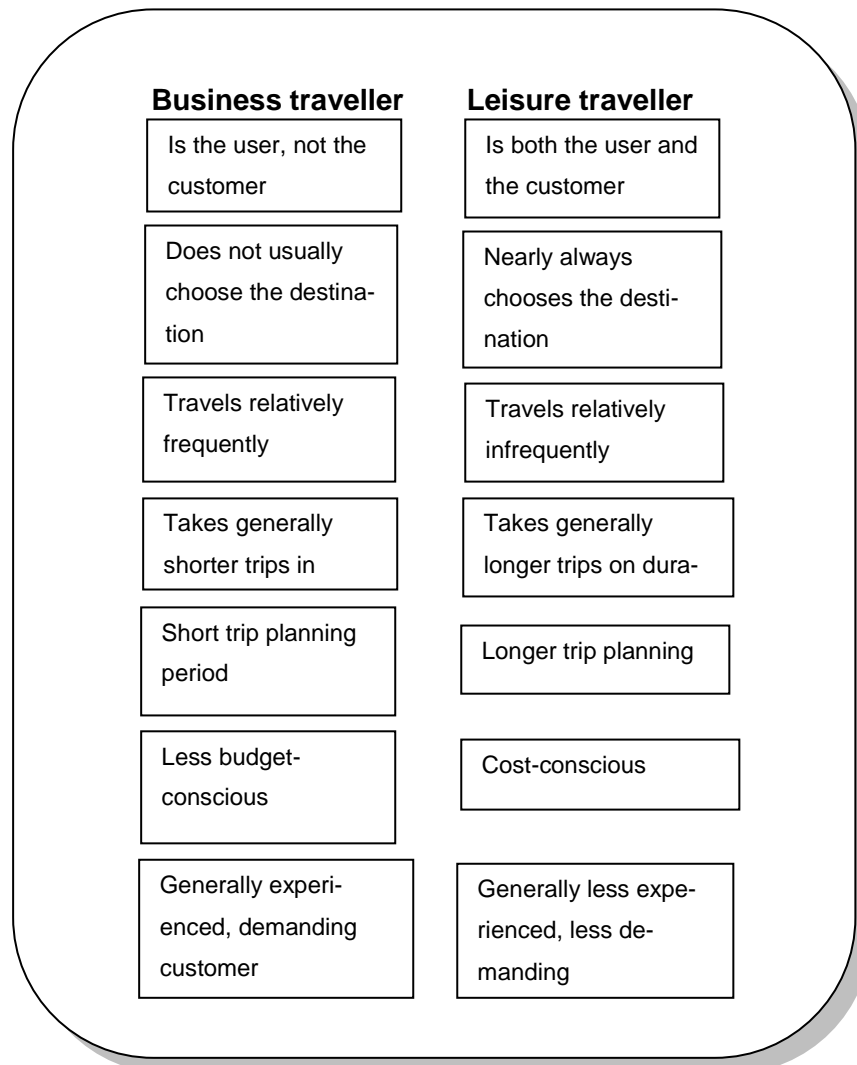


Figure 2

Difference in the behaviour of business and leisure traveller.

Reasons effecting the amount and the decision-making of leisure tourists are constantly changing along trends and other changing phenomenon. Swarbrooke and Horner (2007, 230.) clarify several factors that they especially expect to become more popular in the future. Technological factors will undoubtedly constantly grow their popularity. Due to the Internet and improved transport technologies, making the purchase decision becomes easier than before. Furthermore, the impact of social media and marketing along with increased knowledge of destinations and travelling in general are also noticeable factors in influencing the decision-making process of leisure travellers in the future. Moreover, fac-

tors such as economic, political and social will keep their important spot in determining leisure travellers' decisions. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 230.)

2.2 Leisure travel agencies

According to Buhalis (2003), travel agencies can generally be categorized according to various criteria such as their size or geographical location. Mostly they are categorized according to their target markets and the products they offer, which is where leisure travel agencies and business travel agencies differ from each other. The clientele of business travel agencies consists of people travelling for work whereas the customers of leisure travel agencies can be anyone travelling in his/her free time. Leisure travel agencies can be either traditional travel agencies where customers meet in person with the agents or online travel agencies (OTAs), which constantly keep growing their popularity. (Buhalis 2003, 263.)

Since more and more airlines drop paying commissions for travel agencies, travel agencies have had to think of alternative ways to function profitably. They nowadays apply service fee, which is a fixed fee travel agencies earn from each sale they make. Service fees are constantly getting more important in the travel agencies' revenues all over the world. Agencies where service fee is generally in use have bigger revenues in general compared to those where agents still receive commissions. (Amadeus IT Group 2007, 4-5, 14-16.)

Disappearance of the commissions is not the only problem that travel agencies are facing on daily basis all over the world. Since people have started to book their flights themselves directly from suppliers, travel agencies need to find alternative solutions to attract their customers. It is a struggle especially for small-sized travel agencies. Many have concentrated on a specific theme, thus creating a niche product. Nevertheless, there are many travellers who think that nothing can beat real communication with a human, which sheds light for the future of travel agencies. (Kelso 2012.)

In this chapter, we have seen that the term leisure travel is extremely wide and occasionally hard to understand. The author has also noted that there are travel agencies specialising especially in selling leisure trips. Lastly, we have learned that there are several ongoing changes in the means of how travel agencies aim at differentiating themselves from the other competitors. At this stage, a deep understanding of merchandising is essential for the reader. In the next chapter, the author will clarify the purpose, various techniques and challenges that airlines are facing what comes to merchandising.

3 Airline Merchandising

In aviation industry, merchandising signifies the sales of the ancillary services that customers can separately purchase alongside their flight ticket. Each airline has its own policy concerning which products can be included in the flight tickets and which the customers can purchase separately. Merchandising has become one the most essential ways for airlines to not only yield more profit but also engage their customer loyalty. This chapter introduces major changes that have led to the increase of merchandising. Further, in this chapter the author clarifies what airlines are aiming at when they are implementing their merchandising strategies. Additionally, the chapter represents several techniques of how airlines can successfully conduct merchandising. (Amadeus IT Group 2014, 5.)

3.1 The need for merchandising

Since LCCs have emerged, people have become more and more price-focused in terms of choosing their flights. LCCs were the first ones to unbundle their services; removing items and services from their offered packages and enabling people to buy only the transfer from one place to another without any specialties. Because customers want to choose the services they truly desire and pay only for those, unbundling of services has become a norm in the aviation industry, forcing all the airlines to do it. New trends create lots of pressure for airlines – when the costs of air tickets go down, airlines need to find alternative ways to earn profit. At this stage merchandising is the key. If airlines succeed in merchandising, their revenues can grow tremendously. (Amadeus IT Group 2014, 5.)

Not only airlines are facing new challenges along merchandising but also travel agencies. Travel agencies use GDSs worldwide. Nevertheless, GDSs do not offer enough possibilities for travel agents to sell effectively more ancillaries. Today's GDSs are created mainly for selling flights, leaving additional services secondary. It is extremely time-consuming for the agents to find information about available ancillaries, which is why they skip the sales of ancillaries. Besides the lacks in GDSs, travel agents are facing another dilemma. Since personal communication between customers and agents has rapidly diminished, travel agencies need to find new channels for merchandising. (Buhalis 2003, 320; Doganis 2001, 177-178.)

The variety of different packages and options is extremely confusing for the customer seeking for a suitable combination of convenience and efficiency. Efficient and simple ways to inform the customers about possible ancillaries have not yet been created. Especially the growing use of meta-search sites falsifies the reality, thus misleading customers' purchase decisions. Even if ancillaries are included in certain fares and not included in

others, meta-search sites are rarely able to inform the customer about the differences. For example, a customer does a search in such a site. He/she is ready to pay extra for a certain ancillary but, since the site is unable to inform the customer about ancillaries included in the price, he/she often makes the purchase-decision merely based on the price. In such cases, not only the airline is losing money, but also the customer is left unsatisfied. (Amadeus IT Group 2014, 6; Harteveltdt 2012, 3, 13.)

3.2 Merchandising techniques

The key for a successful merchandising lies in customer engagement and personalisation. Proven that nowadays the aviation industry does not only compete on the price, it is clear that airlines are more likely to succeed in keeping their customers satisfied if they offer personalized products and services. Airlines need a deep understanding of customers' expectations and preferences and they need to design a proper merchandising technique according to those. (Delfmann, Baum, Auerbach & Albers 2005, 109-110.)

When pondering possible merchandising techniques one of the main focus areas should be in offering the products and services the customer is interested in. Airlines are collecting such data from their customers in several ways. Most common ways of collecting information about their customers' preferences are examining their previous travel and purchase history. Especially the increasing use of mobile applications is a great opportunity for airlines to access their customers' information, which the customers can store under their Frequent Flyer Programme profiles. Through applications like that, customers are able to inform airlines directly about their preferences and expectations, which makes it easier for the customer as well. Based on the customer's information, the application can then suggest concerning flights and ancillaries on them. (Amadeus IT Group 2014, 15; Benckendorff, Sheldon & Fesenmaier 2014, 166.)

Even though unbundling of services is an obvious trend in the aviation industry, unbundling may not always be the best alternative. This is what a research conducted by Amadeus and Frost & Sullivan (2014) found out. Customers require suitable choices and simple solutions. Instead of choosing each ancillary separately, customers generally have a great interest in value-added bundles. If the bundle clearly improves the travel experience or if buying it is cheaper in a bundle compared to selecting all the ancillaries separately, the interest is even higher. According to the research, the highest profit comes from personalised packs. The research shows that customers are willing to pay for a ready-made package created according to their personal preferences. With this information, several airlines

are already aiming at creating relevant, personalized and value-increasing packages to their customers. (Amadeus IT Group 2014, 8-9.)

Reaching for the customer in his or her terms has also proven to be a functioning merchandising technique. All too aggressive approach or too frequent contact is more likely to create irritation than engagement among customers. Even though the use of mobile devices and social media has increased dramatically, the majority of customers still prefer that airlines approach them by e-mail. The amount of mobile communication between the customer and the airline is, however, something that has a huge potential especially in terms of cross selling. Through airlines' mobile applications customers are able to search, book and compare products such as flight tickets or hotels anywhere in the world. Of all the communication methods airlines are currently using, push notifications have the highest percentage in successfully creating new purchases. (Amadeus IT Group 2014, 10-11; Benckendorff & al. 2014, 162-163.)

Correct timing plays an important role in merchandising as well, and it is something that airlines need to consider thoroughly. The most significant opportunities for merchandising are before the flight and at the airport. Before the flight customer often needs plenty of guidance and is thus interested in considering more options. Especially the time of flight booking is a good stage for the airline to merchandise. When time passes the customer usually is more reluctant in making any additional purchases. Especially with the help of push-notifications at the right time, airlines have managed to create new cross-selling opportunities when the customer is at the airport or even already on-board. Another method that creates interest among airlines is post-trip selling. When the customer is already at the destination airlines are offering low-priced, immediate deals, often provided by third parties. Such deals are often restaurant/bar vouchers. (Amadeus IT Group 2014, 7; Benckendorff & al. 2014, 162-163.)

Even though mobile applications have proven to be an efficient channel in terms of airline merchandising, visibility in social media is increasing its importance. Interactivity and the ease of access between company and its customers is extremely important if companies are hoping to form a functioning relationship. Because of their worldwide popularity, online channels such as Facebook and Twitter are efficient ways for this. Blogging is another way for a company to share their ideas and opinions as well as provoke discussion among their customers. Other social media channels that are especially popular in tourism industry are product review sites, such as TripAdvisor. Through review sites have a great opportunity to influence potential customers' purchase-decision. (Benckendorff & al. 2014, 132-135.)

3.3 Merchandising via Global Distribution System

Airlines were the first ones to realize the potential of using technologies in order to boost their business, and they have been pioneering in using it since 1970. One of the keys behind the success of their use of technology is the invention and the worldwide frequent use of Global Distribution systems (GDSs). (Buhalis 2003, 328.)

GDSs are important platforms that assist travel intermediaries such as travel agencies in booking flights. They include various information such as seat inventories, flight schedules and passenger information. There are several GDSs, each of them cooperating with different airlines, hotel chains etc. GDSs have facilitated the work of travel agents all over the world in booking flights, hotels and train tickets. The most well-known GDSs are Amadeus, Sabre, Galileo and Worldspan. (Benckendorff, Sheldon & Fesenmaier 2014, 54; Doganis 2001, 177.)

GDSs have introduced e-ticketing for the travel industry the way we know it at moment. In issuing electronic-tickets instead of paper tickets, not only the airline is saving money but also the customer receives fast and environmentally friendly service. Passenger Name Records (PNRs) can also easily be stored in GDSs. PNRs include all the personal information about the traveller, from their names to their Frequent Flyer numbers and personal requests. The storing of various PNRs of airlines' customers helps travel agents to spot the correct existing profile of the customer fast, hence saving lots of valuable time. GDSs also displays all the rates and conditions of various fares. All the information in GDSs is standardised making it as readable for the agent as possible. (Benckendorff & al. 2014, 59, 65.)

What has had the biggest influence in the decrease of the use of GDSs is the ongoing trend of customers booking directly from the supplier instead of travel agencies. OTAs operate completely online without having personal meetings with the customer. Nevertheless, they are using GDSs as their booking tools. There is also lots of criticism towards the technology that GDSs mainly use, which is relatively old. (Benckendorff & al. 2014, 65; Doganis 2001, 177.)

Despite all the problems and criticism, GDSs are still dominating the booking process in tourism. GDSs acknowledge their challenges, and are constantly improving their services and offerings in order to follow the development in the world. (Doganis 2001, 178.)

3.4 The future of merchandising

Even though the current challenges concerning merchandising are noticeably present, the knowledge about efficient merchandising has increased simultaneously with the invention of new technological solutions. In order to facilitate booking ancillaries for travel agents IATA (International Air Transport Association) is developing a New Distribution Capability (NDC). Besides the current GDS contents, IATA will collect all the information about ancillaries in NDC in a standardised way which is easy to read and use. The changes in the GDS will also simplify the process of booking ancillary services, hence, encouraging agents to book them more. Even though NDC has not been released yet, the need for improvement has been noticed and actions towards the goal have been taken. (IATA 2014, 15.)

Customers' data collection is another challenge for the airlines. As the author mentioned earlier, the information that the airline collects directly from the customer is extremely beneficial, yet often insufficient to serve all the needs of the airlines. The biggest data bank for airlines is not their own files but other sources such as social media. In such sites customers often give away a lot wider amounts of information about their preferences and habits than on airlines' own sources. Aviation industry has noticed the potential that such information has on personalizing customers' travel experience. There are ongoing projects gathering that data in one place, which would then create a massive data bank called big data. Should airlines have an access to such a wide data, their merchandising would improve tremendously in efficiency and quality. Collecting the data is extremely complex and expensive, not to mention legal issues, which makes the creation of big data extremely challenging. (Amadeus IT Group 2014, 15; Batchelor 2013; Cowen 2014, 8.)

In this chapter, we found out that merchandising has become one of the major ways for airlines to earn additional profit. The key in merchandising is in understanding the customer and offering them products that truly increase the value of the fare. Besides, airlines need to consider using multiple channels and correct timing in order to succeed in merchandising. In this chapter, the author described also the challenges linked with merchandising, which are mainly the difficulty of accessing information about them as well as booking them. Further, the author clarified that various industry players have taken actions to solve those problems in the future. After having an understanding of the purpose of merchandising, the techniques to assist in it and the challenges that merchandising is facing, we will continue the next chapter with a detailed description of how the author conducted the research.

