

# **Marketing Indochina Luxury and Tailored Tour to Finnish Consumers**

Case: Eviva Tour Vietnam

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<p>The primary aim of the thesis is to examine Finnish consumers' behaviours towards tailored and luxury tours in the Indochina area, as well as finding the best methods to promote tailored luxury tourism products and services. The thesis is commissioned by Eviva Tour Vietnam, a Vietnam based Destination Management Company specialised in high-end, luxury and specialised tours, which are considering entering the Finnish market.</p> <p>Firstly, the theories regarding luxury and tailored tourism will be examined, and the segmentation of Finnish travellers who might be interested in luxurious tourism services, as well as their attitude, will be explained in detail. Tourism marketing theories in both relations with other businesses and customers would also be presented along with the overview of tourism scenes by using a destination analysis method. Moreover, the commissioner's backgrounds, characteristics and operational details would be highlighted and considered.</p> <p>Secondly, the selected approach and methods applied for the research is described. The empirical study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches and practised an online-distributed questionnaire. The limitations of the thesis, clarification of the validity and reliability matters are also considered.</p> <p>Lastly, the data collected is then organized and analysed by graphical illustrations. The key findings of Finnish luxury tourism consumers' segmentation, their behaviours and motivations are presented through certain themes. Further suggestions on how to market the commissioner's products and services are later delivered by the author in accordance with the key results from the empirical study.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Tourism, Marketing, Luxury, Indochina, Finland	

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# 1 Introduction

The tourism industry has been continuing to expand and to diversify in order to become one of the fastest-growing economic sectors, as well as the largest one in the world. Moreover, international tourism incomes made by destinations worldwide have surged from USD 2 billion in 1950 to 1260 billion in 2015, with 1186 million arrivals of international tourists. Not only the tourism industry is the primary drive of socio-economic expansion through the creation of jobs and enterprises, but it also helps export profits, and develop infrastructure. (UNWTO 2016, 2)

The Indochina area or 'French Indochina' is a part of Southeast Asia, which consists of the three nations of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (Cooper 2001). According to UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2016, Laos received 12% more of international tourist arrivals in 2015, while Cambodia (+6%) and Vietnam (+1%) are reported with moderate results. Therefore, with more than 16 million international tourist arrivals, the tourism scene in Indochina area has a growing tendency and seems to be potential. (UNWTO 2016, 7-9)

There is neither original literature existing about luxury tourism nor a clear and concise definition of this term. According to Amadeus 2016 report, luxury travel is subjective, and the key to luxury tourism is to curate values that appeal to consumers on a specific, personal level, which will go above the "norms" (Amadeus 2016, 4). Nonetheless, there is reliable bibliography on other aspects of the luxury concept such as the market, consumer behaviour or brand. Thus, the theoretical part of the thesis would be based on the studied literature on other disciplines of "luxury" tourism

The thesis is commissioned by EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM – an Indochina local Destination Management Company specialised in high-end, luxury and specialised tours, which are considering entering the Finnish market. EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM (EVIVA), established in 2004, is a destination management company specialised in luxury high-quality tailor-made tours in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. (Evivatour 2017a)

## 1.1 Objectives and Research Question

The thesis's commissioner EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM is interested in a market research, and the target country is Finland. The thesis aims to provide the commissioner insights about Finnish consumers' behaviours towards tailored and luxury tours in the Indochina area. The thesis should be relevant and beneficial for the commissioner's future strategy: the thesis needs to give a clear guideline on how to promote the commissioner's services

into the Finnish market. Moreover, the thesis needs to include possible suggestions or marketing plan proposal for their products and brand's awareness to Finnish customers.

Thus, the research problems need to be identified are to identify the characteristics and the Finnish consumers' segment, especially the key features of the Finnish luxury travellers' segment. In addition, the author needs to examine Finnish customer behaviours in tailored and luxury tourism in Indochina, as well as to identify the drives and motivations of Finnish luxury travellers. Lastly, the thesis should propose the best methods to promote tailored luxury tourism products and services.

The thesis results should also give answers to research questions:

- 1) Who are Finnish luxury travellers?
- 2) What are the current behaviours of Finnish consumers in luxury and tailored tours?
- 3) What are the factors, which drive Finnish travellers to purchase luxury and tailored tours in Indochina?
- 4) What are the most effective ways to promote tailored luxury tourism services to Finnish consumers?

## **1.2 Structure of Thesis**

The thesis consists of seven chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 is the introduction of the thesis, explaining the topic is the motivations behind this research, as well as to clarify the aims and objectives of the thesis in accordance with the goals of the commissioner and the author.

In chapter 2, the theories regarding luxury and tailored tourism will be presented. The chapter would also explain the perception of luxury tourism from the Indochinese culture's viewpoint. It also covers the segmentation of Finnish travellers, as well as their attitude towards these types of tourism products and services.

Chapter 3 examine marketing theories, specifically in marketing in the tourism industry. The subchapters are divided as such so that the schemes of marketing in both relations with other businesses and customers would be examined.

In chapter 4, the tourism scenes in Indochina would be approached by using a destination analysis method. Besides, the commissioner's backgrounds, characteristics and operational details would be highlighted and considered in this chapter.

Chapter 5 describes the selected approach and methods used for the research. Moreover, the limitations of the thesis would be discussed, along with clarifying the validity and reliability matters.

Chapter 6 provides the main findings and key results from the empirical study, presented by specific themes.

In chapter 7, the author would conclude the thesis.

### **1.3 Limitations**

There are some limitations which can affect the process of writing the thesis. For example, there is a lack of available theoretical resources regarding tailored luxury tourism and Finnish traveller's behaviours. Thus, there is also lack of prior research studies on this specific topic. Regarding the empirical part of the thesis, when collecting data by the questionnaire, the sample size might be not desirable, and there would be difficulties to gain the exact type or demographic scope of participants targeted. Moreover, the author is lack of fluency in Finnish and network with Finnish people, and this leads to the unable to conduct a Finnish questionnaire.

## 2 Luxury and Tailored Tourism

As the author has mentioned in the first chapter, there are plentiful literature and bibliography about luxury and luxury brands available, however, focus specifically on luxury tourism exists few studies. Thus, the concepts of luxury tourism can be examined through the general definitions of luxury regarding services and lifestyles.

Muller-Stewens, Reinecke and Berghaus (2014, 12-13) brought up that the biggest and the most powerfully expanding segment in the overall business of luxury is luxury services. These luxury experiences consist of travel services, hotels, as well as art auctions, at the sales in 2012 of 664 billion Euros.

Moreover, The World Tourism Forum blog stated that luxury tourism had always been a segment of the overall tourism industry from ancient periods. Nevertheless, luxury tourism became exceptionally extensive in the recent years. This future might be explained by the high competitions, evolving consumer behaviours and the ever-changing technological advancements. (World Tourism Forum 2016)

### 2.1 Concepts of Luxury Tourism and Tailored Tours

Jäckel (2014, 63) suggested that the term 'luxury' refers to both economic and moral standards, while (2014, 71) claimed the notion of luxury is subjective. Nonetheless, there are attempts to define the term of 'luxury' as followings:

- “A state of great comfort or elegance, especially when involving great expense.” (Oxford English Dictionary 2017)
- “The ordinary of extraordinary people and the extraordinary of the ordinary people.” (Bernard Arnault, Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy CEO)
- “Luxury lies not in richness and ornateness but in the absence of vulgarity.” (Coco Chanel)

It is also mentioned that luxury could be both tangible and intangible, depends on the perceptions of each consumer. Theodoridis and Vassou also stated that the concept of 'luxury' is difficult to explain because of its nature. Moreover, they declared that it is vital and beneficial to marketers to understand the consumer's way of thinking about luxury. (Theodoridis, Vassou 2014, 71-73)

Dubois, Laurent and Czellar (2005) described the six facets of luxury products, and they are:

- *Excellent quality*: It is a must that luxury goods and services have two fundamental features, including top quality components or materials, and exceptional craftsmanship.
- *Premium price*: The price of the luxury product is an absolute, as well as a comparative value, and firmly, logically connected to the first attribute of luxury.
- *Scarcity and uniqueness*: True luxury products and services cannot be produced massively.
- *Aesthetics and poly-sensuality*: Luxury goods should satisfy consumer's need for beauty, magnificence along with exquisiteness. In addition, 'poly-sensuality' means luxury is multi-sensory and should bring experiences to customers.
- *Ancestral heritage and personal history*: so as to be luxurious, luxury brands, goods and services should have a well-established history with long-lasting, continuing traditions.
- *Superfluousness*: luxury goods and services should exceed customer's expectations by providing additional values.

(Dubois, Laurent & Czellar 2005)

Specifically, to the concept of luxury tourism, there are definitions proposed by industry leaders and scholars. Luxury tourism is classified as a niche tourism, as it offers to consumers by providing unique, authentic 'superfluous' services. Moreover, the World Tourism Forum suggested to include the following niche markets under the term of 'luxury tourism':

- Accommodating at all-inclusive luxurious 5-star hotel suites and resorts
- Cruise ship travelling or going on personalised yacht and boat tours, river cruises
- Travels involving luxury shopping
- Golf tourism
- Private jet journeys
- Extreme experience tourism, such as deep ocean tourism, space tourism, undiscovered destinations tours.
- Mini indulgences, such as VIP airport services
- *Unique customised and personalised tours with authentic experience*

(World Tourism Forum 2016)

Thus, it can be understood that tailored tours are also classified into the luxury category of the tourism industry. The main idea of this tourism service is a tailor-made itinerary created by the client's interests from accommodation, meals, and other services in a given destinations. The standard of the trip, as well as the length of the tour, are also customised by the client's wishes. (StayPoland 2017)

## **2.2 Luxury Tourism's Characteristics**

Luxury tourism or high-end tourism includes all groups of clients for which practising tourism is not conditioned by the level of their incomes, in the sense that money is not a matter for them since they have more than adequate. Although there is not that many of demand in this niche market, the luxury tourism market is still profitable for economic agents. Moreover, despite the fact that it is difficult to monitor, as a result of the personalised demands with favour to the quality level of services. Indeed, the need for luxury tourism to be more varied is displayed in numerous sophisticated behaviours. These requests are sometimes even considered extravagant and only five-star accommodation facilities or at least four-star infrastructure could respond to the demand. (Teodorescu 2009)

Fedeli claims that the definition of the luxury concept is subjective and even relative in the tourism sector. The meaning of luxury is heavily relied on a multiple of tangible and physical features, plus the perspective and individual assessment, which each person attributes to the concept is unique. (Fedeli 2010)

During the most recent years, the luxury tourism segment has turned out to be more and more varied. Moreover, the luxury concept has come to be blurred because of the advance and growth in numbers of innovative products or services designed to tourism consumers' perceptions along with market trends. The exclusive character, which appointed to the concept of luxury tourism, has gone disappeared as it is at present out-of-date and in dire need of broader significance. Nevertheless, the concept of luxury in travel and tourism has seen a shift from traditional luxury products, such as five-star resorts, to a large variety of unique and exclusive experiences (Bakker, 2005).

Nowadays, luxury hotels are focused on more than offering a pure product or service; they are not limited to tangible products but are more interested in realising a blend of various modules and ideas established on experience and authenticity, instead of financial value. Regarding this shift, the tourism sector signifies an exception, since it is a sector where the experiential and the intangible factor can play a significant part as a effective element

when it comes to satisfying demanding customers. Consequently, luxury can be understood in the present days as a variety of things: it is no longer a mass market or traditional, instead personal, authentic and experiential. Nonetheless, the old meaning of luxury in product consumption and superiority remains to be original, authentic. (Bakker 2005; Yeoman& McMahon-Beattie 2006)

### **2.3 The Global Market for Luxury Tourism**

According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2011), three percent of all tourists in the world are luxury travellers. It is calculated that the expenditures of these tourists on travelling represents twenty-five percent of the spending on international travels. Furthermore, according to the Middle East and North Africa MENA Luxury Travel Report (YouGov 2014), the average amount of money spent on a single luxury trip by a traveller is around 6700 euros each.

According to a report by International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM), the most prominent trend of the luxury tourist is shaped by travellers who could identify precisely what they desire, and are no longer looking for superficial luxury. These travellers would like distinct luxurious trips concentrating on authentic experiences. Moreover, based on Virtuoso Luxe Report, consumers nowadays seek for active experiences that are personalised to their interests and abilities. Hence, tailored luxury tours are often preferred by the luxury travellers group. (Virtuoso 2017)

Additionally, it is also mentioned in the research by Virtuoso that the top global destinations in 2017 for luxury clients are respectively Italy, South Africa, France, Iceland and lastly, Australia. Meanwhile, the places are listed as the most emerging for luxury tourists are Cuba, Iceland, Croatia, South Africa and Japan. This 2017 Virtuoso Luxe Report also showed that upscale travel is successful as trips are selling out earlier than in past years. Many travellers are booking their trips ahead in advance, even range from a one-to-two-years period for more magnificent trips. (Virtuoso 2017)

### **2.4 The Indochinese Perception of Luxury Tourism**

As mentioned previously, the definitions and opinions of luxurious tourism services are subjective. There are variations in perceptions of luxury tourism among not only different individuals but also distinct cultures and societies. Consequently, the designations and views of Indochinese residents and businesses are not the same to Finnish citizens. This

could be explained by the difference in price ranges, the living standards and cultural cognition.

