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Potential for virtual travel product for Pori

SUGGESTION OF A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE FOR VISIT
PORI

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Abstract <p>This study was conducted as a commission for Visit Pori. The objective was to map the potential for a virtual travel product of Pori and write a suggestion of what it should include. First, however, it was important to explain and define the different types of virtual travel products and their benefits and challenges.</p> <p>A survey was done in order to find out who would be interested in a virtual travel product and what expectations they might have for a virtual travel product, if any. The questionnaire was posted on Visit Pori Facebook page and gathered 70 answers. A breakdown of the answers was done to illustrate the results from the questionnaire and to point out the most relevant and popular answers.</p> <p>Main part of the analysis was done by using multiple correspondence analysis and the results indicated that from the two attractions respondents were most interested in, Bothnian Sea National Park and historical buildings and heritage, historical buildings and heritage would most likely work better for the topic of a paid virtual tour that would benefit both the customers and Visit Pori.</p> <p>Based on the information on virtual travel, tourism product development theory and the questionnaire results, a suggestion for a virtual product was written. The suggestion included a virtual video tour with prerecorded narration on the topic of the historic buildings and heritage of the city of Pori. The tour would include a linear story and old picture material of the surroundings. It would also be available to access on location through mobile devices.</p>		
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1 INTRODUCTION

Virtual travel has become a hot topic in the last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions. YLE has written articles about it and so have other news sources. For example, Kati Rantala (2020) wrote about the paid tours organized by Eco Conscious Japan and SaimaaLife and Tuija Veirto (2021) focused on Chinese edutrip in her article. An article by Tuomas Massinen (2021) in Helsingin Uutiset also talks about the topic but points out the boom hasn't been as big as expected since many travel organizations have not taken action. The article speculates that there would be a lot of demand but supply is still small. Virtual travel is not a new concept and it has a lot of potential that could be used in destination marketing.

The aim of this thesis is to outline a virtual tour that the commissioner could implement and use as a product or in their marketing, depending on what kind of tour is found best suited. There are several options for virtual travel and I am using the term very widely here. Studies related to virtual reality and augmented reality in tourism context have been made, but virtual tourism can also be done without those technologies and that side of the concept has been much less researched.

I have chosen this topic because I find it interesting as a phenomenon. As the world changes so does the tourism industry and even when the pandemic dies down, some challenges remain. Virtual travel could have real potential in tackling some of the issues with sustainability, accessibility and marketing less known locations.

I was doing my practical training with Visit Pori and approached them with the idea for this topic. This thesis will be commissioned by them. As their focus is heavily on marketing, the virtual tour or product should be able to support that.

2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this thesis is to outline a virtual tourism product that fits the needs and purpose of the commissioner. The commissioner is Visit Pori. The organization is in charge of marketing and developing tourism in Pori area, so the destination of the virtual tour will be Pori and it would be used for marketing purposes most likely, though depending on the type of product it could also be monetized.

The research questions: Main question is what kind of virtual travel product would be the most useful to Visit Pori. Sub questions are: How a virtual tour can be effectively used in marketing tourism in Pori? Who are the target customers for it? What should be included in the tour? and How would the tour reach the intended audience?

First the concept of virtual travel is explored to find out its advantages and how it can be used in tourism marketing. This thesis will not focus on explaining the technology in detail, but some aspects can be mentioned where relevant. What this thesis will focus on are the advantages and disadvantages of creating a virtual product and who it could be targeted to.

This thesis aims to create a suggestion for virtual tours that is not time sensitive and can be implemented at a later date if the commissioner so chooses. Creating a virtual tour requires time and resources Visit Pori or I do not currently have, but since the concept of virtual travel is not likely going to disappear any time soon, a good plan already gives a starting point for a future implementation. While this plan will be focused on one destination, some of the information will hopefully be useful to other destinations wishing to create their own virtual experiences as well.

3 VISIT PORI

Visit Pori is part destination management organization or DMO and part tour operator. A destination management organization is an organization that aims to coordinate different travel industry activities at a destination in order to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the local stakeholders and the visitors (Website of Revfine, What is a...). A tour operator is an organization, company or person, that creates a travel package which can be sold to consumers. A tour operator buys individual travel services and packages them together for the customer. (Stainton, What is a tour operator.) Visit Pori is owned by the City of Pori and is tasked with marketing and promoting Pori as a tourism destination. The DMO part handles social media marketing targeting tourists, tourist information, issues related to the imagery concerning the Pori brand and tries to develop the city as a destination in different ways. In the last few years, the main focus of development and marketing has been Yyteri. As it is a big beach in Nordic standards and is surrounded by nature that provides many activity opportunities, it has a lot of potential. It only needs the services, infrastructure and marketing in order to reach that potential and that is what Visit Pori has been working on with other organizations, businesses and service providers. It is expected that some of that focus will be extended to Kirjurinluoto as well in the near future.

Kirjurinluoto is another popular place in Pori due to the wide park area. It is known as the venue for Pori Jazz and other summer festivals and events. Event acquisition is another main task of Visit Pori. This means applying for big moving events to be organized in the city and promoting the city and its venues to event organizers as a place to have their event. Visit Pori is also involved with organizing Suomi Areena and handling some matters concerning other events, some permits and applications for example. Finding event venues for organizers and accommodation for participants of events is part of the work too.

As for the tour operator part of Visit Pori, this is mainly Visit Pori Oy half of the combination. While also owned by the City of Pori and attached to the DMO, Visit Pori Oy handles most of the tourism product side of things when it comes to individual

tourists. The Pori brand merchandise that is sold as souvenirs and the sightseeing tours that are organized by Visit Pori are handled by the Oy side. Visit Pori organizes different kinds of tours from walking tours around the city and visits to buildings of importance and history to tours of local small breweries and boat trips to the islands on the coast. Group tours are also organized based on what the customers wish to see and can include visits to multiple places and lunch or coffee in specified restaurants. This kind of tours are what makes Visit Pori Oy a tour operator. Another aspect of the work is the accommodation in the homes of private citizens during big events, like Pori Jazz and Suomi Areena. As the hotel capacity in Pori is not big enough especially during these events and can be rather expensive, this kind of accommodation has been an important option for many people visiting the city during those busiest weeks of the year.

4 VIRTUAL TRAVEL

Virtual reality is commonly considered to mean a computer-generated 3D environment that the user can interact with (Yung and Khoo-Lattimore 2019, 2057). However, even a quick Google search reveals that what most people understand as virtual travel now, does not often include that kind of virtual reality. The term virtual travel can include all participation in tourism experiences in online or virtual spaces. This can mean virtual reality spaces created to resemble real places and where the traveler uses VR-technology to control the environment, or it can be watching a live video stream from somewhere with or without a guide. Some could even include using Google streetview or a webcam to look at a place far away. The most simple definition for virtual travel or e-tourism is traveling to a destination without physically going there (Shuler 2010, 11). Often, this is considered to be connected with the use of VR-technology and a 360 degree view. However, this thesis also includes other implementations created for the purpose of virtual tourism like video streams, virtual tours and views a traveler can watch on screen even without VR-technology. The main criteria to be included in the concept of virtual tourism here is, that the product must be created for the purpose of tourism or it must be used for tourism purposes by industry organizations.

4.1 Definitions and examples

VR or virtual reality is most commonly defined by the use of a computer-generated 3D environment that lets the user navigate and interact with it in a way that simulates a real experience. Usually, the visualization and interaction happen through VR-technology that includes a headset for picture and sound and sensors and an input device for interaction with the environment. (Yung & Khoo-Lattimore 2019, 2057.) The most researched and discussed form of virtual travel is the one where the traveler is fully immersed in a virtual reality environment with the help of VR-equipment. This includes virtual worlds that are described as virtual environments that are open 24/7 and enable people to create, play and interact in real time. In these worlds the people are represented by avatars that are personalized figures in 3-D form. One of the most popular platforms like this is Second Life that has been used by multiple organizations from the tourism field in building their online presence. (Yung & Khoo-Lattimore 2019, 2058.)

Another form of this are the 360 degree videos that let you explore a destination or area while preferably using a VR-headset. These generally lack the social and interactive aspects, however. For example, The Atlantis Dubai hotel lets you explore the hotel through a 360-degree video and Qantas, partnered with Hamilton Island and Samsung, has created a 360-degree video experience that starts from the plane and takes you under water on the great barrier reef and on a tour around Hamilton Island. (Website of Revfine, How Virtual Reality....) The Met has also created six videos that let viewers explore the museum's art and architecture in different locations (Website of The Met). 360Finland on the other hand lets you explore 360-degree images from different Finnish locations, sites, event areas and so on. They will create these panoramic compilations for their customers and those can be viewed on their website. (Website of 360Finland.) Suomenlinna also has their own site with a similar image-based view of the island to explore.

AR or augmented reality means computer-generated images that can be layered onto real-world environments through a device like a smartphone. It can be considered a type of virtual reality or at least related to the concept. The difference is that generally

with AR the user sees mainly the real world with some additions whereas VR immerses the user into a fully virtual environment. (Yung and Khoo-Lattimore 2019, 2058.) The most popular forms of AR come from the gaming industry where possibly the most famous example is Pokémon GO which took over the world in 2016. The game requires players to move around in the real world to catch pokemon through their mobile device where the digital creatures are added onto a video image of the player's physical environment. One Finnish tourism example of this is the Kulttuurikierros Huittisiin project that is available on the Salmi AR-application along with several other tours around Finland. The tours require the traveler to be present at the location where, using the application, they can scan selected objects or information boards which then presents them with additional information or digital objects related to the location. (Kulttuurikierros Huittinen Facebook page.) While the use of mobile technology in this way brings virtuality to tourism products, it does not fit the definition of virtual travel where the main idea is not being physically at the location. These kinds of digital solutions require the visitor to physically move to the destination to reach the digital augmentations. However, these products are mentioned here because many companies offering these tours use the term virtual travel. As you may notice, while the actual definition of virtual travel is quite limiting, the general use of the term has become loose and can include almost any digital service targeted at tourists. Thus, Stainton writes that there is no universally accepted definition for the term virtual tourism. She defines the term as the use of technology to artificially enhance or create a tourism experience. (Stainton 2022.) This definition aligns more closely with the current use of the term.

Virtual travel can be used for marketing of destinations and businesses. Virtual experiences or views of a destination can attract the travelers to visit physically or influence their buying decisions. This kind of virtual tour could also work for a hotel for example. (Website of Revfine, How Virtual Reality....) Virtual realities have been used in tourism marketing in different ways. A tourism destination or company could create a model of their offering on a virtual reality platform or build a virtual experience on their website to offer the potential tourist information in a more immersive way and give them an experience already at the marketing stage. There have even been projects where whole cities have been built virtually, but the use of VR in marketing has been especially successful with theme parks. (Yung & Khoo-

Lattimore 2019, 2060.) At SLUSH Helsinki 2018 ZOAN Oy released their 3D model VR-experience of Helsinki that takes you to the Senate Square, the home of Alvar Aalto and Lonna Island (Website of Virtual Helsinki). AR with the use of smartphones and geolocation has made it possible for destinations to provide information that can be easily accessed by the tourist on location (Yung & Khoo-Lattimore 2019, 2060). Mobile applications can recognize your location and show you relevant information on your current surroundings or destinations can provide QR-codes that open an information page on your mobile device. VR-technology also enables gamification of on location activities like a cow milking VR-game at Koivuniemen Herran Farmi which is an agricultural tourist attraction in Merikarvia.