4 Research Methodology

In this chapter, the author will introduce relevant research methodology. First, the author makes a differentiation between quantitative and qualitative research methods, as well as justifies her decision to choose a specific method in this research. Furthermore, the author will move on to explain about her way of using survey as a way to collect data for this research. In addition, the author explains the process of sampling. Besides those points, the author specifies the processes of data collection and data analysis explaining, how she conducted those processes in this research.

The stages of the research, according to sequential approach by Veal (1997, 131.), are depicted in the Figure 3. A decent planning was the first part of the research. The author investigated various methods to conduct a research and based on those, came up with the most suitable methods in purposes of this research. The author also figured out a hypothesis for her research, which is that leisure travellers are not that interested in ancillary services and do not have enough information about them. In addition, the author assumed that travel agents struggle with the complexity of booking ancillaries and do not have enough time to offer them to their customers.

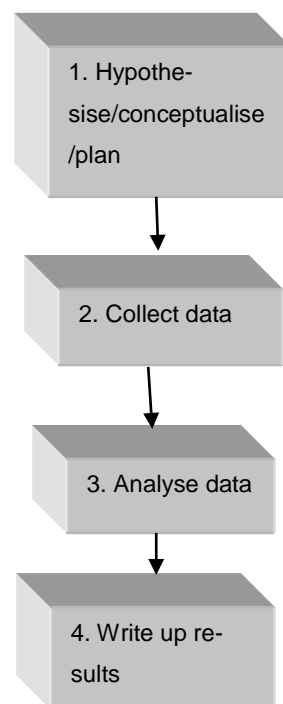


Figure 3

Sequential approach to research process.

After thoroughly considering the possibilities to conduct the research, the author moved on to next stages, which were data collection and analysis. The author will explain more about those stages below. This thesis as a whole is the result of the last phase of the research process, which is writing up results. (Veal 1997, 131.)

The author created two online surveys. Leisure travellers answered to one of them and leisure travel agents to the other. In this thesis, the author will refer to the survey designed for leisure travellers as the first survey whereas the survey designed for leisure travel agents as the second survey.

4.1 Quantitative and qualitative research methods

When discussing various research methods it is important to differentiate quantitative method from qualitative method. According to Veal (1997, 34.), it is typical for quantitative method that the researcher adjusts the questions in a way that is easily analysed after receiving the results. The findings of the research are often presented in a as statistics with the help of numbers, states Holliday (2002, 2.). The extent of the questions in quantitative research is relatively small but the high amount of responses is considered extremely beneficial, which is the reason why quantitative research method often acquires collecting relatively small-sized data from relatively many people. The most frequent ways to collect data for quantitative research are conducting surveys and interviews (University of Wisconsin.). Conducting an analysis of quantitative research is relatively cost-efficient and fast, especially with the help of computers.

Qualitative research method differs from quantitative mainly in the form of how the researchers present the findings. In qualitative research they do not generally illustrate the results with numbers and figures but with analysed text. Thus, the results gained from qualitative research aim at finding more general opinions than the results received from quantitative research method. The quality of the results are valued more than the amount, which makes gathering extensive data from relatively small amount of people typical in qualitative research. There are four main methods of how qualitative research can be conducted, which are interviews, existing texts and documents, audio and video recording and observation. (Silverman 2000, 90; Veal 1997, 35, 70-71.)

Nevertheless, the difference between qualitative and quantitative research methods may not always be visible. The use of both methods is also possible, in many cases even recommended. By using the mixed research method, the interviewer may receive results that are more diverse. However, the use of mixed method may lead to unwanted results as

well. The stages of planning, collecting and analysing the data requires a lot more, and if the researcher fails to complete any of the stages in a proper way, the research may lose its validity. (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 8-9; Silverman 2000, 89.)

Based on the knowledge the author has over various research methods, she decided to use the mixed method approach in this particular research. Since she has two target groups and several research problems, the author aimed at keeping the questions simple. Thus, she decided to have mostly quantitative questions. Both the surveys include only few qualitative elements, which will facilitate analysing.

4.2 Survey

According to Balnaves and Caputi (2001, 75.), survey is the most convenient form to collect responds in situations where the researcher is unable to observe the results by looking. It is especially beneficial when the aim of the research is to researching people's opinions. Based on this knowledge, the author decided to create two online surveys measuring leisure travelers and travel agents' knowledge, experiences and opinions concerning ancillary services for flights. The survey can easily be spread online via social media channels and e-mail, and since leisure travel is more frequent than ever, the author reasoned she will find respondents easily.

The author wanted to include several types of questions in the research. In order to be able to compare various groups of respondents, she began the survey with general questions concerning respondents' personal information such as age and gender. Furthermore, the author did a deep thinking over the other question types that she will use in the survey. Many of the questions in the survey were simple, and the author chose pre-coded questions in them. Nevertheless, when the author wanted to find out whether people value certain ancillaries and measure their readiness to book them, she decided to use the matrix table. The author listed all the ancillaries separately in the table and requested the respondents to evaluate each of them. There were a few other questions where the author thought that using the matrix table is the best way to receive the answers. There were certain questions in which the author did not want to provide the respondents with any pre-set alternatives in the fear of implementing wrong ideas in their minds. As Veal (1997, 164-165.) states, using open-ended questions will provide more realistic responses in many cases.

Especially since the respondents answering to the survey targeted to leisure travellers are not professionals, it is important to keep the language as simple and understandable as

possible. Before publishing the survey, the author tested the understandability of all the expressions in both the surveys with less-frequent travellers. Additionally, there were certain expressions that the author clarified in both surveys. In the beginning of both surveys, the author explained the word ancillary service. Since the term is relatively young in the industry and especially among leisure travellers, the author found explaining of the term essential. In the survey aimed for leisure travellers the author wanted to define expressions such as flight comparison sites and in-flight entertainment in order to generate a straightforward idea for respondents. (Balnaves & Caputi 2001, 81-83.)

The length of the survey plays an important role in engaging respondents to submit their responses. A survey with relatively few effective and relevant questions is the objective of a successful survey. The author tried to minimize the amount of response options and questions, hence creating a compact and well-structured outcome. The maximum amount of questions was pre-set around 15 in the leisure travellers' survey. Together with the questions about personal information, the total amount of questions was 17, which was satisfactory for the author. Because of the time pressure constantly put for travel agents, it was important to create slightly shorter survey for them. The pre-set maximum amount of questions in the agents' survey was around ten. The actual number in the survey was 12, together with the questions of personal information. (Balnaves & Caputi 2001. 85-86.)

The author decided to create both the surveys in Finnish. Since the target group for the research is the Finnish market, it was a natural decision. The author acknowledges that there are people, especially in the leisure traveller survey, who belong to the target group but do not speak Finnish or would prefer any other language. The author did consider distributing second version of the survey in English also because it is the language of the thesis as well. However, the author believes that the amount of responses received in the English version would be extremely low. It would have a great influence in the stage of the analysis making it a lot more challenging for the author. However, the author did create copies of the surveys in English for the purpose of this thesis. Surveys can be found attached at the end of this thesis.

As Holliday (2002, 3.) signifies, the reliability of the responses in survey-based research may be lower as in a research where the data is collected using face-to-face interviews. When answering to surveys, people have tendency of answering something that is necessarily not the reality. The reason behind the phenomenon is not always pure lying but a failure in self-assessment. The author acknowledges this general problem, and strongly believes that the questions in the surveys of this research do not mislead or confuse the respondents.

4.3 Sampling

Sampling is something that a researcher needs to consider when calculating the preferred amount of responses. According to Finn & al. (2000, 108.), it is impossible to request all the Finnish citizens or all the Finnish leisure travel agencies to fill the survey. Instead, the researcher needs to take a sample of the population. A sample is a portion of the population that will illustrate the general opinion of the whole population, if chosen randomly. Random sample selection means that all the people that belong to the research group have equal rights to become selected as a respondent of the research.

Veal (1997, 209.) emphasizes that the size of the sample does not need to be proportional to the size of the whole population, which in this case would be the whole Finnish population who fly on their leisure time or all the Finnish travel agents who book flights for leisure travellers. He merely highlights the importance of the reliability and the size of the sample that the researcher takes. In the survey targeted for leisure travellers, the author aimed at receiving minimum of 100 responses. Because reaching travel agents is more difficult than reaching travellers, the aim in the second survey was to collect at least 20 responses. The author succeeded to receive sufficient amount of responses to both surveys since the total amount of responses for the first survey was 206 and for the second survey 40.

4.4 Data collection

As mentioned earlier, the author decided to collect the data for the research by creating two separate online surveys. The first survey was open from 11th January until 2nd February. Through the first survey, the author aimed at collecting responses of a wide range of leisure travellers. Social media was the first channel that the author used in sharing the address of the survey link. The author shared the link to the survey on her personal Facebook wall, from where a few other people also spread it forward. Several persons in the commissioning company shared the link as well on their social media sites. In addition, the author used widely her networks informing her friends, family and relatives about the survey.

Besides social media, the author contacted several Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences and other educational institutes. Further, she requested several travel agencies to participate in the research by sharing the link to their customers. Even though many of the contacted institutes expressed their interest in the research, they often did not have the resources to spread the link. Lahti University of Applied Sciences forwarded the link to their students and Helmi Business & Travel College shared the link among their teachers.

As mentioned earlier, the initial plan of the author in the first survey was to collect minimum of 100 responses. However, collecting responses closer to 200 than 100 was something that the author hoped for. When the author succeeded in collecting total amount of 206 responses, she received a satisfactory amount of responses and started the data analysis process.

The second survey was open from 6th February until 27th February. The commissioner kindly took care of the distribution of the second survey. The commissioner and the author reasoned that they would get more responses if the commissioner distributes the survey. The reason behind their decision was that the other students who contacted business travel agencies had issues with collecting enough responses. Another reason was that the author did send an e-mail with one travel agency but did not receive any responses, which proved that travel agents are often too busy to fill in surveys as this. Thus, the authority and the networks that the commissioner has in the industry have a huge impact on whether people answer to the survey or not, which the author benefited.

As the author already mentioned, the aim for the second survey was to collect minimum of 20 responses. The total amount of responses collected was 40, which was especially satisfying result for the author.

4.5 Data analysis

The author used Webropol, Excel and SPSS in the analysis of the first survey. First, she took an overall glimpse of the results using Webropol's own cross-tabulation tool. In this way, the author was able to form an overall picture of the tables and figures she might need to in visualising the results. After that, the author transferred the responses to Excel. The author used Excel's figures in creating the simple figures such as gender distribution.

In creating figures and charts, the author mostly used SPSS. In the most complex questions, the author used again the cross-tabulation function of Webropol, which allowed her to calculate average rates for certain questions. By comparing the average rates, the author was able to examine the results of various respondent groups easily. The author used the Text Mining function of Webropol in analysing open-ended questions. It automatically creates mind-maps of the responses and informs how often respondents have mentioned specific words.

The method that the author used in analysing the second survey was mostly the same as she used in the first survey. The only difference in analysing the results was that the au-

thor decided to create all the tables and charts with Excel in the second survey. The author decided to do so because the structure of this survey was simpler than in the first one.

In this chapter, we went through various important topics regarding the conduction of the research. First, the author clarified that in the research she has used two online surveys that she has spread to leisure travellers and leisure travel agents. We found out that the author collected samples of 206 and 40 respondents, which was satisfying for her. The author analysed the surveys with the help of Webropol, Excel and SPSS. After having gone through how the author conducted the research, it is logical to continue with the explanation of the results.

5 Results

This chapter will introduce the findings of the research. Results will be represented in the same order with the questions in the actual surveys, which will make it easier to read and follow. The author will use tables and figures to illustrate the key findings in each question. First, the author will introduce the findings of the first survey. After that, she will continue explaining the results of the second survey.

5.1 Leisure travellers' survey

As mentioned before, the first survey was targeted for leisure travellers and the aim was to measure their experiences, opinions and habits in terms of purchasing ancillaries. The total amount of responses was 206. Figure 4 illustrates the distribution between the genders of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were female. The total amount of respondents was 71% (N=147). The amount of male respondents was 29% (N=59).

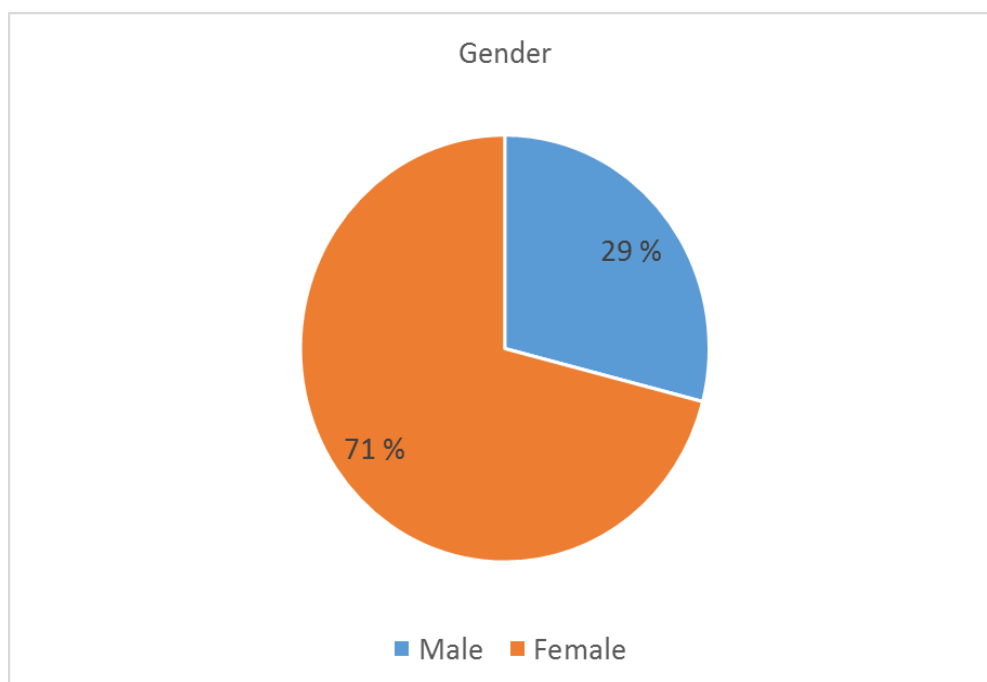


Figure 4. Gender distribution.

Figure 5 depicts the age distribution. It clarifies that the majority of the respondents (61%) were young adults, belonging to the age group 18 – 29. The author managed to collect a wide range of responses from other age groups as well. People aged between 30 and 65 years account to 33% of all the respondents. The author was able to collect 10 responses also from the elderly respondents, accounting 5% of all the received responses. Lastly, 1% (N=2) of the respondents were younger than 18 years.