Thus, it is essential to compare the average incomes, as well as the approximate amount charged of services which are commonly assumed to be luxurious between the two cultures. Vietnam is selected to represent Indochina, since the three country have similar living standards and the commissioner is based in Hanoi, Vietnam. The table below indicates the figures of mentioned attributes and the comparison of their variations in Finland and in Vietnam:

Table 1. The average incomes and prices of luxurious services in Finland and Vietnam

	Finland	Vietnam
National monthly earnings (2016)	EUR 3368	EUR 230
National annually earnings (2016)	EUR 40416	EUR 2760
A night for 2 people at Crowne Plaza King Club Room (2018)	EUR 149.76	EUR 109
3 days 2 nights on a luxury cruise Deluxe Cabin for 2 people (2018)	EUR 1420 (not include meals)	EUR 482 (include all meals)
A one-way Business class ticket for an hour flight (2018)	EUR 440 (Finnair: Helsinki – Stockholm)	EUR 208 (Vietnam Airlines: Hanoi – Vientiane)
A full meal in a gourmet restaurant	EUR 90	EUR 28.16
A 2-hour luxury Spa treatment package	EUR 220	EUR 53
Luxury afternoon tea for a person	EUR 25 (Hotel Kämp)	EUR 8.85 (InterContinental Hanoi)

The figures of the table above have clearly demonstrate the differences between the living standards in Finland and Vietnam. The amount of the average income of Finnish citizens is 14.6 times more than Vietnamese average earning, according to Stat.fi (2017) and thoi-baotaichinhvietnam.vn (2017). Hence, what is so-called “an average Finnish” could be considered a wealthy person in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and thus is able to purchase luxurious and high-end tourism services in Indochina.

More precisely, the table compares the amounts charged for services with similar characteristics in Finland and Vietnam. For accommodation, the comparison is between the rates of two rooms of the same type offered by Crowne Plaza – an international hotel chain belongs to InterContinental Hotel Groups, which has their branches in Helsinki, Finland and

Hanoi, Vietnam (crownplaza.com 2018). Secondly, the luxury cruises selected in Finland is offered by Scandi Classics Tour Operator and the route is Helsinki – Stockholm, while the Vietnamese cruise is a Hanoi – Ha Long Bay by Paradise Cruise. The comparison is exact as they have the same starting date, for two people and in the same type of room. However, the Ha Long cruise cost less than 70 percent comparing to the Helsinki-based cruise, regardless being more services-inclusive (Scandi.travel 2018, paradisecruise.com 2018). Following are the fares offered by Finnair and Vietnam Airlines, the two national carriers, for a Business Class ticket of an hour long flight on the same date. The routes selected are Helsinki - Stockholm and Hanoi – Vientiane, since Finnair do not offer Business Class services in their domestic flights. (Finnair.com 2018, Vietnam Airlines 2018). Other attributes are compared by finding similar high-quality services offered in the two countries, as well as referenced from worldtravelguide.net (2018).

Furthermore, the differences in the price range are visibly considerable, and it could be said it is cheaper to travel in Vietnam. Therefore, luxury and tailored tourism services and products are affordable to a Finn with his or her average Finnish incomes. This explains why EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM aim to introduce their high-end services to Finnish consumers in general, and not specifically target the wealthier population in Finland. In short, the author could conclude that the perceptions of Indochinese citizen of luxurious tourism are different from Finnish perspectives, and hence most Finns are able to afford high-end tourism services in the Indochina region.

## **2.5 Finnish consumers of Tailored Tours and Luxury Tourism**

The consumer is the most crucial stakeholder in business. Thus, businesses must understand how their consumers behave, in order to form products and services that will be aware and purchased by customers. The author shall examine the typical Finnish consumer of tailored and luxury tourism in the following subchapters.

### **2.5.1 The Finnish culture**

This subchapter introduces the theoretical foundation of the Finnish culture along with the values as well as dimensions of Finnish culture are presented. Finnish values are also examined with the cultural models of Richard D. Lewis (2005). In addition, the dimensions of Finnish culture would also be studied in accordance with the theories of Hofstede.

According to Lewis (2005), Finnish people find themselves unenthusiastic when it comes to talking about their own achievements. Consequently, Finnish people do not boast about their achievements. Vice versa, Finnish people are humble and also hardworking. Additionally, Finns are individualistic, democratic, love freedom and being independent. Finns are also kind, and they would love being fond of. The stereotype is that Finns tend to do not talk frequently, they still like to socialise. Finnish people love their Finland and have a self-consciousness, even patriotic about their country. Finns behave mostly in a Western way but some of the Finnish cultural values, such as “losing face”, reflect Asian values. (Lewis 2005, 1- 5)

Lewis (2005, 58-63) also suggested the ten fundamental Finnish Values worth noticing, as they are common in the nation while being seen as a code of conducts for ethical behaviours. The values are as following:

- *The sense of Separateness*: It is common for Finnish people feel separated from other nationalities because of not only their particular language and culture but also demographic and historical reasons. Moreover, Finns are intrigued by cultural relativism and the way themselves are different from other cultures.
  - *Sisu*: There is no exact translation of ‘sisu’ in English. However, the word implies courage, stamina, toughness, single-mindedness, stubbornness and tenacity of the Finns.
  - *Honesty*: To Finns, honesty is uncompromising, law-abiding variety and where the truth is the truth.
  - *Hatred of Debt*: Finnish people consider the debt-free status sits well with the spirit of one’s independence.
  - *Luotettavuus*: Finns consider reliability is an important character, and this is tightly bonded with a steady work ethic of the Finns. Lewis also stated that Foreigners would gain points with Finns by proving their own competence.
  - *Shyness and Modesty*: Finnish people are considered shy, especially when it comes to communicating with foreigners and people they do not know well.
  - *Taciturnity*: In short, Finns do not believe in verbosity and are very brief. They would instead bottle up their feelings and are comfortable being silent.
  - *Directness*: Finns are direct and can be very frank.
  - *Realism*: Finnish people are known as realists and pragmatists of the first degree. They rarely indulge in speculations.
  - *Common Sense*: Lewis claimed that sometimes Finns fall back on common sense.
- (Lewis 2005, 58-63)

Using Hofstede’s theory, Finnish culture would be analysed in six dimensions, including:

(1) *Power Distance*: According to Hofstede, Power Distance's definition is "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally". Finland scores of 33, which clarifies that the Finnish style is being independent, the hierarchy for convenience only, equal rights, superiors accessible, management facilitates and empowers. Communication is direct and participative.

(2) *Individualism*: Hofstede explains this dimension as "the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members." Finland, with a score of 63 is an Individualist society. This tells there is a high fondness for a loose social framework, within individuals, are expected to look after themselves and their immediate families only.

(3) *Masculinity*: Hofstede states that "the fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (Masculine) or liking what you do (Feminine)". Finland scores 26 and thus is considered a Feminine society where they value caring for others and the quality of life.

(4) *Uncertainty Avoidance*: Hofstede argues that the score on Uncertainty Avoidance reflects "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these". Finland scores 59 on this dimension and thus has a high preference for avoiding uncertainty. It is claimed there is an emotional need for rules, people have an inner impulse to work hard, precision and punctuality are the norms, innovation may be resisted and security is an important element in individual motivation.

(5) *Long-term Orientation*: Hofstede describes this is "how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future". With a low score of 38, Finnish culture can be classified as normative. Individuals in this type of society own a solid consideration with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative and rational. They show great admiration for traditional values, a fairly minor propensity to save for the forthcoming, and they concentrated on achieving rapid results.

(6) *Indulgence*: Hofstede defines this is "the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses". The relatively high score of 57 indicates that Finland is an Indulgent country. Individuals in societies classified by a high score in Indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to realise their impulses and desires with favour to enjoying life and having quality, fun time. They retain positive attitudes and are likely to prefer optimism. Additionally, **these people consider a higher level of significance on their leisure time, and would do what they want and spend money as much as they would like.** (Hofstede 2017)

Since individuals belong to different cultures would behave dissimilarly regardless of their financial status, Finnish consumers who are attracted by luxurious tourism inevitably act

unlikely to ones who originated from other countries. Hofstede (2017) dimensions theory thus, by some means displays Finnish's behaviours toward high-end tours. Firstly, the above-average individualism and indulgence scores indicate that Finns tend to take care of themselves and their immediate family members while enjoying a quality life. This indeed an important factor, as it shows the possible interests for them to spend a higher amount of money on leisure activities such as travelling, especially on luxurious trips. Secondly, because Finnish people have short-term orientation and do not have the habit of saving for the distant future so that they are more likely to spend more as well. Lastly, as Finnish residents have the tendency to avoid uncertainty, the more impulsive types of tourism like adventurous are not likely fascinating for them. Finns' preference for security factor also affects how they would rather choose to purchase services from trust-worthy tour operators or travel agencies, than planning trips themselves.

### **2.5.2 Finnish Tourism Consumers**

Swarbrooke claims that one of the latest major growth markets in Northern Europe is based on the climatic factor. Tourists from Northern Europe, including Finns who want to get away from winter climate by travelling to warmer, tropical countries to get a sunny holiday. This target market is titled the "snowbird" market. Generally, this market has characteristics that the trips are instead a long duration from two to four week as their usual holiday period. Furthermore, the tourists belong to this category also spend 90 per cent more money than the typical European tourist on food, accommodation and attractions. This could easily be explained as their level of income is generally higher than average, as well as their adaptability of foreign cultures is one of the best in the world. (Horner & Swarbrooke 2016, 195).

According to Statistics Finland's survey, Finnish citizens made approximately 8.2 million different leisure trips abroad in 2016. Specifically, the number of trips with an overnight stay in the destination country was 6.1 million, including 3.6 million trips with at least four nights stay. The site also announces that about 4.1 million people or 91 percent of Finnish population from 15 to 84 years old, who went on at least one leisure trip that involved an overnight stay in 2016. The statistics include all domestic and outbound leisure trips, in addition to trips vacation homes and visits to relatives and friends. Figure 1 below illustrates Finns' leisure trips by type of trip in May to August 2012 to 2017, proving that travelling is indeed widespread activity for Finns. (Statistics Finland 2017)

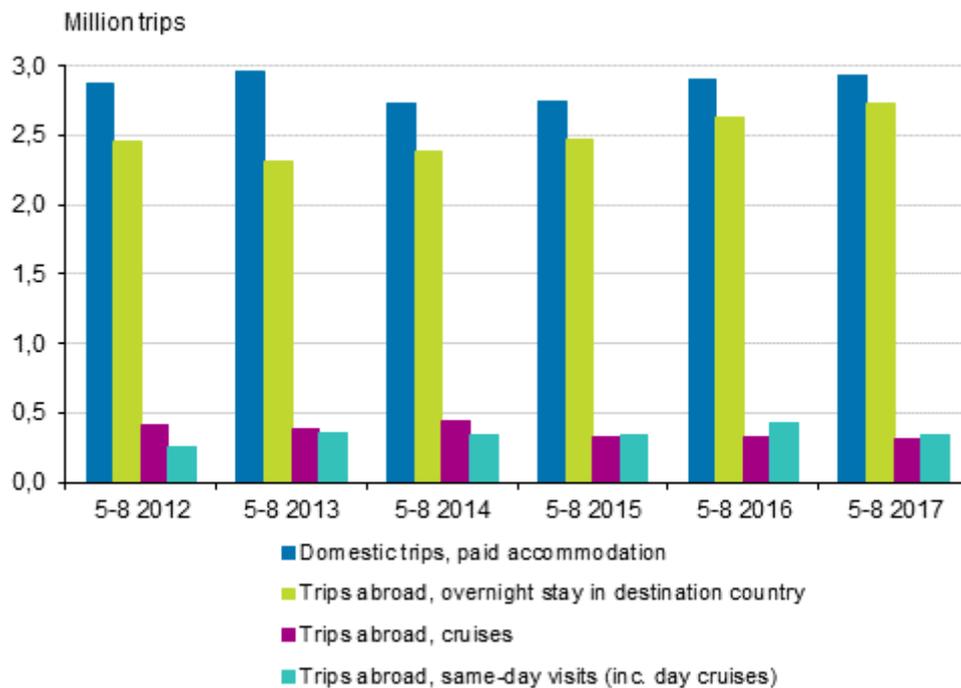


Figure 1. Finnish residents' leisure trips by trip's type from May to August annually from 2012 to 2017. Statistics Finland 2017.

In terms of general trends in traveller's behaviours, Finnish tourists do not have a remarkable change in destinations. Beach and city breaks are the most common category that Finns select and these are likely to remain so in the following years. The most vital aspects looked for when picking a specific destination are an exciting landmark, good weather as well as cuisine. Moreover, the nature of tourism destination image has alternated in increasing interest in beach holidays and environmental issues. It is calculated that about 400000 trips to Asia and Oceania destination area made by Finns in 2016. Among those, Thailand is the top Asian destination for leisure trips as well as the most extended distance destination Finnish tourists, as 310000 trips calculated. Vietnam National Administration of Tourism also reported 15953 arrivals of Finnish citizens in 2016. (Statistics Finland 2017; Vietnam National Administration of Tourism 2016)

Base on Eurostat's statics, the peak season of travelling for Finns is in June and July (33 percent), while the lowest season is in October and November (10.8 percent). Besides the summer holiday, Finnish travellers also are likely to travel outside Europe in wintertime, which occurs in late of December to February. The average budget for trip abroad of Finnish tourists in 2010 is about 1500 euro, which equals to approximately 100 euro per day. (Eurostat 2002)

Finnish travellers are turning increasingly demanding in explore unique travel experiences in the future. Experiencing different cultures is also an element that attracts Finnish tourists, and thus, unique experiences become more popular. Additionally, Finns are considered conscious about pricing; they expect value for money and efficiency. There are six critical criteria for Finnish travellers to select tourism destinations, as follows: culture and native people, climate, cleanliness, activities range, shopping and local cuisine. Nevertheless, as their travel experiences become wealthier, they seem to be more attracted by destinations where involve self-development and creative expression.

