The image of Helsinki as a cultural tourism destination

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Cultural tourism has been increasing constantly during the last decades and has become one of the most essential sections of tourism industry. Culture influences strongly on decisions to travel and it is often placed on the key role in tourism strategies. Similarly a strong destination image is inevitable in order to success in highly competed tourism industry.

The purpose of this study is to examine the image of Helsinki as a cultural tourism destination. The main objective is to examine does the city have a unique and strong cultural image that attracts tourists. Moreover, the images of different cultural activities are discussed and the marketing of the culture is investigated in order to develop cultural tourism in Helsinki.

In the beginning of the study cultural tourism is discussed as a phenomenon. Afterward, the destination image is considered and the cultural tourism strategies of Finland and Helsinki discussed briefly. The chosen research methodology for this study is quantitative research in order to collect sufficient sample of relevant data.

The key findings of this study suggest that the image of Helsinki as a cultural tourism destination is weak and therefore has only slightly impact on people’s decision to travel to the city.

Keywords
Helsinki, Culture, Cultural tourism, Image, Quantitative research
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1 Introduction

Tourism industry is growing. The impacts of the tourism on the world economy are already important and are constantly increasing. As the emerging nationals economies have more and more people that can afford to travel, it is vital for the nations, especially in Europe, to develop and create attractive images of the countries.

In addition, the interest in culture is rapidly increasing and so is cultural tourism. It seems that the culture is part of almost every decision to travel and can be said that the cultural tourism has become very important part of the tourism industry. Therefore it is inevitable to have a strong and interesting cultural image to be able to success in highly competed tourism sector.

Can Helsinki, the capital of Finland, meet these demands? Does it have a unique and strong cultural image that attracts tourists to travel to Helsinki?

It can be stated that answer is no. It could rather be said that the image of Helsinki as a cultural destination is poor or non-existent. As a consequence, it does not have or have only slightly impact on decision to travel to the city.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate if these statements are true. In addition to that, it will provide information about the image of Helsinki as a cultural tourism destination as a whole.

The key objectives of this study are to find out:

- Is Helsinki known and does it have a strong image as a cultural travel destination?
- Is that image positive or negative?
- Did the culture of Helsinki have an impact on decision to travel?
- Which cultural activities have positive image and which ones have negative images?
- Is the marketing of culture in Helsinki sufficient and good?

This research consists of the theoretical framework and the research part. In theoretical framework the most significant abstracts are defined. In addition, the cultural tourism strategies of Finland and Helsinki are presented.
In research part the methodology is chosen, data collected and the results analysed. The methodology used in this thesis is quantitative research. The data is collected by a questionnaire at Helsinki-Vantaa airport from tourists leaving the country and the data is analysed in the Webropol programme.

Since I am studying Tourism and Culture Export Management, this thesis covers both of the orientations. Furthermore, as I am interested in them both and the topic has not been widely studied and still very important, the decision to study particularly this subject was easy.

1.1 Definitions of tourism

Tourism definitions can be conceptual or technical. Conceptual definitions describe what tourism is. Technical definitions focus on the volume and value of tourism that can be measured instead. (Smith 1988, 21) In this research I will use The Worlds Tourism Organizations definition since it is widely accepted and made by a leading organization.

The Worlds Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2013) defines Tourism as following: “Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure.” The visitors can be divided to tourists if they stay at the destination more than 24 hours and to excursionists if they travel less than 24 hours. (Richards 1996, 21)

1.2 Definitions of culture

To understand cultural tourism, culture itself needs to be defined. Since culture is a wide construct and can be seen from different views, there are many definitions and opinions regarding culture depending on the view and objectives. As Rasky (1998, 7) writes: “Culture has to a certain extent made itself unrecognisable because as an infla-
tionary and inflated concept it has assumed immeasurable dimensions.” Can be said, there are as many definitions of culture as there are people. So what is culture? Since there is no correct answer, I will concentrate on some most common views: culture as a process and culture as a product.

Richards (1996, 22) describes culture as a process “mainly as codes of conduct embedded in a specific social group.” So the culture is the learned way of life that transfers from generation to generation. In that case culture can be “characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.” (Livescience 2012) In other words, “Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.” (The Hofstede Center 2013) This programming of the mind takes place by learning. (Marketing Teacher 2013)

The need for learning the culture, or cultural identity, is in maintaining group stability since the group stability is vital for survival of the group. Therefore, it is inevitable for the members of a group to adapt to the group’s values, knowledge, beliefs, behaviour, moral law, history and so on. (Ivanovic 2008, 11) The culture of group is maintained
by social control, which can be divided in two groups of social agencies: positive (stimulating and rewarding individuals) or negative (groups suppression of an individual). These agencies can be for instance government, law, music and art, public opinion, beliefs, customs, taboos and education. (Bogardus 1920, 13)

“If the culture of any group remains relatively stable for a long period of time, cultural uniformity and cohesion of group, known as tradition, will emerge” (Ivanovic 2008, 13) The term tradition can be referred to language, knowledge and customs and it encompasses continuity and consistency. In addition, tradition increases group’s cultural identity and pride, which are, if we look at the cultural tourism side, significant elements of cultural tourism. (Ivanovic 2008, 14)

The other way to view culture is to see it as a product. If culture is seen as a product, it is “regarded as the product of individual or group activities to which certain meanings are attached.” (Richards 1996, 22) So we can look at the results of the way of living and the behaviour of the group. These results might be for instance monuments, music, arts and events. This view focuses more on the tangible elements of the culture; what have been created.

Littrell (1997, 7) seals these different views well and divides culture in three parts. First part is “what people think” which includes ideas, attitudes and beliefs of the people. Second part is “what people do” which means the actions people take. The last part is “what people make” which consists of cultural products such as art, buildings and so on. So the culture is “therefore composed of processes (the ideas and way of life of people) and products of those processes (buildings, artefacts, art, customs and atmosphere).” (Littrell 1997, 7) In this thesis Littrells definition shall be used, as if we examine cultural tourism, every part of the culture can be the object of tourism. For instance, the reason for visit can be the atmosphere, events or architecture.

1.3 Definitions of cultural tourism

As there are many ways to define culture, so is cultural tourism at least as complex to define. As people see the culture in different way so they do with cultural tourism.
In addition, the extent of cultural sector and diversity of the products together with peoples will to modify the definitions to meet their own needs, might lead to this mixture. (Du Cros & McKercher 2002, 1)

The people have always been traveling for cultural reasons, but these travels have not been determined as a specific cultural travel. Visiting cultural attractions such as museums, historic sites, landmarks have always been a part of the tourism experience. (Du Cros & McKercher 2002, 1) So, according to Du Cros and McKercher (2002, 1) “All travel involves a cultural element” and cultural tourism “has become an umbrella term for a wide range of related activities, including historical tourism, ethnic tourism, arts tourism, museum tourism, and others.”

So cultural tourism can be just any travel our tourism, since all travel involves a cultural element. But we can also limit the determination of cultural tourism so that it excludes some ways of travelling and highlights the intention to culture. In that definition the cultural tourism is ‘the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs’ (Bonet 2003, 187-193)

Swarbrooke (1999, 307) defines cultural tourism as a form of tourism build on cultural resources. As we can see culture as a process and results of that process, cultural tourism can be the consumption of these resources. (Richards, 1993) For instance cultural tourist can enjoy the process; the way of life of particular culture of destination, or the results of the process; historical buildings, arts and so on. This definition does not highlight intention nor does it suggest that all travel involves cultural element.