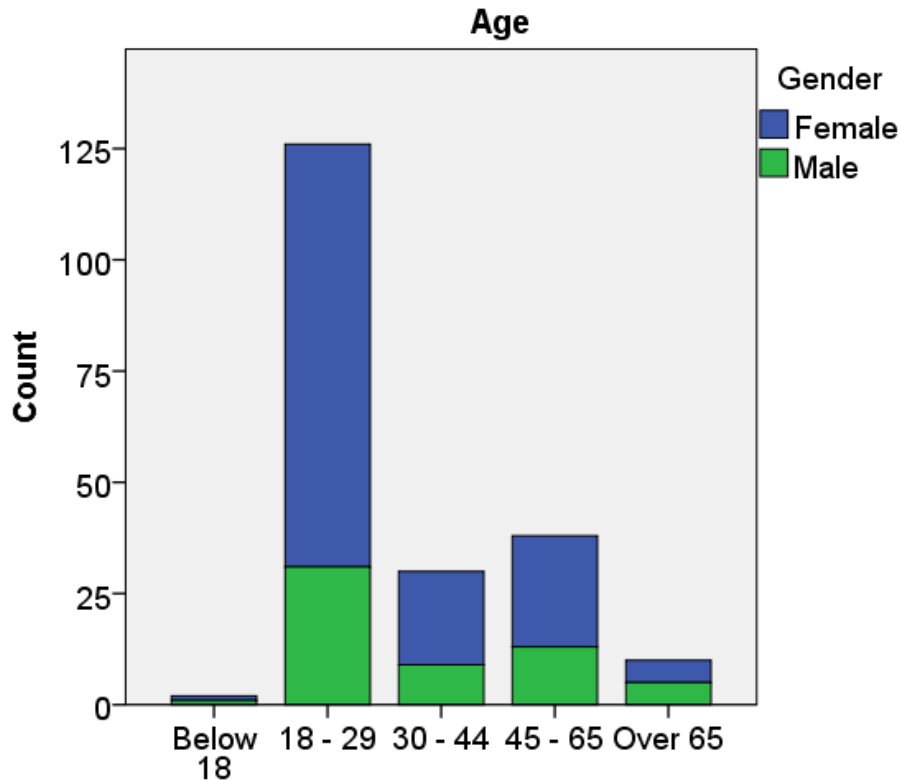


Figure 5. Age distribution by gender.

Since only two under aged respondents answered to the survey, the author could not generalise that their responses represent an overall picture of the whole age group. Hence, the author decided to leave those responses out of her deeper, verbal analysis. Their responses are included in the figures and totals but the author will not explain them further.

The author realized that since young female adults were an obvious majority group, she could not always generalize all the responses to all age groups. Instead, she first looked at each survey question as a whole. After that, the author used cross-tabulation in order to receive results based on the respondents' gender and age. The reasons why the majority of the respondents were young females may be that young adults are generally more interested in the topic. Since they do not necessarily have families yet, they also have more time to travel on their free time. Older people may be more afraid of travelling and they use Internet and social media less than younger respondents. Since the survey was mostly distributed on social media, the amount of elderly respondents might also result from that.

Table 1 shows the responses that the author received from the third question where she asked how often the respondents approximately fly to specific destinations per year. In order to analyse the question effectively, the author transferred the responses into values. The alternative “Fewer than once” equals 1, “Once” equals 2 and so on. Thus, the author sums up that if the average number is small, respondents do not fly there frequently. A bigger number means more respondents flying there more frequently.

Table 1. The amount of how many times respondents travel to specific destinations.

How many times do you approximately travel to following destinations per year?	Fewer than once	Once	2 - 3 times	4 - 5 times	More than 5 times	Average
Within Finland	148	30	16	4	8	1,51
Other Nordic countries	148	44	10	2	2	1,38
Other European countries	16	95	80	10	5	2,48
Countries outside Europe	93	97	13	0	3	1,66

As Table 1 depicts, respondents obviously fly most frequently to other European countries on their leisure time. Their secondary destinations are countries outside Europe and third within Finland. The respondents fly least to other Nordic countries. People often choose trains, cars or ferries as their primary ways of transportation, if the destination is relatively close to their origin. This could explain the reason for why people do not fly to destinations within Finland and Nordic countries as frequently. The age group of 45 – 65 flies generally more than the other age groups. Otherwise, there were no particular differences between age or gender groups.

Next, the author wanted to find out respondents habits to look for suitable flights for themselves. Figure 6 shows the results from that particular question. Flight comparison sites are the most used channel to look for flights among the respondents. Airlines’ webpages and travel agencies’ webpages are two next popular channels, leaving mobile apps and visiting travel agencies the last. In this question, there was also an option to choose “Something else” and then specify it. A respondent answering to that expressed that someone else is in charge of looking for the flight whereas another respondent expressed that he/she uses the flight schedules on the webpages of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport.

Flight comparison sites are especially popular among young adults, for nearly 80% of them chose them as their preferred channel. Figure 6 clearly shows that it is the most popular channel among people aged 30 – 44 as well. There is a clear change in the pattern when considering the older age groups. Respondents belonging in the age group 45 – 65 slightly prefer looking for flights on airlines’ websites compared to flight comparison

sites. The oldest age group clearly prefers looking for flights through travel agencies and airlines' websites. They are also the main age group who visits travel agencies offices in order to look for their flights. There were not specific differences in the questions based on genders.

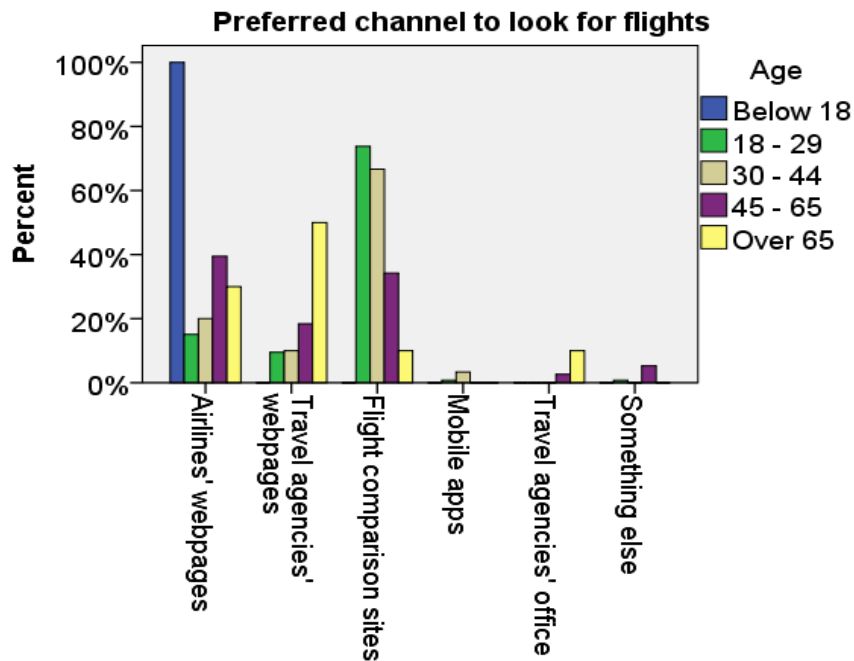


Figure 6. Respondents' preferred channel to look for flights.

After finding out the respondents' preferred channel to look for flights, the author wanted to find out their preferred channels to book their flights. Figure 7 represents the results from this question. As opposed to their preferred channel to look for flights, respondents tend to use airlines' webpages more in booking than in searching for flights. Otherwise, the overall results from this question were similar. An individual respondent expressed that he/she prefers booking where he/she can get the flight with the lowest price.

However, the majority (48%) of all the respondents that belong to the age group 18 – 29 still prefer booking through flight comparison sites. People from the age groups 30 – 44 and 45 – 65 both prefer booking through airlines' webpages, even though they do use mobile applications and the services of travel agents as well. The elderly group is again the one that uses mostly travel agencies and their webpages. However, a noticeable amount (40%) of the elderly informed that they prefer booking straight from airlines' webpages. There were not specific differences in the responses between male and female respondents.

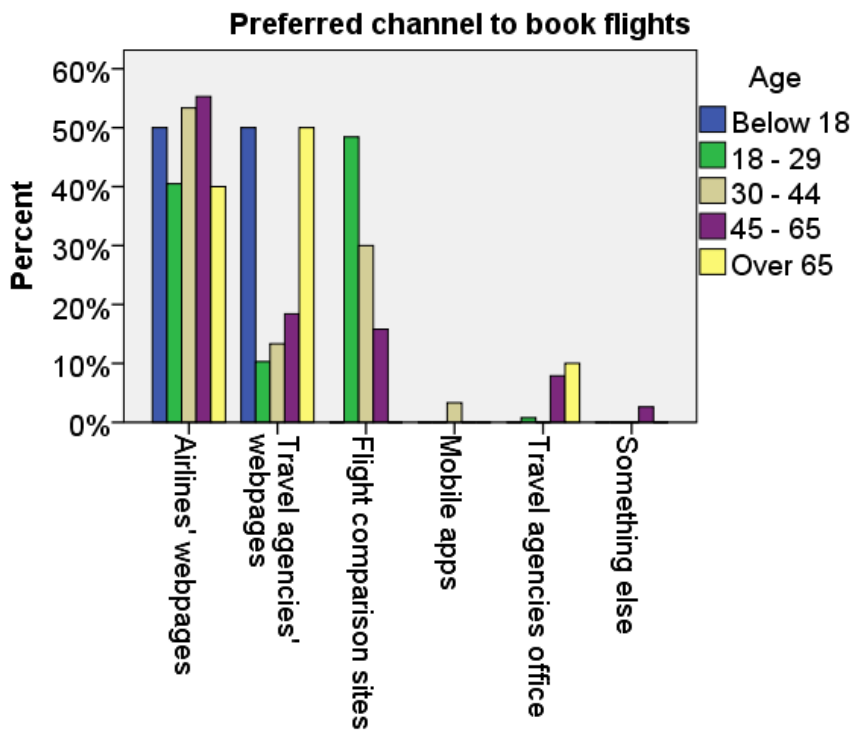


Figure 7. Respondents' preferred channel to book flights.

In order to find out more background information on the respondents' booking habits, the author wanted to find out their preferred payment methods. As shown in Figure 8, respondents' preferred payment method is obviously credit card payment. There is a slight interest towards wire transfer as well, but the difference between credit card and wire transfer is still quite noticeable. There is a minor interest towards receiving invoice before the trip as well.

Especially the three older age groups prefer credit card payment compared to other payment options. There is a slight difference in the age group of young adults. Exactly 47% (N=59) of them prefer both credit card payment and wire transfer. An explanation for the interest toward wire transfers among young adults could be their age. Since they are still relatively young, they might not yet have credit cards. There were not significant differences in the responses between male and female respondents.

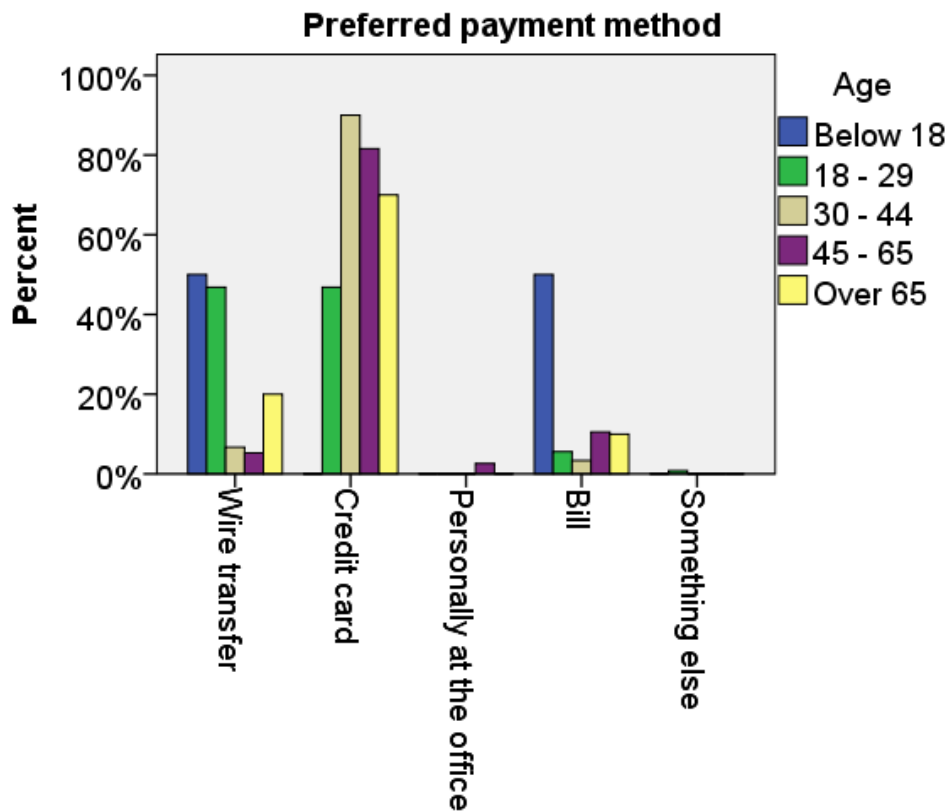


Figure 8. Respondents' preferred payment method.

After the author found out the respondents' preferences and habits throughout the whole booking process, she wanted to identify the most important criteria of the respondents when they are selecting their flights. The author did not want to limit or guide respondents' opinions, which is the reason why she decided to create an open-ended question.

The responses the author received were quite as she expected. The author observed that more than 150 of the respondents mentioned the word "price" as such. Altogether with the comments including words such as "budget" and "affordability", the author adds up that an obvious majority of the respondents stated that the price of the flight is their most important criterion. Further, the amount of stopovers, the duration of the flight and the reputation of the airline were the most popular criteria for selecting a specific flight.

A few respondents also stated that the ancillary services the airlines provide are important criteria when they are selecting their flights. Most of them mentioned that luggage, meals and pet transportation are the most important reasons to choose a specific airline.

Since the time of the flight purchase is a great opportunity for the airlines to sell more ancillaries, the author wanted to find out whether the respondents have received any information of ancillaries simultaneously when they purchase their flight. Figure 9 shows the

results. As it demonstrates, the majority of the respondents have received information of ancillaries at the time of the booking. Nearly as equal amount (41%) have received that information in certain cases but not always. Only 5% of all the respondents have never received any information about ancillaries when making the booking. There were not significant differences in the responses based on respondents' gender or age.

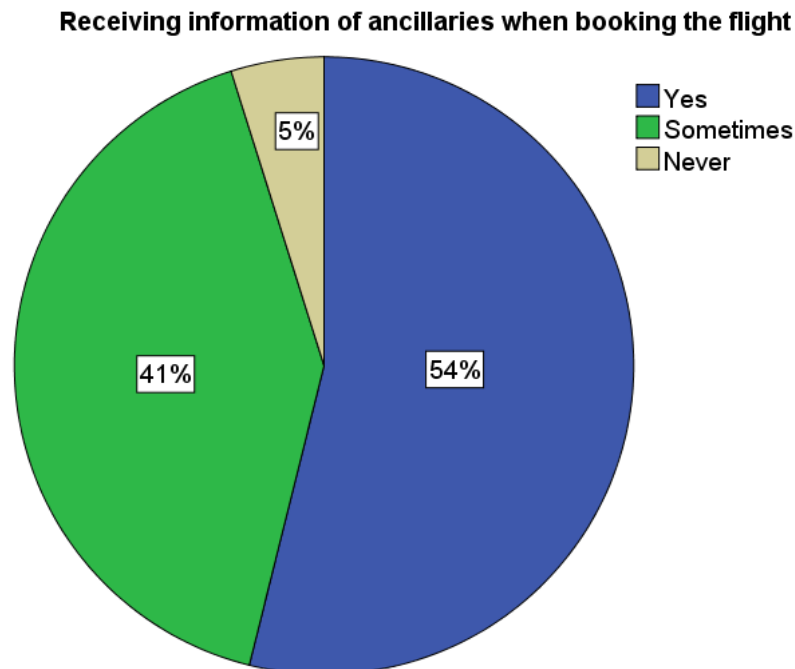


Figure 9. Whether respondents have received information about ancillaries when they booked the flight.