VR and AR are the most researched aspects of virtual tourism. This makes sense because the concepts are older and the ideas have been around for decades. VR technology has been in development since the 1950s and the first head-mounted display (HMD) system was invented in 1968 (Website of Verdict 2020). The development of new technology has made it possible to consider new uses for them and as companies keep developing VR-equipment that is targeted toward mass market, the technology can grow more mainstream and offer more innovative opportunities. What used to be an idea mainly explored in science-fiction, could become reality.

The more recent additions under the term virtual travel are less studied. During the past few years and especially after 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic started, several tourism companies and some private citizens have created guided tours that employ the use of a live video connection through platforms like Zoom that enable group videocalls. A guided live virtual tour is a relatively new concept. It can be defined as a paid virtual experience that involves a live connection, a tour guide, videos and photos (Rantala, 2020). These introduce a variety of places in varying quality and can include many types of material. Some examples can be found on virtuaalimatka.fi website, [travel with Sari](http://travelwithsari.com) website, [Tours by Locals](http://toursbylocals.com) website and so on, some were already mentioned in the introduction of this thesis. These tend to be paid tours and the price fully depends on the tour and website. These tours generally show a video stream of a real-world place, so they do not fit under virtual reality. They are similar, in a way, to the 360-degree videos, but bring in the social and interactive aspect through the live guide.

While it is debatable whether or not webcam-travel should be included in virtual travel, there are people who do consider it a part of the concept, hence the term exists and will be added here. Webcam-travel refers to watching the real-time views of stationary web-cameras around the world. Many of these video feeds can be found on YouTube. Many tourism destinations and attractions that have a webcam have the feed integrated on their website to work as a marketing tool. The web-camera in Yyteri in Pori for example shows a wider picture of the beach than a still photo could. In addition, it works as a tool of information on the current conditions on the beach. Through the live feed the tourist can see what the weather looks like or how many people are on the beach at the time. This can influence the tourist's decision to visit the beach at that time.

4.2 Benefits and limitations of virtual travel

As already discussed, virtual travel is useful as a marketing tool. Destination management organizations, tour operators and other entities can use it to tempt visitors into trying the physical experience. Another useful area is the enhancement of tourism experiences by adding virtual elements. While virtual travel is not expected to replace physical tourism and the demand is likely to decline once the COVID-19 epidemic is over, there are uses for virtual tourism as it does have its benefits. (Stainton 2022.) Virtual travel can substitute for some travel experiences when external and environmental circumstances prevent physical travel (Sarkady, Neuburger & Egger 2021). However, whether a traveler accepts the substitute depends on how authentic they perceive virtual experiences and their travel motivations (Guttentag 2010). Other limitations of virtual travel as a substitute are lack of spontaneity, inability to purchase things and the lack of relaxation for example (Sarkady, Neuburger & Egger 2021).

Virtual tourism and virtual realities can help increase the accessibility of tourist sites that are difficult to reach due to remoteness, costs, undeveloped conditions or physical limitations of the tourist (Sarkady, Neuburger & Egger 2021). Virtual tours can substitute visits to specially protected areas and places that are closed for visitors (Voronkova 2018, 2) and traveling virtually can reduce travel related emissions

(Sarkady, Neuburger & Egger 2021). Thus, virtual tourism could be an eco-friendly solution to over tourism and a sustainable way to travel. This aspect could be of interest to environmentally conscious people who wish to reduce their carbon footprint. (Chen, 2020.) In addition to the reduced environmental impact, virtual tours are generally less expensive than physical travel (Voronkova 2018, 3). Virtual travel can also be used to provide travel experiences to elderly and disabled people. It can offer them experiences that would not be otherwise possible for them (Voronkova 2018, 2). One more use of VR-technology is the ability to recreate destinations. This makes it possible to model historical places that no longer exist, thus allowing tourist to experience attractions that would not be otherwise available. (Stainton 2022.)

In other words, the advantages of virtual travel include that it allows people with physical disabilities to join in and it removes some personal economic limitations as it is usually more affordable than actual traveling. Virtual travel can also lessen over tourism in places that suffer from it since the tourists are not physically there and it can be a more ecological and green option because it removes the emissions from flying and other transports and does not burden the nature of the destination. It can also make it possible to explore places that are inaccessible in the real world or places that do not exist anymore and maybe even places that are not accessible yet.

Virtual reality is a popular theme in science fiction and while the technology keeps advancing in the real world, it still faces challenges that mean it is not found in every home ready to use for some virtual travel experiences. Kate Wolwort (2020) listed the five main problems with VR industry. Firstly, VR gear is too expensive for most consumers and the industry cannot lower the prices as the production is expensive and the market is small. The second problem is the lacking content. There has not been an engaging enough reason for consumers to buy the expensive technology. Thirdly, a viable cost-effective business model has yet to be found for use of VR. The fourth challenge considers possible health risks or issues that have not been properly studied yet. And finally, VR is often not taken seriously outside of the tech-enthusiast community. It is seen as a gimmick and the bigger public sees no use for it or know what it is capable of. Because of these challenges a most likely a better options for virtual tourism for wider audiences, for now, are those that don't include VR-

technology. There is hope for the technology as companies keep developing their products to combat these issues.

4.3 Types of virtual travel

From the explored examples we can find five types of virtual travel options. The most common way to create a virtual tourism product is with the use of VR or AR. This type is the most studied and is used in various ways as explained earlier. 360-degree videos and virtual tours can be watched without a VR headset, but they are closely related. In a virtual tour that uses a 360-degree video, the watcher can usually interact with the video by clicking to move to different direction. They are used in destination marketing because they can give a realistic taste of the destination to the customer. These kinds of tours are usually free for the customer except for the cost of the equipment if they want to watch with VR headset.

A newer type of virtual travel is a live virtual tour with a guide. These are new enough that there is no popularly used name for categorization. Simply put they can be called guided live virtual tours. They may be offered with many different names, but they are utilizing a live connection between the guide and the customers on an online platform. The tour can also include pre-recorded video footage and images and even 360-degree videos sometimes. These tours are paid, but generally not very expensive. For example, virtuaalimatka.fi offers tours to several cities in Europe with different themes. The tours are 1 hour and 15 minutes or 1 hour and 30 minutes long and cost between 20€-30€. One of the guides has a blog and writes about her experience as a virtual guide in a post from March 2021. She guides tourist around Iceland through Zoom connection and says her most popular tour had over 350 attendees (Rämö 2021).

Webcam-travel is also a rather new concept. As mentioned before it means viewing places through a webcam. Webcams are cameras that are placed in different locations and stream live video footage online. They can be placed almost anywhere, but they often film a fixed point in the environment, or a very limited area even if they move a little in some way. For example, the web-camera in Yyteri turns slowly from side to side to show a bigger area of the beach. Whether or not webcam-travel can be counted

as virtual travel is debatable as it does not fit the traditional definition that usually highlights the use of VR technology and interaction in one way or another.

5 TOURISM MOTIVATION AND EXPERIENCE BUILDING

All product development and marketing should start with market research. It is important to know the tastes and expectations of the customers in order to provide appealing services. (World Tourism Organization 2011, 37.) What should be found out is how the potential visitors see the destination and its potential, what the markets are interested in and who are the most important customers for the destination. After those are cleared the following things should be researched: What kind of products already exist, tourism trends and who are the competitors. (World Tourism Organization 2011, 39.) This means you should understand who your visitors are, what they are interested in and what they expect from the destination. You should also know your competition and the trends that influence visitor behavior.

5.1 Tourism motivation theories

In tourism the customer is not present at the place they are planning to visit and cannot test the products or services available. This makes marketing and promotion very important. The perception the potential customer has of the destination impacts their decision to visit. Having products and services at a destination is only half of the work, the other half is bringing them into the attention of the customers in a way that gets them interested and gives a positive picture of the destination. (World Tourism Organization 2011, 64.)

To provide a positive image and interest to buy or visit, understanding of tourist behavior and travel motivation is needed. Research on travel motivation relates to the reasons why people travel. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is used by many as the basis of their analysis (Hsu & Huang 2007, 14). The theory was created for clinical

psychology, but it has been applied also on other areas since. The theory examines human needs and arranges them in five categories from basic physiological needs to psychological needs of safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization in rising order. (Hsu & Huang 2007, 15). From tourism perspective, while useful and popular as a basis, the theory has been criticized for missing some needs researchers have considered important in relation to tourist behavior. Maslow has however discussed two additional sets of needs that are not included in the hierarchical needs model. These are the aesthetic need and the need to know and understand, which are relevant from tourism point of view as many people travel in order to learn about something new and to be exposed to objects of beauty. (Hsu & Huang 2007, 16.)

When this is turned into marketing, we can consider the progression from needs to wants to demands. Human needs come from a state of felt deprivation. We all have physical, social and individual needs that are explored by Maslow's model. Wants are based on needs but are shaped by culture and individual personality. Everyone needs food, but the type of food we want varies from person to person. Humans may want many things but they have limited resources. This means they need to choose which products satisfy their wants the best. Which wants to turn into demands by putting their money on them. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 19.) Basically, the job of marketing is to convince the customer that a certain product is the best one to satisfy their need and it is the one they should buy based on their individual preferences. Because a tourist's background affects their wants, not all tourists want the same things. In order to find the needs and motivations of different tourists, segmentation is used to divide tourists with similar traits into groups that can be expected to answer to similar stimuli. Tourists' needs and preferences also constantly evolve and change so it is important for destinations to adapt. (Yousaf, Amin & Santos 2018, 206.)

The push and pull factors model is widely accepted by tourism researchers. In this model push factors are defined as internal motives or forces that cause tourists to look for activities that satisfy their needs. Pull factors are described as destination-generated forces and the knowledge that tourists have about a destination. Most push factors are based on internal motivations like the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, prestige, health and fitness, adventure and social interaction. Pull factors are based on the destination and what makes it attractive and interesting, for example beaches,

recreation facilities and cultural attractions. Push factors are considered to affect the desire to travel while pull factors impact the choice of destination. (Hsu & Huang 2007, 18.)

As discussed different people look for different things. The factors that influence their decision making are cultural, social, personal and psychological. The cultural factors can be divided into culture, subculture and social class. Culture is the most basic factor that influences human behavior. Each culture teaches us different values, perceptions and behaviors that affect the things we find important. Each culture contains smaller subcultures that share values based on common life experiences and situations. These include different nationalities, religions, racial groups and geographic regions. Social classes also share similar values, interests and behavior, but are based on factors like occupation, income, education and wealth. (Kotler, Armstrong & Opresnik 2018, 153-156.)

Social factors are related to groups and social networks, family and roles and status. These are all aspects of a person's social life and the people they interact with. Social interactions influence our behavior by exposing us to the opinions and expectations of others. This can be face-to-face or through online networks which makes word-of-mouth and influencer marketing valuable assets for companies trying to reach their target audience. Personal factors include age and life-cycle stage, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle and personality and self-concept. There are individual traits that affect the things we are interested in and what we find value in. They can be influenced by the previous factors, and are subject to change over time, but grouping people of similar life-cycle stage or occupation, for example, is helpful for marketers as those people can often have similar buying habits. The psychological factors of motivation, perception, learning, and beliefs and attitudes come closest to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and are influenced by all of the factors above. Perception is our interpretation of the world where we select and organize the information we get through the lens of our lived experiences. Learning arises from our experiences and changes our behavior. Beliefs and attitudes are acquired through leaning and affect our perception. (Kotler, Armstrong & Opresnik 2018, 157-165.) All of these form the basis for segmenting and target marketing. Tourists form a big group of different people and a destination cannot make everyone happy, which is why dividing that group into

smaller segments is important. This lets marketers target the people who are the best fit for what the destination has to offer and plan their marketing strategies accordingly.