Du Cros & McKercher (2002, 4) divide cultural tourism definitions in 4 categories. Tourism-Derived Definitions see cultural tourism as a part of broader context of tourism. So the cultural travel can have different approaches that are related to wider framework of tourism. That means, culture can be for instance the basis for attracting tourists since it can motivate people to travel, it can be interrelationship between peo-
ple, places and culture or it can even be seen as a part of development and marketing. (Du Cros & McKercher 2002, 4)

Motivational Definitions emphasize that “cultural tourist are motivated to travel for different reasons than other tourist and, therefore, feel that motivation must be considered an important element when defining cultural tourism.” (Richards 1996, 261-283) The World Tourism Organization approaches also cultural tourism with motivational definition. The WTO defines cultural tourism as “movements of persons essentially for cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other events, visit to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages (WTO 1985, 6)

Experiential or Aspirational Definitions focus on experiential activity in addition to motivation in cultural tourism definitions and some add aspirational elements to that also. (Du Cros & McKercher 2002, 4) That means cultural tourism includes experiencing or contact with the destination travelled to. In these definitions experiencing culture will also educate and entertain tourist (VICNET, 1996), and one can learn about community or significance of a place and its associations with the local community. (ACH & TCA, 1997)

Operational Definitions are the most common definitional approaches and it is often included to other definitions such as tourism derived, motivational and experiential definitions. (Du Cros & McKercher 2002, 5)

In operational definition “cultural tourism is defined by participation in any one of an almost limitless array of activities or experiences.” (Du Cros & McKercher 2002, 5) Motivation, purpose and experiencing are less important. Operational definition avoids defining cultural tourism, but rather includes elements under that framework. (Du Cros & McKercher 2002, 5) For instance, visiting museums can be cultural tourism, but it does not define the cultural tourism itself.
In this thesis the image of Helsinki as a cultural tourism destination is studied. Motivation to travel is therefore important, but since travellers can have an opinion of the cultural image of Helsinki even if travelling without intention to culture, motivational definition would limit the study. In addition, travellers can have an image of Helsinki even without participation in any of activities. Therefore the definition of Swarbrooke combined with tourism derived motivations shall be used in this thesis. Cultural tourism is consumption of process and results of the process related to wider frameworks of tourism. That means cultural tourism can be examined for instance from the developmental or motivational side of view.

1.4 The significance of cultural tourism

According to WTTC’s latest research, “The total contribution from Travel & Tourism to the world GDP grew by 3.0% in 2012. This was faster than growth of the world economy as whole (2.3%), and also faster than growth of a number of broad industries including manufacturing, financial & business services and retail.” (WTTC 2012) That means, 1,03 billion US dollars generated by tourists in year 2012. (World Tourism Organization 2013) From these figures the importance of tourism for the global economy can be seen. The tourism flow has been increasing almost every year and it seems that even the economic recession hasn’t significantly decreased it.

If we focus on cultural tourism, the issue is not that simple. The impacts of cultural sector and cultural tourism to the economy are slightly difficult to study since the impacts on the economy are often indirect. Furthermore, lack of data is an issue and more assertions than data has been provided. (Leslie & Sigala 2005, XII; Richards 1996, 11) For instance, we can calculate the jobs the cultural tourism might have created, but we cannot really determine how many tourists visited a certain country for only cultural reasons. It seems that culture is partly reason in almost every decision to travel. (Richards 2001, 4) Furthermore, culture and cultural tourism can be defined in many ways and can be approached from different views. (Cristou 2005, 5-6)

Even though it is difficult to study and define how and which cultural activities impact on tourism flow and income (Borowiecki & Castiglione 2012, 2) it can be seen that
cultural tourism has become increasingly important part of tourism and its economic impacts on society are also growing. (Leslie & Sigala 2005, XII) Currently cultural tourism draws more attention as an economic driver of society and interest to relationship between culture and tourism has increased. (Borowiecki & Castiglione 2012, 2) To support that, “the World Tourism Organization, for example, asserted that cultural tourism accounted for 37% of global tourism. And forecast that it would grow at a rate of 15% per year (2001)” (Richards 2001, 8) According to Du Cros & McKercher (2002, 1), “240 million international journeys annually involve some element of cultural tourism.” If we look at the Europe, “there is no doubt that culture is an important tourism resource, and that maintaining the competitiveness of the European tourism product is vital.”(Richards 1996, 11)

The cultural tourism has become so important that it is often placed on the central stage of the urban and rural development strategies and branding programmes of different countries or cities (Richards 1996, 10; Richards 2001, 3) Moreover, even though the tourism is considered to be one of the major forces to destroy cultural diversity, it has been discovered that cultural tourism can also help to maintain the cultural differences between people due to culture travellers desire to experience different and unique cultures. (Ivanovic 2008, 7)

From these figures the importance of cultural tourism can be seen. The sector seems to be growing constantly and therefore it is vital for nations and cities to create and develop cultural tourism strategies to success in attracting tourists. Moreover, as written before, the culture seems to be part of almost every decision to travel and should also be taken in account for that reason.

1.5 The growth of cultural tourism

There are many reasons for the growth of cultural tourism. It could be “a direct result of the rising interest in art, culture and history, which can be explained by demographic, social and cultural changes (Freund de Klumbis & Munsters 2005, 27) The amount of wealthy, educated senior citizens in western countries is growing and this group has an interest in culture and history. Also there are more educated young singles and cou-
ples without children that are willing to visit cultural destinations. (Freund de Klumbis & Munsters 2005, 27) Education raises interest in culture and as many culture travellers are living in “experience economy” they are searching for information to experience the destination and are willingly learning and participating in the destination. (Gilmore & Pine 1999, 28) Therefore, “Travel has become a means of finding personal fulfilment, identity enhancement and self-expression.” (Cho & Fesenmaier 2001, 28) On the other hand, instead of personal aspect, Leslie & Sigala (2005, 28) suggest that “Another relevant trend is the rising interest in local, regional and national history and culture as an expression of its own identity.”

Others argue that the growth is due to rapidly growing tourism sector during the last decades. As the tourism flow has been increasing, so have been the choice of destinations and need for new tourism attractions and forms of tourism. That has given a reason and demand to develop cultural tourism attractions and destinations. (Leslie 2005, 112) According to Richards (2001, 6-7) the growing cultural tourism is not an evidence of higher interest in culture itself. Richards (2001, 6-7) also argues that “surveys on the degree of cultural tourism motivation among tourists also offer little support for growing interest in culture.”

The public administrations, from EU to local cities, have also impacted on cultural tourism development. (Richards 2001, 4-5) The EU has focused on the development of cultural tourism since the culture is seen as a vital resource that provides work and cultural harmony within the EU. (Richards 2001, 4-5) Furthermore, there is a concern of vanish of traditional cultures and traditions since they are replaced by the modern lifestyle. (Richards 2001, 4-5) The local administrations, such as cities, have also started to use culture not only to attract tourists, but also to persuade people to live and work in that very place. (Richards 2001, 6-7) The cultural attractions are also often seen as a local pride and prestige and success of these are determined by the amount of visitors. This has led to growing cultural competition between cities Richards (2001, 6-7) This phenomenon can be seen also in Helsinki, since the cultural travel and culture is an important part of the travel strategies of the city (see chapter 5). For example, Helsinki was the World Design Capital of the year 2012, cultural attractions, such as Musi-
ikkitalo and Hiljaisuuden kappeli have been built and there has been a constant debate about the Guggenheim-museum. In addition, the marketing of the city, especially on the internet, highlights culture.

1.6 Cultural Tourists

Since culture and cultural tourism can be defined many ways and definitions have many meanings, so can defining cultural tourist be a bit complex. However, according to some studies based on American travelling to Europe, cultural tourists tend to be older, better educated and wealthier than other tourists. Moreover, they stay longer at the destination, spend more money and participate more in activities than other tourists (Du Cros & McKercher 2002, 136) On the other hand, according to some authorities, these characteristics can be only adapted to American tourists, but are not reliable for tourist from different backgrounds. (Du Cros & McKercher 2002, 136)

If we look at the purposes and motivation to travel, we can see that culture can have different roles. To illustrate, visiting cultural attractions such as museums can be the main reason to travel. However, culture may not be part of the travel decision at all even though some tourist might visit cultural attractions during their visit. (Du Cros & McKercher 2002, 139) As we can see, there are different types of cultural tourists depending on their purposes and experiences. Therefore, Du Cros & McKercher (2002, 146) have categorized 5 types of cultural tourists:

1) The purposeful cultural tourist- cultural tourism is the primary motive for visiting a destination, and the individual has a deep cultural experience

2) The sightseeing cultural tourist- cultural tourism is a primary or major reason for visiting a destination, but the experience is shallower.

3) The serendipitous cultural tourist- a tourist, who does not travel for cultural tourism reasons, but who, after participating, ends up having a deep cultural tourism experience.

4) The casual cultural tourists- cultural tourism is a weak motive for visiting a destination, and the resultant experience is shallow.
5) The incidental cultural tourist- this tourist does not travel for cultural tourism reasons but nonetheless participates in some activities and has shallow experiences.

Understanding different types of cultural tourist and their motivation is vital for marketing and development of cultural tourism. As the motivation for travel alters, there needs to be different ways to promote and highlight attractions. For instance, in this thesis purposes to travel will be studied in relationship to the image they had before and after the visit.
2 Destination Image

The competition between tourist destinations has been increasing due to growing number of tourists. In this competition the image of the destination can be the key point of decision making and it is inevitable for the destinations to create and develop the image in order to success in highly- competed markets.