Next, it was important for the author to find out if the respondents are familiar with how to book ancillaries. As Figure 10 illustrates, the majority of all the respondents feel comfortable with their knowledge of how to book ancillary services for flights. However, the gap is extremely narrow compared to those who stated that they only partly know how to book them. People are obviously somewhat confused with where to book which ancillary service. Only an obvious minority has expressed that they are unaware of where to book ancillaries.

The author illustrates also an exceptional finding in Figure 10. Younger respondents are perceptually more unaware of how to book ancillaries than older. The most confident age group in booking ancillaries is the oldest age group. Up to 80% of the respondents over 65 (N=8) answered that they do know how they are booked, whereas the equivalent percentage of the young adults' age group is only 42% (N=53). The overall amount of the elderly respondents in the research was significantly lower than other adult respondent groups,

which may have affected the results. The author did not find any differences in the responses based on the respondents' gender.

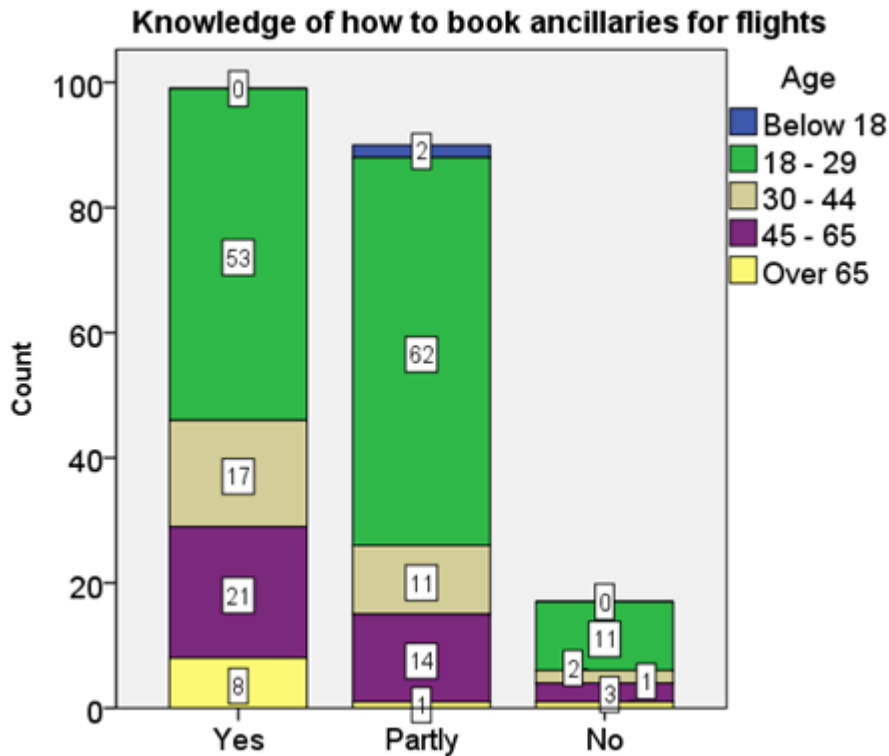


Figure 10. Respondents' knowledge of how to book ancillary services according to their age groups.

After finding out respondents' knowledge and experiences about ancillary services, the author moved on to find out when they prefer to book ancillaries for their flights. As Figure 11 clearly illustrates, the majority of the respondents (58%) books ancillaries preferably at the same time when booking the flight. 27% indicate that they never book ancillaries for their flights, and 12% prefers doing it a couple of days before the flight. Only three respondents expressed that they rather book ancillaries on the same day of the flight, if possible.

What the author found interesting is that even though the general amount of female respondents is higher than the amount of male respondents, all the three respondents who prefer to book ancillaries only on the same day when they are flying are male. The author sums up that females seem to prefer booking ancillaries earlier than males.

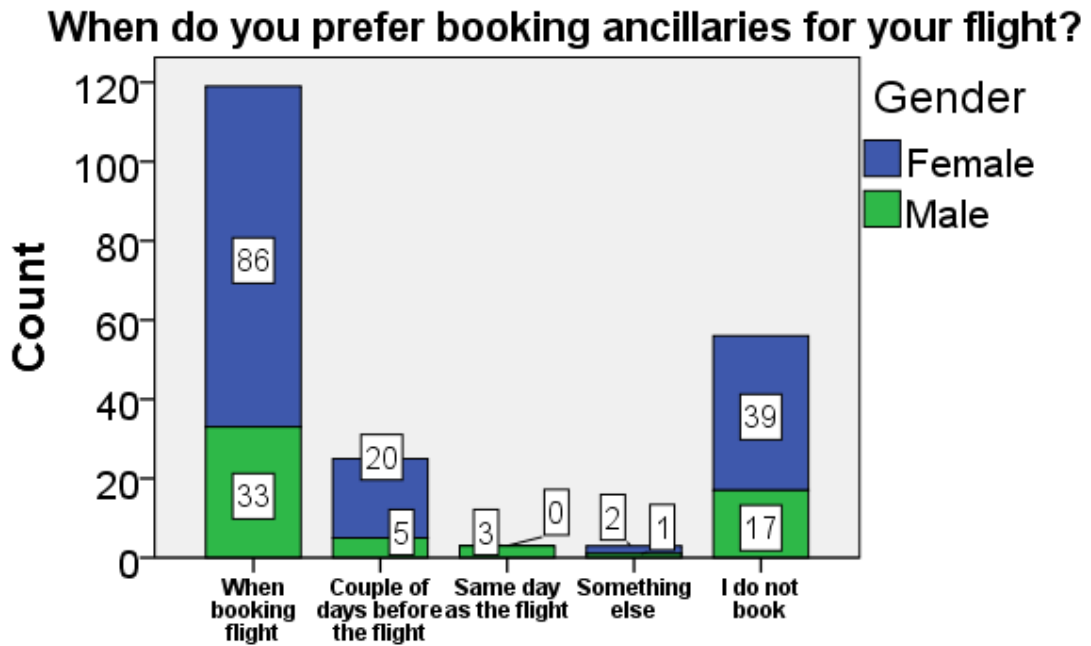


Figure 11. Respondents' preferred timing for booking ancillaries.

The next question in the survey measured which are the preferred channels for respondents to receive marketing and other similar information. The author decided that since people receive flight information from multiple channels, respondents should be able to choose more alternatives than one. The total amount of responses in this question was altogether 328.

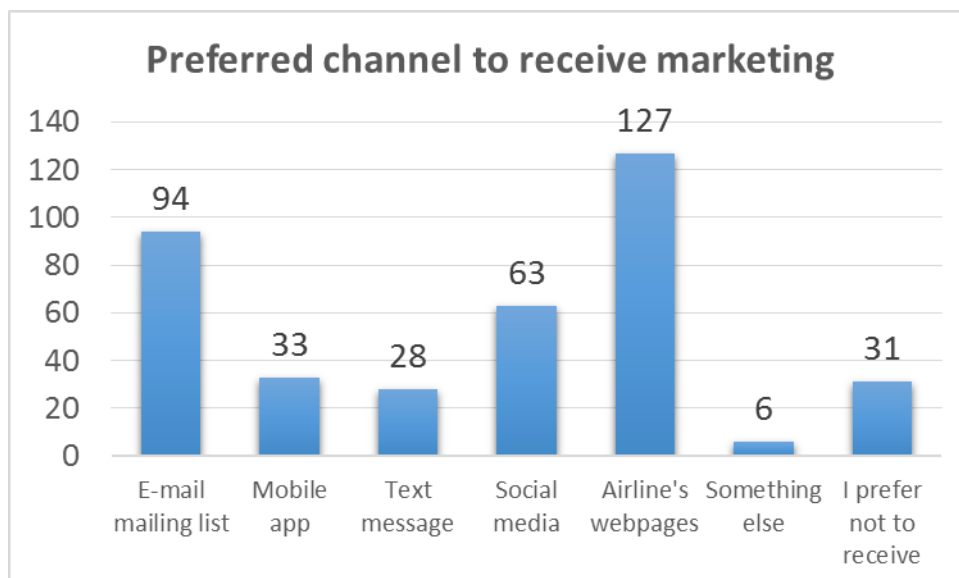


Figure 12. Respondents' preferred ancillary marketing channels.

As Figure 12 demonstrates, the majority of respondents (N=127) think that they rather encounter ancillary marketing on the webpages where they make the booking. Even though mobile devices and social media keep growing their importance in marketing, the second popular (N=94) option was mailing list through e-mail. Social media comes as third popular (N=63) channel to receive marketing. All the other alternatives received more or less a similar amount of responses. Respondents who chose the alternative “Something else” mostly hoped that ancillaries would be marketed personally either online when booking the flight or later by e-mail.

The author wanted to find out, whether the gender has an effect on respondents’ responses. Table 2 illustrates three main sections, where the author found difference. Males are more interested in receiving marketing through mobile applications. Even though the overall amount of female respondents is much higher than the amount of male respondents, there were slightly more responses from males stating that they want to receive marketing through a mobile application. On the other hand, Table 2 shows that females are more interested in marketing that takes place online through social media or webpages where they make the booking.

Table 2. Major differences in the preferred marketing channel according to respondents’ gender.

Gender	Mobile app	Social media	Airlines webpages
Female (N=147)	11% (N=16)	33% (N=48)	64% (N=94)
Male (N=59)	29% (N=17)	25% (N=15)	56% (N=33)

When the author researched if there are differences in the responses between various age groups, she found out that young adults are more reluctant in receiving marketing via text message (Figure 12). Only 8% of young adults stated that they wish to receive marketing via text message, whereas 20%-27% of the older age groups did. On the other hand, young adults seem to prefer social media as their marketing channel with 37% of them choosing that alternative. Another interesting finding is that elderly people seem to be interested in ancillary marketing in general, since none of the respondents chose the alternative “I would rather not receive marketing”. Further, from the age group of 30 – 44 only 7% stated that they rather do not receive marketing, whereas 16 – 18% of young adults and respondents between 45 and 65 stated so.

Table 3. Major differences in the preferred marketing channels according to respondents' age.

Age group	Text message	Social media	Prefers not to receive
18 -29 (N=126)	8% (N=10)	37% (N=47)	18% (N=23)
30 - 44 (N=30)	27% (N=8)	20% (N=6)	7% (N=2)
45 - 65 (N=38)	21% (N=8)	21% (N=8)	16% (N=6)
Over 65 (N=10)	20% (N=2)	10% (N=1)	0 %

After receiving information about respondents' habits and experiences along the flight booking process, the author moved on to find out their opinions of specific ancillaries. The author asked how important it is for the respondents if certain ancillary services were included in the price. Respondents were able to choose an option that is closest to their opinion from alternatives "Not at all", "Not much", "Neutral", "Somewhat" and "Much". The author used cross-tabulation in the analysis, transferring the alternatives to values. Number 1 equals the alternative "Not at all", 2 equals "Not much" and so forth, until the last number 5 equals "Much". In this way, the author was able to calculate average results of each section (Figure 13.). Hence, a high average rate implies high interest towards a specific ancillary service.

The author realized that there are certain ancillaries that are targeted only for a specific group, such as pet transfers are targeted for pet owners only. Respondents may find it challenging and confusing to rate those ancillaries, if they do not belong to the target group. The author recognises the effect that this might have in the results of the research.

According to Figure 13, luggage and on-flight meal are the most important ancillaries for the respondents in general. They are the only ancillaries that have an average rate below 4. Wi-Fi on board, pre seat selection, entertainment on board, collecting Reward Points and extra legroom are another ancillaries that the respondents rated rather important than meaningless (average rate below 3). However, the respondents rated that several ancillaries are closer to meaningless than important. Those were transfers to the city, bypassing the airport queues, accompanying service for minors, insurance, access to lounge, special luggage and transportation of pets. Low interest towards many ancillaries might occur because not all the respondents belong to the target group of the ancillary. For instance, transportation of pets is something that only affects the people who own a pet. Respondents did not rate any of the ancillaries below 2, which implies that there is a market for each of them.

The main difference that the author found out when examining the results according to respondents' gender was that male respondents do not want to spend their time at the

airport queuing. The average rate of bypassing the airport queues was 3.15 for males whereas female respondents rated it only as 2.73. Otherwise, there were no major differences in the responses according to gender.

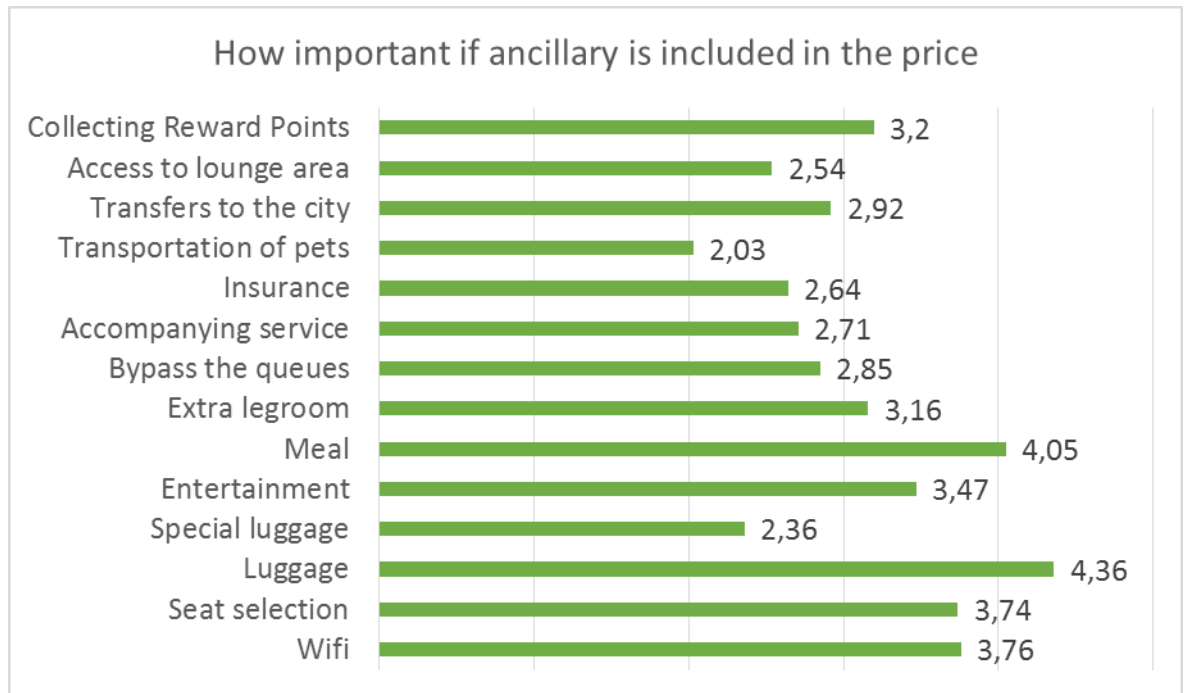


Figure 13. Respondents' opinions of how important specific ancillaries are if they are included in the flight ticket.