Virtual travel is not likely to replace physical travel, but it is already used for marketing purposes for destinations or to enhance the experience at the destination. In a marketing context, virtual tours can give the customers a taste of the destination prior to choosing a place to visit. A good virtual experience could give the customer a good impression of the destination and show how the destination could answer to their internal needs and what the destination has to offer. Virtual travel differs from physical travel in the way of how it can answer to different travel motivations and what it can offer. Virtual travel has limitations when compared to physical travel, which is likely the reason for its use mostly in marketing, but as discussed it has some benefits as well.

5.2 Creating an experience

For many, tourism is about encountering something different. In a new destination the tourist is out of their ordinary environment and the local habits, conditions and practices can be new and strange and even the language can be unfamiliar. A successful tourist experience is one that holds meaning for the visitor and is memorable with positive feelings attached to those memories. A successful tourist experience is often associated with exceeding yourself by doing something you might not dare to do at home and a meaningful experience can lead to personal development and change from absorbing parts of what was learned during the trip into everyday life. (Tarssanen 2009, 6.)

A theory of four experience realms depicts four ways to experience things that correlate to the level of participation from passive to active and absorption versus immersion. The four realms are entertainment, educational, esthetic and escapist. In this model, entertainment is described as a person passively participating in absorbing a piece of media for example. Educational experiences are also absorption, but the participation is active. In esthetic experience the participation is passive, but the person is immersed in their environment. When the person is actively participating and immersed in the experience the model calls the experience escapist. An ideal tourism

experience is all four of these. (Komppula & Boxberg 2005, 29.) To build a meaningful experience that hits all these four realms, we can look at the experience pyramid model as a tool to help us find all the needed elements.

A meaningful experience can never be guaranteed because it is a personal, subjective experience and depends on the background and past experiences of the customer. Paying close attention to what makes experiences meaningful can still help in offering experiences that have a higher probability to be special for many customers. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 10.)

The Experience Pyramid model is a tool to analyze an experience product. It divides the product into parts based on two perspectives, the specific elements of the product and the customer's experience as illustrated in figure 1. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 11.)

The elements that build the customer experience are at the base of the pyramid. The six elements are individuality, authenticity, story, multi-sensory perception, contrast and interaction. The different levels of customer experience rise up the pyramid and describe the construction of the customer experience from basic interest up to a more meaningful levels of engagement. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 11.)

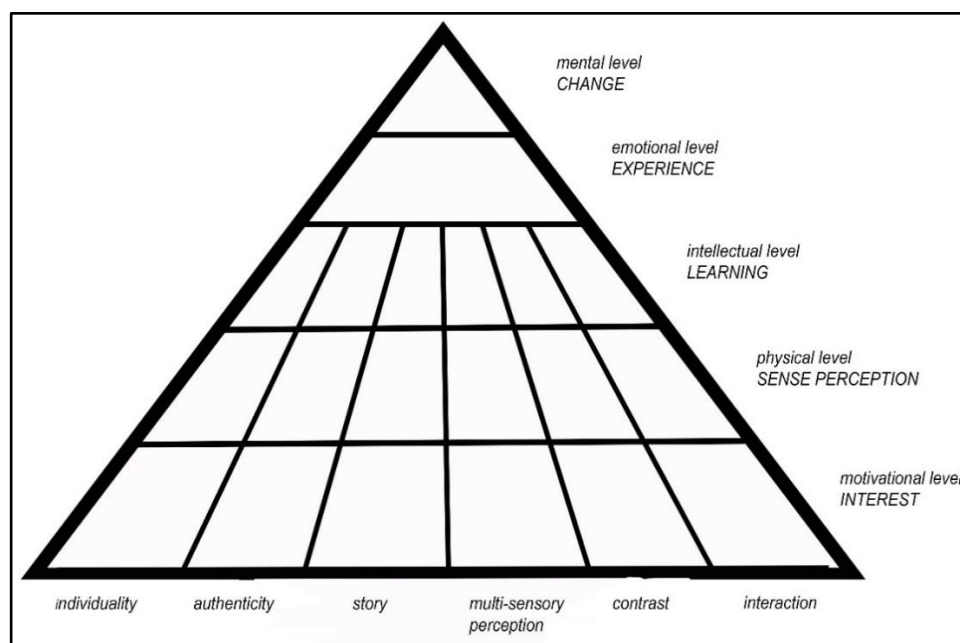


Figure 1. Experience pyramid (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 11.)

Individuality of a tourism product means that it should be unique and not available elsewhere. The experience should be something that is special in its own way. This usually means the product needs to be flexible to serve customers' needs and be possible to customize according to the customers' preferences. A customizable product is always unique. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 12.) In regards of a virtual travel product, flexibility can be challenging in the case of a tour that includes a lot of or is entirely comprised of prerecorded material. In this case other means to stand out need to be considered.

Authenticity means that the product should feel real to the customer who wants to experience something that is true to an existing lifestyle or culture. Basing the product on the local culture in a way that the local people see natural and is culturally ethical and sustainable helps the credibility of the experience. Authenticity is always determined by the customer, if they see it as credible and genuine it is authentic to them. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 12.)

Story is related to authenticity. It should contain both facts and fiction to spice it up, but it should feel real and coherent to the customer. Story ties in all the activities of the experience and gives them a meaning that the customer can connect to on an intellectual and emotional level. With a well written story behind the experience, the impact on the customer is likely to be more potent. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 13.) The gaming industry has made storytelling and manufactured authenticity in between action an artform. Bringing that to a virtual travel product should be considered.

Multi-sensory perception simply means that the experience should have aspects that engage all senses. The experience should be designed in a way that helps immersion and focuses all senses to the chosen theme. When the customer is fully focused they are less likely to be thrown out of the experience by other thoughts or stimuli and thus having the immersion ruined and the experienced lessened. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 13.) Engaging all senses is an obvious limitation for virtual travel. Especially without using VR-technology the traveler's physical surroundings can easily break the immersion. Virtual travel mainly engages with visuals and audio. Taste, smell and touch are more difficult to satisfy.

Contrast is fully related to the perspective of the customer. It means the difference between the product and the customer's everyday life. When designing product that has an exciting contrast to the everyday life of the customer, it is important to consider the nationality and culture of the target customer. The experience can have more impact when the contrast is bigger, because it lets the customer to view themselves from a different perspective and see things in a different light outside of their everyday limitations and habits. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 14.)

Interaction means both the communication between the customer and the service provider and between customers participating in the same activity. The service producer stages the experience for the customer and communication is important in successfully engaging the customer. While one can have a great experience on their own, experiencing something together with other people can give the experience extra value in social status and interaction with a group that shares that experience. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 14.) This is another point where physical travel has a clear advantage, but certain types of virtual travel can achieve satisfying interaction as well.

Going up the pyramid there are the levels that illustrate the customer experience from simple interest to mental change. Ideally a product would have all the basic elements on all the levels. The first level is motivational, and it is where the customer's interest is awakened. The expectations for the product are created by marketing that should already include all the basic elements. The second level is the physical level where the customer experiences the product. The product is perceived in its physical form by the customer's senses. The third level is intellectual, and it is where the customer assesses their physical experience and decides if it was satisfying or not and whether or not it provided them some new knowledge or skill or an opportunity for a learning experience. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 15.)

The last two levels are emotional level and mental level. The emotional level is what forms a meaningful experience. Making sure the lower levels include all the elements that build a meaningful experience should ensure the likelihood that the customer is left with a positive emotional experience. People are different and it is hard to predict or control individual emotional reactions, but if the building blocks are there, most

people should find something they consider meaningful. The mental level can be a product of a positive and powerful emotional experience. Such an experience can lead to personal change and development in the customer's life, either physical or mental. It could be, for example, a new hobby or a new way of thinking or some kind of self-discovery. (Tarssanen & Kylänen 2009, 16.)

There is no reason why a virtual travel product should not seek to offer a meaningful experience formed similarly to the building blocks of a physical travel experience. Due to the virtual nature of virtual travel products and the fact that the traveler is most likely not present at the location, some adjustments may be needed. This of course depends on the type of virtual travel product and its purpose.

6 TYPES OF VISITORS AND DESTINATIONS

This chapter focuses on categorising visitors, destinations, and attractions. Visitors are motivated and influenced by multiple different things that all affect their decisions to travel. Understanding these factors helps destinations find and choose the tourists they have the most to offer for. A tourism destination can be considered as a place consumers travel to and which has multiple tourism resources available (Wang 2011, 2). Tourism resources include attractions, infrastructure, equipment, service providers, and organizations coordinating the efforts of the different tourism industry sectors at the location (Wang 2011, 2). The type of resources available at a destination determines what kind of destination a place can be and what type of tourists it should target.

6.1 Segmentation and traveler types

As described in chapter 5.1 segmenting target visitor groups can be done based on the travel motivations of different groups that are influenced by their demographics and lifestyles, for example, and those can be used as segmenting variables as well.

Segmenting visitors based on push and pull factors is common practice and considers both the destination specific characteristics and tourists' individualistic characteristics. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 357.) For the purposes of marketing, the next step after segmenting is choosing the segments the destination wants to target. There are two ways to identify natural target markets for a destination. The destination can look into the current visitors and see who they are, what are they looking for and how much do they spend money. This gives an idea on who the destination should target in marketing and development. Another way is to look at the attractions and events the destination offers and target segments that could be interested in those. However, many segments can be identified it should be noted that the ones chosen should be financially beneficial to the destination. This means that the target segment should be one that is willing to spend money during their stay. The target segments should also be specific enough that the destination can define what they are offering in their marketing efforts. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 360.)

Visitor segments can be classified in a few different ways. One simple and common classification is done based on whether the tourist travels independently or with a group. The terms independent traveler (IT) and group-inclusive tour (GIT) are commonly used for these classifications. Classification can be done based on the tourist's degree of institutionalization and their impact on the destination. Organized mass tourists fall under the GIT classification. They are people who purchase a readymade package and have little to no other influence on their travel experience. They usually travel in groups and have very little contact with the local people because they mostly stay in the hotel included in the package and tour the destination in a bus. Individual mass tourists differ from the previous group in the way that they take a little more control over their own itinerary and may rent a car to visit attractions on their own for example. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 361.)

The IT classification includes the explorers who plan their own itineraries and make their own reservations. These people are also more likely to interact with the local people. The backpackers who mostly do not stay in traditional hotels and are more likely to use youth hostels with friends or camp out are commonly classified under the term drifters. They are usually young and mix in with the lower socioeconomic local groups. Tourist who are visiting friends and family (VFR) are a group that may not

use accommodation services since they are staying in the homes of their friends or family, but they should not be discounted as important tourists because they do use money on dining, shopping, and visiting attractions and events. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 361.)

Business travelers are people whose main reason for their stay is any form of business. This could be any kind of meeting, convention, trade show or job seeking for example. Pleasure travel could be described as the opposite of business travel, but as a classification it is usually too wide to be of much use without further segmentation. Bleisure or business and pleasure travelers are those business travelers who have planned to include some relaxation time to their business trip. Education and religious travelers are a broad category that includes students, missionaries, and those on a pilgrimage as well as many others and should be broken down to smaller categories when this segment is relevant. Lastly there are pass-through tourists who are traveling from one place to another and need to stop overnight in between. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 362.)