2.1 Definition of destination image

To start with, image could be defined many ways as, for instance, it can refer to data handling (pictures), artwork and mental representation or idea. Nevertheless, related to the subject of this thesis, the definition of image will refer to “the general impression that a person, organization, or product presents to the public.” (Oxforddictionaries 2015) That kind of definition is seen from the marketing side and relates image to consumer behaviour (Jenkins 1999, 1)

When focusing on destination image, the common approach is to see it as a picture in the mind. For instance, Crompton (1979, 18) defines destination image “the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that person has of a destination.” Since this definition includes only individual experiences and excludes the images a group can have of a destination, the definition written by Lawson & Baud- Bovy seems to be more accurate and will be used in this thesis. Lawson & Baud- Bovy (1977) define destination image as “the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place.” These expressions can be whether positive or negative and are often hard to change. (Bertzovec 2004, 115-129) In this thesis the destination image will be considered from a cultural point of view.

2.2 The importance of destination image

The destination image is a vital part of tourism strategies and good destination image is inevitable for success of a tourist destination. Firstly, it influences the travel decision making of potential tourist. (Jenkins 1999, 1) Actually, destination image is “a key fac-
tor in the destination selection process of potential tourists.” (Di Marino 2015, 3) In that case, the image of a destination does not need to be a true representation of the cultural offerings of the particular area. More important is the picture a customer has in mind. (Mayo 1975, 15) However, some studies indicate that too positive image compared to the experience in destination might lead to negative evaluation of the destination. (Ross 1993) Since the image formation is a complex process (see next chapter) with many influencing factors, the image can be considered as a push and a pull factor to motivate people to travel for a particular destination. (Di Marino 2015, 7) Di Marino (2015, 7) determines these factors as follow:

- Image can push people to desire to go on a vacation in a destination.
- Image, as a strategic management tool, can pull people to choose a destination.

In addition, the destination image is vital for differentiate from the main competitors. For example, Finland and Sweden are quite similar countries, but since Sweden has succeeded in marketing and creating better image, they been able to attract more visitors.

Secondly, destination image influences the behaviour towards a destination when visiting, level of satisfaction regarding the cultural experience after the trip and intention to repeat the visit. (Di Marino 2015, 2-4; Jenkins 1999, 2) For these reasons Pike & Ryan (2004) suggest that ”a major objective of any destination positioning strategy should be to reinforce positive images already held by the target audience, correct negative images, or create a new image.”

As a consequence, the importance of destination image cannot be underestimated. Since Helsinki, in my personal opinion, is fairly unknown destination for the most of the people, enhancing the image of Helsinki would have a positive impact on the visitor count. Developing the cultural image is already important part of the cultural tourism strategy of Finland. In addition, focusing on smaller sections like culture, nature and safety could make a change in the big picture.
2.3 Stages of destination image formatting

The stages of image formation are based on the perceptions of the tourists considering the impacts of external and internal factors that can influence the image. These perceptions need to be distinguished from each other as they have different meaning. (Di Marino 2015, 4)

Di Marino (2015, 4) describes these perceptions as follows:

- Perception “a priori” is the mental construction an individual makes of a place without having a physical connection with the place. This means that tourists have already “visited” a place before they physically visit it.
- Perception “in situ” is a key moment in the tourists’ experience, because it contrasts what they have imagined. Tourists never arrive with a null perception: they have a previous image of the place that can be confirmed or not.
- Perception ”a posteriori” indicates that tourists’ experience doesn’t end with the trip, but they consume some elements in their daily life. For instance, the role that photograph have in order to capture a moment of the trip or specific elements of the destination.

Gunn (1988) divides the formation of images in three levels: organic-, induced-, and modified-induced level. The organic image forms internally due to actual experience or visitation. The induced image develops due to externally received and processed information such as advertisement, news and word of mouth. The modified-induced image is the result of the personal experience of the destination. (Jenkins 1999, 3)

Furthermore, Gunn (1988) has developed a seven-stage theory of image formatting (see figure 2). Gunn has embedded organic image, induced image and modified-induced image in these seven stages.
Moreover, some studies suggest that image formation is partly influenced by the distance from the destination. For instance, Hunt (1975) and Scott et al. (1978) claim that people tend to visit destination close to their home more often and therefore they have been exposed to more information through the media and other people. For that reason, they have stronger and more realistic images of the destination.

Di Marino (2015, 7) summarizes all the important internal and external factors influencing the individual image formatting in the following figure:
As conclusion, travellers create their own image of the destination from their organic image and/or from external influences such as advertising, news and so on. Moreover, the image prior the visit (projected image) compared to the travel experience (perceived image) is crucial for satisfaction and evaluation of the destination. (Ross 1993) For instance, according to Chon (1992) positive image and negative travel experience will lead to most negative evaluation and negative image and positive travel experience to most positive evaluation. Therefore, “the comparison between the projected image and the perceived image by the tourist has to be efficient because it represents a critical link.” (Andreu et al. 2000, 47-67) To illustrate, a customer finds out information of Helsinki and its culture. If marketed right, customer gets interested and decides to visit the country. During the visit he/she will look the city through the lenses of the image he/she had before and will “update” and evaluate the image. After leaving the country, the customer will whether be satisfied or unsatisfied depending on how the destination met the expectations.
3 Finland as a cultural tourism destination

To be able to focus on cultural tourism in Finland, we need to know and understand the overall Finland’s Tourism Strategy. This strategy creates the base for cultural tourism strategy of Finland and Helsinki city as the objectives, target groups, strengths and weaknesses are considered.

3.1 Visit Finland- Brand

Since Finland is a small country and it is impossible to compete with marketing budget, the country has focused on the brand of Finland. The brand of Finland consists of 4 C’s: Creative, Contrasting, Credible and Cool. (Finnish Tourist Board 2014)

The target group for marketing and brand is so called “modern humanists” - a lot travelled persons that are open for new experiences and self-development. The modern humanists appreciate quality of living and responsibility and are often wealthy. (Finnish Tourist Board 2014) Comparing this target group to typical cultural tourists discussed earlier in this thesis, the resemblance can be seen. For instance, education, experiencing and wealth are common qualities.

Finnish Tourist Board (2014) has divided he target markets of Finland have been divided in 3 groups:

1) Local markets and markets Finland is known as a tourism destination such as Russia and Germany
2) Markets Finland is known as a country, but not as a tourism destination such as Great Britain, France and Spain
3) Markets Finland is not known, such as USA, China and Japan.

The marketing of Finland has also been divided in themes and areas. The themes are based on motives to travel and have three approaches:

1) Silence please
2) Wild & free focuses on adventures Finnish nature can offer.
3) Cultural Beat highlights the speciality of Finnish Culture.
Silence please highlights the silence and room that Finland can offer almost everywhere whereas Wild & Free focuses on special adventures and activities in Finnish nature. Cultural Beat introduces speciality and global phenomenon of Finnish culture such as design. (Finnish Tourist Board 2014) Finland is divided in 4 areas which have different profiles and attractions. These areas are Helsinki, Lapland, Lake-Finland and Coastal area and archipelago. (Finnish Tourist Board 2014)

3.2 Finland’s Tourism Strategy 2020

Since the traditional industries in Finland, the forest industry and metal industry, have faced difficulties, the country is in need of new successful industries. Following the global trend, the tourism industry has been growing and has good growth prospects in Finland.

“In 2007, tourism sectors employed a total of 130,500 people, generating approximately 4 billion euro in tax revenues per year, and accounting for 3.8 per cent of GDP. “ (TEM 2014) These sectors could employ 171,000 people by 2020, generating 7.5 billion euro in tax revenue and accounting for 5.1 per cent of GDP. (TEM 2014) From these figures we can see that the tourism sectors impact on the economy of Finland is important and will increase.