Regarding trip arrangement process, Finnish tourists have a tendency to book both accommodation and transport directly before leaving the country. There is over 70 percent of Finns using intermediaries such as tour operators or travel agents to purchase package trips abroad. Other than that, 17.4 percent of Finns reported reserve accommodation and travelled straight from the supplier, while only 5 percent of Finnish tourists arrange their own trips. All-inclusive package tours are particularly common among travellers with their family. (Eurostat 2002)

Finns are known as heavy users of information and communication technologies. Thus, online information searches on the internet are the critical tool for organising trips. Moreover, Finnish consumers nowadays prefer booking their trips online thanks to the flexibility. The high level of usage in the technology and online platforms also depicts that social media, as well as mobile-friendly user interface, are considered hugely significant for marketing and promotion activities.

### **2.5.3 Luxury and Tailored Tours consumer behaviours**

Tourist typologies are the categorisations of tourists on the basis of their shared behaviours and characteristics. These typologies are crucial as it not only support the product development, pricing as well as promoting and distributing channels processes, but also form the foundation for market segmentation methods. One remarkable fact that as Sharpley (2000) points out that the majority of the tourist typologies, which could be found in the literature, are classified into the academic category. Thus, further identification of the most common Finnish tourist typologies is a necessity.

It is argued that the number of tourist typologies needed should be equal to the number of tourism products, tourism markets as well as countries and culture (Horner & Swarbrooke 2016, 136-137). Perhaps it is because of the crucial role of tourist typologies in designing and marketing tourism products and services.

Amadeus's report in 2016 regarding the future of luxury travellers could serve as an example of how tourist typologies are shaping product development. In the report, they investigate the luxury travel sector, identify consumers' motivations and service level expectations in order to help the travel industry provide a better fulfilling and personalised customers journey for tourists. More precisely, Amadeus conceptualised luxury traveller tribes by their behaviours, intentions and also by the varying levels of affluence of these tourists based on the Hierarchy of Luxury Travel Needs as in Figure 2:

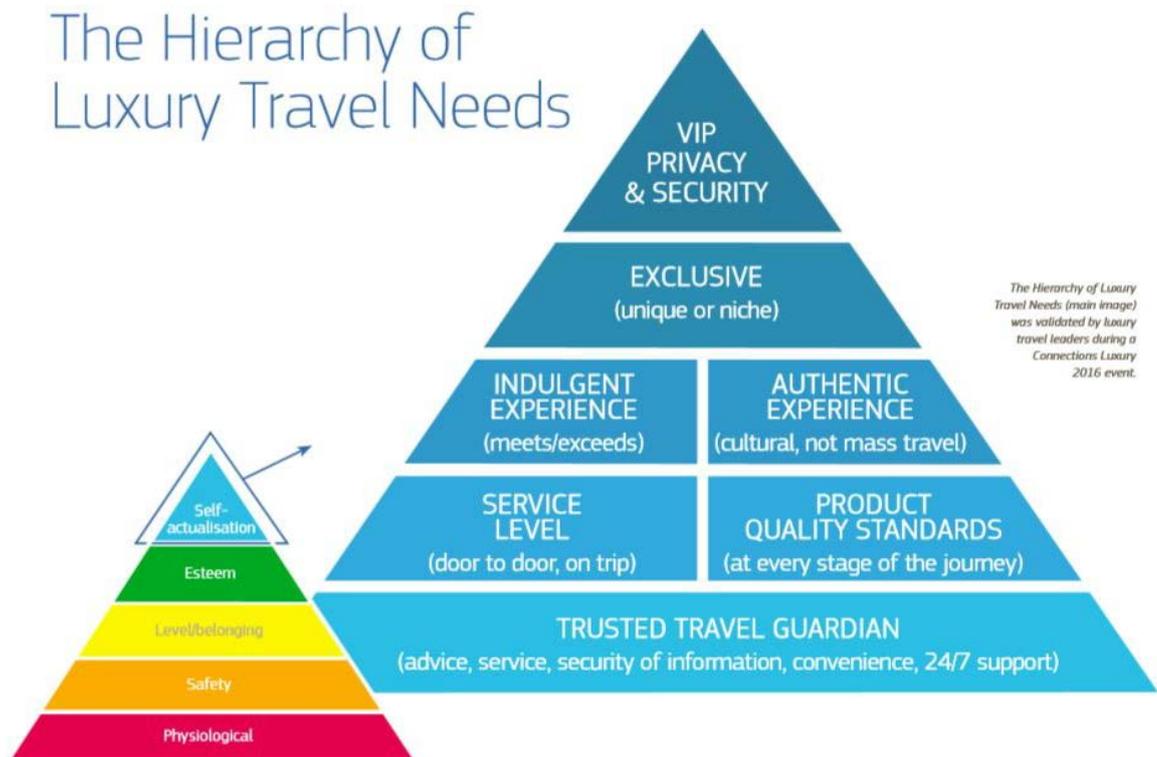


Figure 2. The Hierarchy of Luxury Travel Needs. (Amadeus 2016)

The six segmentations proposed are as follows:

- *Always Luxury*: luxury is part of their daily life, and they will be pursuing the highest level of needs. Thus, VIP levels of security and privacy are what providers should be considered when delivering the tourism services to this tribe.
- *Special Occasion*: for them, luxury travel is a treat rather than a given, and they are more willing to compromise. Thus, suppliers should be more concerned about greater possibilities for disruption to these customers' end-to-end luxury travel experience.
- *Bluxury*: tourism providers which servicing Bluxury travellers need to fulfil their personal leisure needs and create a tailored itinerary which is adaptable to their post-trip feelings.
- *Cash-rich, Time-poor*: suppliers could offer products and services which are more flexible regarding time and schedules to this luxury traveller tribe.
- *Strictly Opulent*: tourism organisations could deliver Strictly Opulent travellers the best and the most rich travel experiences.

- *Independent & Affluent*: tourism suppliers may take care of them and help them choose the best selections for their trip. (Amadeus 2016)

Considering how Amadeus (2016) categorise high-end customers into different segments, it is recognisable that luxurious travellers are being defined not only by their behaviours and objectives but also by their varying levels of economic background. However, since the concept of luxury tourism, as mentioned above, is considered subjective even by industry experts, consequently there is no solid definition for a “high-end” travellers. Ordinary tourists could practice luxurious and tailored trips at some point of their life and thus are seen as potential luxurious travellers.

Through conducting research on demand typologies in tourism, Teodorescu (2009) identifies three primary typologies of tourists that could be distinguished based on their aspirations and wishes for tourism products or vacation destinations. They are as following:

- (1) Tourists whose economic situation cannot affect their decision of tourism experience and destinations. They lie in the category of “luxury” traveller
- (2) “Active” tourists, who have the decent economic means or are seeking resources in order to balance between their financial constraints and their desire for vacation trips.; and
- (3) “Passive” tourists or the “captive” travellers, whose goals for acquiring tourism products do not surpass the limits of their economic conditions.

Evisionturism (2013) demonstrates the results of a survey conducted by Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SHL) in August 2013 on a test group of over 800 clients globally. The research aimed to identify the habits and wishes of luxury tourists, and it indicates that a vast majority has significantly raised the consumption of luxury products in the tourism industry (62%) over the last five-year period.

Lastly, concerning the greatest recent trends exist in luxury tourism, Pedro (2014) summarises the three new tendencies that are appearing in the segment, and they are:

- 1) All brands are keen on travelling – the diffusion of intercontinental markets by tourism luxury brands, irrespective of whether the business is providing products or services
- 2) The growth of ethical trips – a rise in travellers’ concern for the global sustainability, the preservations of the environment along with the commitment to environmentally friendly activities on holidays. Thus, purchasing services from firms with the same value is crucial
- 3) Redefining peer-to-peer – using luxury tourism products and services in groups that are equal from the perspectives of their financial resources, to identify peers who have shared passions and activities that they are accustomed to.

### 3 Marketing in Tourism

Kotler, Bowen, Makens and Baloglu (2017, 30-31) suggested that marketing nowadays plays an increasing role in the tourism industry. They also emphasized that the travel-hospitality industry is one of a few “interdependent” ones, which increases the complexity. It is crucial requirements for the travel industry to have marketing professionals who deeply understand the scenes while being responsive to the evolving needs and behaviours of consumers.

Marketing is defined as the process in which businesses create value for their customers while building and managing strong customer relationships, so as to capture the value in return from their consumers. Figure 3 below illustrates a simplified model of the marketing process:

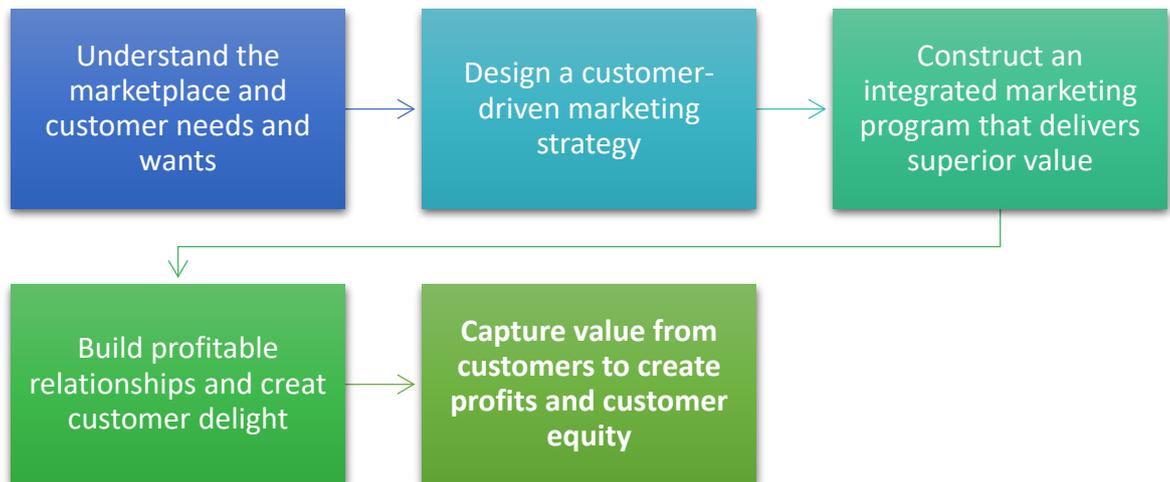


Figure 3. A simple model of the marketing process (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 31)

#### 3.1 Business to Business Marketing in Tourism

Kotler, Bowen, Makens and Baloglu suggested that marketers should have partner relationship management skills, which means they also have to cooperate with suppliers, channel partners, and other businesses outside the company. This leads to the fact that distributors, retailer are also the marketing channels for the business, besides others who connect the firm to its clients. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu, 2017, 42)

The authors also emphasized that although marketing is one of the leading roles in businesses, it separately cannot generate engagements and high-quality values for consumers. Thus, marketing can be only an element in attracting, engaging and expanding consumers. And this could be effective if managers apply partner-relationship management in the firm, in order to form an efficient internal value chain that brings values to the end-users. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu, 2017, 90)

One concept is somewhat known and used in the tourism industry is 'Marketing Intermediaries'. These are the firms that support tourism and hospitality organizations to promote, sell, as well as distributes the products and services to the final buyers. Kotler, Bowen, Makens and Baloglu stated that intermediaries are businesses that help hospitality firms to find customers or selling their goods. They consist of travel agents (TA), wholesale tour operators (TO), hotel representatives, and online travel agencies (OTAs). The authors also claimed that it is integral to recognize the vitality of cooperating with tourism intermediaries as partners, rather than solely channels which they could sell their products and services through. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu, 2017, 112)

### **3.1.1 Approach to Finnish travel agencies and tour operators**

It is wise to claim that the returns on investment of conducting sales and marketing campaign in a new foreign market might not be very rewarding. Especially in the case of EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM, aiming to expand their market to Finland, exhibiting in Matkat Expo (MATKAMESSUT) without foundation seems slightly unrealistic. Hence, the idea of having a co-operative marketing scheme with tourism organisations in Finland could allow the firm to get better visibility to Finnish consumers with the constraints of resources. There are various travel agencies and tour operators based in Finland offering tourism packages to Indochina region. They could be considered as key channels to implement marketing activities and develop the trading cooperation between the commissioner and Finnish tourism services provider. The author would list and briefly describe the most known travel businesses as follows:

Aurinkomatkat oy or Suntours Ltd Ab is the leading outbound Finnish tour operator that not only offers traditional holiday packages but also provides flights, accommodation as well as consults theme travel, tailor-made trips and group travel. The tourism business is a member company of the Finnair Group. It represents numerous official retailers across Finland and has agencies abroad in Estonia and Russia. Suntours Group's turnover in 2013 was 221 million euros. 300 000 people used Aurinkomatkat travel services in 2013. Company's share in Finnish market was 28 percent. However, the company by November

2017 only offer 9 package tours to Vietnam among the three of Indochina countries. (Aurinkomatkat Oy LinkedIn 2017; Aurinkomatkat Oy 2017)

Tjäreborg is a travel agency member of Thomas Cook Group Plc, a leading international tour operator group. The tourism business claims to be the third biggest charter tour operator in Finland, providing travel services for 190000 Finnish consumers annually. Nonetheless, similar to Aurinkomatkat Oy, Cambodia and Laos are not in the list of destinations that the company are selling packages tour to. (Tjäreborg LinkedIn 2017)

CTW Kaleva Travel is known as the most significant business travel agency offering full selections of services in business travel, including events and incentives, and even expertise in leisure travel of Finland. They currently presented in have nine offices and service outlets in 8 different sites in Finland. To achieve the supreme quality leadership in tourism, the business invests heavily in the quality of operations, as well as open to all levels of partnership. CWT Kaleva Travel is owned by CWT (Carlson Wagonlit Travel) and is one of two companies has cooperation with Tourism Authority of Thailand. Similar to other leading operators in Finland, they only offer travel packages to Vietnam in the Indochina region. (CWT Kaleva Travel 2017)

TUI Finland Oy Ab (formerly known as Finnmatkat) is Finland's largest tour operator. According to tui.fi, the tour operator sells approximately 216,000 package tours annually. TUI Finland belongs to the world's largest tourism group TUI. TUI Finland only sells package tours to Vietnam in the three Indochina countries. (TUI Finland 2017)

One of the noticeable common points among these tourism services providers is that the services and products offered include accommodation selections from at least four-star infrastructures. This indicates the regularisation of so-called luxurious accommodation in Finnish tourism concept. Moreover, pre-made packages from Finnish tour operators and travel agencies only consists of the flights to and hotels in Vietnam, without neither activities itinerary, nor products and services in Cambodia and Lao. Regarding tailored tours, there is no information indicating the expertise level of Finland-based travel businesses distributed online.