Tourists can also be classified through Plog's categorization into allocentrics and psychocentrics. This is based on the travel patterns and preferences determined by tourists' personality characteristics. Allocentrics are similar to backpackers or explorers and look for new experiences which leads them to often be the ones discovering new destinations. Psychocentrics are closer to the mass tourists and are often less adventurous and demand comfort and service. As they look for nonthreatening places they generally find a destination when the tourism services and infrastructure has had time to develop. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 362.)

It is important to monitor the popularity of different attractions and the type of tourists visiting them. This helps identifying and predicting trends that can cause changes in the popularity of the attractions. Keeping up with the changes makes it possible to answer to them and adjust the marketing accordingly or create new services or products or change the current profile of the attraction in a way that meets the needs of the changing market. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 362.)

Because a destination includes a variety of products and attributes such as geographic size, attractions, accommodation, food and beverage and entertainment, destination marketing can be more challenging than business marketing. Whereas in business marketing the product strategy is determined by the target markets, in destination marketing the existing attractions and resources are the basis of choosing potential target segments. Knowledge on the characteristics and destination selection behavior is important for successful destination marketing because while destinations have varying natural, historical and cultural attractions, they need to develop and offer other facilitating, supporting and augmented products to stay competitive in the tourism market where other destinations have their own similar attractions. Offering good infrastructure, accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, tours, entertainment, visitor services and hospitality can make the difference for the tourist choosing between destinations. When a destination understands what type of visitors they want to attract and what those visitors seek from their travel, they can better specify what they have to offer for those specific visitors. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 346.) Being able to effectively and efficiently use the resources available creates a competitive advantage (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 347).

Sustainability has been a big trend in the recent years and affects the tourism field as well. Sustainable tourism refers to tourism that minimises the environmental impacts and sociocultural changes at a destination. It also aims to sustain the longevity of a destination and create economic opportunities for local communities. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 349). Protecting the resources and the interests of both residents and travellers may mean some limitations in the capacity and possibilities at the destination, but for some tourists sustainability of the destination can be the deciding factor on their travel plans.

6.2 Destination categorization

Destinations can be categorized in to five groups. Centered destination is a destination where the visitor plans to spend the majority of their time during their visit in one place. A base destination is a place for the tourist to stay while they explore the

surrounding regions. Multicentre holidays include two or more destinations of equal importance to the tourist. Touring destinations are included in a linear itinerary that stops in a number of points, for example this could be a port during a cruise. The fifth category are transit destinations. They are stopover places at convenient points between more popular destinations. (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, 215.)

Tourism attractions can be categorized into historic buildings and heritage, museums and galleries, parks and gardens, events, and other attractions. Historic buildings and heritage include places like archaeological sites, battlefields, industrial heritage areas and modern structures of significance. Museums and art galleries are a popular visitor attraction. They can be found in many destinations in some form in different sizes with varying exhibitions. Parks and gardens refer to places like botanical gardens, arboretums and other garden types, wildlife parks and theme and amusement parks. These are man-made places that were purposefully built as opposed to natural attractions. Events include all sizes of markets, festivals, parades, exhibitions and entertainment venues that regularly host events. Events are often visited also by business travellers while many of the other categories focus mainly on leisure travel. The other attractions category includes a variety of attractions that do not fit into the other categories but have been able to build the characteristics of a tourist attraction. These could include cultural attractions, religious attractions, sports related places and events, shopping opportunities, gastronomy, transport related attractions and places of dark tourism. (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, 276-.) Another category are natural attractions that are features within natural environment and are not built for the purpose of tourism. These include national parks, beaches, caves, cliffs, mountains, hills, waterfalls, islands and forests. (Stainton, Types of Tourist Attractions.)

The two primary strategies used by destinations to attract visitors are events and attractions. All consumers weight the costs against benefits when making buying decisions. The gained value of education, experience, fun, relaxation, and memories needs to be worth the time, effort and resources the tourist uses on their trip. While convenience in the form of transport times, language barriers, sanitary concerns, access to interests and possible special needs plays a part in travel decisions, events and attractions are meant to be the pull factor creates the interest. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 353.)

Events of all different sizes can generate economic impact on the destination in the form of money spent on hotel accommodation, food and beverage, tourist attractions, entertainment, gasoline, and shopping. Besides the economic value events can help create an identity for a community and help destination reduce the problem of seasonality. Most events can be enjoyed by both locals and travellers and they can be organized year-round. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 353.)

Manufactured attractions are needed in order to satisfy the desire for travel as many nations have recognized that while historical and natural attractions are valuable, they alone cannot support mass tourism sustainably. Many destinations have created national parks to protect the popular natural sites and Unesco World Heritage Sites were created to protect and conserve sites of outstanding cultural or natural importance. A natural attraction that used to be often ugly, dangerous, and polluted in many places because they were used for purposes of heavy industry are the waterfronts in cities. Rivers, lakes, and ocean fronts have been cleaned up and housing, restaurants, hotels, and shops have been built close to them to take advantage of the waterfront view. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 355.)

7 TOURISM IN PORI

Pori is located on the coast of western Finland. It is one of the bigger cities in Finland but is still relatively unknown beyond the country borders. Pori is an old industrial town established in 1558 on the estuary of the Kokemäki River. Best known for Pori Jazz festival, Yyteri beach and Kirjurinluoto park area which is the venue for multiple summer festivals, Pori is a summer destination for most leisure tourists. As a tourist destination Pori is a mix of nature and cultural attractions.

Categorizing some of the biggest visitor attractions in Pori based on the aforementioned categories for visitor attractions, under historic buildings and heritage we could put Pori Theater building, Villa Mairela in Noormarkku, The Old Town Hall,

Juselius Mausoleum, Central Pori Church, Leineperi Ironworks and Ahlström works. The main attractions in museums and galleries would be Pori Art Museum, Satakunta Museum, Rosenlew museum and Ark Nature Center. There are also several other smaller museums and many art galleries. Something to note is that many of the museums are located in buildings that could also be considered under historic buildings and heritage, and many of the historic buildings include exhibits.

The National urban park area could be categorized under parks and gardens as a lot of it is built and reserved for recreational activities. The area includes Kirjurinluoto park area, Hanhiluoto Garden Park and the adjacent Satakunta Garden Information Centre, Eteläranta, the Old Cotton factory area, Kalifornia golf course, The Old Town Hall park, the sports centre area and so on. (Website of Visit Pori 2022.)

As mentioned the Pori Jazz festival is well known nationwide but it is not the only event in Pori. Other events include Porispere festival, Iskelmä festival, Suomi Areena and different theatre and concert events that may vary from year to year.

Yyteri Beach and the surrounding nature areas and Bothnian Sea National park as well as the Kokemäki River delta make up some of the natural attractions in Pori. The river delta area and some of the Yyteri area are especially popular with birdwatchers. The Bothnian Sea National Park consists mostly of islands and is popular with boaters. For tourists who are not traveling by boat, access to the islands is more limited. Yyteri beach is a popular holiday destination during the summer and there has been a lot of development in the recent years in order to offer services for the tourists. Large part of the beach and surrounding area having Natura 2000 status is a challenge for the area because it prevents some development ideas that could be harmful to the environment. However, the status and protection work under it could be turned into an asset and that is one goal in the marketing of the area. An hour away from Pori Lauhanvuori - Hämeen kangas Unesco Global Geopark is also a great natural site to visit for nature lovers exploring the Satakunta region.

Reposaari with its wooden buildings, Kallo island with its lighthouse and the Archipelago Routes that reach several Finnish coastal cities offer a mix of natural and

built attractions. Different sports events bring people to Pori and there are also different restaurants, cafes and shopping opportunities offered around the city.

For many tourists Pori could be categorized as a base destination as they often like to explore the wider Satakunta region during their visit. (Mäkinen, personal communication on 20.12.2021.) For people traveling along the Archipelago routes, Pori may be part of a multicenter plan to visit several cities along the coastline.

In order to find out what Visit Pori already knows about their target groups and what is popular among visitors Armi Mäkinen and Maria Rasmussen were interviewed. They have both been working in the tourism field in Pori for several years. Mäkinen has been working for Visit Pori and its predecessor for many years in customer service and planning different guided tours and organizing private accommodation. Maria Rasmussen was interviewed for her understanding of marketing and co-operation. Understanding what is being done currently and what is popular, will help figuring out what would work in digital form or how a virtual experience could be used as an advantage.

Tourists in Pori are mainly domestic. International tourists come mostly from Germany, United Kingdom and Sweden. The main target groups are nature lovers, urban adults, and families. With the top attractions in the focus of marketing being Yyteri and its nature, Kirjurinluoto and the wider Archipelago this makes sense since these attractions offer a variety of activities for these groups.

Mäkinen (personal communication on 20.12.2021) notes that while there is interest in domestic travel and visiting places close to home since people have realized there is much to see and experience nearby, those visits are generally shorter, and the tourists spend a shorter time in a specific place. Destinations hope for longer visits though, because those bring more money to the entrepreneurs in the area. The number of nights tourists stay in the city is also one of the measures of success for tourism management. Other notable trends in tourist behavior have been seeking experiences instead of luxury, a wish to return to roots, locally produced food, local life, nature travel and National parks and the search for small destinations that offer high quality,

personalized, memorable experiences and services. Responsibility and sustainability are also noted when seeking a destination.

Visit Pori focuses heavily on social media marketing through Facebook and Instagram, but other channels are used as well. Visit Pori website and Visit Yyteri website gather together information about the city, its attractions and its services. Visit Pori also prints brochures of Pori and Yyteri that are available in many hotels in Pori and tourist information centers around the country. Advertisement pictures and videos have been on lightboards outside and at shopping centers for example, and different media outlets have been used when possible. There are also different types of campaigns and shorter escapades to get people talking about the city. Visit Pori uses participatory marketing that invites locals and tourists to share their experiences and thoughts with others and join activities and talking points to grow awareness of the existence of the city and what it has to offer. Part of this is also the brand merchandise that show the Pori brand in items in the use of people. The longer campaigns include the 100 reasons to travel in Finland marketing ensemble that focuses on domestic travel and presents different attractions in all around the country. There was also a co-operation campaign with other Finnish cities targeted toward Sweden in fall 2021 and the Salaa rakas -campaign that included a photo exhibit in Helsinki and Pori and new merchandise. Other campaigns are coming in 2022 that continue the love theme in different ways. In 2021 already suggestive direct messages were sent on Instagram to Finnish celebrities and influencers in the name of Pori, inviting them to share their reactions, and the kissing booth was built with the idea that it would make a fun backdrop for social media pictures for anyone that comes across it. (Rasmussen, personal communication on 7.1.2022.) Mäkinen (personal communication on 20.12.2021) also adds that for several years Visit Pori has been present on the Finnish Archipelago section at the Matka Nordic Travel Fair instead of Satakunta section because the Archipelago co-operation is important especially when we consider international travellers. They are seldom interested in one small city and want a wider view of the whole country. This is why being part of a bigger ensemble is beneficial in international marketing.

Visit Pori co-operates with many local and national organizations. Of course, there are the tourism entrepreneurs and businesses in the area. Other local entities include the municipalities in the Satakunta region, Satakuntaliitto, the University Consortium of

Pori and Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. As for national co-operation other cities and their Visit organizations are important, Visit Finland as a whole and the Finnish Archipelago network that includes 14 coastal cities and does international marketing and sales co-operation. (Rasmussen, personal communication on 7.1.2022.)