TEM (2014) has listed 4 main reasons to develop tourism in Finland Tourism Strategy 2020. These 4 reasons are:

1) Tourism is an industry with remarkable multiplicative effects on the national economy
2) Tourism is an industry with an intense employment effect
3) Tourism brings prosperity and wellbeing to regions
4) Tourism has growth potential

Finland’s tourism strategy has been created in relation to strengths and weaknesses in comparison to two main competitors: Sweden and Norway. In Finland’s Tourism Strategy 2020 (Finnish Tourist Board 2014) the strengths and weaknesses are as follows:
Strengths
- Accessibility from Russia
- Attractive tourist areas
- Diverse tourist centres

Weaknesses
- Awareness of Finland
- Accessibility
- High price levels

Based on the strengths and weaknesses, the Finland’s tourism strategy concentrates on
development of the tourism sector, enhancing Finland’s image as a tourist destination
and the general industry policy base underlying industry development. (TEM 2014)

3.3 Finland’s Cultural Tourism Strategy

The global interest in cultural tourism has increased and cultural tourism is now im-
portant part of the tourism and for that reason, part of the tourism strategies. Finland’s
Cultural Tourism Strategy follows the overall tourism strategy of Finland. The Target
group is the same, modern humanists and the brand- four C’s is the base for the strate-
gy.

The Finnish Tourist Board (2014) has defined the vision and mission for cultural tour-
ism in Finland. The vision is freely translated “Finland is the natural choice of modern
humanist- thanks to our culture.” The mission can be translated “By creating new ex-
periences for travellers and business opportunities for the culture- and tourism industry
we enhance sectors wellbeing and economic sustainability.”

The goals in cultural tourism have been made until 2018 and they can be divided to
financial and developmental goals. The main goal, which is financial, is to increase the
tourism income. Secondary goal is to strengthen the cultural image of Finland interna-
tionally and make culture stronger part of the brand of Finland. (Finnish Tourist Board
2014)
The Finnish Tourist Board (2014) has also determined the strengths and weaknesses of Finnish cultural tourism. The strengths include the interest of the target group (modern humanists) in Finnish way of living. (The Finnish Tourist Board 2014) Since the modern humanists are the target group and the tourism strategy is based on them, this is the most important part of the strengths and the other issues; the food culture, technology, design, the contrast between modern living and nature-based cultural heritage and the meeting of east and west (The Finnish Tourist Board 2014) are supporting that. Good infrastructure and safety are also strengths of Finland despite not being directly culture or attractions. As we look at the weaknesses of Finland as a cultural travel destination, we can see that the problems are mostly in the services and development. Many cultural attractions have not been productized and the potential of the cultural tourism has not been fully utilised. The reasons behind these issues are weak networking of the companies in the tourism and culture sectors, minor marketing and co-operation between stakeholders and insufficient customer knowledge. (The Finnish Tourist Board 2014)

3.3.1 The Culture Finland Umbrella Programme

The Culture Finland (CF) Umbrella Programme has been created to increase cultural tourism to and in Finland. The programme is governed by The Finnish Tourist Board and it is divided in different counties. The objectives of the programme are to increase cooperation between tourism- and culture operators and develop new, culturally related tourist attractions and that way, increase the income of the tourism and culture sector and create better services for tourists. The most important actions are to combine tourism and culture sectors with networking and increasing the performance of the actors by eliminating the overlapping element. Identifying and highlighting local strengths is also one key issue. The Culture Finland Programme has created a network team model to reach the objectives. (The Finnish Tourist Board 2014)
4 Helsinki as a cultural tourism destination

During the year 2013 there was 3.3 million overnight stays in Helsinki of whom 53% were international travellers. 54% of visitors were recreational travellers, 44% business travellers and 2% came for other reasons. In the whole country, there were about 5.9 million overnight stays. (Visit Helsinki 2015) So roughly half of the tourist that visited Finland visited Helsinki. In addition to that, 15.3 million passengers travelled through the Helsinki Airport. As we can see from the statistics, Helsinki is the most visited city in Finland and main destination for the most of the travellers. For that reason, marketing Helsinki is very important to not only the city itself but also to Finland.

4.1 Helsinki City Tourism strategy

Helsinki is marketed by Visit Helsinki and operated by Helsinki Marketing Ltd, which is a city owned company. It focuses marketing Helsinki as a tourist and congress destination and provides information about the regions travel services. The key missions include also strengthening the appeal of the city and promoting the development of the travel trade. (Visit Helsinki 2015)

The vision of Visit Helsinki is divided in 4 parts: to be one of the most competitive city destinations in the world with a strong and unique brand, to be year-round attractive destination for leisure travel, to be the leading congress city in the Nordic region and the best quality congress city in the Europe and to be crucial cruise destination in the Baltic area. (Visit Helsinki 2015)

According to Visit Helsinki (2015) the mission of Helsinki’s tourism strategy is to:

- Offer tourists and local people practical information about the city, attractions, events and travel services.
- Market Helsinki as a travel destination in cooperation with actors and companies in the travel industry in Finland and abroad.
- Market Helsinki as a convention-, - meeting and event-destination in cooperation with actors and companies in the travel industry in Finland and abroad.
- Provide information about travel services and events, publish marketing and informative material and maintain the website of Visit Helsinki.
- Follow and enhance the development of tourism by means of research and statistics.
- To assure sufficient travel information during the peak seasons with additional staff.

The goals of the strategy are to keep Helsinki the most important travel destination in Finland and to make tourism vital part of the economy and business life and the tourism is developed according the plan. In addition, the tourism income increases in Helsinki region. Focusing on marketing, Helsinki will have an unified brand and it is marketed as an entity, Helsinki is easily reachable and known for its events and tourism services are high-quality. (Visit Helsinki 2015)

4.2 Cultural Tourism strategy of Helsinki city

Helsinki does not have a specific cultural tourism strategy. The city adapts the cultural tourism strategy of Finland which is made by Visit Finland and has been discussed earlier in this thesis. But if we focus on the tourism strategy as a whole and look at the information and marketing, we can see that culture plays a major part. For instance, Visit Helsinki has listed 12 reasons to visit Helsinki. The reasons are friendly locals, good connections, main attractions, design, architecture, maritime appeal, nature, events, between east and west, food culture, shopping and year-round destination. From those 7 can be easily categorized as cultural reasons.

Food culture seems to be important part of cultural marketing of Helsinki. The website Visit Helsinki has quite comprehensive information about restaurants, local food and superfood that can be enjoyed in Helsinki area. In addition to that, design and architecture are highlighted in combination with contrast between east and west. The difference and uniqueness of Helsinki seem to be emphasized and be one of the most important marketing keys of the city. The main attractions, which are listed as one of the 12 reasons, are historically and culturally important to Finland.
One marketing combination seems to be local people, atmosphere and events held in Helsinki. Visit Helsinki- webpage highlights the active cultural life and friendly locals as one of the main attractions. The uniqueness is vital part of marketing in events and local atmosphere.

During the year 2015, Helsinki has launched HEL YEAH! - Concept that concentrates on marketing the urban culture and highlights especially design and food culture. The marketing theme packs up the most interesting urban phenomenon, events and actors for the target group of 25-40 years old international visitors. The concepts key missions are to provide new experiences represent new phenomenon and unique culture of Helsinki, follow international trends, be active on social media and use stories in marketing. (Alanko Annika 2015)

4.3 Information and marketing channels

Visit Helsinki- webpage is the main information and marketing channel of Helsinki city tourism. The web page has two sections: one for tourists and one for professionals. The professional section has been divided in 4 subsections: why Helsinki, Travel Trade, Convention bureau and Media. The web site offers statistics, marketing material and contact details for professionals willing to work within tourism industry in Helsinki.

Nevertheless, to this thesis subject the tourism section of the web site is more vital as it provides information for travellers and develops the image of Helsinki. This section is divided in 4 subsections as well: come, stay and enjoy, what’s on and see and experience. First two, come and stay and enjoy focus on general information and accommodation in Helsinki. What’s on and see and experience subsections focus more on the events, culture and activities. What’s on- subsection gives a pretty good general view of the events happening in Helsinki. It has a searching engine that can be used to look for specific interests in addition to highlighting special events. The web site also provides information for sightseeing and tours, for families and cruise visitors. See and experience- subsection gives an insight on shopping, sights and attractions, activities and day-
trips around the region. It covers the main attractions found in Helsinki as well as design and architecture and arts.

Visit Helsinki web site is well structured and information is easily reachable and defined. Searching for specific events and overall cultural selection is simple and can be done in multiple languages.

Visit Helsinki has also freshly created HEL YEAH! – web site. This site highlights urban culture of Helsinki with modern and fresh look and is clearly made for the target group of modern humanists. It is a combination of videos and social media feeds as Twitter and Instagram. The most unique concepts like restaurant day and cleaning day are underlined.