Another idea has been repeatedly mentioned above is that the concept of luxury tourism is subjective and rather ambiguous even to key player in the industry. Moreover, the Finnish population has their average incomes more than the Vietnamese population 14.6 times in 2016, thus be considered wealthy and able to afford high-end services offered in Vietnam. Consequently, the commissioner does not clearly define the term of "luxurious

traveller”, as any regular Finnish consumer could be one at some point. Since there is no specific market target, the commissioner aims to promote their leading expertise of tailoring luxurious trips as the main service to the general public, including so-called “ordinary” tourists. Consequently, it might be optimum if EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM concentrate and emphasise on endorsing the DMC’s expertise of luxury and tailored tour when building on partnerships with foreign businesses.

## **3.2 Business to Customer Marketing in Tourism**

According to Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2014, 10), marketing has been playing an increasingly crucial role in the tourism industry. It is reasoned by the need of aggressive marketing skills used to win customers in such a highly-competitive environment. Thus, the travel industry marketing requires not only the big-picture visions but also a concrete marketing plan in order to respond to the ever-changing customer needs through creative strategies. This thesis will further examine the 4P + 3P method in the subchapters

### **3.2.1 4P + 3P model**

The service marketing mix is also recognized as an extended marketing mix and is an integral part of a marketing plan design. The original marketing mix, which is more known as 4Ps was proposed by Mc Carthy (1964), consists of Product, Pricing, Promotions and Placement. The service marketing mix comprise of 7P’s is more advanced in comparison with the original 4P’s of a product marketing mix, as it adds 3 more P’s which are required for optimum service delivery. This was suggested by Booms and Bitner (1994), by adding People, Process and Physical evidence to the model as seen in Figure 4.



Figure 4. 7P's Marketing Mix. (professionalacademy.com, 2017).

As defined by Bhasin on Marketing 91 (2016) and Professional Academy (2017), the travel package product created in the previous section would be examined in accordance with this model as follows:

- **Product** - The travel product should be suitable for consumers who seek for a holiday as a combination of luxurious, cultural aspects as well as sight-seeing. Moreover, tailored tour packages are also appropriate to ones who want to have a more flexible itinerary.
- **Place** – The product would be available on the organiser's website, tour-finder websites, as well as available by contacting the tour operator.
- **Price** – The travel product should represent good value for money for customers.
- **Promotion** – Advertising, PR, Sales Promotion, Personal Selling and nowadays, Social Media platforms are all key communication tools for the tourism organisation.
- **People** – People is one of the elements of service marketing mix. Having the right people is for the products and services offered.
- **Processes** – Service process is the way in which a service is delivered to the end customer. The demand for these services is such that organisations have to deliver optimally without a loss in quality. However, tourism products are usually intangible, so this seems to be less relevant.
- **Physical Evidence** – Almost all services include some physical elements even if the bulk of what the consumer is paying for is intangible. However, to create a better customer experience, physical elements are also delivered with the service. For example, physical evidence could be a souvenir as a gift to the customer by a tour operator.

The 7P marketing mix is a fundamental method when creating promotional plan in the tourism and hospitality sector. It is also applicable to the case of luxury tailored tours and

EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM concerning marketing strategy development. For instance, the Product element can be marketed for luxurious tours consumers as such it is not only the core product but augmented by adding peripheral services. Secondly, regarding the Place element, the firm's the distribution strategy should be making their products and services to the high-end consumers be available online whenever and however they prefer. Lastly, the Price part is also crucial for the commissioner when promoting their services. The options are, on the one hand, keep the price level reasonable according to Vietnamese standards, and on the other hand, charging high price and offering additional intangible gains such as sense of high status and extravagance.

### **3.2.2 Traditional promotions plan**

Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2014, 382) proposed that there are five primary promotion tools could be used, including advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing.

Advertising suggests that the advertised product is standard and legitimate, as well as is capable of presenting a message repeatedly to clients (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2014, 398). However, as the tour package is small-scaled and should not be costly, only radio advertising and internet ads should be considered other than traditional print media such as newspaper, flyers and brochures.

Personal selling could be used to some extent. Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2014, 399) claim that this method is applied primarily to large key customers, business to business, travel intermediaries, meeting planners and others with responsibility for group sales.

They also suggest that sales promotions attract consumers' attention and provide information that may lead the clients to buy that product. Thus, sales promotion should be used efficiently in this case with more call-to-action messages to create a stronger and quicker response from the customers.

Public Relations offers believability to customers as new stories, features and events seem to be more real and trustable than ads individually (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2014, 399). As the size of the packaged tour is small, a public relation campaign should be needed.

Direct Marketing, directly as it called, is useful in this case, especially Email marketing and customized ads. Using customers' contact info, special interests or travel history to target

this specific travel package may be effective. This could also be combined with ads by Google, in which internet ads would be shown to customers if they show interests in the tour package's characteristic by searching relevant keywords.

### **3.2.3 Social Media Marketing plan**

Firstly, the main objectives should be identified, along with choosing the Social Media platforms. The main aim is to promote the services and products on social media platforms to not only target customers but also a large group of audience, thus raising the awareness of the brand or company simultaneously.

Social media nowadays have the great reputation to reach a greater amount of population, as well as potential customers. It is a fact that most public relation campaigns are now digital and could be seen on websites or the most common social media platforms, for instance, Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, and for the tourism industry: TripAdvisor. Moreover, social media has significantly shifted to become the mainstream media, especially for tourism consumers of younger ages. Thus, the integration of social media into communications plan is essential, as its undeniable ability to get the message broadcasted to many viewers. (Kotler, Bowen, Makens & Baloglu 2017, 410-411)

## 4 Tourism in Indochina and Eviva Tour Vietnam

In this chapter, the author would describe in details the characteristics of Indochina region destination-wise, as well as including an overview of the commissioner's values and operational details.

### 4.1 Indochina as a Tourist Destination

The Indochina area or 'French Indochina' is a particular part of Southeast Asia, where lie the three nations of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (Cooper 2001). The map of the region is illustrated as seen in Figure 5 below:



Figure 5. The "Indochinese Peninsula" that encompassed modern day Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. (Insider Journeys 2017)

The Insider Journeys (2017) stated that the term "Indochina" is used to refer to a particular region of Southeast Asia, precisely the "Indochinese Peninsula", which is consisted of three countries: Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Adjoined by Burma and Thailand, as well as China on the other side, the Indochina area nowadays is the main part of travellers' trails around this region. However, this Indochina region has been the subject of elaborate political and military struggles, and the name originates from the French colonisation of this part of the world from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. This "colonial

protectorate federation” was formed in 1887, made up of territories ruled by the French during Cambodia, Laos, and the part, which is now modern Vietnam.

In addition, it is said that although the term “Indochina” is still used to refer to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, it is now used less often. However, the term is still well fit travellers who enthusiast for a speciality in these three countries. (Insider Journeys 2017)

Horner and Swarbrooke claim that in some countries in Asia have started to attract foreign visitors in a vast number, and Cambodia is one of the examples. However, they argued that the most magnificent growth rates in international arrivals have been calculated in Vietnam. The explanation is based on the political shift in the country, as well as the wishes by foreign travellers to see Vietnamese culture and heritage attractions. (Horner & Swarbrooke 2016, 27)

## **4.2 Destination Analysis of Indochina**

Some scholars defined destinations as places with some forms of actual or perceived boundary, where tourists travel to. These boundaries could be the physical boundary of an island, political boundaries, or even market-formed boundaries. (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2014, 534.) Boniface, Cooper and Cooper (2016, 8-9) also suggest that the tourist destinations are also called tourist receiving areas. These tourists receiving areas attract travellers to stay for a temporary period, feature characteristics and attractions which visitors cannot find in the tourist-generating areas.

Tourist destinations not only attract tourists, but they also influence the host community as well as the environment (Boniface, Cooper & Cooper, 2016, 9). Thus, it is crucial to analyse the features of destinations in order to develop tourism products and services. The author would be using 3A’s model to measure the market readiness of the destination, which is based on a summary of current accessibility, attractions and amenities.

### **4.2.1 Accessibility**

Tourists need to get to the destinations. It is crucial to provide adequate and cost-effective access, such as a sealed road, an airport, railway line or a harbour, and transport services such as buses, tours, rental cars, etc. (Tourism Western Australia, 2007, 11)

According to [travelfish.org](http://travelfish.org) (2017), Vietnam has two hub international airports, Noi Bai Airport in Hanoi – the capital city of Vietnam, as well as Tan Son Nhat Airport in Ho Chi Minh City of Southern Vietnam. The third airport, called Da Nang Airport is in the middle region of Vietnam, operates a much lesser number of international flights. In addition, there are a dozen domestic airports are located across Vietnam. Meanwhile, Laos has three international airports including Wattay International Airport in the capital city of Vientiane, Luang Prabang International Airport in Luang Prabang and Pakse International Airport in Pakse. And there are two international airports in Cambodia: Phnom Penh International Airport in Phnom Penh the capital, as well as Siem Reap International Airport in Siem Reap.

Tourists who are residing in Finland could select among many flight routes to these three countries of the Indochina area. Flights from Helsinki Vantaa International Airports to international airports in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos usually include one or two transits ([momondo.com](http://momondo.com) 2017). In addition, according to Finnair's announcement on this carrier's official website, Finnair will have direct flights from Helsinki to Ho Chi Minh City in Southern Vietnam, from 29 November 2017 to 25 April 2018, without connections in other airports ([Finnair.com](http://Finnair.com) 2017).

Regarding visas' procedures, any visitor entering Laos must have a valid passport. Visas can be applied from Lao Embassies and Consulates abroad or be obtained on arrival at the international checkpoint. There are four Lao Embassies located in Europe, including The Lao Embassy in Austria, Belgium, France and Moscow. ([tourismlaos.org](http://tourismlaos.org) 2017). Furthermore, a valid passport is required to enter the Kingdom of Cambodia. As instructed on [tourismcambodia.com](http://tourismcambodia.com) (2017), Finnish visitors, visas are obtainable upon arrival at both Phnom Penh or Siem Reap International Airports in Phnom Penh, and Siem Reap and especially, tourists also can obtain a visa through the online E-Visa. Concerning Vietnam visas, it is rather easy for Finnish travellers who wish to visit this Indochina country, as Finnish citizens are exempted from obtaining a visa if the duration of stay is less than 15 days ([lanhsuvietnam.gov.vn](http://lanhsuvietnam.gov.vn) 2017). Moreover, it is able to apply for a visa on arrival, or e-visa, without having to obtain directly from the embassy ([visa.mofa.gov.vn](http://visa.mofa.gov.vn) 2017).

#### **4.2.2 Attractions**

Visitors also seek activities and attractions at destinations. These may include trekking, biking, fishing, swimming, boating, skydiving and food tasting as well as passive activities, for example, going on a camping, photographing or retreat activities. Some of these activities may themselves be attractions for some visitors. (Tourism Western Australia, 2007, 11.) Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2014, 543) also suggest that attractions may be natural

or manufactured. Boniface, Cooper and Cooper (2016, 54) also classified attractions into four categories: natural, manmade, and purpose-built to attract visitors, special events or event attractions.