Visit Pori does work in the field of responsible and sustainable travel. Visit Finland launched a Sustainable travel Finland -path that aims to help businesses and destinations plan and reach an acceptable level of sustainability and continue the work in the future. Visit Pori and Pori as a destination has committed to the program and is helping and educating the local businesses on matters of sustainability and inviting them to join the program. Visit Pori organizes also other training and information events. When it comes to sustainability the co-operation with Satakunta University of Applied Sciences is important. Pori is also a so-called HINKU -municipality which means that it is taking part in the carbon neutral Finland network which was established in 2008. The aim of the project is to reduce carbon emissions 80% from 2007 to 2030. (Rasmussen, personal communication on 7.1.2022.)

Rasmussen sees potential in virtual travel but believes virtual experiences would be a better term at this point. These experiences would be especially useful for the elderly and disabled people as was discussed already earlier. Rasmussen also sees the benefits of not being tied to a certain time and the increasing opportunities for individual travel. It could add a new dimension for visiting an attraction, either virtually or on location, and it could make walking tours possible with a virtual guide or let travellers familiarize themselves with a destination beforehand. Virtual travel opens many doors and the possibilities it offers are growing. (Rasmussen, personal communication on 7.1.2022.) Pori does already have live footage web-cameras looking over Yyteri, Reposaaari and Eteläranta, so in that regard web-cam travel is already possible to engage in.

In addition to the brand merchandise Visit Pori offers different travel packages and tours. There are shorter walking tours in different parts of the town and tours of specific locations or sights like the Pori Theater building or the Old Town Hall. Then there are some longer tours like the microbrewery tour and the boat trips to Säppi island and Iso-Enskeri island. There are scheduled tours during the summer for these, but they

can also be reserved for a group at any time of the year. Visit Pori also plans longer tours for groups that can be customized based on the group's wishes. (Website of Visit Pori 2022.)

Many tours have been built in co-operation with the Archipelago network. These tours include several destinations and attractions. For example the tour of Old wooden towns in Finnish archipelago includes Turku, Naantali, Uusikaupunki, Rauma and Pori. Another tour is one that is Alvar Aalto themed. These tours are not sold by Visit Pori, but many of the attractions located in Pori that are included in these tours are attractions Visit Pori can sell separate tours to. (Website of Visit Pori 2022.)

To summarise and show where the virtual travel product would fit, Ansoff matrix is used. Ansoff matrix is a table figure with four fields consisting of Diversification which depicts how a new product could bring a new market, Product development which depicts what new product could be added for the existing market, Market development which depicts what new markets could be targeted for the existing product and Penetration which depicts the current situation of product and market. (World Tourism Organization 2011, 74.)

		Market	
		New	Existing
P r o d u c t	New	<p>Diversification:</p> <p>A virtual experience product that doesn't require the user to be on location would enable elderly and people with disabilities to experience and see aspects of the city otherwise unavailable to them. It could also be used by foreign markets to get a taste and possibly travel physically to Pori at some point.</p>	<p>Product development:</p> <p>A virtual experience product that can bring something new even to those already familiar with the area.</p>
	Existing	<p>Market development:</p> <p>The current domestic market matches the existing products well, so the logical place to look for new market is</p>	<p>Penetration:</p> <p>The current market is mainly domestic and includes nature lovers, urban adults and families. The main foreign markets</p>

		abroad. This is the aim of marketing co-operation with Archipelago network especially.	are in Sweden, Germany and the UK. Pori offers many kinds of attractions but the main focus has been on Yyteri area and Kirjurinluoto. Different tours depicting the history of the city are offered to tourists.
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Figure 2. Ansoff matrix (World Tourism Organization 2011, 74).

8 RESEARCH METHODS

For this study a quantitative method to gather data was chosen, specifically a survey. Quantitative research methods aim to be generalizable and either verify or falsify a hypothesis. Quantitative methods rely on numbers and statistics. For this reason, data is gathered from a big number of varied subjects in order to find an average. (O'Gorman & MacIntosh 2015, 155.) Surveys are well established as a research method in tourism destinations as they can provide useful information on visitor activities, motivations, behavior and expenditure as an average of the population as a whole. They can also be used to monitor trends over time. (Richards 2010, 13.)

A survey includes a structured questionnaire that is planned and tested and should provide a wide array of data from a large number of subjects. The sample size should be big enough to provide data that can be reliably generalized. (O'Gorman & MacIntosh 2015, 165.)

As the purpose of this research is to map what kind of virtual product would be the most appealing to customers and would provide the most value to Visit Pori, a survey was chosen in order to find out what it is that interests visitors about the city. To map out what those things are the survey asks, what visitors and residents have found most important and what they would like to know more about, or what people who have not visited the city yet would be interested in. Questions about whether these things influenced their decision to visit and if they learned something new that was especially memorable are also included to find out what in the city should be especially pushed

in marketing. Another issue included in the questionnaire is the interest the travelers have in virtual travel and what is the level of digital skills and owned equipment they have in order to participate in virtual travel.

The questionnaire is created using Google Forms so it is easy to share online and transport into an Excel spreadsheet later for analysis. It also means that it is reasonable to assume anyone answering the questionnaire has access to a computer or a smart device and is able to use it, thus also having the basic means to participate in virtual travel. The questionnaire is shared on Visit Pori Facebook page. Visit Pori Facebook page currently has 7836 followers, but most of them are not actively interacting with post. Most posts get less than 50 interactions in the form of likes or comments. The sample cannot be controlled when the survey is done like this. The sample forms itself from the people who see the invite to answer the questionnaire and are interested enough on the topic to give answers. This study relied on the answers from people interested on the topic. The question was not about whether or not people are interested, it was about who is interested and on what aspects would they be most interested in. The reason for sharing the questionnaire on Visit Pori Facebook page is that the followers of the page are at least aware of the city and interested enough that they would follow a tourist information center page on social media. Using the followers as a sample can give a varied sample that is still specific enough to root out people who have never heard of the city and thus could not give answers to half of the questions. However, with social media there is always a risk of bias or some group of people getting overrepresented because of someone sharing a post with their friends. The questionnaire has the questions in both English and Finnish in hopes of some foreign answers as well.

The survey questions were designed to answer the research sub-questions: How a virtual tour can be effectively used in marketing tourism in Pori? Who are the target customers for it? What should be included in the tour? and How would the tour reach the intended audience? The questions were divided into four categories: background questions, interest in Pori, interest and capability with virtual travel and overall interest and motivation to travel. The questionnaire has both closed and open-ended questions. Many are simple yes or no answers. There are a couple multiple response questions

where more than one answer is possible with the option to add any that the answerer sees important.

Open-ended questions are kept to a minimum for analysis purposes but are not excluded completely. While open-ended questions often have a lower percentage in answers, they can provide important additional information and context for the close-ended questions. Questions 8, 15 and 23 are open and some content analysis is needed as it is designed and used for analyzing text. The answers to the open questions were short and similar answers could easily be grouped under a few themes that arose from the answers.

The research type is mainly explanatory, meaning it considers causality and association between variables (Veal 2017, 483). The analysis uses crosstabulations drawn from a spreadsheet of the answers. Most answers will be measured as nominal data, as they have no numerical categories. Nominal data codes do not require an average or mean to be calculated. (Veal 2017, 493). The main interest in the answers is the frequency of each variable, that means how many times the answer appears in the data in numbers and percentages (Veal 2017, 500). Crosstabulation is used to analyze how two or more variables relate to each other (Veal 2017, 508). The data in this study will be broken down in numbers, percentages and frequency tables to show the most relevant answers.

Comparing answers from the people who most frequently expressed interest in virtual travel with their answers to questions from the other categories should give an understanding on what type of people would be the target audience for a virtual tour. And, further, what kind of tour they could be interested in in Pori specifically. Those with no interest in virtual travel or technical skill to participate can be excluded from the target group from the start. Some of this can be done by the use of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) which allows for simultaneous analysis of relations among several categorical variables. MCA works much like crosstabulation the way it is used in this study, but it allows more than two variables to be examined together at the same time. While factor and cluster analysis is used when grouping together numerical data variables, when analyzing nominal data multiple correspondence analysis needs to be used (Veal 2017, 555).

9 THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND ANALYSIS

The questionnaire got 70 answers. 38,57% of the answers came from people living in Pori, two more lived in the Satakunta region (Harjavalta, Ulvila). This was expected and works for the study as it can give an idea what the locals find important about the city and their attitudes toward virtual tourism. Other cities included in the answers were Turku, Helsinki, Vantaa, Espoo, Tampere, Oulu, Joensuu, Kaarina, Kajaani, Kemi, Kerava, Lahti, Lontoo, Mietoinen, Northampton, Raisio, Sipoo, Tukholma and one answerer who said Turku/Pori. Only three answers came from outside of Finland and all of them had visited or lived in Pori before. In fact, 62 out of 70 had visited Pori before which was beneficial for the purpose of the questionnaire. For the question, are you interested in Pori as a place to visit, 39 answered yes, 23 answered maybe and only 8 answered no.

Figure 3 shows the frequency of the age groups from question one of the questionnaire. 34,29% were between the age of 26-34, 25,71% between the age 50-60, 21,43% between 35-49, 8,57% between 61-69, 5,71% between 19-25 and 4,29% over the age of 70.

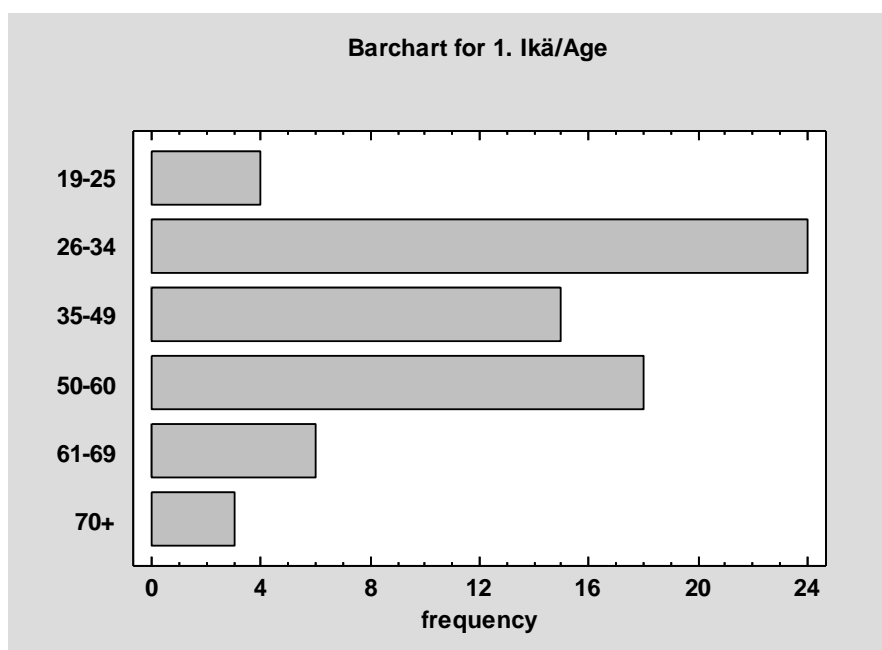


Figure 3. Frequency of age groups of the respondents.

People who lived in Pori or had visited the city found the most important things to be Kirjurinluoto and Reposaari and the coastal area, followed closely by Yyteri beach. Events were also important to many as well as natural attractions in general and historic buildings and heritage. Museums and galleries were also fairly popular. This correlates well with what Mäkinen told about the customer and target groups of Visit Pori. Full list of answers can be seen on figure 4.