The social media is also important marketing channel of the city. Visit Helsinki has active Twitter- and Instagram accounts with thousands of followers as well as YouTube- channel and blog.
5 Research methodology

5.1 Overview

To start with, the research methodology and approach has to be decided. There are two main methodologies that can be used: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research can be and is often referred to as hypothesis-testing research and following common patterns of research operations in investigating is typical. For instance, studies start with statements of theory. From these statements research hypotheses are derived. After that, an experimental design or survey is created in which the variables in question are measured while other, independent variables (alternative explanations) are controlled. According the results and analysis, hypothesis and statements of the theory are updated. (Newman & Benz 1998, 19) As a conclusion, quantitative research includes “the process of collecting, analysing, interpreting, and writing the results of the study.” Creswell 2014, 24)

Qualitative research is “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” (Creswell 2014, 4) This method differs from quantitative as it uses collection of open-ended data, analysis of text and representation of information in figures and tables and personal interpretation. Qualitative research focuses on an inductive style, individual meaning and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation. (Creswell 2014, 4)

Since the purpose of this study is to investigate the image of Helsinki as cultural tourism destination, quantitative method is best suitable method since it provides direct and broad information about the overall image. In addition, the collected data can be divided in different sections to measure which issues need to be developed in the cultural tourism in Helsinki.

5.2 Population, sample and methods of data collection

A population is the total group to be studied. It consists of individuals that have common characteristics for the purposes of the research problem. The total of all popula-
tions, the people, consumers, households, stores, or places, is called the universe. To define the population the researcher can outline the target market for the service or product under review. The population has to be identified before sampling in order to define the sample. (BusinessDictionary 2012; Malhotra 2010, 370-373; McDaniel, Gates 1998, 301)

A sample is a subgroup, a group of people, selected from a population for a certain study. The group chosen for the sample share common features. If the sampling frame does not include all members of the population, the results will most likely be incorrect. (Malhotra 2010, 368-393; Wrenn, Stevens, Loudon 2007, 25-26). Sampling methods are divided into two broad categories; nonprobability sampling and probability sampling, which are further divided into subcategories. (Malhotra 2010, 376-393; Schmidt 2006, 159-161, 164-168) When using probability sampling the results can be computed to the entire population. Larger sample may guarantee a smaller sampling error. (Malhotra 2010, 376-393; Schmidt 2006, 159-161, 164-168) Nonprobability sampling is depending on the researcher’s instinct and the results cannot be reflected to the entire population. The researcher is to decide what elements to include in the sample and the participants are chosen for a reason. (Malhotra 2010, 376-393; Schmidt 2006, 159-161, 164-168)

In this study, the population is all the foreigners that have visited Helsinki. Since the culture is rarely the only reason to visit a certain destination, it is more reasonable to gather information from all the visitors. After all, they all have some kind of image of Helsinki as a cultural destination. Sampling method to be used is probability sampling since that will ensure the results can be computed to the entire population.

The data is collected by online- questionnaire. The questionnaire is reachable online at www.webropolsurveys.com and it will be offered to the target group of this study via social media and e-mail. In addition to that, data will be collected at Helsinki-Vantaa International airports gate area on the same platform using tablet computer or paper sheets.
Questionnaire is a formalised set of questions for finding information from defendants. Classically a questionnaire is only one part of a data-collection package and also some reward, gift or payment is offered to respondents. (Malhotra 2010, 335)

Questionnaires have many advantages. For instance questionnaire is cheap to implement and standardised answers make it easy to collect data. Respondents have to able to read the questions in the questionnaire so the questions must be simple and well formulated. Questionnaire should also avoid leading or biasing questions as well as generalisations and estimates. (Malhotra 2010, 348-349)

5.3 Validity and reliability

There are many different kinds of errors that may occur in research. For instance, random sampling errors, systematic errors, respondent errors, nonresponse errors, data-processing errors and sample selection errors. (Zikmund, Babin 2006, 187-190, 193-195) In addition, the researcher cannot always rely on the honesty of the sample group. People tend to be dishonest which can cause flaws in the result of the marketing research. (Bowdery 2008, 51) Moreover, since the most of the sample group may not be native English speakers, the questions have to be made clear and easily understandable to avoid misunderstandings which can result to false research data. The simplicity is not the only issue as the questions have to be formalized so that they are not misleading or cannot be interpreted in many ways.

Since the query is done by a program that automatically counts the answers, the probability of data processing error is low. A human error may occur in this case meaning the people answering the question may not be comfortable using tablet computers and therefore choose wrong answer by mistake.

The strength of this research is the simplicity of it. Using questionnaire will provide direct answers and data that can be easily analysed and based on that, conclusions made. The weaknesses are in complexity of the objective of the research. Culture can be comprehended in many ways and that may have an impact on the answers. Equally important, the sample needed may need to be quite wide to get reliable results. In addi-
tion to that, people tend not to be totally honest giving the answers and might not focus on the questions. For instance, a respondent can answer without actually reading the question or might give a better value to please the researcher.

6 Results and analysis

The data was collected at Helsinki-Vantaa airport between 8.5.2015-19.5.2015. Since the collection of data at the airport was rather fast, social media was not used at all. In total 103 answers was received giving somewhat sufficient sample to analyse.

6.1 Background of the respondents

From all of the respondents, 48 were female and 52 male so almost even with the genders. For that reason, we can also compare the differences between the genders.

Figure 3. Gender.

The respondents’ ages distributed also quite evenly. Not surprisingly, the middle-aged were the biggest group since they tend to also travel the most due to business life and economical wealthy. Also, the second biggest group of young adults was no surprise at all as they are willing to travel for leisure and studies.

Figure 4. Age.
To support the age distribution, the most common life situation was working followed by students. Quite small part of the respondents were retired and no significant data of unemployed or other life situations was received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Situation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>68.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Life situation.

Most of the respondents were from Europe, around 70%. As a consequence, the most reliable data that can be analysed is about the European tourists. 14 answers from Americas and 18 from Asia will is sufficient to give a glimpse of the images they might possess. Nevertheless, wider sample could have been needed to get more reliable results. As the responses were gathered from total of 26 different countries, the data covers quite wide range of nations. The most answers from one nationality were from Germany with 22 responses followed by Japanese, USA, Sweden and Russia.

Figure 6. Nationality by the continents.
Over half of the respondents had visited Helsinki before. In that case, they had already some kind of experience of the city and its culture. Therefore it is interesting to compare how the images vary between the first time visitors and “returning” visitors.

![Figure 7. Have you visited Helsinki Before.](image)

Most of the visitors spent 2-3 days in Helsinki followed by 4-7 days or one day. Significantly small number spent over one or two weeks in the city. That might be due to the time the data was collected as the summer holiday season had not started during that time.

![Figure 8. Time spent in Helsinki](image)

Against the expectations, the biggest group of visitors was the leisure travellers while business travellers were the second biggest group. Surprisingly almost 10% were travelling for cultural reasons despite the fact that the topic of the questionnaire might have impacted on the decision of the purpose. Most common other reasons to travel were long transfer to Europe, studies and sports.
Over half of the respondents had an average interest in culture. That kind of result was quite expectable, but on the other hand, quite large number had a big interest in culture while only about 11% had only small to none interest. There was no big difference between the genders, but between the age groups the difference could be seen. Young adults (25-33) and elderly people (50+) had the strongest interest in culture overall. To bear in mind, in this case the nature of the study might have impacted on the answers. Nevertheless, this result points out that the interest in culture is quite strong amongst the respondents.

If we look at what kind of culture the respondents were interested in, we can see an interesting issue. Things that are traditionally referred to cultural or high-culture; theatre, museums, attractions and design were not interesting. Only about ¼ of the responders were interested in those. The only exception was architecture with 40% rate.
In contrast, people were interested in issues considering so-called living culture; food, events, music and local people. The most interesting part of the culture was food with almost 60%. The other interest mentioned were history, language and religion. As a conclusion, can be said that the people are most commonly more interested in the living culture than the “high-culture”. Other issue to be found was that in general, women seemed to be more interested in different types of culture. Also, the young (15-24) responders were more interested in living culture and the oldest group (50+) was most interested in theatre, museum and architecture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>59.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractions</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local People</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something else, what</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12. Interest in different types of culture.