Located on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia, Vietnam is a tropical, enchanting landscape of over 3000 kilometres coastline, primitive and magnificent jungles, caves, charming falls, dynamic cities, distinctive culture and exquisite cuisines. With over 4000 years of history, Vietnam has its own unique cultural identity along with world-famous ancient natural and architectural wonders. Visitors could visit the majestic mountainous north with the charming villages of the ethnic minorities, the central coastline with stunning many beaches, fresh seafood and a selection of water-based activities. They could moreover experience the ancient town of Hoi An with the old quarters, as well buildings from the colonial-era and Hue's imperial citadel by the stunning Perfume River or the colourful floating markets on the Mekong Delta. Vietnam is known as an exciting mix of adventure and culture. (Evivatour 2017b; Lonely Planet 2017a)

Laos has the reputation to be the pristine country in Southeast Asia. The charms of Lao seem to be unknown from the outside world, and its beauty lies in the entire culture, traditions and heritage. The graceful landscapes and quite possibly the most chilled-out locals in the world. Visitors to Laos could get away from the modern stresses and their day-to-day life while once in a lifetime, by living an unusual laid-back lifestyle. The serene riverfront capital city of Vientiane is celebrated for its delightful rustic life while the noteworthy imperial city of Luang Prabang is a hallowed place where saffron-robed priests are spending their lives in old religious communities. Far from the city life, there is a lot more to see; the tree-loaded piles of Northern Laos, the charming limestone karsts in Vang Vieng, which built up itself as the exemption to the decision that Laos does not have a nightlife. Moreover, in the further south, past the market town Pakse, is Si Phan Don (Four Thousand Islands), where the Mekong spreads out, and all the hammocks are taken. As the country opens up, the tourist map is expanding, making the previously hidden treasures of Laos more accessible to travellers seeking far to the end of the road less travelled. (Evivatour 2017c; Lonely Planet 2017b)

Situated in the core of Southeast Asia, Cambodia is a world unto itself. Visit Cambodia common excellence, and rich legacy keeps on knocking one's socks off with its monstrous hundreds of years old sanctuary edifices, different untamed life, old tropical rainforests, incredibly unblemished shorelines, pleasant rustic scenes and delightful urban life. The

capital and biggest city of Phnom Penh has great pilgrim exteriors continue close by sparkling new diners, brilliant spired pagodas, and clamouring markets. Siem Reap emerges as an absolute necessity to visit the city in Asia with the inheritance of the huge Angkor sanctuary complex. Known as one of the planet's most seasoned and most great fortunes, the acclaimed Angkor is joined by the charming countenances of the Bayon, the delicate pink sandstone and outstanding carvings of Banteay Srei, wilderness secured Ta Prohm sanctuaries and more than one thousand sanctuaries scattered around the woods. Guests are captivated by the mood of town life and ageless scenes of sparkling rice paddies and influencing sugar palms in Cambodia. (Evivatour 2017d; Lonely Planet 2017c)

### 4.2.3 Amenities

Visitors need amenities at and on the way to destinations and near iconic attractions and experiences and their accommodation. These include shops, restaurants and cafes, public transport, tourist information outlets and public toilets. (Tourism Western Australia, 2007, 11.) The table 2 below summarizes as well as compares the features and characteristics regarding amenities matters in the three countries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Table 2. Summary of tourism elements in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia

	Vietnam	Laos	Cambodia
<b>Product and Services</b>	The range of tourism products and services in Vietnam is rather boundless. Vietnam could be the destination for both city and beach break, for natural, cultural and heritage tours, as well as exotic tours such as adventurous or dark tourism. The country has resourceful amenities when it comes to hospitality services,	Laos has the reputation to be a destination that suitable for natural, cultural and heritage tourism. Since Laos do not have any coastline, beach break tours are not available. However, city break tours are possible in cities like Vientiane or Luang Prabang.	Cambodia is the destination for ones who are interested in heritage and cultural tours, as well as nature and sightseeing tours. The most common cities to visit in Cambodia are Siem Reap, Phnom Penh and the beach town of Sihanoukville.

	especially in touristic destinations.		
<b>Price</b>	Surprisingly, according to Expatistan's (2017) comparison tool, the cost of living in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city of Vietnam is about 30 percent cheaper than Laos' capital Vientiane, and over 20 percent less costly than Siem Reap of Cambodia. Thus, regardless that Vietnam is ranked way higher than the other Indochina countries in the Human Development Index, the price element in Vietnam is way cheaper.		
<b>Accessibility</b>	As mentioned in the previous chapter, the country has the easiest accessibility, especially for Finnish citizens, is Vietnam. Cambodia comes second as the country has two international airports and the online visa system, and Laos places last since the more traditional way of getting a visa.		
<b>Luxurious accommodations</b>	According to a search on Booking.com (2017), Vietnam has 812 properties ranked from 4 to 5 stars available. Moreover, international luxury hotel chains of IHG, Hilton, Marriot, and Sofitel or so on have been in Vietnam for a long time. Moreover, the 6-star hotel named The Reverie Saigon in Ho Chi Minh city is ranked fourth best in the world (VnExpress 2017).	Using the similar search on Booking.com (2017), Laos only offer luxurious 76 properties from 4 stars and above on this platform. However, there are still some international chains in Laos such as Sofitel or Crown Plaza of IHG.	493 luxurious accommodations were found by the same search on Booking.com (2017), which is rated equal to or higher than 4 stars. InterContinental and Sofitel hotels are also operating in Cambodia, especially in the capital city of Phnom Penh.
<b>Other luxurious services</b>	Luxurious transportation is available in Vietnam, particularly luxurious cruises and yachts. Other than	Private transportation using modern and high-end models are available in	Luxurious cruise lines, as well as modern private means of transportation, could

	<p>that, private transportation using modern and high-end models are also available. Luxurious activities and experiences for example spas or fine-dining restaurants are fully offered.</p>	<p>cities such as Vientiane. Luxurious activities and experiences in tourism of spas or gourmet restaurants are available.</p>	<p>be found in Cambodia. Other luxurious experiences and activities like gourmet dinners or spas are accessible in major cities and tourist destinations.</p>
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### 4.3 EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM

EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM – an Indochina local Destination Management Company specialized in high-end, luxury and specialized tours, which are considering to enter the Finnish market. EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM (EVIVA), established in 2004, is a destination management company specialized in luxury high-quality tailor-made tours in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. (Evivatour 2017a)

As stated on their official website [www.evivatour.com](http://www.evivatour.com), the company’s vision and the objective are to be the leading Destination Management Company (DMC) in Vietnam for their travel service quality. The slogan of the firm, as illustrated in Figure x below, is “Smile every mile”. The explanation for EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM’s motto is that customer satisfaction is the top concern for this business, as they claimed on the website: “We listen to you carefully from the 0 miles you make from your country and every and every MILE you make your trip. We have and will be spending endless efforts to make you SMILE happily until you are back safely and satisfactorily to your country”. The company also express their concerns about strict customers’ comments and feedback, as well as a solution for continuously improving. (Evivatour 2017a)



Figure 6. Summary of Eviva Tour Vietnam (evivatour.com 2017)

It is also worth mentioning the three core values in EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM's working culture: Local Expert, Warm and Caring, as well as Responsible, and these are illustrated in the Figure below. Warm and caring is how the customer services operate, the firm requires their staff to treat customers with not only friendliness but also considerations. The company also owns the local expertise, in terms of their business coverage in the Indo-china area. Thus, EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM's products vary from high-end, luxury and tailored specialized tours with characteristics of authenticity to off-the-beaten-track and community-based travel (the most experience with local community). In Vietnam, quality control is always a concern that EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM has been investing in by inspection, reviews the suppliers, so as to meet and even over-satisfy the expectations from their customers. (Evivatour 2017a)



Figure 7. The core values of Eviva Tour Vietnam. (evivatour.com 2017)

Lastly, being responsible is also taken into considerations in operational procedures of this destination management company. EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM is currently holding the president position of Vietnam Responsible Travel Club [www.rtcvietnam.org](http://www.rtcvietnam.org), as they aware of the sustainable and responsible development of Vietnam tourism. Besides that, EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM has green office, responsible products, CSR activities, community development work. (Evivatour 2017a)

#### **4.3.1 Partnerships and Memberships**

EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM is an official member in Vietnam Chapter of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is a not-for-profit association founded in 1951 that is universally acclaimed for performing as a catalyst for the responsible growth of tourism and travel industry to, from and within the region of Asia Pacific. PATA offers aligned advocacy, as well as insightful research and events to member organizations as illustrated in Figure 8. below, including 95 government, state and city tourism organizations, 29 international airlines, airports and cruise lines along with 63 educational institutions, and hundreds of travel industry companies in Asia Pacific. Being a member also means that EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM is eligible to post special offers in the PATA Market Place. (PATA 2017, Evivatour 2017a)



Figure 8. PATA region. (PATA 2017)

Moreover, EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM is also known as an active member of Vietnam Tourism Association (VITA) and as mentioned in the previous subchapter, the current president of The Responsible Travel Club of Vietnam (RTC). The memberships benefit the company plenty of networking and partnership opportunities for the company. (Evivatour 2017a)

Besides these memberships, EVIVA TOUR has preferred partnerships with the most known, luxurious hotels and resorts, as well as cruise lines, gourmet restaurants to more budget accommodations and transportations. This would guarantee their clients' accessibilities to exclusive value and added perks, such as complimentary room upgrades in hotels, at their partners' properties (Evivatour 2017).

#### 4.3.2 Operational Details, Products and Services

The team of EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM consists of travel experts, not from only Vietnam but also interns from France, Korea, Italian or Taiwan and so on. The main departments are Administration, Sales department comprising of Visa services team and Tour sales and consulting teams, as well as a Marketing team. Being visa services consultant and travel professionals, they aim to provide clients with outstanding tailored customer services.

Moreover, even though there are a separate marketing team and a marketing manager at EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM, everyone is accountable for promoting his or her own services. Moreover, there is an IT specialist supports with e-marketing: dealing with promotions on email marketing and websites development, on which touchpoints the destination management company are interacting most effectively with current and potential customers and partners. The Director of the company is Mister Chu Dinh Cuong, who is in charge of general managing and directing EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM, as well as strategically increase the revenues gained. Miss Nguyen Thuy Duong is the Vice Director of the company, who is responsible for business networking and marketing activities; she is as well the President of Responsible Travel Club in Vietnam. One of the key positions in EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM is Sales Manager, and Miss Nguyen Bach Duong has played this crucial role in managing sales activities in visa operations to tour sales at Eviva Tour Vietnam. Moreover, Miss Nguyen Bach Duong also the one who brings EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM to international tourism fairs such as ITB Berlin, TTI Italy, TITE in Iran or TUR in Gothenburg, Sweden. (Eviatour.com 2017e). The figure 9 below captured from the official website illustrates their aim to introduce the EVIVA team to potential clients and partners:

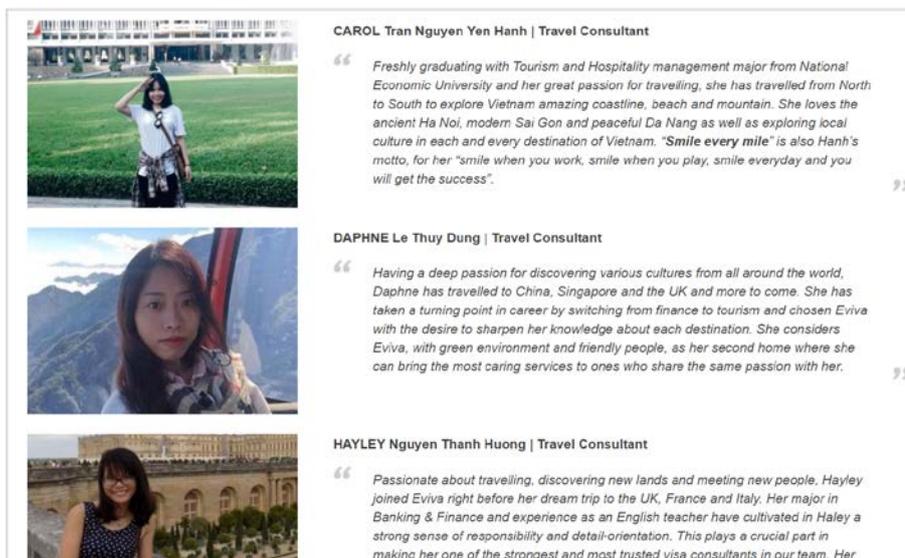


Figure 9. EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM's "Our Team" subpage on the official website (Eviatour 2017e)

Based on the author's previous experiences and observations at EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM, the organizational culture at EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM is not only professional, but also very friendly, and encouraging to efficient work. There are both permanent full-time employees, part-time workers as well as interns who came to learn about the travel industry in this organization. The fixed working hours for full-time workers are from 8:00 to 17:30, with an hour of lunch break.

Having the interview with EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM's representative, the customers' segment the DMC is targeting and working with was defined as a high-end class, aged as over thirty years old, having time and inspiration to luxury travel. They also focus more on selling to and negotiating with the person who has the 'decision-maker' role when purchasing. The target market varies annually; however, besides focusing on promoting their services to potential European clients, EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM is expanding their market to the Middle East region, especially after exhibiting in the TITE 2017 Tourism fair in Iran.

EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM owns two offices in the two most populated cities of Vietnam: the main one is located in the heart of Hanoi – Vietnam's capital city, while the other is Ho Chi Minh City - the focal point of the Southern region. The company does not have representatives in Laos and Cambodia, but often go on investigations as well as attend meetings with their partners in the two countries. In the company profile, they claim that the company has more than 10 years of experiences as a local Destination Management Company in Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao and it is known as a prestige and trustworthy logistics provider for overseas tour operators and travel agencies. The figure below presents some both domestic and international cooperate clients of EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM:



Figure 11. Cooperate clients of EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM

Regarding operational procedures, travel consultants work closely with the clients and thus, tailor the trips to meet and to exceed expectations from the buyers. Besides consulting the trips, EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM tour sales also handle direct bookings through the hotels and resorts, and other facilities. It is worth noticing that EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM mostly collaborate with and using services of superior and sustainable suppliers, which the staff spend time on inspecting and assessing quality regularly.

Figure 10. EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM Tour request form. (Evivatour 2017f)

As online customers' requests are the most frequent approach, their potential buyers reach EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM. Tour sales team are typically contacted by emails or the tour request form on evivatour.com official website as illustrated in Figure 10 above. The requests are then promptly taken care of and respond within a reasonable time period. After that, one person is appointed by the team to specifically to reach out to the customer, in order to discover the preferences of the client, as well as to discuss all the possible details on the inquired services. Until everything is set, the tour consultant would organize the tailored trips by their interest and send written descriptive signed confirmations to the customer along with payment method details.

In addition to luxury and tailored tour specialisation, Eviva Tour Vietnam as well offer trips categorised by experiences. According to their website, the destination management company provides a wide range of niche tourism services such as Beaches, Tours, Culture, Family, Golf, Honeymoon or Luxury. EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM does not simply act as the intermediary channel between suppliers and consumers. More precisely, although the firm has built strategic partnerships with numerous tourism services providers of accommodations, transportations and restaurants, EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM aims to match the suitable suppliers accordingly to tourists' interests, rather than trying to sell all the options.