The author found slightly more variety in the responses when examining them according to age groups. It is clear that younger respondents value Wi-Fi connection more than older. The average rate of young adults was 4.08 and for respondents between 30 and 44 it was 3.8, whereas the two older age groups rated Wi-Fi below 3. Another ancillary that fascinates especially younger respondents is on-flight entertainment. The youngest age group rated it as 3.81 and the two following age groups around 3, while the average of the elderly is clearly lower; 2.3. The youngest age group rated on-flight meal highest as well with the average rate of 4.25. For the other age groups the average rate is between 3.68 and 3.8.

Extra legroom is something that the elderly respondents are most interested in. They rated it as 4.2 whereas for the younger age groups the rate varies from 2.97 to 3.26. Another finding is that the interest towards bypassing airport queues seems to grow when aging. The youngest age group rated it as 2.71 and the oldest as 3.5. Other age groups are in the middle. Further, the elderly rated accompanying service for minors the highest with the average of 3.4, which is followed by the two second youngest groups with an average rate around 2.7. The lowest average rate (2.34) comes from the second oldest age group.

Reason behind this phenomenon could be that the children of people between 45 and 65 are already relatively old, which makes accompanying service irrelevant for them. Since the elderly often value safety and easiness when travelling, they have also rated transfers to the city the highest. Their average rate for transfers is 3.8 whereas all the other age groups rated it below 3.

After figuring out respondents' interests towards certain ancillaries, the author wanted to find out what is their readiness to purchase them in case they are not included in the price. The author used the same ancillaries and alternatives as in the previous section. She conducted the analysis in the same way as well, transferring each option into values and calculating the average rate of each ancillary. The same pattern applies in this case; if the average rate is high, respondents are likely to purchase it separately.

Before examining specific ancillaries separately, the author wants to make a notion that the average rates of this question are generally lower than in the question where respondents had to rate their interest towards ancillaries. Figure 14 illustrates the findings of this. Therefore, the author wants to clarify that respondents do see the value of most ancillaries but they are not as likely to purchase them separately in their flight ticket. The only ancillaries that respondents rated more or less similarly in both questions was special luggage (importance average rate 2.36 and purchase likeliness 2.22) and transportation of pets (importance average rate 2.03 and purchase likeliness 1.97). The author believes that the reason behind the pattern is that people who need special luggage or transportation for pets would appreciate if it were included in the price. However, customers who need such services are required and accustomed to pay for them separately due to current policies.

There are only two ancillaries that the respondents rated above 3. They are the same ancillaries that the respondents think are most important, luggage and meal. The author wants to emphasise that in this section especially luggage clearly stands out from the other ancillaries, implying that over one quarter of the respondents are ready to purchase it separately. What the author found unexpected was that transfers to the city is clearly the third popular option with the rate 2.72. Even though many respondents do not see that transfers are important addition combined with the flight ticket, the people who see the value of it are also ready to purchase it separately.

All the other ancillaries have average rates between 1.88 and 2.45. What the author finds remarkable is that even though the respondents obviously value if especially Wi-Fi, seat selection and on-flight entertainment included in the price, they are not overly likely to pur-

chase them in case they are not included in the price. The author believes that the respondents see those ancillaries more as an addition to their journey rather than a necessity. As already mentioned before, the phenomenon is another in services such as accompanying service for minors or pet transportation. The ancillary is a necessity for the most customers who are interested in it, which grows their likelihood to purchase it.

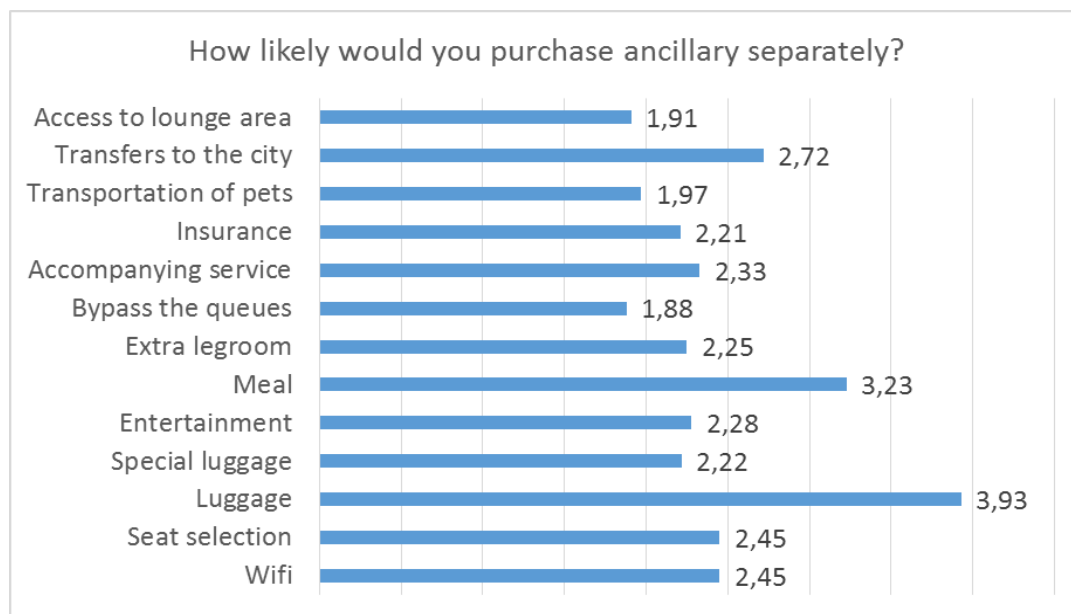


Figure 14. Respondents' likelihood in purchasing specific ancillaries separately.

The author used cross-tabulation in order to find out whether male or female respondents are more likely to purchase specific ancillaries. In the previous section, the author clarified that male respondents do not enjoy queuing at the airport. The author found out that they are also more likely to pay for avoiding it. When measuring male respondents' likelihood in purchasing the access to bypass the airport queues, the average rate was 2.17 whereas the average rate for the female respondents was only 1.77. Instead of queuing, males seem to choose spending their time rather at airline's lounge area. They are more likely to purchase lounge access than females (males' average rate 2.24, females' 1.78). In addition, males are also more likely to purchase Wi-Fi on-board (males' average 3, females' 2.22). The author found out that females are more likely to purchase luggage separately. They rated luggage with an average rate of 4.11 whereas male respondents only as 3.49.

When examining the findings according to the respondents' age, the author found out that younger respondents are more likely to purchase Wi-Fi on-board than the older. The average rate for the two lowest age groups was around 2.5 whereas for the two older groups it was around 2.2. Younger respondents are also more likely to purchase luggage separately. In that section, the average rate for the two youngest age groups was around 4,

and the average rate for the two older age groups was only around 3.5. Further, the author discovered that the young and the elderly are not as likely to purchase pre seat selection as the age groups in the middle. The two age groups from 30 – 65 rated seat selection nearly as 3, whereas the young and the elderly less than 2.5. The author believes that this phenomenon can occur because the young and the elderly travel more often alone or with a partner than with a family.

Previously, the author clarified that, compared to other age groups, the elderly have the highest interest towards extra legroom, bypassing the queues, accompany service for minors and transportation to the city. According to the author's findings, they are also more willing to pay for those services and book them separately. Respondents between 45 and 65 years of age are as likely to purchase the ability to bypass the airport queues as the elderly. Apart from that, the likelihood of the elderly to buy any of those ancillaries is undoubtedly the highest compared to all the other age groups. In addition to the previously mentioned ancillaries, the author found out that the elderly are also most likely to purchase special luggage with the average rate of 3.1. The average rate from all the other age groups varies between 2.05 and 2.47.

After finding out the respondents' opinions of specific ancillaries and their likelihood in purchasing them separately, the author aimed at finding out their opinions of merchandising and ancillaries in general. She created six statements concerning ancillaries, and requested the respondents to rate those according to their opinions. Respondents were able to choose from five alternatives, "Disagree", "Partly disagree", "Neutral", "Partly agree" and "Agree". The author transferred the responses into values in a similar way as in two previous sections, creating average rate for each statement.

Figure 15 illustrates the findings of this question. The average rates of nearly all of the statements were above 3, which signifies that the overall opinion of respondents on ancillaries is positive. The author reasons that the respondents have realized the point of merchandising, because they mostly agreed that airlines are able to offer more personalized services by offering ancillaries. The only statement that the respondents mostly disagreed was the statement "It is easy to compare the ancillaries offered by different airlines." From this, the author reasons that the respondents are confused with the variety of services and various fees that airlines offer.

The author did not find any specific differences in the responses based on their gender. However, when she analysed the results based on respondents' age groups, she did find an extraordinary difference. When the respondents rated the statement "I am excited to

see the range of ancillary services provided in the future”, the young adults and the age group 45 – 65 seem to be more excited about ancillaries in the future than the other age groups. They rated the statement as 3.63 and 3.71, whereas the age group 30 – 44 and the elderly rated it only as 3.2 and 3.3.

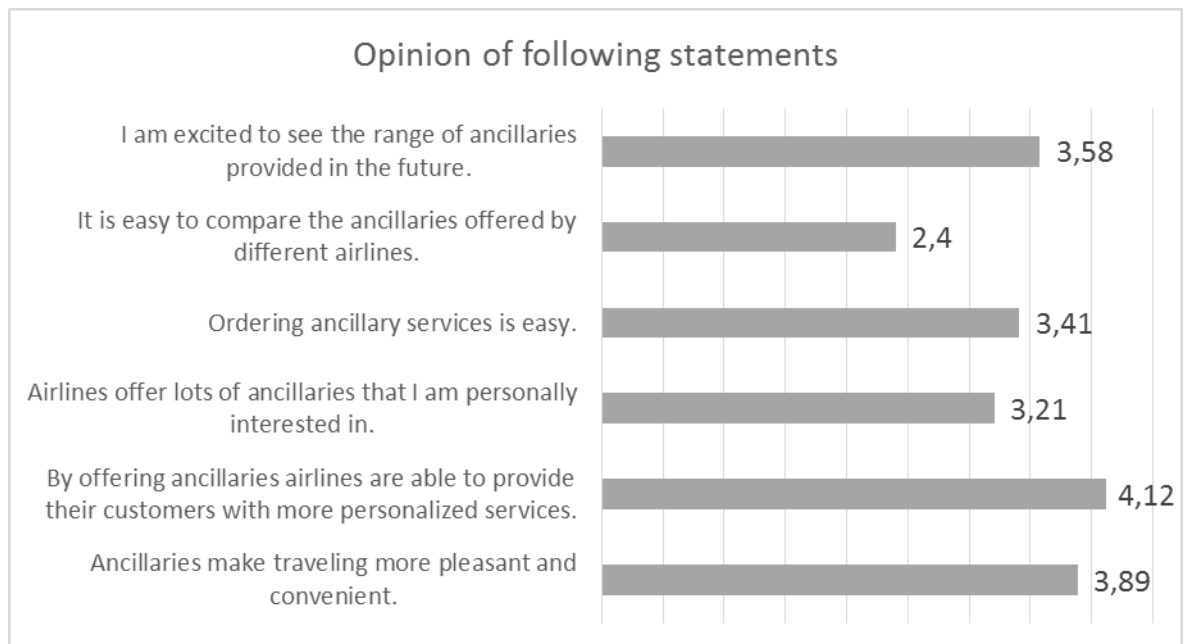


Figure 15. Respondents’ opinions of certain statements.

The author was also interested in finding out the factors that could possibly make customers purchase more ancillaries in the future. The author gave several alternatives and a section for the respondents to clarify an answer of their own. The respondents were able to select multiple alternatives in this question as well. The author managed to collect altogether 330 responses from 206 respondents.

The author has depicted the results of this question in Figure 16. As expected, the obviously most selected alternative was the price. 175 respondents out of 206 stated that they would be willing to purchase more ancillaries if the price was lower. Other alternatives were not even close to receiving that many responses. What the author wants to emphasise is that only 23 of 206 respondents expressed that they are not interested in purchasing ancillaries in the future, which shows that the majority are interested in them.

The respondents who chose the alternative “Something else” mostly highlighted the importance of Wi-Fi and high-quality meal options on-board. There were many who also wished that the airlines would present and market ancillaries better online and that their webpages would include more information about ancillaries in general.

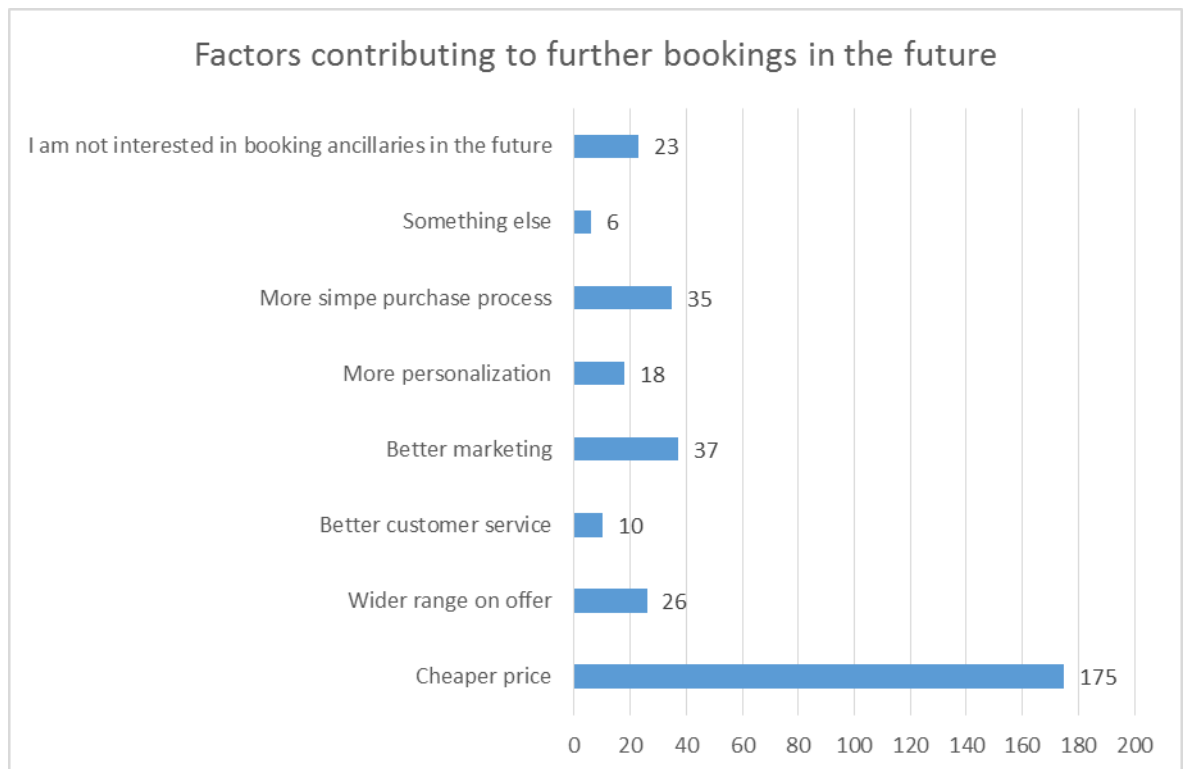


Figure 16. Factors that would contribute in the sales of ancillaries in the future.

When the author used cross-tabulation in order to find out whether there was any differences between the genders she found out that female respondents are more interested in booking ancillaries in the future. Only 8% of all the female respondents stated that they are not interested in booking ancillaries in the future, whereas the amount of the male respondents was 19%. Otherwise, the gender division in this section was relatively even.