6.2 The cultural image of Helsinki before the visit

The responses for question how much you knew about the Helsinki as a culture in Helsinki were very interesting. As stated in this thesis, the presumption was that the image of Helsinki as a cultural destination is nonexistent and poor. Choosing the answering alternatives was quite challenging as the human mind likes to avoid strong statements in these kinds of situations. Choices very much and nothing were logical to choose, but the in-between alternatives leave much for interpretation. For instance, answer something is reliably easy to choose comparing to answer much if the respondents is somewhere in between. It is easier to answer I know something than I know
much. On the other hand, changing that alternative to for example a little or somewhat would not have made any difference. In the end, to get more reliable results 5 alternatives for the answer should have been implemented.

For these reasons, it is no surprise that the answer something is the most common one with almost 50% of the responses. However, significantly big number, 27% of the respondents chose the alternative nothing as only about 8% said they know very much about culture in Helsinki. So this statistic supports the statement about the weak cultural image of Helsinki. Moreover, if we focus only on the people that have not visited Helsinki before, the results are even more negative. Almost 43% of the participants who had not visited Helsinki before did not know anything about the culture in Helsinki whereas only about 6% knew much or very much.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13. The familiarity of the culture in Helsinki.

If we compare different age groups we can see some differences. The youngest group was clearly not aware about the culture in Helsinki as almost 43% of the responses stated that way. In contrast, the oldest group was the most familiar with the culture of Helsinki. In addition, interesting is also that the young adults (25-33) were more familiar with the culture that the middle aged (34-49). This could be explained, in my opinion, by the reason that the young adults and elderly people are often more interested in culture as a whole when comparing to teenagers and middle aged. That kind of phenomenon can be seen also in the figure 11.
The most familiar part of culture was food with 41% familiarity followed by architectures 37%. The least ones were theatre and attractions as only around 15% of the respondents were familiar with them. The results are quite expectable. Some interesting issues can be still seen. The familiarity of architecture was a bit unexpected compared to design for instance. Even though Finland is said to be known for the design, only 25% of the participants were familiar with it. If comparing the different age groups can be seen that the phenomenon is quite similar to the situation in interest in culture. Older people are familiar with “high culture” and younger ones of “living culture”. Moreover, as expected, people who had visited Helsinki before were more familiar with most of the parts of culture.

Figures 15-16. Familiarity with different kinds of culture.
As expected, people use internet to search for cultural offerings. In addition, word of the mouth was very common way to get information as around 44% consulted their friends and 17% their relatives. Surprisingly only 17% used social media for information whereas almost 16% used other ways, most commonly guide books. No significant differences between age groups or genders were found.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertise</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, where?</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17. Information sources.

How did culture of Helsinki impact on decision to travel? The presumption was, according to earlier statistics about the familiarity of culture in Helsinki, that the culture does not have an impact at all or only a little. As we look at the results, that presumption was partly right. Over 25% stated that the culture did not impact on travel decision at all and 42% that it impacted only little. So for over 70% the culture was not one of the main reasons to visit the city. On the other hand, the culture had quite much impacted the travel decision for more people than had not impacted at all. Only for 6% it was very important part of decision making.

If we compare the familiarity of the culture in Helsinki and the impact of the culture on decision to travel, interesting link can be seen. It seems that the familiarity and the decision to travel might mostly correlate. Therefore, a tentative assumption can be made that the more one knows about the culture in Helsinki, the more it impacts on decision to travel. No differences were found between first time visitors and returning visitors. The differences between the age groups were found, but not significant. Nevertheless, it seems that for the youngers people culture plays a bit bigger role in decision making process.
6.3 Helsinki as a cultural travel destination

The respondents were given statements they had to agree or disagree with. The opinion 5 means that the respondent strongly agrees, opinion 3 neither agrees nor disagrees and the opinion 1 strongly disagrees.

The results of the first statement, Helsinki has a strong cultural image, are slightly confusing. As discussed earlier, people have quite weak image of Helsinki as the most of the respondents did not know much about the culture of the city and the culture did not play a major role in decision making. Despite that, more people think that Helsinki has a strong cultural image than that it has a weak image. About 48% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed the statement whereas only about 19% disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement. Interesting is also that the most common answer was number 4, to agree with the statement. As a whole, the average of the responses was 3.38 meaning that the respondents agreed slightly more than disagreed. There might be a possibility that even the culture of Helsinki is not well known, that limited knowledge can create at least quite strong cultural image. In addition to that, the respondents had already visited the city which has already modified and altered their images to better or worse.

The case is quite similar with the second statement; Helsinki has a wide range of cultural activities. The most of the people did not agree or disagree with it. Nevertheless,
significantly more people agreed than disagreed with the statement resulting in average of 3.45. From these numbers can be argued that people think Helsinki indeed has quite wide range of cultural activities.

The same trend continues with the third statement; Helsinki is an unique cultural destination. 38% of the people agreed with the statement and almost 12% strongly agreed. In comparison, the exact same percent disagreed with the statement, but only about 5% strongly disagreed. The average of 3.4 argues that Helsinki has quite good reputation as a unique cultural destination. On the other hand, as one of the key marketing strategies is to highlight uniqueness of the city, the result could be better.

The people concurred with the fourth statement; it is easy to find cultural activities in Helsinki. About 59% agreed or agreed strongly with the statement as only 2% strongly disagreed and 18% disagreed. The average 3.55 argues that the cultural activities are rather easy to find.

People concurred mostly with the last statement; I would recommend Helsinki as a cultural destination. 24.5% strongly agreed and about 43% agreed with the statement whereas only 9% disagreed or disagreed strongly. The average of 3.79 clearly indicates that even though the Helsinki as a cultural destination is not well known, the people are willing to recommend it after the visit. The overall average 3.51 also relates that the respondents more likely agreed than disagreed with the statements and therefore, the image of Helsinki as cultural travel destination is fairly good. However, as can also be seen from the results, the image is still quite far away from being strong and significantly good. Comparing the age groups, young people (15-33) tend to have most positive images of Helsinki as a cultural destination and the middle-aged the most negative images.
Figure 20. Helsinki as a cultural travel destination. 5= strongly agree 3= neither agree or disagree 1= strongly disagree.

6.4 The image of different cultural activities in Helsinki

The respondents were given statements of the different cultural activities in Helsinki they had to agree or disagree with. The opinion 5 means that the respondent strongly agrees, opinion 3 neither agrees nor disagrees and the opinion 1 strongly disagrees.

The first 2 statements; Helsinki is a city full of design and Helsinki has an interesting architecture received almost similar results. That was quite expectable as they are pretty much linked together. However, the images of the design and architecture seem to be pretty good as about 25% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statements and over 40% agreed whereas only 8% disagreed. Finland has been marketing the country with design and architecture and mostly highlighting Helsinki and that kind of result was desirable. The averages of 3.84 for design and 3.86 confirm the images fairly positive.

The statement “Helsinki has interesting museums” received more deviation. The most of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. As can be seen from the earlier statistics, the reason might be due the quite weak interest in museums amongst the respondents. Still, almost 40% whether agreed or strongly agreed whereas only about 18.5% disagreed. The average of 3.36 leaves a slightly positive, but nowhere good image of museums in Helsinki.
The results are quite similar with the statement “Helsinki is a city full of events. Most of the people neither agreed nor disagreed. Combination of strongly agreed and agreed reached about 43% of the responses as only 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Therefore the average of 3.4 indicates that Helsinki has slightly positive image regarding the events, but could be enhanced knowing the quite big amount of events held in Helsinki. The fact this study was done in spring time might have impacted on the results in this case as the most of the events are happening during the summer months.

The next two statements received the most negative images of the different cultural activities; Helsinki has a strong nightlife and Helsinki has interesting sport events. There was quite much deviation in the responses. The most common choice in both statements was neither agree nor disagree consisting of almost half of the responses. Slightly more people agreed than disagreed with the statements but the average of 3.15 for Helsinki has a strong nightlife and 3.2 for Helsinki has interesting sport events leaves no space for good and strong image. However, considering that marketing of Helsinki has not focused on these two issues the results are quite expectable.

The strongest images of the chosen subjects have the people and atmosphere of Helsinki. 26.5% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement “Helsinki has interesting people and atmosphere.” In addition, almost 57% agreed with the statement whereas only 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The average of 4.04 clearly indicates that the images of the atmosphere and people are strong and positive. The food culture possesses also quite positive image. The statement “Helsinki offers great food” was agreed or strongly agreed by 60% of the respondents. The average of 3.68 confirms that the image of food culture in Helsinki is quite positive.