## 5 Research Methodology

Syrakaya-Turk and Uysal (2011, 7) suggest that research in leisure, recreation and tourism means a process by which new information and knowledge are produced to answer questions which are valuable and beneficial for the planned purposes in a planned and systematic way that is free from personal bias. In addition, the research process is simplified and illustrated in Figure 11 below:

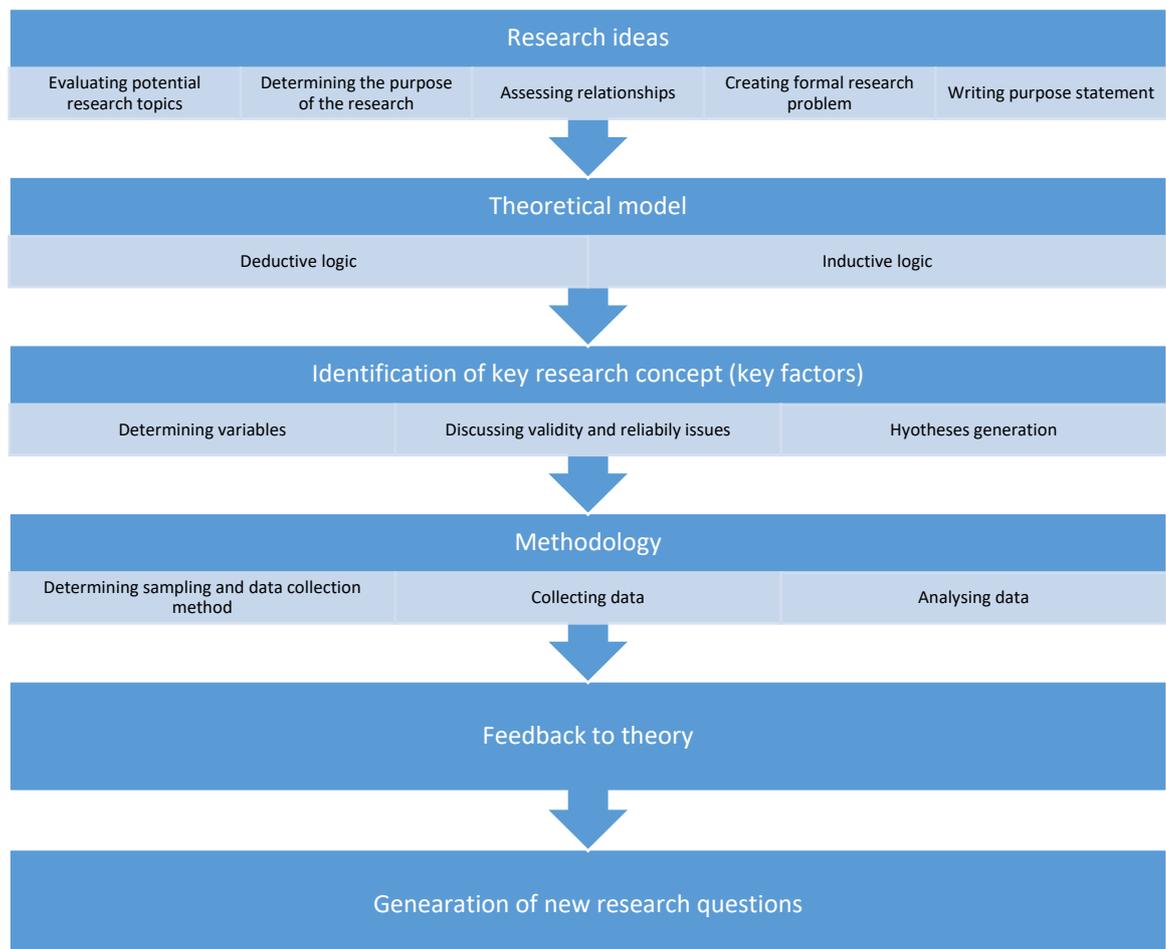


Figure 12. Leisure, recreation and tourism research process (Syrakaya-Turk & Uysal 2011, 8)

### 5.1 Research Design

In this chapter, the author shall explain in details how the research is designed to serve the thesis' purposes and meet the established objectives.

### 5.1.1 Quantitative and Survey Research

Quantitative research is regarded as a common method when conducting studies specifically in the tourism industry, often used under the form of survey research. Ruddell (2011, 115) claims that quantitative research focuses on differences represented by the quantity and often expressed as a variance. Lesley Andres concludes that there exist two main types of survey research, and the scale is the main criteria to distinguish them. National censuses, opinion polls or research projects which are carried out by institutions with many resources financially and database-wise lie in the larger-scale survey's category. Smaller scale surveys are often conducted by schools, hospitals and other organizations, as well as individual researchers. The aim of the smaller-scaled surveys is to gather facts about, or studying about the demographic features, behaviours of a specifically targeted group. (Andres 2012, 1)

There have been many literatures which define what actually is 'survey research', such as Converse (1987, 19) describes it as the idea of conducting a broad 'overview' or in other words, are 'comprehensive vision of the whole', by examining in details with 'the more, the better' of respondents. However, the definitions have evolved and narrowed down, while still comprehended these characteristics:

- (1) Data collection is processed in the field, not in a laboratory setting
- (2) Data collected are organized by individual record, regardless of the multiple methods of gathering data on the individual
- (3) By either measuring or calculating selectively or all of the information gathered, the value or extent of the phenomena under the study should be established

In short, it is "a patchwork of different kinds of data, collected by different means and processed in different ways" (Converse 1987, 33). (Andres 2012, 9)

Meanwhile, Fowler believes that the purpose of surveys is to generate statistics and figures; and that are quantitative or numerical descriptions of some aspects of a study (Fowler, 2009). On the other hand, Dillman argues that ample surveys are usually used in researches to estimate 'the distribution' of characteristics' in a demographic group (Dillman 2000, 9). To other authors, the root of a sample survey is believed to be the 'discipline of statistics' and the final objective of survey researches are to allow the conductors to conclude, summarize and generalize about a general population only by examining the smaller portion of it (Rea & Parker 2005, xii, 4).

Sirakya-Turk and Uysal define an internet survey as a self-administered questionnaire published on websites then answered interactively. Meanwhile, Andres (2012) defined the

format of self-administered survey begins with the respondent answering the survey unaided by researchers. The benefits of this survey format are, for example, the respondents could be more reflective and thoughtful, as they can complete the questionnaire at their own pace. Thus, better accuracy and more qualified information reported. Moreover, self-administered surveys can be included with visualized materials like charts or figures and could be structured with complex categories. (Sirakya-Turk & Uysal 2011, 105; Andres 2012, 47)

It is as well emphasized that the popularity of online surveys has significantly raised over the recent years. Academics conclude that the advancements in information technology along with applications allow researchers to communicate with their research subject. This could be explained by the increasing number of smartphones and internet users, as well as the surveys made to be friendly with the user interface, leading to the limitless possibilities of reaching the broader audiences on the internet. Despite the rapid evolution, the technology for online surveys is in its development. (Andres 2012, 51; Sirakya-Turk & Uysal 2011, 104)

Also, online surveys are divided into two categories: email surveys and web surveys (Andres 2012, 51). The author would be using web surveys when conducting the research so that she would only explain the pros and cons of the web survey format. Authors argue that one of the most considerable advantages of web surveys is their speed and cost-effectiveness, as many types of research conducted imply that the respondents would reply to the online surveys within 48 hours, Visual appeal and interactivity of a self-ministered survey may encourage respondents to cooperate and willing to complete the questionnaire. Nevertheless, online surveys increase the uncertainty over the validity of the data and sampling matters, demographic issues, as well as survey's design concerns, implementation and evaluation of the questionnaire. More precisely, the main drawback of internet surveys lies in the aspect of sample representation. (Sirakya-Turk & Uysal 2011, 104-105).

Zikmund (2008) concludes that the nature of the population to be studied, the objectives of the research as well as sampling methods are crucial when evaluating the quality of Internet samples. It is also mentioned by Sirakua-Turk and Uysal that if a questionnaire is created and made available to any internet user who is willing to fill in the answers, is not likely to be representative of the study population (Sirakya-Turk & Uysal 2011, 105).

### **5.1.2 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research focuses on descriptions based on kind, rather than in quantity. In other words, qualitative research is based on words while quantitative research is based on numbers. This research method emphasizes the essentialness of preserving context, of focusing on the participant's points of view and providing a rich description. (Ruddell, 2011)

Qualitative research aims to provide a simple understanding of a particular phenomenon and to describe the researched topic in-depth often by giving answers to the questions what, why and how (Silverman 2011, 17). According to Silverman (2011, 42-43) the four primary methods used in qualitative research are: 1) observation, 2) analysing texts and documents, 3) in-depth interviews and focus groups, and 4) audio and video recording. The specific methods tend to be usually combined and as well can be optimized for quantitative research.

### **5.2 Survey Construction and Data Collection**

One of the data collection methods would be used to conduct the thesis is the questionnaire. The author planned to distribute the survey during the period from the beginning of August to the end of October and to collect at least 100 anonymous answers from Finnish citizens - the target respondent group of the questionnaire. The content of the survey is structured base on the four research questions proposed from the beginning of the thesis. Moreover, the author had a meeting with the commissioner and created the questions under the supervisions of the Marketing Manager of Eviva Tour Vietnam. The full questionnaire in details can be found in the appendix section of the thesis, consists of four main parts as follows:

- (1) Who are the Finnish consumers of luxury tours?
- (2) Finnish luxury traveller's behaviours
- (3) Travel motivations of Finnish consumers
- (4) Practical ways to market Indochina luxury and tailored tours to Finnish consumers

The author has designed the surveys in accordance with principles suggested by Lesley Andres (2012, 66-68). Firstly, the questions asked should be answerable by the respondents while creating valuable results for the research. Secondly, each question would only contain a single thought or idea in order to avoid confusing the surveyors and to simplify the analysing process. Moreover, the wording and phrasing step of creating survey question should be taken into consideration by using simple language, as well as avoiding technical vocabulary to enhance the audience's comprehensibility. Lastly, explanations on

how to answer the survey questions would also be included in the questionnaire. (Andres 2012, 66-68)

There are different types of questions used in the survey, for instance, dichotomous closed-ended question with unordered response category option or ranking scale question in which respondents are asked to rank from “Least important” to “Most important”, the factors they consider when choosing to use services from a travel agency or tour operator. This serves the purpose of entirely covering the research questions, as well as varies the format of the questionnaire. (Andres 2012, 69-81)

After designing the questions, the layout, formatting, as well as design of the survey, would be processed. The author utilized Google Form in order to create the questionnaire after arranging the questions in different parts with a logical order, proofreading to elude technical mistakes, as well as adding illustration images to the survey. The questionnaire is distributed online as a Google Forms’ document. Afterward, it is then shared in Finnish traveller groups on Facebook such as the “Nordic Travel & Lifestyle” group with almost 9000 members, and to the author’s social circle connections. The author did not aim to distribute the questionnaire exclusively to a target group of wealthy individuals from high-end society but to share to any Finnish traveller. This is not only because of the limited access to this group’s contacts, but the main reason is that any ordinary tourist could be a potential luxurious traveller as emphasised in chapter 2. The more reach to respondents acquired, the more insights the author could collect in order to have an overview of Finnish citizens’ behaviours toward luxurious tourism in Indochina.

### **5.3 Data Analysis**

Betty Swift (2006) argues that preparing numerical data - the process of altering “raw” data into variables that can be analysed to generate information found in the results, is the essential first step, as it always involves exploration of data’s characteristics and structures. Moreover, it is considered wise to look ahead to the data analysis process to enhance the potentials for achieving the objectives of the research. Swift also believes that an appropriate approach for an academic paper is to work towards shifting the raw data into scales that summarize it, rather than hypothesis testing. (Swift 2006, 153-155)

Swift as well claims that structured questionnaires produce data that could be handled by a similar method for all cases. Since the questions asked to respondents are exactly the same and in a precise order, raw data could be transformed into scores or categorized accordingly. The closed-questions are considered relatively unproblematic at the stage of

pre-analysis, as the figures could be entered directly into the database. In the same way, open-ended questions could be reduced to numerical information in principle. (Swift 2006, 159)

Baloglu and Usakli also declare that once the data collection progress is finished, it must be arranged and summarized before the information they cover could be easily understood. Moreover, the two elementary methods for describing datasets are graphical and numerical. Both ways have integral impacts on statistics, and they should be combined to enhance the recognition of the data set's description. (Baloglu & Usakli 2011, 191; McClave 2008)

Andereck explains that inferential analysis of data allows the researcher to generalize the data from the sample to the large population. As a research usually applied the examination in a definite number of individuals, the assumption that the information from the sample represents the entire population is made. (Andereck 2011, 213-214)

Regarding extracting and presenting statistics, Sapsford claims that although actual figures may be valuable for planning purposes, it is easier to interpret and compare when they are converted to percentages. More precisely, he describes the presentation of numerical data equals to demonstrating the statistics, which are conveyable into the desired results in an effortlessly legible format. In addition to that, the author should also provide adequate information for the audience to check the number, as well as to draw deduction from them easily. One of illustrating numerical data is to turn them into graphs. There are many variants of this graphical presentation of data, but the most common types such as bar graph, histogram, line graph and pie chart. Thus, the characteristics of the data determine which type of graph is one that best illustrates the figures. (Sapsford 2006, 184-204, Andereck 2011, 213-214)

#### **5.4 Validity and Reliability**

Andres (2012) defines the worth, which is also known as "the truth value" of research by four words: 'validity', 'trustworthiness', 'goodness' and 'soundness'. The criteria of the validity and trustworthy of the data collected in a quantitative research are also considered as follows:

- (1) It could generate information, which answers the proposed research questions made by the author
- (2) It precisely illustrates the sample or population approaching

(3) If applicable, could be reached out to individuals outside the participants of the research.