Again, the author found more variation in the responses when she researched them according to respondents' age groups. The age group 45 – 65 does not value price as much in their booking as the other age groups. Only a little bit more than half of the respondents in that age group chose price as their influential factor, whereas a clear majority (more than 80%) of all the other age groups chose price as their determinant in booking more ancillaries. The author reasons that people in that age have been in working life for quite a while, which implies that they are more likely to earn more money than the younger and elderly. Thus, they do not need to be as price focused as the other age groups. None of the elderly stated that they would require better marketing, whereas 17%-21% of all the other age groups did. In addition, the author found out that the elderly seem to be the age group who is less interested in the ancillaries in the future with 40% of respondents choosing that alternative. Respondents who are aged between 30 and 44 are most interested in

them since only one of their representatives expressed that they are not interested in ancillaries at all in the future.

The author wanted the last obligatory question to handle the ancillaries that the respondents wish to purchase in the future. The author set the question as an open-ended question in order to allow the respondents to share their ideas and thoughts freely.

Approximately half of the respondents stated that they are happy with the current situation. One of the most important ancillary for the future was free Wi-Fi that the customers could use with their own devices. A few respondents also expressed their interest towards borrowing/renting tablets from the airline. Personalized and free on-flight entertainment such as movies, music, books, newspapers and Sudoku are also something that the respondents are interested in in the future. Furthermore, respondents find meals, snacks and beverages important in the future as well. They mentioned that they are especially interested in diverse and high-quality selection, free snacks and coffee. Many express that the need for all of those services are naturally dependent on the duration of the flight; customers need them more on long-haul flights.

Several respondents mentioned that they wish to have more personalized services in the future. They wish that the airlines would utilize regular customer programs more than they do now. Respondents suggest that airlines could implement better personalization through more developed mobile applications, which would also enable them to book ancillaries there. Several respondents also express their interest towards information packages about the destination, which could also include personalized offers and suggestions at the destination. There was also a suggestion to give away small, personalized items with customers' names.

Comfort on-board, in the form of larger seats and extra legroom, was something that several respondents mentioned. The respondents also expressed that they would appreciate blankets and pillows especially on long-haul flights. Their wish was also to receive solutions for the lack of space. They mentioned that a special room for jacket and other personal items would make their journey more pleasant. Furthermore, respondents expressed that they are interested both in pre-ordering tax-free items that are waiting for them on their seats and children-free departments.

Several respondents wished that airlines would consider efficient and clear solutions when developing their services. Respondents wish to receive more guidance at the airport in between their connecting flights. In addition, several respondents mentioned that the

transportation from the airport would save them from queuing taxis or waiting for buses. The respondents continued that airlines' cooperation with each other and travel agencies would benefit customers, providing them with more versatile and affordable options.

Lastly, the author allowed the respondents to share their ideas concerning the survey or the topic in general. The question was not obligatory, and the total amount of responses that the author received was 44. The comments about the survey were mostly positive feedback of the topic and the questions. However, a few respondents expressed that they had difficulties in rating specific ancillaries because they might not have a need for it now, but may have later in life. Another issue was that the respondents might be interested in the ancillary for long-haul flight but not for shorter flights, which makes the rating challenging for them. As the author has already expressed earlier, she does understand the effect of this in terms of delivering useful results.

A few respondents expressed their concern over unbundling in general. They stated that it is not fair for the customer if airlines unbundle their services and the customers cannot see it in the ticket prices. They also criticized the compulsion of paying for seat selection, which many of them see as a mere fare collection. Besides, a couple of respondents stated that they are expecting the emergence of an unbiased flight comparison site that would compare ancillaries as well.

5.2 Leisure travel agent survey

As mentioned earlier, the respondents of the second survey were travel agents who book leisure trips for their customers. The survey focused measuring their experiences, opinions and habits especially in terms of booking ancillaries. The author was able to collect altogether 40 responses.

The percentage of female respondents in the second survey was even higher than in the first survey. The results are depicted in Figure 17. Even 85% (N=34) of all the respondents were females, whereas the percentage of the male respondents was only 15% (N=6). The author acknowledges the effect that this gender distribution might have in the results of the research. Nevertheless, collecting equal amounts of responses from both genders was not likely because the entire industry is particularly female-dominant. The author acknowledges the effect that the low amount of male respondents may falsify the results. Nonetheless, she decided to give their responses as much value as females' responses.

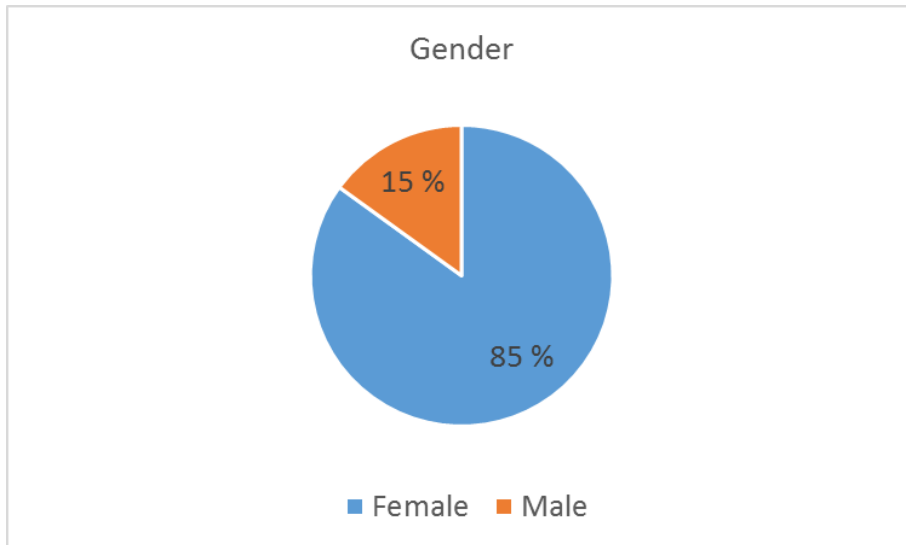


Figure 17. Gender distribution.

Figure 18 shows the age distribution between the respondents. A majority of the respondents belongs to age group 45 – 65, which is 65% (N=26) of all the respondents. 30 – 44 is the second largest group with 30% (N=12) of the respondents belonging in it. Lastly, only 5% (=2) belongs to the age group 18 – 29. The author was surprised by the lack of younger professionals. Nevertheless, she reasons that the absent of 65 year olds is obvious because most of them are not in work life anymore.

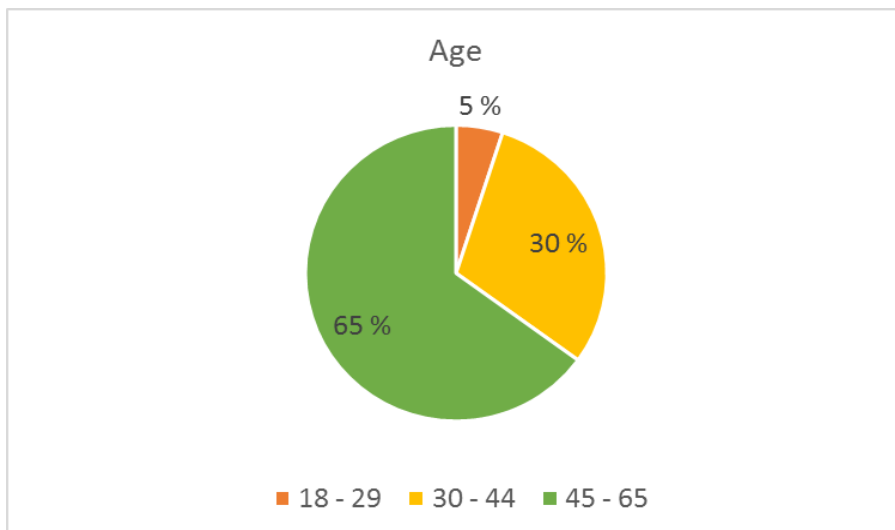


Figure 18. Age distribution.

In order to diminish errors in the results, the author did not consider the youngest age group's responses when she did cross-tabulations. Their responses are merely calculated in the totals. The author did not find any specific differences in the age distribution according to genders of the respondents.

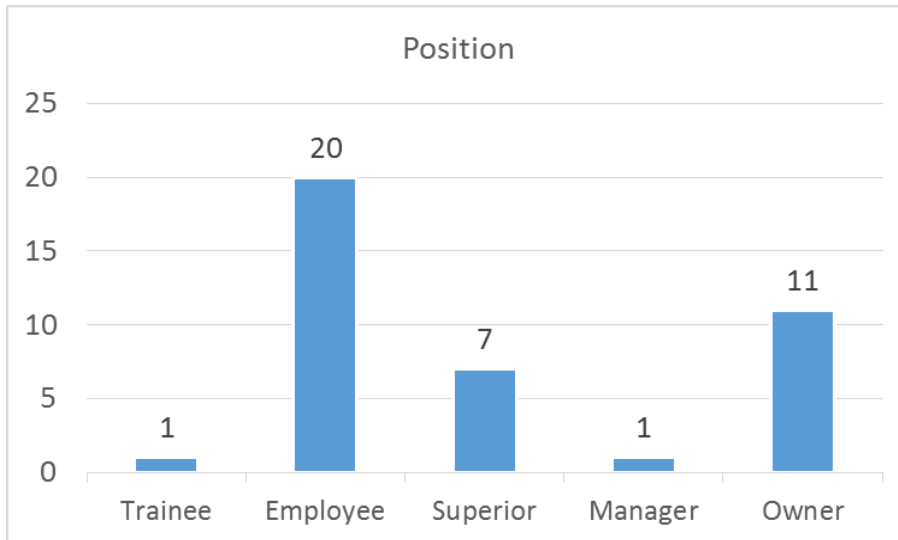


Figure 19. Respondents' positions at their current workplaces.

Next, in order to examine possible differences between the respondents' current positions, the purpose of the first actual question was to find out the respondents' current positions. As Figure 19 illustrates, the majority (50%) of all the respondents are ordinary employees. The amount of Owners and Superiors are between 20% and 30%, whereas only two respondents have identified themselves as Manager and Trainee. The author decided to exclude the responses of the Trainee and Manager when she did the cross-tabulation according to positions. The reason is the same as in the previous section; the author wants to diminish errors by concentrating on the sections that have received more responses. Nevertheless, the author counted the answers of Trainee and Manager in the totals.

When the author cross-tabulated the results based on the respondents' genders, she found out that male respondents hold generally higher positions than females. Even 56% of females are employees whereas the amount of male employees is only 17%. In addition, the amount of Owners is slightly bigger in the age group 30 – 44 (42%) than in the age group 45 – 65 (23%).

The author wanted to find out the flight booking frequencies of the respondents by asking how many times they approximately book a flight per day. Figure 20 illustrates the findings. The majority of the respondents (40%) books 2 – 5 flights per day. 50% state that they book more than five flights per day. A minority (10%) books less than one flight per day.

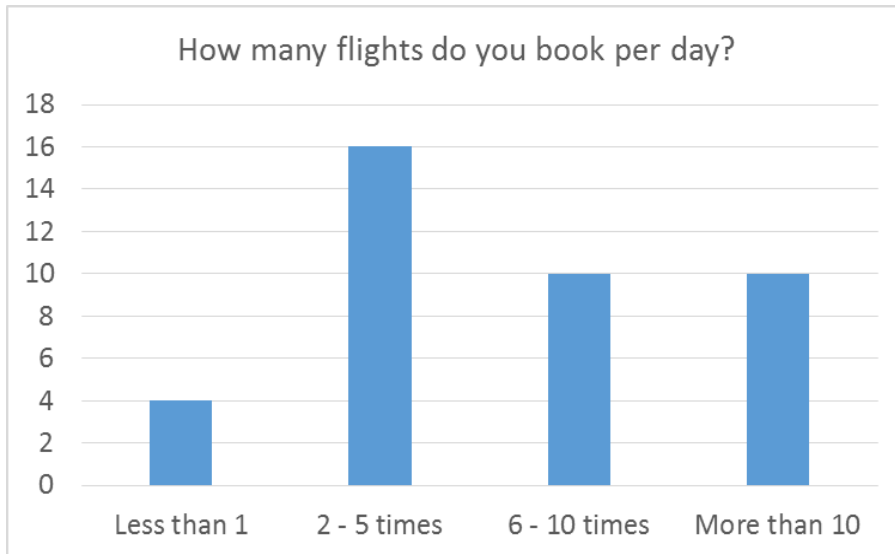


Figure 20. The amount of how many flights do the respondents approximately book per day.

When the author cross-tabulated the results based on the respondents' gender, age and position, she found out certain differences in their booking frequencies. The most frequent in flight booking seem to be older males who hold management position. Over 80% of the male respondents implied that they book more than five flights per day whereas only 44% of all the female respondents stated so. The author found similar phenomenon also between the age groups 30 – 44 and 45 – 65. Nearly 60% of the respondents older than 44 stated that they book more than five flights per day, while only 42% of the younger stated so. Lastly, only 20% of the employees book more than five flights per day. The equivalent amount of the respondents in higher position is more than 60%.

It was important for the author to find out the preferred channels for travel agents in booking flights. The respondents were able to select several alternatives in this question. The total amount of answers collected was 43.

As Figure 21 illustrates, an obvious majority of the respondents (98%) state that they use Amadeus GDS to book their flights. Because only one respondent did not select Amadeus GDS in this section, the author reasons that it may be merely an error. The respondent who chose the alternative "Something else" specified that he/she books groups of Norwegian straight from the airline and everything else through Amadeus GDS. None of the respondents stated that they use another GDS in booking flights.

Even though the amount of female respondents is more than five times bigger than the amount of males, 33% of male respondents (N=2) implied that they also use airlines webpages when making flight booking whereas only 3% of female respondents (N=1)

stated so. Thus, the author sums up that males are slightly more likely to book flights through airlines' webpages. The author did not find any specific differences in respondents preferred booking channel dependent on their age or position.

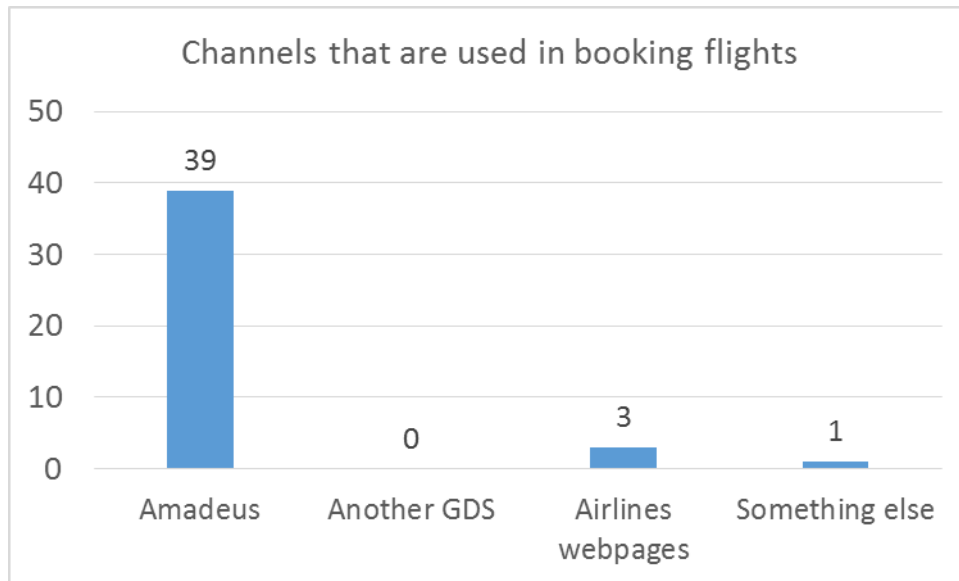


Figure 21. Respondents' preferred channels to book flights at work.