The statement “Helsinki is an interesting mix of east and west” is directly adopted from the marketing strategy of the city. Interestingly, despite the marketing efforts, the image is not very positive. 40% neither agreed nor disagreed the statement. About 11% strongly agreed and 31% agreed the statement whereas about 15% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. Against the expectations, the average of 3.36 leaves it below the overall average of all statements. It seems that despite the marketing and highlighting
this speciality, people don’t see Helsinki as a meeting place of east and west. The image of music in Helsinki does slightly better, but the average of 3.41 leaves it also below the overall average. Nevertheless, around 46% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement compared to 16% disagreement.

The overall image of different cultural activities in Helsinki is rather positive. However, only the people and atmosphere, design and architecture have strong images whereas nightlife, sports, museums and mixed culture have disappointing images. High numbers of neither agree nor disagree- answers could be explained from the earlier statistics as people don’t know much about the culture in Helsinki and therefore cannot have strong opinions or opinions at all. Comparing the different age groups can be seen that the younger people have more positive images of the most of the statements the exemption being the museums. Moreover, the group of middle-aged (34-49) tend to have most negative images of all of the statements.

Figure 21. The image of different cultural activities in Helsinki
6.5 Information and Marketing of Helsinki

The people found quite easy to find information about cultural attractions such as museums, architecture and design in Helsinki. 22.5% strongly agreed and 47% agreed with that statement. Only 10% disagreed and the average value of 3.81 supports that finding.

The information about cultural events was not easy to find. About 19% strongly agreed and 43.5% agreed the statement whereas almost 27% did not agree or disagree and about 11% disagreed at some level. Nevertheless, the average of 3.68 indicates still that the information is rather easy to find, but could be easily better. In the same manner the information was quite easily found, people found it useful and sufficient. Almost 20% totally agreed with the statement and 49.5% agreed whereas only 6% disagreed with it leaving the average to 3.83.

As a whole, people had pretty good impression of the quality and availability of information. There were no big differences between genders and age groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is easy to find information about cultural attractions, architecture and design in Helsinki</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.55%</td>
<td>47.08%</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>0.98%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy to find information about cultural events</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.81%</td>
<td>43.56%</td>
<td>28.73%</td>
<td>8.91%</td>
<td>1.98%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information provided was useful and sufficient</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>24.75%</td>
<td>5.94%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 22. Availability and quality of information.

With no surprise internet was the most common tool to search for information with 82% of the people using it. The other channels to get information were more or less evenly used hotels and social media being the most famous ones. Only 5% received information from the outdoor advertising which is something needs to be taken in to consideration. 6% got the information from somewhere else, most commonly guidebooks and university. As expected, the young people tend to use more internet
and social media to get information whereas older people used more tourist information centres, brocures and guide books.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist information centers</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochures</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor advertising</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locals</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhere else</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 23. Information channels.

Even though people most commonly used internet to get information about culture in Helsinki and were quite satisfied with the quality of the information, the most common answer to the question “how would you like to get more information about cultural offerings in Helsinki” was internet with almost 58% of the respondents choosing that one.

Mobile applications were the second tool people are willing to get information from with over 44% of the people suggesting that. These two most highlighted tools are followed by social media and tourism information centres with almost equal amounts of answers. Every fifth answerer wanted to get more information by outdoor advertising and the issue is almost the same with accommodation. Only about 10% are willing to get more information from the brochures.
The participants were asked if the image of Helsinki as a cultural destination got better during the visit. With most of the people, almost 59% it did. The image stayed the same with 41% and got worse with no-one. That is somewhat unexpected, but can be explained by two ways: as the awareness of the culture of Helsinki was quite weak, the expectations were not high and therefore the influence was positive. In addition, people might have been polite and did not dare to answer that the image got worse.
7 Conclusions

To start with the backgrounds, most of the visitors stayed 4-7 days in Helsinki. The interest in culture was mostly varying from average to big and focused more on living culture like events, locals and food whereas the interest in “high-culture”; theatre, museums etc. was low. Most of the people were middle aged and traveling for leisure, although culture was reason for 10% of the travellers.

According the results the image of Helsinki as a cultural destination is poor as most of the visitors did know a little to nothing about the culture in Helsinki. The situation was even worse with the visitors who had not visited Helsinki before since almost half of them did not know anything of the Helsinki as a cultural destination. Young adults (25-33) and elderly people (50+) were the most familiar with Helsinki as a cultural destination.

Most of the visitors were familiar with the food and architecture of Helsinki before the visit whereas theatre and attractions were pretty unknown. Surprisingly people were not very familiar with the design despite marketing and overall image of Finland. Moreover, the young people were more familiar with “living culture” and the older people with “high-culture”. Most of the people used internet to search for information before the visit. Significantly important was also the word of mouth. Significantly small number found information in advertises.

One of the key findings is that the culture of Helsinki impacted on the travel decision mainly a little or not at all. These results go almost hand in hand with the awareness of the culture in Helsinki. So can be said, that the more people know about the culture in Helsinki before the visit, the more they are also willing to visit for cultural reasons. In addition, the culture plays bigger role in decision making for young people.

Although the culture in Helsinki is not well known and does not impact much on the decision to travel, the image of culture is still quite positive. According the results, more people think that the city has a strong cultural image than weak. More people
also agreed than disagreed that the city has wide range of cultural activities, it is a unique destination and the cultural activities are easy to find. This is at some point a bit confusing as the respondents also claimed that they mostly didn't know much about the city before the visit. It seems that their image of the cultural Helsinki has been enhanced during the visit. This also supported by the statistics as the major of the respondents stated that their image of the city as a cultural destination has gotten better. Moreover, even though the awareness of the culture is weak, the image of the Helsinki as a cultural destination itself can be positive. Interesting issue is also that the visitors were willing to recommend Helsinki as a cultural travel destination much more than could have been expected from the image of the city. On the other hand, the image is still only slightly positive and could be easily enhanced by marketing. The most positive images were held by young people and the middle-aged had the most negative images.

The overall image of different cultural activities in Helsinki is rather positive. However, only the people and atmosphere, design and architecture have strong images whereas nightlife, sports, museums and mixed culture have disappointing images. The most of the visitors avoided strong opinions about cultural activities and therefore can be assumed that the awareness of these particular issues is weak.

Comparing the different age groups can be seen that the younger people have more positive images of the most of the statements the exemption being the museums. Moreover, the group of middle-aged (34-49) tend to have most negative images of all of the statements.

The visitors were pretty satisfied with the information and the quality of information regarding the cultural offerings provided during the visit. Most of the visitors looked for information on the internet followed by accommodation and social media. The least used channel was outdoor advertising.

According to the results, more information would be needed to add on the internet. There is also a quite strong demand for mobile applications, better information on social media and outdoor advertising. Equally important, it seems that the information provided in tourist information centres is insufficient as 30% would like to get more information from there.
To summarize, the cultural image of Helsinki is weak and therefore it also impacts only little on decisions to travel. Despite the weak awareness of the culture in Helsinki, the image possessed is fairly positive. The images of the activities considered as “high-culture” are more likely to be closer to negative whereas the images of “living culture” are usually positive. The younger people tend to have more positive image overall whereas the older people have more positive images of the higher or more traditional culture. The information provided during the visit is sufficient and of good quality, but the problem lies in the marketing of the culture for the tourist who have never visited the city. In the end, the image of the most of the visitors got better during the visit.

7.1 Recommendations and further studies

As stated before, the cultural image of Helsinki is weak, especially amongst the people never visited the city, and needs to be enhanced. This problem is mostly due to marketing as the most of the people don’t even know the existence of the city itself. With the limited marketing resources the focus should be on internet and social media marketing as they also are the most common ways to search for information about the destinations. The internet and social media as a marketing channel is also important by the reason that it can easily create phenomenon that spreads all over the world. The marketing banners on the booking sites such as Momondo and Skyscanner could enhance the awareness of the city and its culture. In addition to that, the focus could be more on the living culture: events, food, local people and atmosphere as according to results most of the people are more interested in them than the traditional cultural attractions such as museums, statues and so on. This is even more important in marketing to the youth and young adults as they tend to have the strongest interest. Moreover, the marketing of culture should be embedded in or combined with other marketing such as marketing the nature of Finland or the shopping possibilities.

Marketing the culture of Helsinki also during the visit could be enhanced by developing more and better mobile applications including cultural activities and by placing outdoor advertising. The outdoor advertising could be for instance similar to those used in shopping malls that you can look for the information and directions you are
interested in. Moreover, according the results, there might be need for investigating is the information in Tourist Information Centres sufficient regarding culture and cultural activities.