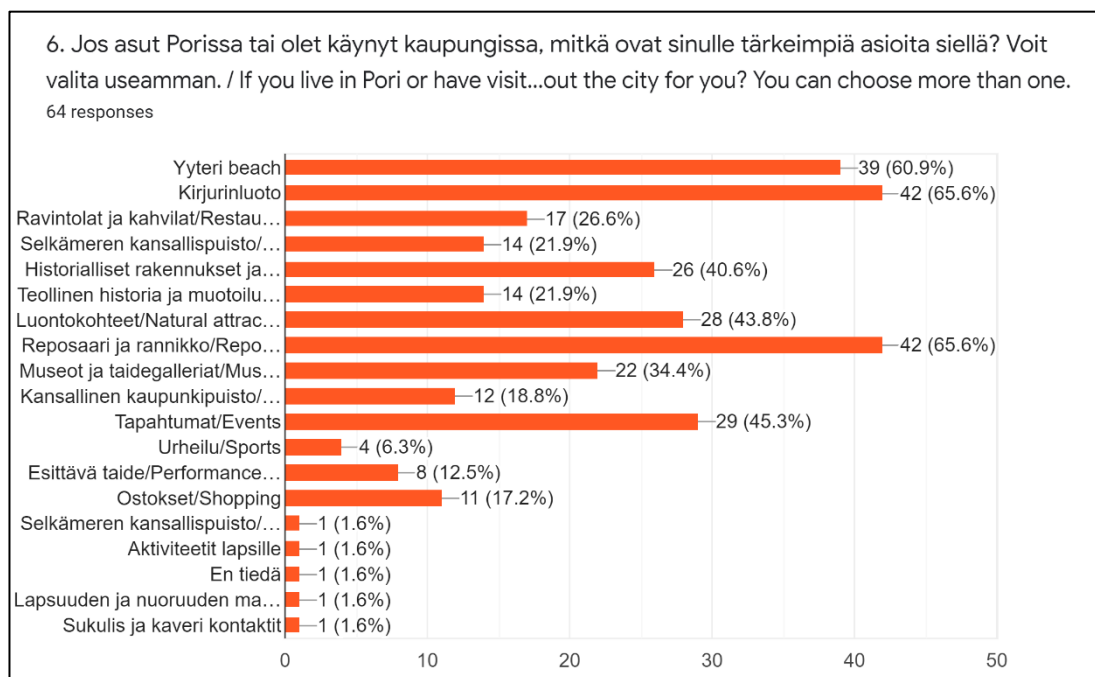


Figure 4. Responses to “If you live in Pori or have visited Pori, what are/were the most important things about the city for you?”

In table 1 we see the number of answers for each option for question number six, if you live in Pori or have visited Pori, what are/were the most important things about the city for you, from respondents living in Pori versus respondents living elsewhere. There were 36 answers from people from other cities and 27 from Pori. Considering the difference in the number of answers, comparing percentages is more helpful. Differences are not huge for the most part, but shopping opportunities, natural attractions and Yyteri beach especially seem to have more importance to the tourists. Events and Bothnian Sea National Park similarly have slightly more importance to people living elsewhere.

Table 1. Responses to question 6 divided by locals and people from elsewhere.

	City.Other	City.Pori
Shopping.	9 (25%)	3 (11%)
Performance arts.	3 (8%)	5 (19%)
Sports.	3 (8%)	1 (4%)
Events.	18 (50%)	11 (41%)
National urban park.	6 (17%)	6 (22%)
Museums and art galleries.	12 (33%)	10 (37%)
Reposaari and the coastal area.	23 (64%)	19 (70%)
Natural attractions.	18 (50%)	10 (37%)
Industrial heritage and design.	7 (19%)	7 (26%)
Historic buildings and heritage.	14 (39%)	12 (44%)
Bothnian Sea National Park.	9 (25%)	5 (19%)
Restaurants and cafes.	8 (22%)	9 (33%)
Kirjurinluoto.	23 (64%)	19 (70%)
Yyteri beach.	24 (67%)	15 (56%)

In table 2 the different attractions from question six were compared with the age groups of respondents. There are very slight differences between age groups. The table is based on frequency instead of percentage and it should be noted that when compared the numbers should be considered relative to the total number of answers per age group. However, with the sample size being so small comparing especially the 19-25 group and 61+ groups give nearly no indication of the general public. As such, it is difficult to base any results for this study on those answers. For the three bigger groups, while still small the most notable difference is that the 50-60 year olds seem to have a little more attachment to history and heritage than the younger groups based on the chosen answers for museums and galleries and historic buildings and heritage. Yyteri beach and Kirjurinluoto on the other hand are the most popular with the 26-34 age group.

Table 2. Responses to question 6 divided by age groups

	Ikä/Age 19-25	Ikä/Age 26-34	Ikä/Age 35-49	Ikä/Age 50-60	Ikä/Age 61-69	Ikä/Age 70+
Total answers per age group	4	24	15	18	6	3
Shopping	1	5	2	3	0	1
Performance arts	0	2	3	1	1	1
Sports	0	1	0	2	1	0
Events	2	10	7	8	2	0
National urban park	0	6	4	2	0	0
Museums and art galleries	1	7	3	7	2	2
Reposaari and the coastal area	2	13	10	12	3	2

Natural attractions	1	10	8	6	2	1
Industrial heritage and design	0	3	5	5	0	1
Historic buildings and heritage	0	7	6	9	2	2
Bothnian Sea National Park	1	3	6	3	1	0
Restaurants and cafes	0	6	6	4	1	0
Kirjurinluoto	2	16	7	9	5	3
Yyteri beach	3	16	10	8	2	0

Things that had made an impression included views of the riverside and old buildings, Yyteri, the coast and nature sites, the small size with all the shops close by and the Pori dialect used in marketing and signs. These were gathered from question 8 which was open ended and asked if the respondent learned something new during their visit that was especially memorable. There were a small number of answers that were grouped based on similar themes.

For what respondents would like to know more of the answers were a little different as shown on figure 5. Over half of the respondents would like to know more about the Bothnian Sea National Park and about historic buildings and heritage in the city. Natural attractions was the third most chosen answer with 48,6% of respondents including that in their answer.

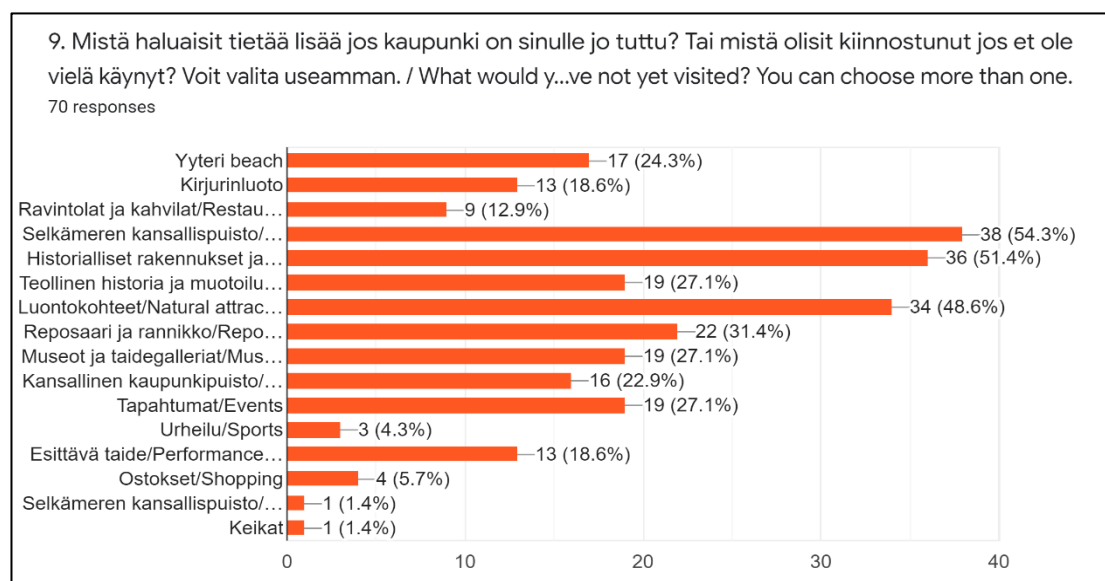


Figure 5. Responses to question 9, “What would you like to know more about if the city is familiar to you or what would you be interested in if you have not yet visited?”

When compared between people living in Pori versus elsewhere there are some clear differences as shown in table 3. People from outside of Pori would like to know more about Kirjurinluoto, Yyteri beach, Reposaaari and the coastal area, Bothnian Sea National Park and natural attractions in general. While many people living in Pori likely feel the first three places to be familiar to them there is still interest to know more about the National park and other natural attractions. People living in Pori would like to know more about performance arts, events and museums and galleries, all of which are things that often change. There is also a clear interest in historic buildings and heritage from both groups.

Table 3. Responses to question 9 divided by locals and people from elsewhere

	City.Muu	City.Pori
Total answers	43	27
Shopping	3 (7%)	1 (4%)
Performance arts	6 (14%)	6 (22%)
Sports	3 (7%)	0
Events	11 (26%)	8 (30%)
National urban park	10 (23%)	4 (15%)
Museums and art galleries	11 (26%)	8 (30%)
Reposaaari and the coastal area	18 (42%)	4 (15%)
Natural attractions	24 (56%)	9 (33%)
Industrial heritage and design	12 (28%)	6 (22%)
Historic buildings and heritage	22 (51%)	15 (56%)
Bothnian Sea National Park	28 (65%)	11 (41%)
Restaurants and cafes	7 (16%)	2 (7%)
Kirjurinluoto	12 (28%)	2 (7%)
Yyteri beach	16 (37%)	2 (7%)

Similarly to table 2, table 4 shows the comparison between different age groups and attractions of interest in regards to what the respondents would like to know more about. The differences are not very big again for the most part. Again because of the small sample, not much can be said about the 19-25 and 61+ groups though their answers do seem to align mostly with the other three bigger groups. When looking at the two most popular answers, historic buildings and heritage and the Bothnian Sea National Park, they are relatively even with all age groups. The historic buildings are a little more popular with the older people though.

Table 4. Responses to question 9 divided by age groups

	<i>Ikä/Age.</i> 19-25	<i>Ikä/Age.</i> 26-34	<i>Ikä/Age.</i> 35-49	<i>Ikä/Age.</i> 50-60	<i>Ikä/Age.</i> 61-69	<i>Ikä/Age.</i> 70+
Total answers per age group	4	24	15	18	6	3
Shopping	1	1	1	1	0	0
Performance arts	0	3	4	3	2	0
Sports	1	2	0	0	0	0
Events	1	9	5	2	2	0
National urban park	1	4	4	4	0	1
Museums and art galleries	0	7	4	7	1	0
Reposaari and the coastal area	1	7	6	7	0	1
Natural attractions	2	14	7	6	4	0
Industrial heritage and design	0	9	3	4	1	1
Historic buildings and heritage	0	13	8	12	4	0
Bothnian Sea National Park	2	14	8	10	4	1
Restaurants and cafes	2	3	2	1	1	0
Kirjurinluoto	0	5	4	3	1	1
Yyteri beach	1	7	3	5	1	1

For the questions about virtual travel 74,3% said the concept is not familiar and 82,9% had never tried it. Although this means only 12 people answered yes to having tried virtual travel but 16 people responded to the question about what kind of virtual travel they have tried, which indicates that 4 people did not necessarily consider their virtual travel experience as virtual travel. Considering the somewhat unclear definition of the term and its uses, this would make sense. Figure 6 shows the answers to what kind of virtual travel the respondents had tried. It also indicates that some of those who had tried, had tried more than one type.