After the author found out which channels the respondents use in booking flights, she wanted to find out the channels that they use in booking ancillaries. Figure 22 shows the results the author received from this question. This question allowed the respondents to choose multiple alternatives as well. The total amount of responses in this question was 53.

Out of all the respondents, 35% stated that they book ancillaries on airlines' webpages besides Amadeus GDS. It is a lot more than what the author found out in the previous question concerning flight bookings. Thus, the author reasons that it is more common among the respondents to use another channels in booking ancillaries than it is in booking flights. Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents (93%) still stated that they use Amadeus GDS also in booking ancillaries. None of the respondents implied that they use another GDS or something else in booking ancillaries.

The author found out that 50% of male respondents use airlines' webpages in booking ancillaries, when only 32% of the females do. Besides, the author found out that respondents over 44 years are also more likely to use airlines' webpages in booking ancillaries. Nearly half of them, 42%, indicated that they use also airlines' webpages, whereas only 17% of the younger indicated similarly. Lastly, only 10% of the employees clarified that

they use airlines' webpages in booking ancillaries, while more than 50% of the respondents in higher positions implied the same.

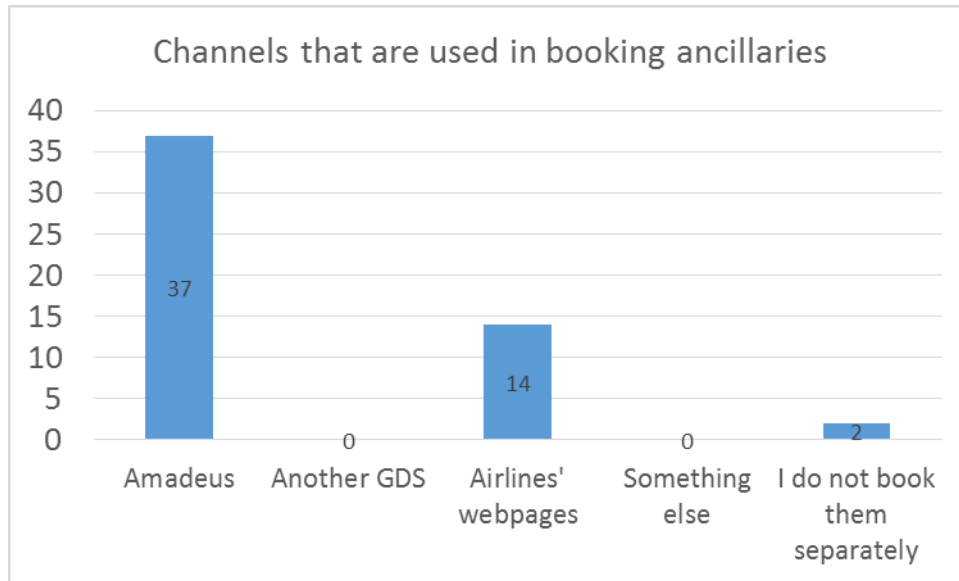


Figure 22. Respondents' preferred channels to book ancillaries.

An important matter for the author was to find out the respondents' general opinions concerning the importance of ancillaries. The author created three statements and requested respondents to rate those statements according to the following criteria: "Disagree", "Partly disagree", "Neutral"; "Partly agree" and "Agree". As the author did in a few questions in the previous survey, she transferred the responses into values. The pattern that the author followed was that "Disagree" equals 1 and "Agree" equals 5. All the other alternatives lay in the middle. Hence, the author sums up that a high average rate equals general agreement among the respondents.

The author collected the average rates of each statement in Figure 23. Overall, the author sums up that the respondents generally agree on the statements more or less, because all the average rates were above 3. The respondents see mostly the value for the customer, which was the only statement rated above 4. "Booking ancillaries is a relevant part of my job" got the lowest average rate 3.15.

When the author cross-tabulated results of the statement "Selling ancillaries creates more value to my company", she found out that male respondents value it more than females do. Males' average rate for this section was 4.33 and females' only 3.56. Additionally, Superiors see the value for the company more than other position groups. Their average in this section was 4.14 whereas the average for other position groups was around 3.5. The

author did not find any differences in the responses when examining them according to respondents' age groups.

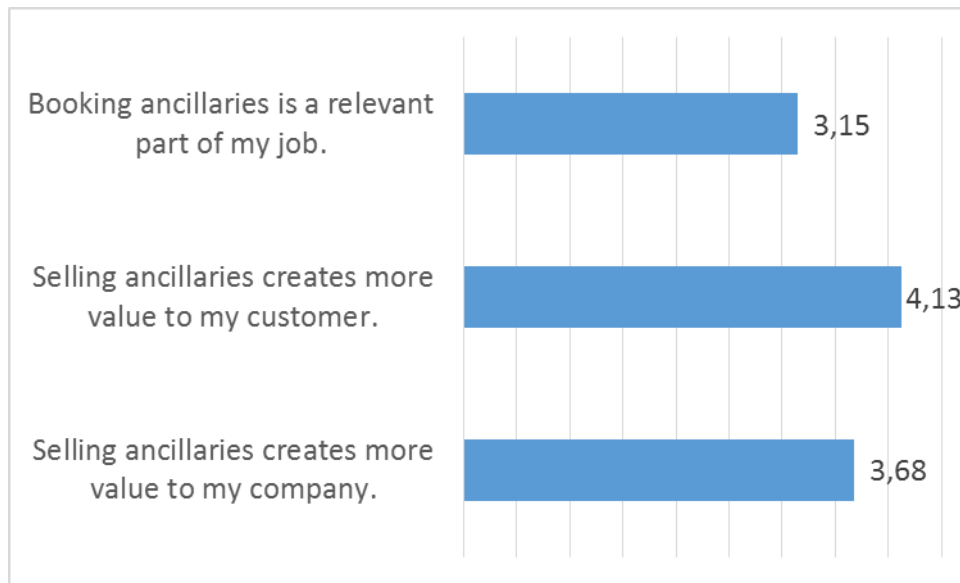


Figure 23. Respondents' opinions about the following statements.

When considering the value of offering ancillaries for the customers, Owners are the position group that finds it the most important. Owners' average rate in this section was staggering 4.55, while the rate for other position groups was around 4. The author did not find any specific differences in the responses of the statement handling booking ancillaries as a relevant part of one's job. Additionally, there were not particular differences in the responses according to respondents' age.

The author wanted to find out how the respondents perceive booking ancillaries by asking them to choose the alternative that was closest to their opinions. As figure 24 illustrates, an obvious majority of the respondents (58%) stated that they are familiar with ancillaries but somewhat insecure with the booking. The next biggest group (22%) stated that they do not have any difficulties in booking ancillaries. 18% of all the respondents implied that they are not that familiar with ancillaries at all. The respondent who chose the alternative "Something else" expressed that booking ancillaries is difficult and only benefits the airlines.

The author found out that the older are more familiar with booking ancillaries than the younger. Even 31% of the respondents older than 44 implied that they are familiar with booking them. The difference with the younger age group was huge, for only 8% of them stated similarly. Even though booking ancillaries is relatively new trend in the aviation industry, the author believes that the lack of experience may be behind the insecurities of

the younger respondents. There was no clear differences in the responses based on respondents' gender nor position.

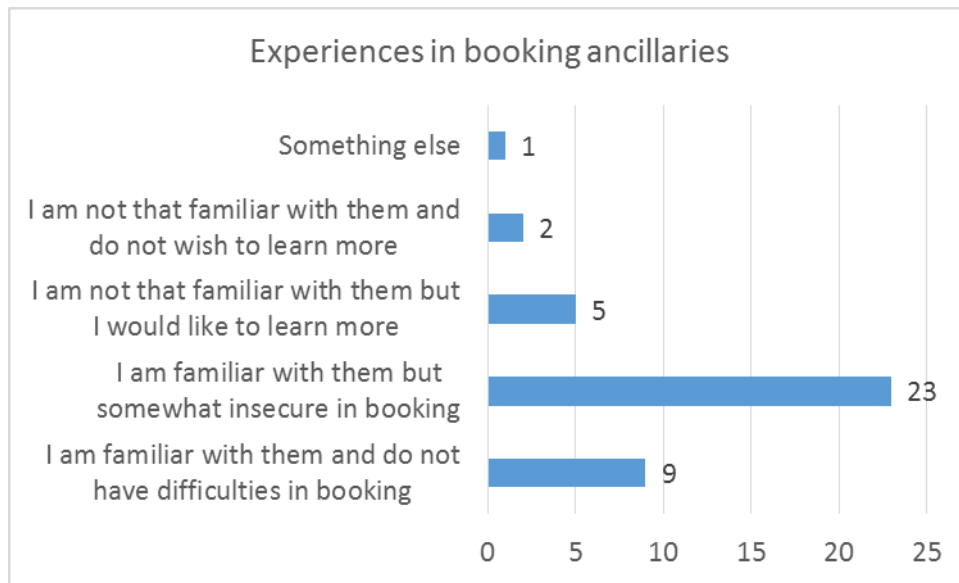


Figure 24. Respondents' experiences in booking ancillaries.

The author wanted to find out how frequently respondents offer specific ancillaries to customers, if those are not included in the flight ticket. She listed 11 ancillaries and requested the respondents to rate each according to how often he/she offers that ancillary to customer. The scale was the following: "Never", "Rarely", "Neutral", "Often" and "Always". The author transferred the responses into values in the same way as she has described in several sections earlier in this thesis. The bigger the average rate is, more frequently respondents offer that ancillary to their customers.

In order to avoid possible misunderstandings that occurred in similar questions in the first survey, the author did not make this question obligatory. Instead, she informed the respondents to leave a specific section unanswered if offering the ancillary is not relevant for them (i.e. the agent only books flights where the ancillary is already included). One respondent did not answer the following sections: pre seat reservation, luggage and accompanying service for minor. Two respondents did not answer the section pet transportation. The author surprised pleasantly by the amount of responses she received.

Figure 25 portrays the results that the author collected from with this question. The average rates are generally below 3, from where the author can deduce that the respondents do not offer ancillaries too often. The only ancillary that the respondents rated above 3 was the most valued and booked ancillary; luggage. Other ancillaries that have an average rate relatively close to 3 are special luggage, pre selection of seat and accompanying

service for minors. Further, the author clarifies that the ancillaries that respondents offer to customers the least are priority ancillaries as well as lounge access.

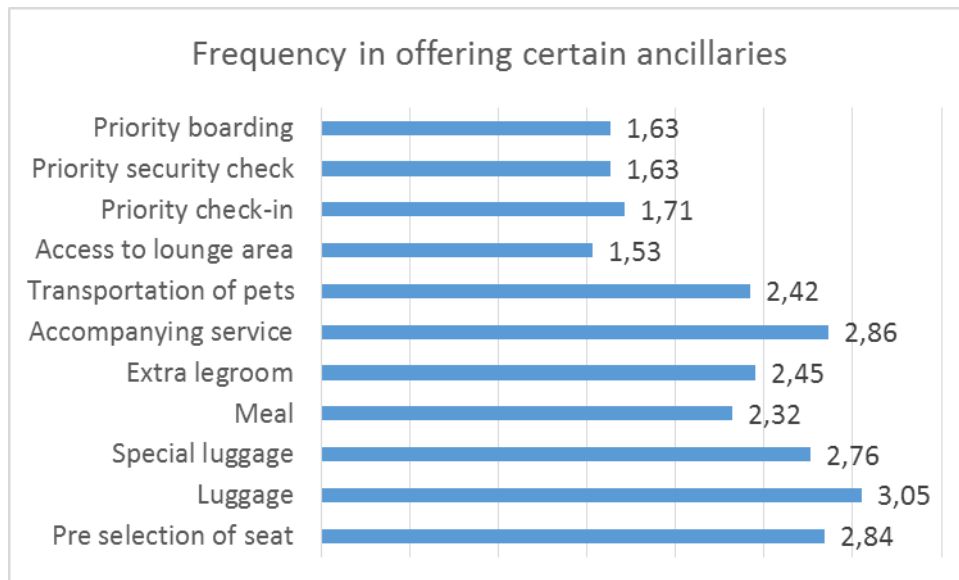


Figure 25. Respondents' frequencies in offering certain ancillaries to customers.

The author found one specific difference in the responses between female and male respondents. Females are clearly more likely to offer luggage to their customers than males. The average rate for females was 3.16 and for males only 2.5. The author reasons that females may offer luggage more often than males because they are more likely to purchase luggage their selves, which is what the author found out in the first survey.

The author found a specific pattern in the responses when she examined them according to respondents' positions. Employees had clearly the lowest average rate in all the sections, which implies that they offer the least ancillaries to customers. The author did not find any specific differences in the responses according to respondents' age groups.

After finding out respondents' frequencies in offering ancillaries for customers, the author wanted to identify the major challenges that the respondents are facing in booking those. The author listed six possible challenges and a decision of specifying their own alternative. Respondents were able to choose several alternatives, and the total amount of responses in this question was 68. Figure 26 shows the results of the question.

The author was somewhat surprised to see the most popular alternative being that ancillaries do not benefit the workplace economically, which 55% of all the respondents chose. The author expected that the top three alternatives would be the complexity as well as the lack of information and time. Those were only relatively popular with approximately 30% of

the respondents selecting them. Respondents did not see as big challenge in the risks and the selection of ancillaries. The respondent who selected the alternative “Something else” clarified that booking ancillaries is difficult because customers need to select their preferred services online anyway themselves.

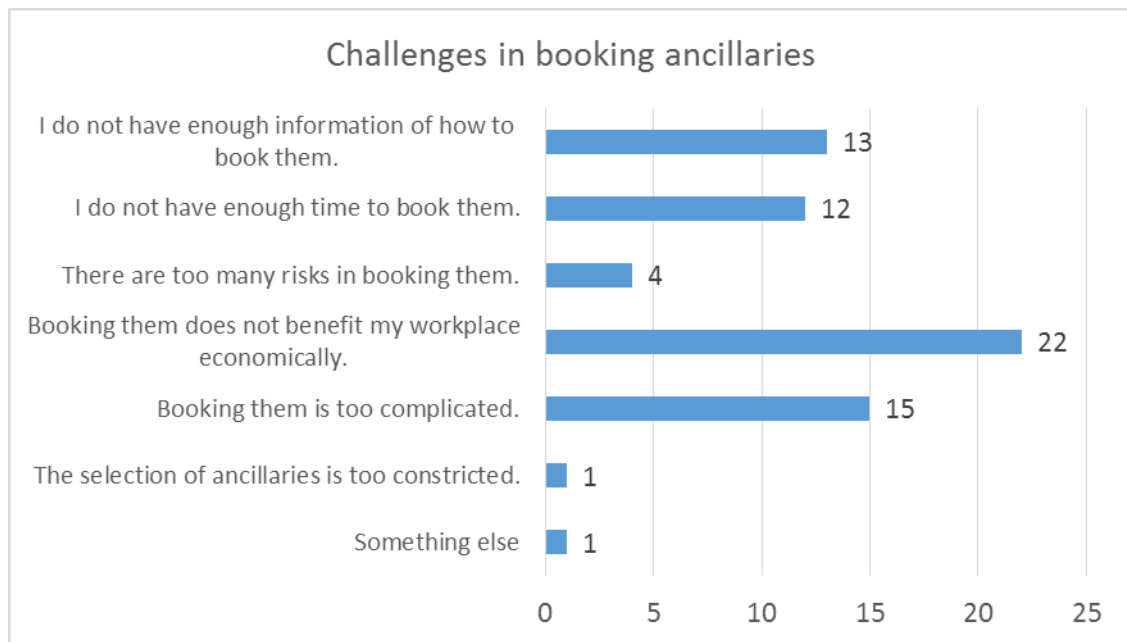


Figure 26. The challenges that respondents are facing in booking ancillaries.