Andres also addresses the significance of the external validity – the extent to which a research's results of a sample of respondents can be generalized beyond the study sample to its inferential populace. The generalizability is indeed integral, as it is the magnificent objective that targets to take the results of a sole research conducted, then assert the findings are applicable to other individuals, contexts and temporal periods. (Andres 2012, 115-119)

Simply put, reliability denotes the extent to which the results of research can be replicated. Firstly, the measures used in the questionnaire are obligated to be designed in an unambiguous method, to guarantee that the respondent would answer the item in a similar way if requested to repeat the exercise. Furthermore, the reliability of research conducted also implies the extent to which a study could be replicated with the same samples and in the same conditions to generate the same findings. Hence, if similar tendencies in the results could be concluded, the measures and methods applied could be considered reliable. (Andres 2012, 122-123)

All in all, the questionnaire has successfully collected 103 responds from Finnish citizens during the active period. Accordingly, the number of respondents recorded was  $N = 103$ .

## 6 Key results and Findings

In this chapter, the data collected by the questionnaire would be analysed, summarized. The author would also deduct key outtakes from the information gathered.

### 6.1 Survey results

In order to conduct the research, the author has distributed a questionnaire online, as well as sent to personal contacts. Thus, the number of responses received is 103 forms and are filled by Finnish citizens. The questionnaire was designed and structured for the respondents to answer openly about their travel behaviours, and the idea of luxury tourism as a concept. The author would briefly summarize the key findings from each question below, in accordance with the sections divided. Moreover, the open-ended answers from the survey's respondents are enclosed in the appendix as an attachment for further references.

The survey is not specifically aim to any target group defined by their earning or age, but meant to be distributed to any Finnish citizen. This is because of the mentioned-previously idea that any regular Finn with average incomes is considered a potential consumer of the high-end services offered by the commissioner.

### 6.2 Defining the segment of Finnish Luxury Travellers

#### *1. Who are the Finnish consumers of luxury tours?*

In the first part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked some demographic questions, for instance, their age group and gender. There was 41.7 percent of surveyors belong to the "less than 25" age group, 36.9 percent were between 25 and 39 years old, and 18.4 percent were between 40 and 55, while only 2.9 percent were older than 55. The dominance of younger respondents could be explained by the online distribution method, as well as the social circle of the author. Moreover, 52.4 percent of people who answered the questionnaire were female, 39.8 percent were male, and the rest were identified as "other". Figure 12 below illustrates the age group of the questionnaire's participants:

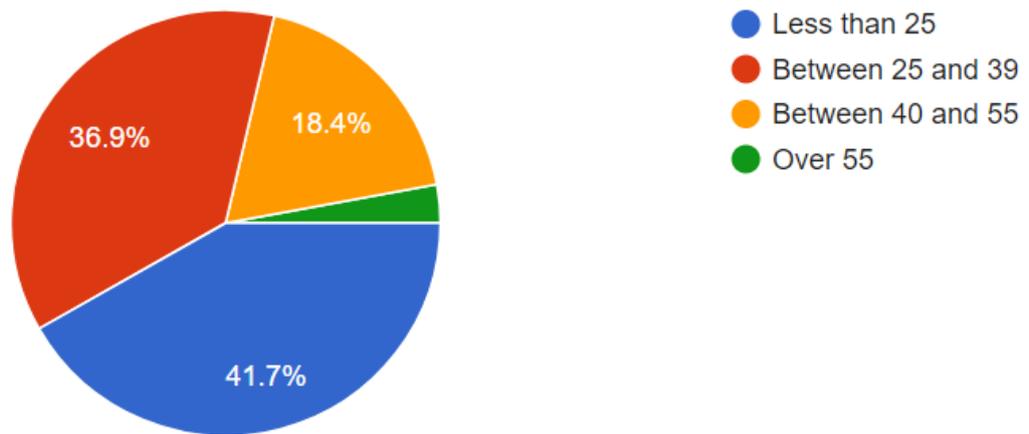


Figure 13. Age groups of respondents N=103

After that, the respondents were asked about their yearly income level. Most of the people who took the questionnaire have their income lies between 20000 and 40000 euros, as they accounted for 52.4 percent of 103 respondents. 26.2 percent and 15.5 percent of the total have wages below 20000 euros yearly, or over 40000 euros, respectively. Only six people (5.8 percent) prefer not to share their annual earnings. The next questions asked were how much the respondent is willing to spend on travelling per year. There are many variants in the answers as shown in figure 13 below:

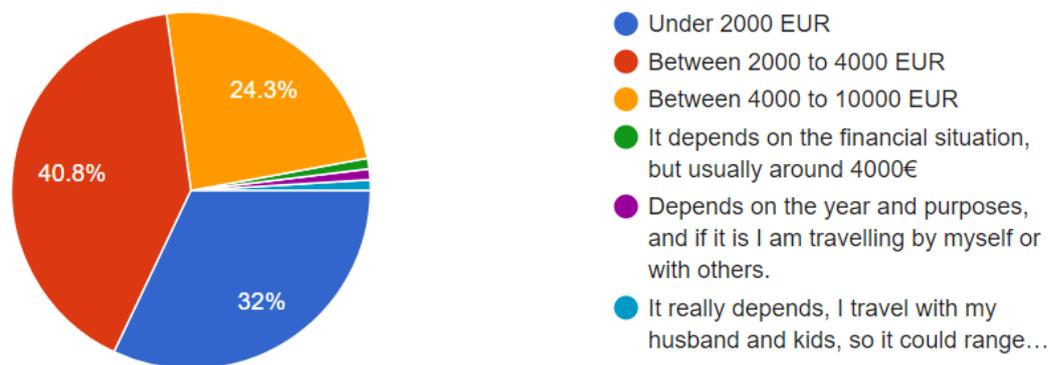


Figure 14. Respondents' travel budget annually N=103

Besides ones who selected pre-made choices, some stated that it varies yearly, depending on the financial situation, purposes of travelling, as well as if they are travelling independently or with friends and family.

The last question of this part is to find out how participants organize their trips. Thirty-four percent plan their own itinerary, which could be reasoned by the distribution of thesis questionnaire to many people who have tourism background. Nonetheless, 31.1 percent reported using services of Finnish travel agencies and tour operators, while 29.1 percent selected local travel agencies were they are going to visit. Other opinions mainly claim that the destination (whether it is long-haul or near location), type of trips (backpacking, road trip or beach break), and if they travel alone or with companies.

### 6.3 Finns' behaviours in Luxury and Tailored Tours in Indochina

#### *II. Finnish luxury traveller's behaviours:*

In this section, questions were asked, aiming to discover Finnish travellers' behaviours towards luxury and tailored tours, as well as their interests in travelling to Indochina region. Firstly, respondents were asked how much they are willing to pay for a luxury or customized tour. Most selected a budget range from 1000 to 2000 euros, accounting for 43.7 percent of the whole. 27.2 percent thought an amount between 2000 and 5000 euros is suitable for a luxury and customized tour, while 22.3 percent believed a budget of and under 1000 euros seems appropriate for them. Seven people equal to 6.8 percent of 103 respondents were willing to pay over 5000 euros for a high-end trip. The figure 14 below shows a pie chart that represents the data collected from this question:

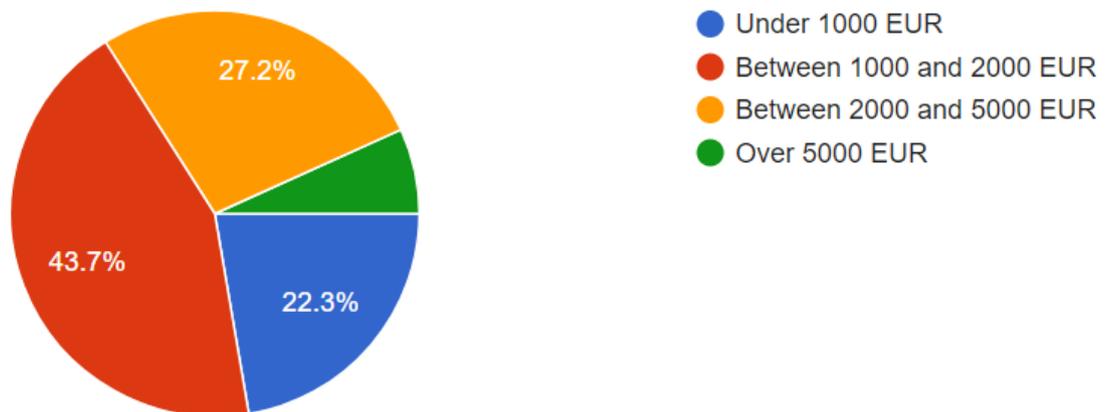


Figure 15. Respondents' budget on a luxury and customized tour. N = 103

Additionally, the frequency of travel activities of the surveyed was also questioned. Surprisingly, none of the respondents selected the option of "never". 50.5 percent of them practice travelling a few times per year, and 39.8 percent only travel once a year or less. There were only 10 respondents, which means 9.7 percent of total often travel monthly. Thus, the results from this question verify that Finns are familiar with and keen on travel

activities. After that, their interests in travelling to Vietnam, Lao and Cambodia were tackled. There were 60.2 percent, thought that having a trip to this region is fascinating and consideration-worthy, while 22.3 percent have travelled to Indochina and would love to come back. However, there is 11.7 percent have been to at least one of the three countries but were not planning to re-visit, and 5.8 percent were not intrigued. The outcomes appear to be appealing, as most of the respondents considered Indochina region as an attractive destination.

Moreover, the idea and concept of high-end travelling were also looked at in this section, as the answerers were asked as if they were going on a luxury and tailored tour. Firstly, the question that “How many people would you travel with, in a luxury and tailored tour?” was given, and the major of them, 68.9 percent selected that they might be high-end travel in a group of 2 to 5 people. In addition, the rest of the data is illustrated as in the pie chart below:

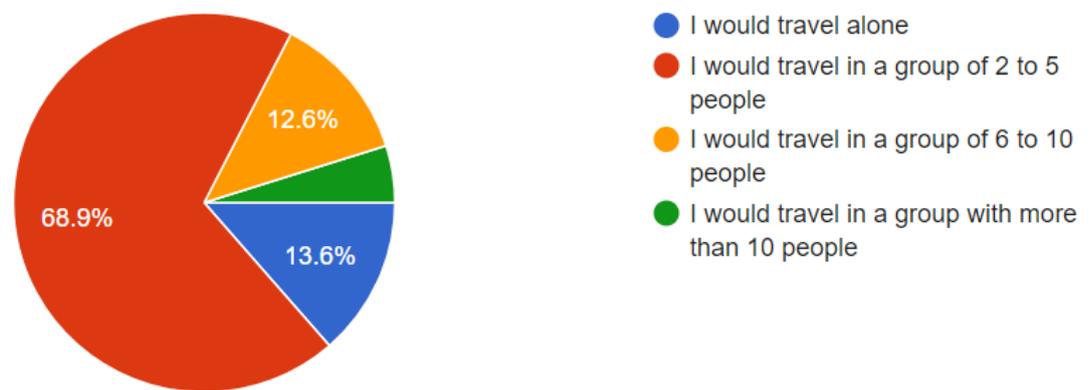


Figure 16. Respondent’s desirable number of members on a luxury trip. N = 103

Subsequently, the type of accommodations and transportation the respondents would rather have a luxury and tailored tour were inquired. While the gap is rather minor between the number of people who would like to stay at private luxury villas or homestays and 4 to 5-star hotels or resorts, respectively of 44.7 and 41.7 percent, luxury cruises were the selection of 10.7 percent of the respondents. Regarding the decision of accommodation type, there were some people wrote in the open-ended space that it somehow depends on the destinations and the people they travel with, and nowadays traveller might search for great accommodation on Airbnb.

On the other hand, concerning the means of transportation, which respondents preferred to have in a luxury and tailored tour, the majority chose to travel by private transportation of 63.1 percent. Public transportation came as the second choice, with 18.4 percent of votes and only 12.6 percent of the respondents would rather share their transportation.