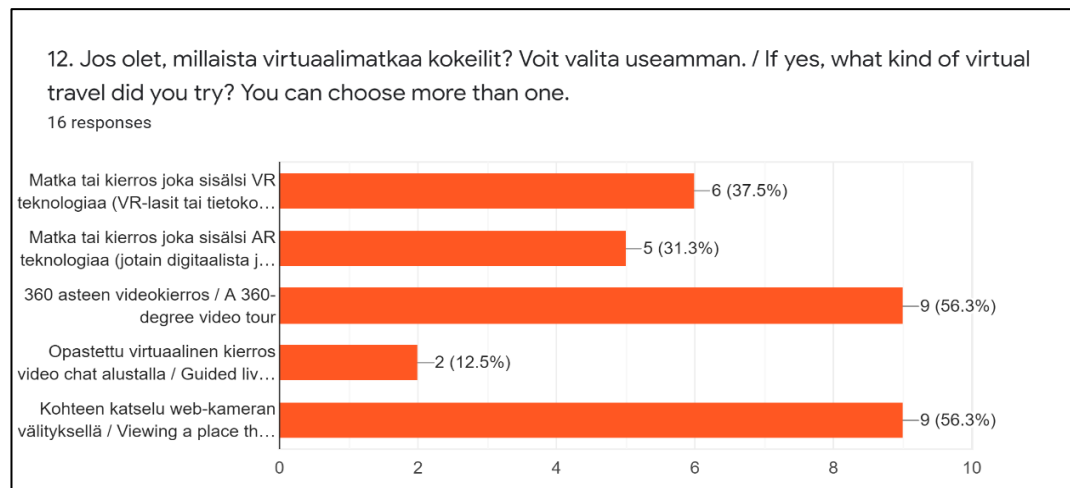


Figure 6. What kind of virtual travel have you tried

When asked if they would be interested in trying virtual travel 61,4% answered yes and 37,1% said maybe. However, only 14,3% would pay for a virtual tour, 30% would not and 55,7% said maybe. It was not specified in the question what type of tour this would be and when asked for maximum price they would be willing to pay, many specified that it would depend on the type of tour, destination and length of the tour. Based on the 29 given answers the sums were divided to 4 groups, less than 10€ (10 answers), 10-20€ (9 answers), 20-30€ (7 answers) and over 30€ (2 answers). There were two additional answers that did not give a sum, one of those mentioned museum card and the other specified what type of tour they could pay for and said it should be something that was not possible to see otherwise, like a tour that incorporates historical images in a way that lets you see what areas used to look like. Many also specified they would be willing to pay more for a guided tour.

60% of the respondents thought a virtual experience could make them more interested in visiting a place in person and 37,1% answered maybe to the question. 91,4% did not own VR-equipment which was to be expected based on earlier discussion on the problems with VR. However, 62,9% were interested to at least try VR-equipment. While there seems to be an interest in trying VR, this study cannot say if investing in a fully VR experience would be profitable since so few own equipment and the answers for this correlate with the analysis presented earlier of the challenges of VR at the moment. It could be worth looking into later if the technology keeps developing and gets more affordable.

The most used sources of information on travel destinations were Google and websites both with over 50 answers. After those came Facebook, Instagram and travel blogs with over 20 answers. All given options had some support, but those five were clearly the biggest.

When asked how often the respondents traveled 65,7% usually travelled a few times per month, 30% traveled monthly and 4,3% traveled weekly. 70% traveled for leisure and 30% for business and leisure both. When asked who they travelled with multiple choices were an option and many chose more than one. Traveling with family got most responses at 53, traveling with friends or colleagues got 40 answers and alone 30.

In the last question about the most important things about traveling new experiences were highlighted, both natural and cultural attractions that let you explore something new. Relaxation and taking a break from everyday life were also themes in many answers. In the theme of relaxation, answers also included the importance of easy access to attractions and information, being comfortable, and going at your own pace. Also, price was important to many and that it fits the quality, and that the destination meets the expectations set by marketing. Ecology and safety were also mentioned in a couple answers.

10 SUGGESTION FOR A VIRTUAL TRAVEL PRODUCT

To find the most beneficial target group for a virtual travel experience and what the topic of the experience should be, a multiple correspondence analysis was done with the variables of age group, interest in trying virtual travel, willingness to pay for a virtual travel experience and the two most popular answers to what respondents would like to know more about in Pori. The two answers were the Bothnian Sea National Park and historic buildings and heritage as mentioned before. A simplified run down of the analysis is presented in tables 5 and 6.

Table 5 does not bring much new information as it was already established that most respondents were at least maybe interested in trying virtual travel and most could consider paying depending on the type of tour. The table does sum up the interest corresponding with the age groups, the two attractions and willingness to pay, however. It also shows that over half of the people interested or possibly interested in virtual travel were interested in knowing more about at least one of the two attractions.

Table 6 shows the correspondence of willingness to pay with the age groups and the two attractions. The age group most willing to consider paying for virtual travel are the 35-49 year olds followed closely by 26-34 year olds. For the two attractions, 8 of the people interested in historic buildings and heritage would not pay for virtual travel while the same number for Bothnian Sea National park is 12. Both have 22 interested respondents who answered maybe to paying for a tour. Historic buildings and heritage has 7 respondents saying yes to paying while the National park has 5.

Table 5. Multiple correspondence analysis breakdown of the questions for age and willingness to pay for virtual travel with the two most popular attractions compared to interest toward trying virtual travel.

	<i>Interested in trying virtual travel. Ehkä/maybe</i>	<i>Interested in trying virtual travel. Ei/no</i>	<i>Interested in trying virtual travel. Kyllä/yes</i>
Total number of answers	26	1	43
1. Ikä/Age.19-25	1	0	3
1. Ikä/Age.26-34	11	0	13
1. Ikä/Age.35-49	4	0	11
1. Ikä/Age.50-60	5	1	12
1. Ikä/Age.61-69	2	0	4
1. Ikä/Age.70+	3	0	0
Historic buildings and heritage	14	0	23
Bothnian Sea National Park	13	1	25
Would you pay for virtual travel. Ehkä/maybe	15	0	24
Would you pay for virtual travel. Ei/no	9	1	11
Would you pay for virtual travel. Kyllä/yes	2	0	8

Table 6. Multiple correspondence analysis breakdown of the question for age and the two most popular attractions compared to willingness to pay for virtual travel

	<i>Would you pay for virtual travel. Ehkä/maybe</i>	<i>Would you pay for virtual travel. Ei/no</i>	<i>Would you pay for virtual travel. Kyllä/yes</i>
Total number of answers	39	21	10
1. Ikä/Age.19-25	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
1. Ikä/Age.26-34	15 (62%)	5 (21%)	4 (17%)
1. Ikä/Age.35-49	10 (67%)	3 (20%)	2 (13%)
1. Ikä/Age.50-60	9 (50%)	6 (33%)	3 (17%)
1. Ikä/Age.61-69	1 (17%)	5 (83%)	0
1. Ikä/Age.70+	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	0
Historic buildings and heritage	22	8	7
Bothnian Sea National Park	22	12	5

This could indicate that while the overall interest in the National park is slightly bigger, a tour focusing on the historic buildings and heritage of the Pori area could better succeed as a paid tour. Of course, the numbers here are very small and it is impossible to draw any definite conclusions based on them.

Based on the data there could be two options for a tour: A tour focusing on the Bothnian Sea National Park, especially targeted for tourists, or a tour focusing on historic buildings and heritage with a target group that clearly includes the locals. Either one of these could have potential.

A virtual tour of the Bothnian Sea National Park that included 360 degree video that could be watched on VR-goggles and had a voice over guide narration could be a great extra at the planned info center in Yyteri and part of the footage could be used in marketing. However, if we wish the virtual product to be such that it can draw tourists to Pori and also be available to use on site, a tour on city history might be a better place to start. As noted earlier, the National Park is difficult to access without a boat and promoting it as an attraction would mean efforts to make it more accessible are needed. If something is promoted as a great thing to see, the tourist should be able to easily reach it. While a virtual tour of an area that is difficult to access for many could be interesting and bring information about the area to people, it might not be the most beneficial project for Visit Pori specifically.

Visit Pori already organizes guided city tours in different parts of the city, but unless the customer is part of a group and reserves a private tour at a specific time, the tours

are limited to certain days and times. Sometimes these times do not fit in the customer's schedule. Creating a recorded virtual tour with narration by a guide would make it possible for customers to watch and listen to the tour whenever is convenient for them. It could be watched at home or it could be followed on site through a mobile device. The full tour could be a paid product, but parts of it could also be used in marketing. This could give the visitors a new way to experience and learn something in an easy way at their own pace, which fits the reasons for people to travel and the points made by the survey respondents on what they found important in traveling.

The tour would include buildings and sites that are already included in many city tours. Including those popular buildings in this first virtual product would give the locals a new way to see familiar buildings and the visitors a more traditional look on the history of the city. Those buildings are popular for a reason and are included in tours because they have importance and relevant history and stories attached. If the virtual tour is popular, another more niche experience can be made with a similar idea.

Considering the experience pyramid, building a virtual experience that customers would be willing to pay for, it should have at least most of the building blocks of a meaningful experience covered earlier. To make the virtual experience unique and authentic it should lean into the weird and unique aspects of the city highlighted in the brand marketing. Pori dialect should be used and humor could be included, but it needs to be noted that the narration should still be understandable. As the questionnaire was mainly answered by Finnish speaking respondents the results can not be used for any foreign audiences and thus this tour plan would be in Finnish for Finnish market. Of course, with the goals of reaching international visitors it could also be translated to other languages as further development, although that will leave out the dialect.

A good story is an important element for any tour. Very few people wish to listen to a dry litany of facts no matter how interesting those facts might be. So, tying all the information about the city history in stories about the people who have lived in the city and changes the city has gone through makes it more approachable. To make the tour feel more cohesive all the smaller stories about the places the tour visits could be written into a linear timeline. The fact the tour would be prerecorded means walking

from one place to another can be cut out and they do not need to be in a logical walking order.

Prerecording also makes some extra editing possible. While much of the tour could have a 360-degree view to give the customer who chooses to watch it at home the opportunity to look around if they wish, the tour could also include archive material of the places visited to show what it used to look like and how it has changed. Depending on the budget, these old views of the buildings or places could even be created digitally onto the video so the customer could feel like they are looking at the area from the period the story narration takes place in.

Making this kind of virtual tour a multi-sensory experience that contrasts to the everyday life of a Finnish audience sitting at home is very difficult if not impossible. The voice and visuals are covered, and the soundtrack could even have some city noises at the background. The customers could be encouraged to get some food or drink popular in Pori to cover the taste and smell if it is possible for them. Interaction is also very limited with a prerecorded video. A live-video tour would enable that, but it would suffer from the same problem as an actual live tour for being limited to a certain time and the idea here is to make the tour accessible at any time. A comment section similar to that on YouTube could be added for those who have purchased the tour to comment on it and answer others' comments. However, this kind of communication is very limited and not comparable to real time interaction.

The tour could also be used on site. Customers could buy the tour and walk from place to place to follow the story or jump around on the video to listen to the part about the site they are currently at. The experience would be slightly different, but it would give the customer the freedom to choose their own route. Also, QR-codes could be used for visitors on site to scan and access the relevant part of the video tour. Although, this would be easier if the tour was free or you could access that part of the tour free when using the QR-code. A map of the included sites should also be included for these visitors to find the places. Being on site also delivers the tastes and smells of the city more easily and since many of the respondents of the questionnaire answered that they traveled with family or with friends it creates interaction between them as they can talk about what they are seeing and learning.