The author found out certain changes in between the genders. Female respondents do not have as much information of ancillaries as males do (35% of females, 17% of males). Additionally, women are more afraid of the risks that booking ancillaries may cause. None of the males selected that they are worried about the risks, while 12% of the female respondents stated so. On the other hand, males are more concerned of the economic benefits and the complexity of the process. An obvious majority of males, 83%, find economic benefits for the company challenging in order to book ancillaries, whereas the equivalent amount for females is only 50%. Besides, where 50% of the male respondents stated that booking ancillaries is too complex, only 35% of females agreed.

Younger respondents think that they do not have enough information of booking ancillaries and they think booking them is too complicated, which the author think may result from the lack of experience. Neatly half of the younger respondents, 42%, state that they do not have enough information, whereas only 31% of the older did. In addition, 50% of the young expressed booking ancillaries is too complicated, simultaneously with only 31% of the older respondents agreeing them. Older respondents seem to think more of the economic issues related to booking ancillaries, for 62% of them find the economic issue challenging in booking. The amount for the younger is only 42%.

Respondents in higher positions think more that the economic issues in booking ancillaries are a challenge in booking ancillaries with more than 60% of them saying so. The amount for employees in the same section was only 45%. However, the author found out that employees find booking ancillaries more challenging than the respondents in higher positions do. Even 45% of employees expressed that it is too difficult, while only 22% of the respondents in higher positions did. The author believes that the difficulties may also be the reason why employees do not offer ancillaries for customers as much as respondents who hold higher positions.

After finding out the major challenges that the respondents are facing in booking ancillaries, the author moved on to clarifying their improvement ideas for the future. The author wanted to give the respondents a full freedom to write whatever comes to their minds, which is why she decided to create an open-ended question. Since the author is only interested in the opinions of the respondents who have something to say, she decided to make the question optional. The author managed to collect altogether 16 responses in this question.

Nearly all of the respondents mentioned the need to improve booking system. They emphasised the importance of standardization, which would save lots of their time and effort. Respondents stated that a clear system would make their job a lot easier in terms of selling ancillaries. A respondent also mentioned that the ability to sell ancillaries for several customers/group at the same time would also be a huge improvement in the system. There was also a respondent criticising the fact that booking ancillaries is not even possible in all the flights departing for instance in Kokkola.

Lastly, the author wanted to create a final open-ended question in the end. In case respondents had anything to add concerning the survey or the topic in general, they could share their thoughts there. This box was optional as well, and the total amount of the responses was six.

The comments that the author received were mostly criticism towards unbundling services and the current trend of being price-focused. A respondent thinks that it is unfair for the customers when certain services are unbundled and it has no effect on the price of the flight. One respondent also expressed that in certain cases it is impossible for travel agents to book ancillaries because airlines require that they are to be booked online and paid immediately with a credit card.

5.3 Reliability and validity

A good researcher needs to be critical when evaluating the research in terms of its reliability and validity. It is typical for a reliable research is that the results can be replicated if the research is conducted again. As Veal (1997, 229.) states, gaining reliable results is a challenge for researchers. They are able to collect such results if their collected sample is wide enough to express the overall opinions of the population in general.

Whereas reliability signifies truthful results, validity measures the usefulness of the research. No matter how reliable the research is, if it does not give insight in terms of answering the research problem, the results are useless. Validity is often determined at the time of creating the survey simultaneously when the researcher determines the research problem. (Balnaves & Caputi 2001, 87-90; Veal 1997, 229.)

When the author conducted this research, she ensured the reliability of the results by collecting wide-sized samples that do depict the opinions of the general population. The author believes that the sample size of 40 is efficient in the second survey because the chance of collecting a sample as wide as in the first survey is not as likely. The author also spread the surveys to different target groups all over Finland, in order to ensure that the respondents have diverse experiences.

In terms of validity, the author critically evaluated the results compared to the research question. The author realizes that the research is valid, because the findings of the research answer to the research problem. The author did find out that there is a gap between what airlines wish to achieve through merchandising and how people perceive it. The author managed to find out how frequently leisure travelers and travel agents book ancillaries. Further, the author found out the factors that may have an influence on the opinions of the respondents.

6 Conclusion

In terms of the actual research problem, the author clarifies that there is a gap between how much airlines wish to sell ancillaries and how much leisure travellers actually book them. There are a few reasons affecting leisure travellers' habit of not booking ancillaries on their flights. First, travellers are extremely price-focused and do not have the need to for ancillaries, apart from certain ancillaries such as luggage and meal. Instead, they rather pay for flight only. According to the findings of the research, another issue diminishing ancillary booking of leisure travellers is the difficulty to compare the flights including ancillaries and the complexity of the whole booking procedure. Many travellers feel that finding the best flight with suitable ancillaries is time-consuming and difficult. The research also showed that the most efficient way to improve ancillary bookings is to lower the prices.

The research exposed a gap also in between how frequently travel agents book ancillaries and how frequently airlines wish the agents to book them. Even though the majority of agents do see the value of offering ancillaries in terms of improving customer service, they would require more incentives in order to offer them to customers actively. The majority of the agents do not see the economic value of booking ancillaries, which effects their motivation to offer them. Other issues that make agents' job more difficult are the lack of standardized and clear layout in the booking system as well as the lack of knowledge and time. The findings of the research suggest that especially incentive system, improving booking system and further training of staff is needed in order to gain better results in selling ancillaries.

The author suggests that in order to increase the sales of ancillaries, the airlines should focus more on their marketing. As the results gained from this research showed, there is an interest towards ancillaries. What travellers currently do not have is merely a need for ancillary services. The author believes that customers would be more fascinated in booking ancillaries, if there would be more knowledge of what they are and how they effect on the journey. If airlines organized ancillary campaigns, which would allow customers to test certain ancillaries for half the price, customers would be more tempted in booking ancillaries. Afterwards, having tried the ancillary once, the customer would be more likely to purchase that specific ancillary in the future as well. Besides marketing, there is a need for improving comparison tools that are designed to compare ancillaries of various airlines. Since flight comparison sites rarely inform the traveller about available ancillaries, travellers are often unaware of the possibility to book ancillaries. The amount of ancillaries booked would hence increase if those sites were able to include ancillaries in the results shown to the traveller.

Travel agents should be motivated and encouraged to offer ancillaries for customers. Money is, without doubt, the most efficient motivator for the agents. Airlines would maximize the sales of ancillaries if they were able to pay a proper compensation for travel agencies each time they book ancillaries. However, since the economic situation may not enable that, travel agencies could come up with other types of solutions. They could organize small selling competitions between the agents. Instead of money, the best sales person could receive other types of recognition within the company. Various titles and honour certificates or simple prizes such as movie tickets could motivate several agents. In addition to motivating the agents, improving the booking system by adding and standardizing information in it would benefit travel agents tremendously in terms of booking ancillaries. Furthermore, the author suggests that travel agents would receive further training about ancillaries and booking them. Ways to conduct the training could be in-person training sessions or more cost-efficient virtual trainings.

The author believes that the result of the research are not only valuable for the commissioner, airlines and travel agencies but also for other fields that require efficient sales skills. Even though this thesis focused on ancillaries of aviation industry, there are other industries trying to earn extra income by selling ancillaries. As a student perspective, the author believes and hopes that this research will inspire many students to tackle real-life problems already on their study time.

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Attachments

Attachment 1: Leisure travellers' survey

Leisure travellers' opinions of ancillary services included in flight tickets



This survey is conducted as a part of a Bachelor's thesis for Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. It is commissioned by Amadeus Finland. The aim of the research is to measure travelers' the experiences, opinions and expectations of flight tickets and the ancillary services that are included in the price.

Answering to survey will take only 5 - 10 minutes. All the replies will be kept anonymous. The thesis and the results of the survey will later be published on www.theseus.fi. The target group of the research are people living in Finland and traveling in their leisure time.

The term **ancillary services** stands for all the services that are excluded from the flight ticket but can separately be purchased in it. Services that are included in the ticket vary depending on the airline, travel class, ticket type and customer level. Most common ancillary services that leisure travelers use are payable meals, (extra) baggage, pre-selecting your seat and using wireless Internet on board.

Your answer is highly appreciated and valuable part of the research. I thank you in advance for your answer.

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Answering is required in the questions marked with an asterisk (*).

1. Gender *

- Female
- Male

2. Age *

- Below 18
- 18 - 29
- 30 - 44
- 45 - 65
- Above 65

3. How often do you approximately fly to following destinations per year? *

	Less than once	Once	2 - 3 times	4 - 5 times	More than 5 times
Within Finland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To other Nordic countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elsewhere in Europe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outside Europe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Which is your preferred channel to **look for** a flight for yourself? *

- Webpages of airlines
- Webpages of travel agencies
- Flight comparison sites (e.g. Vertaa.fi, Momondo.fi, Rantapallo.fi)
- Mobile applications of airlines
- Calling or visiting airline's office
- Calling or visiting travel agency
- Somewhere else, where?

5. Which is your preferred channel to **book** your flight? *

- Webpages of airlines
- Webpages of travel agencies
- Flight comparison sites (e.g. Vertaa.fi, Momondo.fi, Rantapallo.fi)
- Mobile applications of airlines
- Calling or visiting airline's office
- Calling or visiting travel agency
- Somewhere else, where?

6. Which is your preferred payment method to pay for your flight? *

- Online wire transfer when booking the flight
- Online credit / bank card payment when booking the flight
- Mobile device, such as mobile phone
- Paying at the travel agency when booking the flight
- Receiving an invoice before the flight
- Another way, please specify

7. What are the most important criteria for you when selecting your flight? *

8. When booking a flight, have you received information of ancillary services? *

- Yes, I have received.
- I sometimes have received.
- No, I have not received.

9. Are you familiar with how ancillary services can be booked? *

- Yes, I am familiar.
- I am partly familiar.
- No, I am not familiar.

10. When do you prefer to book ancillary services for your flight? *

- Simultaneously when booking the flight
- A couple of days before the flight
- At the same day when the flight is (if possible)
- Another time, when?
- I do not book ancillary services for my flights

11. Which is your preferred channel to receive information about airlines' ancillaries and campaigns? You may choose more than one alternative. *

- A mailing list sent via e-mail

- Airline's mobile application
- Text message
- Social media
- Airline's webpages
- Another channel, which?
- I prefer not to receive information about airlines' campaigns and other offers

12. How important it is for you that the following ancillary services would be included in the flight ticket automatically? *

	Not at all	Not much	Neutral	Somewhat	Very
Ability to use Wi-Fi on board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to select your own seat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(Extra) luggage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special baggage with you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-flight entertainment (films, music, news etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-flight meal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extra legroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to bypass the queues at the airport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service to accompany underage child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation of pets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfers from the airport to the city	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to the airline's lounge area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collecting Reward Points	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. How likely are you to purchase following ancillary services if they were not included in the ticket price? *

	Not at all	Not much	Neutral	Somewhat	A lot
Ability to use Wi-Fi on board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to select your own seat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(Extra) baggage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special baggage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-flight entertainment (films, music, news etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-flight meal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Extra legroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to bypass the queues at the airport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service to accompany underage child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation of pets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfers from the airport to the city	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to the airline's lounge area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. What is your opinion of the following statements? *

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree
Ancillaries make traveling more pleasant and convenient.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
By offering ancillaries airlines are able to provide their customers with more personalized services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Airlines offer lots of ancillaries that I am personally interested in.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ordering ancillary services is easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy to compare the ancillaries offered by different airlines.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am excited to see the range of ancillaries provided in the future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. What would make you purchase more ancillary services in the future? *

- Lower price
- Wider range on offer, for example
- Better customer service, for example
- Better marketing of the products, for example
- Targeting the ancillaries more according to personal preferences, for example
- More simplified purchasing process, for example
- Something else, what?
- I am not interested in buying ancillaries in the future, why?

16. What kind of ancillary services are you expecting from airlines and their partners in the

future? *

17. If there are any further comments concerning the questions or the topic in general, please share them here.

Attachment 2: Leisure travel agents' survey

Leisure travel agencies' opinions of booking ancillary services for flights



This survey is conducted as a part of a Bachelor's thesis for Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. It is commissioned by Amadeus Finland. The aim of the research is to measure travel agents' experiences, opinions and expectations of booking ancillary services for flights.

Answering to survey will take only app. 5 minutes. All the replies will be kept anonymous. The thesis and the results of the survey will later be published on www.theseus.fi. The target group of the research are Finnish travel agents who book leisure holidays for their customers.

The term **ancillary services** stands for all the services that are excluded from the flight ticket but can separately be purchased in it. Services that are included in the ticket vary depending on the airline, travel class, ticket type and customer level. Most common ancillary services that leisure travelers use are payable meals, (extra) baggage and pre-selecting your seat.

Your answer is highly appreciated and valuable part of the research. I thank you in advance for your answer.

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Answering is required in the questions marked with an asterisk (*).

1. Gender *

- Female
- Male

2. Age *

- 18 - 29
- 30 - 44
- 45 - 65
- Over 65

3. Position in the company *

- Trainee
- Employee
- Superior
- Manager
- Owner
- Something else, please specify

4. How many flights do you book approximately per day? *

- Fewer than one
- 1 - 5
- 6 -10
- More than 10

5. Which channel(s) do you use to book flights? *

- Amadeus GDS
- Other GDS, please specify
- Airlines' webpages
- Other channel, please specify

6. Which channel(s) do you use to book ancillaries? *

- Amadeus GDS
- Other GDS, please specify
- Airlines' webpages
- Other channels, please specify

I do not book ancillaries separately

7. What is your opinion of ancillary services? *

Please evaluate following statements according to your experiences.

	Disagree	Partly disagree	Neutral	Partly agree	Agree
Selling ancillaries creates additional value to my company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Selling ancillaries creates additional value to my customers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Selling ancillaries is a relevant part of my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How do you feel about booking ancillaries? *

- I am familiar with ancillaries and I do not have difficulties in booking them.
- I am familiar with ancillaries but I am somewhat insecure in booking them.
- I am quite unfamiliar with ancillaries but I would like to learn more about them.
- I am quite unfamiliar with ancillaries and I do not need more information about them.
- Something else, please specify.

9. How often do you offer the following ancillaries for customers if they are not included in the ticket price?

Please leave the section blank if you only book flights that include the ancillary in question.

	Never	Rarely	Neutral	Often	Always
Pre-selection of seat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(Extra) luggage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special luggage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-flight meal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extra legroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accompanying service for minors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pet transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lounge access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Priority check-in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Priority security check	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Priority boarding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Which of the following matters are making ancillary bookings more complicated? *

- I do not have enough information of how to book them.
- I do not have enough time to book them.
- There are too many risks attached to booking them.
- Booking them does not benefit my company economically.
- Booking them is too complicated.
- The selection of ancillaries is not wide enough.
- Something else, please specify

11. Do you have any improvement ideas of how to make booking ancillaries easier?

12. If there are any further comments concerning the questions or topic in general, please share them here.