Since the sample was fairly limited, the results give more a glimpse to the cultural image of Helsinki and a study with wider sample could give a bit more reliable results. In addition to that, the limited amount of respondents from outside the EU-area restricted the comparison between the visitors from EU, Asia and Americas. Because the topic of this study is still very important and topical and the number of visitors from Asia is growing, further studies focusing on the cultural image of Helsinki amongst Asian travellers should be done in the future.

8 References


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Attachments

Attachment 1. Questionnaire in English

Helsinki as a cultural travel destination

A) Background

1. Gender: □ Woman □ Man
2. Age: □ 15-24  □ 25-33   □ 34- 49  □ 50+
3. Nationality:____________________
4. Life situation: □ Working □ Student □ Retired □ Unemployed □ Other
5. Have you visited Helsinki before? □ Yes □ No
6. How long did you stay? □ One day □ 2-3 days □ 4-7 days □ Over one week □ Over two weeks
7. What was your purpose for travelling to Helsinki? □ Business □ Leisure □ Culture □ Relatives or friends □ Other, what __________
8. Your interest in culture (theatres, sports, events, food, design etc.)? □ None □ Small □ Average □ Big

B) The cultural image of Helsinki before the visit.
   1. How much did you know about the culture in Helsinki?  □ Nothing  □ Something  □ Much  □ Very much
   2. From where did you get the information about the cultural offerings?  □ Friends  □ Relatives  □ Internet  □ Advertise  □ Social media  □ Other, where? ___________
   3. What kind of culture you were familiar with?  □ Design  □ Architecture  □ Events  □ Food  □ Attractions  □ Music  □ Sports  □ Local People  □ Theatre  □ Museums  □ Something else, what? ___________
   4. Did the culture of Helsinki have an impact on your decision to travel?  □ Not at all  □ A little  □ Quite much  □ Very much

C) Helsinki as a cultural travel destination
   Please choose the number that is closest to your opinion. 5 = strongly agree 3= neither agree or disagree 1 = I strongly disagree

   1. Helsinki has a strong cultural image  5 4 3 2
      1
   2. Helsinki has a wide range of cultural activities  5 4 3 2
      1
   3. Helsinki is an unique cultural destination  5 4 3 2
      1
   4. It is easy to find cultural activities in Helsinki  5 4 3 2
      1
   5. I would recommend Helsinki as a cultural destination  5 4 3 2
      1
D) The image of different cultural activities in Helsinki

Please choose the number that is closest to your opinion. 5 = strongly agree 3= neither agree or disagree 1 = strongly disagree

1. Helsinki is a city full of design
   5 4 3 2 1

2. Helsinki has an interesting architecture
   5 4 3 2 1

3. Helsinki has interesting museums
   5 4 3 2 1

4. Helsinki is a city full of events
   5 4 3 2 1

5. Helsinki has a strong nightlife
   5 4 3 2 1

6. Helsinki has interesting sport events
   5 4 3 2 1

7. Helsinki has interesting people and atmosphere
   5 4 3 2 1

8. Helsinki offers great food
   5 4 3 2 1

9. Helsinki is an interesting mix of east and west
   5 4 3 2 1

10. Helsinki has a strong music scene
    5 4 3 2 1

E) Information and marketing of Helsinki

F) Please choose the number that is closest to your opinion. 5 = strongly agree 3= neither agree or disagree 1 = strongly disagree

1. It is easy to find information about cultural attractions such as museums, architecture and design in Helsinki
   5 4 3 2 1

2. It is easy to find information about cultural events
   5 4 3 2 1

3. The information provided was useful and sufficient
   5 4 3 2 1

Where did you get information about cultural activities while in Helsinki?

Internet □

Social media □
Tourist information centres □
Brochures □
Hotels □
Outdoor advertising □
Locals □
Somewhere else □

G) How would you like to get more information about cultural offerings of Helsinki

1. Outdoor advertising □
2. Brochures □
3. Social media □
4. Internet □
5. Mobile applications □
6. Tourist information centres □
7. Accommodation □

H) Image and satisfaction
Did your image of Helsinki as a cultural destination change during the visit?

□ It stayed the same □ Yes, it got better □ Yes, it got worse

Attachment 2. Questionnaire in Russian

Хельсинки как город культуры

Информация о себе

10. Пол: жен □ муж □
11. Возраст: 15-24 □ 25-33 □ 34-49 □ 50+ □
12. Национальность: ______________________
13. Жизненная позиция: Работа □ Студент □ Пенсия □ Безработный □ Другое □
14. Посещали ли Вы раньше Хельсинки? Да □ Нет □
15. На как долго вы приезжали? Один день  2-3 дня  4-7 дней  Больше недели  Больше двух недель

16. Цель поездки в Хельсинки? Бизнес/деловые дела  Свободное время  Культура  Семья или друзья  Другое, что

17. Заинтересованы ли Вы в культуре (театр, спорт, события, еда, дизайн итд.)? Нет  Немного  Средне  Очень заинтересован

18. В каком виде культуры Вы заинтересованы? Дизайн  Архитектура  События  Еда  Развлечения  Музыка  Спорт  Местные люди  Театр  Музеи  Что-то другое, что?

________________________

Культурный имидж Хельсинки до визита.

5. Много ли Вы знали о культуре Хельсинки? Ничего  Что-то  Довольно много  Очень много

6. Где Вы нашли информацию о культуре в Хельсинки? Друзья  Родственники  Интернет  Реклама  Социальная Медиа  Другое, где?

7. С каким видом культуры Вы уже были знакомы? Дизайн  Архитектура  События  Еда  Развлечения  Музыка  Спорт  Местные люди  Театр  Музеи  Что-то другое, что?

8. Повлияла ли культура Хельсинки на Ваше решение приехать сюда? Совсем нет  Немного  Довольно много  Очень повлияло

Хельсинки как город культуры

Пожалуйста, выберите номер, который больше всего описывает Ваше мнение.

5 = полностью такого же мнения  3 = не могу ответить  1 = полностью несогласен

6. У Хельсинки сильный культурный имидж  5  4  3  2  1
7. В Хельсинки большой выбор разных культурных вариантов/активитетов  5  4  3  2  1
8. Хельсинки уникальное культурное место  5  4  3  2  1
9. В Хельсинки легко найти развлечения/активитеты 5 4 3 2 1
10. С точки зрения культуры, я рекомендую Хельсинки как место для поездки 5 4 3 2 1

I) Имидж и разные формы активитетов в Хельсинки
Пожалуйста, выберите номер, который больше всего описывает Ваше мнение.
5 = полностью такого же мнения 3 = не могу ответить 1 = полностью несогласен

11. Хельсинки, как город, богат дизайном 5 4 3 2
1
12. В Хельсинки интересная архитектура 5 4 3 2 1
13. В Хельсинки интересные музеи 5 4 3 2
1
14. В Хельсинки много событий 5 4 3 2 1
15. В Хельсинки хорошая ночная жизнь 5 4 3 2 1
16. В Хельсинки хорошо развита музыка 5 4 3 2 1
17. В Хельсинки интересные спортивные события 5 4 3 2 1
18. В Хельсинки интересные люди и атмосфера 5 4 3 2
1
19. В Хельсинки вкусная пища/еда 5 4 3 2
1
20. Хельсинки это интересный "микс" востока и запада 5 4 3 2
1

J) Информация и маркетинг Хельсинки
Пожалуйста, выберите номер, который больше всего описывает Ваше мнение.
5 = полностью такого же мнения 3 = не могу ответить 1 = полностью несогласен

59
4. Легко найти информацию о культурных развлечениях, таких как музеи, архитектура и дизайн в Хельсинки
   5  4  3  2  1
5. Легко искать информацию о культурных событиях
   5  4  3  2  1
6. Найденная информация полезна и достаточна
   5  4  3  2  1

Где Вы искали информацию, находясь в Хельсинки?

Интернет □
Социальная медиа □
Туристические бюро □
Брошюры □
Отели □
Реклама на улице □
Местные люди □
Другое место □

Г) Как бы Вы хотели узнавать информацию/рекомендации о культуре в Хельсинки

8. Реклама на улице □
9. Брошюры □
10. Социальная медиа □
11. Интернет □
12. Мобильные приложения □
13. Туристические бюро □
14. Отели □

Удовлетворенность и представление о Хельсинки

Изменилось ли Ваше представление о Хельсинки как о культурном городе за время Вашего визита?

Осталось таким же □ Даже, в лучшую сторону □ Даже, в худшую сторону □