In its most successful the tour should be entertaining and educational and it could immerse the viewer into the story and history of the city. A high-quality video would make it visually pleasing and some could watch it like a documentary. For those visitors on site, the tour can give extra information about the places they came to see. For those watching at home, it can be an invite to see the places live or an opportunity to see something they would not be able to see otherwise. The tour could also be enjoyed during any season of the year and this would bring something more to do for those visiting the city during off-season. Adding translated versions of the narration, foreign visitors could get to know something about the city even before visiting or get a sample of what the city has to offer. This could further the goals of Visit Pori in reaching international customers.

11 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Virtual travel is a very wide subject that could be looked at from several angles. For this work the topic had to be limited a lot. In addition, the small number of answers for the questionnaire make the results not truly possible to generalize. It is rather difficult to reach people to answer this kind of questionnaire and when the only viable way is through social media, the results will inevitably be somewhat biased toward the people who are active in the specific platform used and the communities interested in the topic. Many older people are not using social media at all and having the questionnaire on Facebook certainly limited the answers from those younger than 25 because they tend to be more active on other platforms. Most other social media platforms only allow posting under your individual account which brings the question whether or not your personal followers are a reliable source of information. Also, as mentioned before, the majority of answers came from people in Finland, so there would be room to look into what foreigners would be interested in and how they see the potential for virtual travel, especially to Finland.

Regarding the questionnaire some questions could have still been clearer or more specific and some information was not truly needed after all. Most of the data from the questionnaire does line with what was said by Mäkinen about tourism in Pori and the target groups of Visit Pori as well as with the earlier information about virtual tourism in general. Thus, while the sample was small it seems it is likely to be relatively accurate representation of the tourists and locals in Pori and the interest in virtual experiences while the concept is not widely familiar.

12 REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK

In addition to a better understanding of quantitative research methods, the work gave the student abilities to continue following the advancements in the field of virtual travel and to plan further virtual products. The student has a better understanding on what the concept of virtual travel entails currently and what options exist to create a virtual travel experience. In regard to tourism in Pori in general, the student can better answer questions about the most popular tourist sights in the city based on the answers given to the questionnaire. There is also a clear interest in the Bothnian Sea National Park that rose from the answers and with that knowledge the student can also try to help develop accessibility of the area and information about it.

From the side of the commissioner Maria Rasmussen read the work and gave some comments. She said the work is broad and has useful information. She thought the questionnaire brought good information on the behavior of different age groups regarding virtual travel and found it surprising that the younger people were more interested in virtual travel even though it could have so many benefits for those who are older. Rasmussen thought that the work gives a good basis on which to build if the resources for implementing virtual travel products come available. This would suggest the goal of the work was reached though some further research would be recommended, especially on the technical and financial aspects of implementation. Those were not included in this study because they are evolving, changing and developing constantly, which means at the time of implementation all information

gathered now would most likely be outdated by the time actual implementation would be planned.

13 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The definition for virtual travel has expanded over the years and new forms of virtual travel have emerged in recent years. While the older aspects of virtual travel via virtual realities have been studied, the more recent methods have not been the focus of much research. The interest in these new ways of incorporating virtuality in tourism marketing and products has risen especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual travel can have several benefits and while it is not likely to replace physical travel, it should be taken seriously as a tool of marketing and accessibility.

Pori is a small destination with a season that heavily leans on summer. With virtual travel products Pori could offer possible tourists a taste of what the city has to offer and widen the accessibility of informative tours on the city. A virtual tour designed to have as many aspects of a tourism experience product as possible could give tourists a way of learning about the city at their own pace when physical guided tours are not available to them, or they are not capable to take part in them.

The study was done with an online questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out who would be interested in a virtual travel products and what kind, and what aspects of Pori those people would be interested to know more about. The answers indicated that the focus of the product should be on the historical buildings and heritage of the city, and many could be willing to pay for a virtual tour. As guided walking tours are already available, a more documentary style pre-recorded tour would work in this instance because it eliminates the need for scheduling the tour to a certain date and time. Linking parts of the tour on QR-codes on location would give the locals and visitors on location the ability to also access the tour on their mobile device whenever they might be on a walk around the city and have the desire for more information on their surroundings.

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Questionnaire.

Virtuaalimatka Poriin / Virtual tour in Pori

FI: Tämän kyselyn tarkoituksena on kartoittaa kiinnostusta mahdolliselle virtuaalimatkailetuotteelle Porista, ja miltä sen pitäisi näyttää. Kysely on osa opinnäytetyötäni Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoululle. Opinnäytetyö tulee Visit Porin käyttöön. Kyselyyn vastataan anonyyminä. Vastausaikaa on 12.12. asti. Vastaamiseen menee noin viisi minuuttia.

EN: The purpose of this questionnaire is to map interest in possible virtual travel product about Pori and what it should look like. The questionnaire is part of my bachelor's thesis for Satakunta University of Applied sciences which is done for benefit of Visit Pori. Answering the questionnaire is anonymous. The questionnaire is open until December 12th. Answering takes about five minutes.

FI: Kyselystä ja sen vastausten analysoinnista vastaa opinnäytetyön tekijä Ira Heino. Jos sinulla on kysyttävää tai ongelmia kyselyyn liittyen, otathan yhteyttä ira.heino@student.samk.fi

EN: The thesis and this questionnaire are done by Ira Heino. If you have any questions or problems, please contact ira.heino@student.samk.fi

1. Ikä/Age *

- 13-18
- 19-25
- 26-34
- 35-49
- 50-60
- 61-69
- 70+

2. Asuinmaa/Country *

Your answer

3. Asuinkaupunki/City *

Your answer

4. Oletko vierailut Porissa? / Have you visited Pori? *

Kyllä/yes

Ei/no

5. Oletko kiinnostunut Porista matkakohteena? / Are you interested in Pori as a place to visit? *

Kyllä/yes

Ei/no

Ehkä/maybe

6. Jos asut Porissa tai olet käynyt kaupungissa, mitkä ovat sinulle tärkeimpiä asioita siellä? Voit valita useamman. / If you live in Pori or have visited Pori, what are/were the most important things about the city for you? You can choose more than one.

- Yyteri beach
- Kirjurinluoto
- Ravintolat ja kahvilat/Restaurants and Cafes
- Selkämeren kansallispuisto/Bothnian Sea National Park
- Historialliset rakennukset ja kulttuuriperintö/Historic buildings and heritage
- Teollinen historia ja muotoilu/Industrial heritage and design
- Luontokohteet/Natural attractions
- Reposaari ja rannikko/Reposaari and the coastal area
- Museot ja taidegalleriat/Museums and Art galleries
- Kansallinen kaupunkipuisto/National urban park
- Tapahtumat/Events
- Urheilu/Sports
- Esittävä taide/Performance arts
- Ostokset/Shopping
- Other: _____

7. Oliko kysymyksessä 6 vastaamillasi asioilla vaikutusta päätökseesi vierailla Porissa? / Did the answers you gave in question 6 have an influence on your decision to visit Pori?

- Kyllä/yes
- Ei/no

8. Opitko jotain uutta vierailusi aikana, mikä jäi erityisesti mieleen, mitä se oli? / Did you learn something new during your visit that was especially memorable, what was it?

Your answer

9. Mistä haluaisit tietää lisää jos kaupunki on sinulle jo tuttu? Tai mistä olisit kiinnostunut jos et ole vielä käynyt? Voit valita useamman. / What would you like to know more about if the city is already familiar to you? Or what would you be interested in if you have not yet visited? You can choose more than one. *

- Yyteri beach
- Kirjurinluoto
- Ravintolat ja kahvilat/Restaurants and Cafes
- Selkämeren kansallispuisto/Bothnian Sea National Park
- Historialliset rakennukset ja kulttuuriperintö/Historic buildings and heritage
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- Esittävä taide/Performance arts
- Ostokset/Shopping
- Other: _____

10. Onko virtuaalimatkailu sinulle tuttu konsepti? / Is virtual travel familiar to you as a concept? *

- Kyllä/yes
- Ei/no

11. Oletko kokeillut virtuaalimatkailua? / Have you tried virtual travel? *

- Kyllä/yes
- Ei/no

12. Jos olet, millaista virtuaalimatkaa kokeilit? Voit valita useamman. / If yes, what kind of virtual travel did you try? You can choose more than one.

- Matka tai kierros joka sisälsi VR teknologiaa (VR-lasit tai tietokoneella luotu ympäristö) / A tour involving Virtual reality technology (VR-goggles or computer-generated environment)
- Matka tai kierros joka sisälsi AR teknologiaa (jotain digitaalista johon pystyi vaikuttamaan, lisättyä videokuvaan todellisesta ympäristöstä) / A tour involving Augmented reality technology (something digital added to video image of real environment that you can interact with)
- 360 asteen videokierros / A 360-degree video tour
- Opastettu virtuaalinen kierros video chat alustalla / Guided live virtual tour through a video chat platform
- Kohteen katselu web-kameran välityksellä / Viewing a place through a webcam

13. Olisitko kiinnostunut kokeilemaan virtuaalimatkailua? / Would you be interested in trying virtual travel? *

- Kyllä/yes
- Ei/no
- Ehkä/maybe

14. Maksaisitko virtuaalimatkasta? / Would you pay for a virtual tour? *

- Kyllä/yes
- Ei/no
- Ehkä/maybe

15. Jos maksaisit, mikä saisi olla maksimihinta? / If yes, how much would be the maximum amount?

Your answer _____

16. Luuletko että virtuaalimatkan kautta saatu kokemus saisi sinut kiinnostumaan fyysisestä vierailusta kohteeseen? / Do you think getting a taste of a place through a virtual tour would make you more interested in visiting in person? *

- Kyllä/yes
- Ei/no
- Ehkä/maybe

17. Omistatko VR-laitteita (lasit ja/tai ohjaimet)? / Do you own VR equipment (goggles and/or controllers)? *

- Kyllä/yes
- Ei/no

18. Oletko kiinnostunut kokeilemaan tai ostamaan VR-laitteita? / Are you interested in trying or buying VR equipment? *

- Kyllä/yes
- Ei/no

19. Mistä etsit tietoa matkakohteista? Voit valita useamman. / Where do you look for information on travel destinations? You can choose more than one. *

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- TikTok
- Matkablogit/Travel blogs
- Matkatoimistot/Travel agencies
- Matkailutoimisto/Tourist information
- Aikakauslehdet/Magazines
- Sanomalehdet/News papers
- Verkkosivut/Websites
- Google
- Other: _____

20. Kuinka usein normaalisti matkustat asuinpaikkasi ulkopuolelle? / How often do you usually travel outside your hometown? *

- en koskaan/never
- muutaman kerran vuodessa/a few times per year
- kuukausittain/a few times per month
- viikoittain/weekly

21. Matkustatko työ- vai vapaa-ajalla? / Do you travel for leisure or business? *

- vapaa-ajalla/leisure
- työasioissa/business
- molemmat/both

22. Kenen kanssa matkustat? Voit valita useamman. / Who do you travel with? You can choose more than one. *

- yksin/alone
- ystävien tai kollegojen kanssa/with friends or colleagues
- perheen kanssa/with family

23. Mikä on sinulle matkailussa tärkeintä? / What is the most important thing to you about traveling? *

Your answer

Kiitos vastauksestasi. / Thank you for your answers.

Submit

Clear form