Nonetheless, few open answers were collected that mainly state respondents' preference on traditional taxis, or high-tech transportations services like Uber or Lyft. Some even want to hire cars or motorbikes at the destination or share the ride with the app called BlaBlaCar. The results somehow show the shift from traditional transportation services to advanced and app-based transference for Finnish people, as well as Finns' desire to have the initiative while going on trips. The illustration of a graph underneath demonstrates Finn's desirable means of transportation in a high-end and personalized tour:

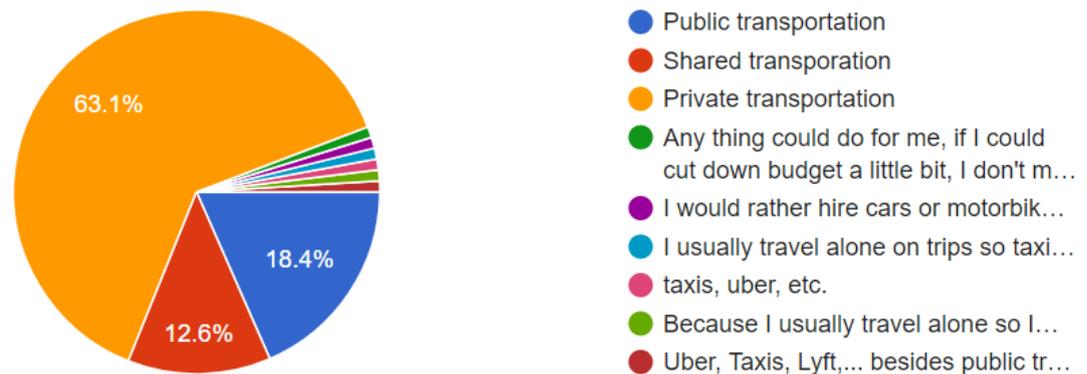


Figure 17. Respondents' desired means of transportation in a luxury and tailored trip. N = 103

The two last questions in the section were targeting the preference of respondents in choosing tour guides and dining. Whereas there are 30.1 percent of people had no fondness when it comes to choosing tour leaders, 34 percent wanted local or ethnic tour guides, and 32 percent trusted guides who are tested and verified better. Other 3.9 percent thought they would want to try free city tours, exploring the destination by themselves, along with being guided by their local friends, Couchsurfing or Airbnb hosts. Below is shown figure 17, illustrating the results in the form of a pie chart:

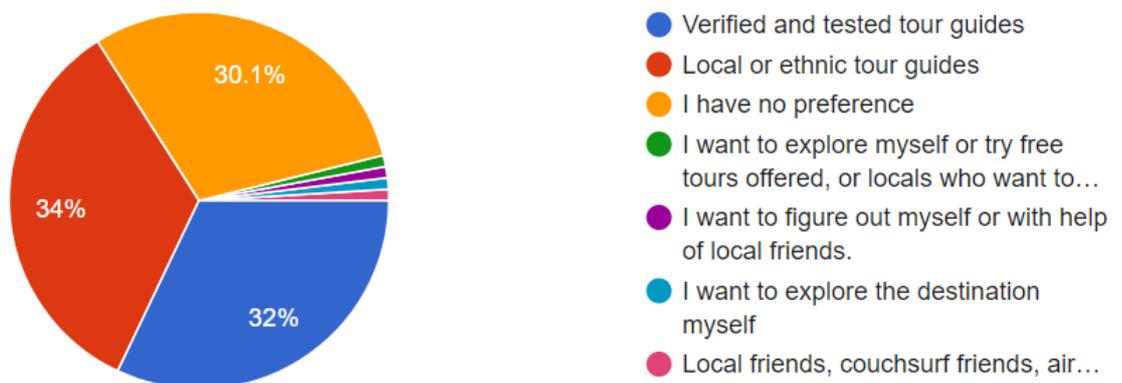


Figure 18. Respondents' preferences when choosing tour guides. N = 103.

Regarding dining options, 43.7 percent of respondents had no preference, but 42.7 percent preferred eating and experiencing the traditional street food culture. Only 10.7 percent, 11 people out of 103, wanted to have local dishes in fine-dinner or gourmet restaurant. The rest stated that the combination of both would be worth trying.

#### **6.4 Motivators to Luxury Travel in Indochina**

##### *III. Travel motivations of Finnish consumers:*

In this section, two main questions were given to the surveyed individuals; one was to find out the motivation could lie behind their decision to luxury travel. The other was to find out how Finnish travellers evaluate the travel services provider when they select to purchase products.

In the first question created, respondents can select multiple motivators. There were 85 votes, which accounts for 82.5 percent of the total, thought that they would luxury travel on some special occasions, or as a reward for themselves. Meanwhile, 39 votes (37.9 percent) counted were by people who just want to experience how a luxurious and high-end trip would be like. Only 13.6 percent (14 votes) were for the reason that luxury is associated with their lifestyles. In additions, there were many individual motivations submitted via the 'Other' option. However, the answers can be sorted into four other main motivators as (1) vacation trips with family and beloved ones; (2) combination with occasions such as business trips, conference or weddings, get-together; (3) travelling is a part of their job (travel bloggers or vloggers, reviewers); or (4) based on the distinct luxury tourism in the destination such as Dubai, Bali.

The next task for the respondents required them to rate the importance of each criterion when you select a travel agent or tour operator from one (not at all) to five (very important). There were six criteria given, and they were the popularity level of the tourism services provider, their quantity of guests, price range, as well as the reviews they have online, the quality of their suppliers, as well as the familiarity of the tour operator or travel agency they selected. In order to visualize the data, the figure of charts was created as follow:

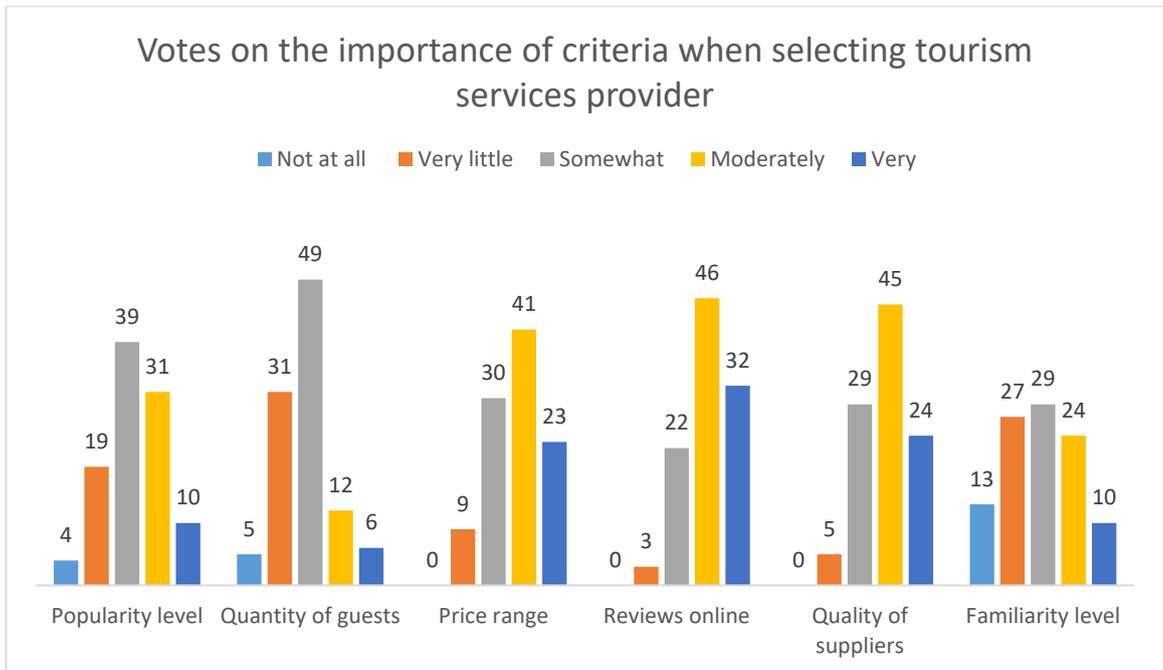


Figure 19. Votes on the importance of criteria when selecting tourism services provider

As seen in the figure below, the criteria of Finnish travellers when assessing a travel agency or tour operator can be simplified. First of all, the well-known level of a tourism business, the quantity of guest somewhat to moderately affect Finn's selection. The price range counts 94 votes for being somewhat to very important characteristic; with 22.3 per cent considered it as crucial when choosing a provider. The same when it comes to reviews online, as mentioned before, Finns are heavy users of technology and internet platforms, so the majority (44.7 percent) thought reviews online to be reasonably essential. Quality of suppliers also seems to be integral in the selection process of Finnish travellers, with 69 out of 103 people viewed this as indeed important. Lastly, when it comes to familiarity level, the answers were varied, almost spread evenly. Thus, the significance of brand acquaintance when buying tourism products and services is diverse and individual.

## 6.5 How to Market Indochina Luxury and Tailored Tours to Finnish Consumers?

### *IV. Effective ways to market Indochina luxury and tailored tours to Finnish consumers:*

In the section, respondents were asked how they often know about a travel agent or tour operator. This was also a question, which individuals could have multiple answers, as well as a space for additional information or personal opinions. There were 86 votes for the option of acknowledging a tourism business via reviews or ads online, and came close after with 85 votes were by their friends or family's recommendations. Social media platforms were the touchpoint, which 43 out of 103 respondents found out about a travel services provider. Furthermore, 20 people (19.4 percent of total) were aware of a tourism firm while they were participating in travel fairs.

In addition, there were 26 free-written opinions that could be sorted into 4 categories as follows:

(1) An online search engine like Google and its top results; online tourism-related platforms and websites, which contain reviews such as TripAdvisor, Lonely Planet, Booking.com (included in 14 answers).

(2) Familiar Finnish travel brands, from which respondents have purchased services. The brands were mentioned including Aurinkomatkat (10 times), Tjäreborg (4 times), TUI Finland (3 times), and KILROY (1 time). In total, there were 12 answers mentioned this behaviour.

(3) Tourism fairs are a touchpoint for four people. The fairs were mentioned include Matkamessut (Travel Expo) Helsinki (3 times), Gastro Helsinki (2 times), ITB Berlin (1 time).

(4) Various comments, such as encounter via company business-leisure trip, or they are open to new travel agencies and tour operators.

Moreover, collected answers to open-ended questions indicate that respondents' objectives when travelling are mainly vacation with their immediate family members and friends (15 mentions), self-treat breaks (4 mentions), as well as business leisure trips or travelling as a part of their jobs (8 mentions). There were also respondent specify that the activities when travelling might be a mix of luxury, relaxing and cultural experiences.

## 7 Conclusions

The author would summarize as well as go to conclusions based on the studies. The conclusion should be able to answer all the questions given at the beginning of the research and would be arranged into two subchapters by two main themes.

### 7.1 Defining Finnish luxury travellers' segmentation, behaviours and motivations

Luxury travel is considered subjective, as each individual would have his or her own perspective and definition of high-end tourism. However, it is concluded that regular Finnish travellers are capable of purchasing luxurious and tailored tourism products in the Indochina region, and thus considered as possible luxury travellers by the commissioner.

Therefore, in accordance with the data summarized previously, the author could sort Finnish luxury travellers into four diverse segments. The categorization of Finnish high-end tourists are defined by their travel behaviours, motivations as well as by their varied levels of affluence as follows:

**The 'Fancy Finn':** These are wealthy Finnish people, to whom luxury is part of the norm. The income level of them is often around or over 40000 euros annually. They have high incomes, and travel in first class or at least private transportation. These people would stay in the most luxurious room categories, and they are willing to spend money on outsourcing the planning process to trustworthy parties.

**The 'Self-indulgent Searcher':** There are a considerable number of Finns in this market segment. Most of these Finnish travellers would have an average income, range from about 20000 to 40000 euros and would travel a few times or once every year. For them, luxury travel is a reward for themselves rather than a must or ordinary life. These Finns may cut down on accommodation and transportation, or change the itinerary of their trip to fit their budget.

**The 'Opulent Occasions':** These Finnish individuals usually combine their travel for occasions such as business or conferences, wedding, honeymoon or visiting friends and family with luxury tourism experiences. This group also includes ones, to whom travelling is a major part of their jobs such as travel vloggers or bloggers. Moreover, Finns belong to this segment are usually over 25 and have from average to above average income level. Their trip to a specific location would have specific objectives besides pure leisure, but they will extend it. These travellers would possibly purchase expertise from tourism services providers to organise the trip.

**The 'Family Tripper':** Finns who are members of this segment usually luxury travel with their family members as a group from 2 to 5 people. Besides youngsters who are below 25 years old who usually not have an affluent income, other Finns who are sorted into this group are usually decision-makers in their family, with a more mature age and higher earnings. Private transportations and accommodations are essential to them. In addition, Finnish Family trippers would not demand to plan their itinerary in details, but would rather purchase from agencies to simplify, as well as they may be into traditional packages.

Understanding the segmentation of the Finnish luxury travellers is crucial, as it is the fundamental knowledge before approaching the market, as well as tailoring the marketing method.

## **7.2 Recommendation of methods to market Indochina luxury and tailored tours to Finnish consumers**

Firstly, one of the key actions before tapping into the Finnish market is to create contacts and to build partnerships with some of the local tourism businesses. One of the solid opportunities that this could be done face-to-face is the tourism expo organized every January in Helsinki, Finland. The tourism event called Matkamessut Helsinki is not only where the key players in the Finnish tourism industry, as well as businesses in the region, exhibit themselves and introduce their products services to the public. It would be an occasion for EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM to not only present to Finnish end-users, but also to build strategic business partnerships.

Secondly, as the Finnish population is rather tech-savvy and prefers the uses of technology in their daily lives, digital marketing should be more focused on. As shown in the research, search engines are an integral tool when consumers are in the research phase. Hence, keywords usages and search engine optimization (SEO) methods should also be focused. Moreover, the websites or forms on both desktop and mobile devices should have an optimal user interface (UI), as well as should be able to create great user experiences (UX). Finns are great English speakers, thus adding Finnish and Swedish languages to the website may not be necessary, but could be considered. Regarding social media, TripAdvisor, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter promotions are also a method to introduce themselves, but not necessarily are the most important touchpoints.

Lastly, the right timing for services promotion is also crucial. Finns usually have a longer break during the winter, from December to January, and it is the coldest period in Finland. Thus, beach breaks, as well as luxury cruise trips should be advertised more dynamically

when it is close to the wintertime, as Finns plan to get away from the dark and snow to a warmer climate, as well as a more relaxing destination. Regarding the promotions of more active and exotic trips or honeymoon trips, EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM could advertise them all year round.

Vietnam, Lao and Cambodia do not have a well-developed local tourism marketing agencies, but rather government-based tourism authorities. Consequently, the strategic plan regarding tourist attraction is more on a national level and more general. Tourists from Nordic countries belong to the target market that the three countries are aiming at, however, there is no action to specifically market the destination to Finnish consumers. (VIETNAM GOVERNMENT PORTAL 2017). Therefore, destination management companies, as well as other tourism businesses based in the three nations of Indochina, should also take the initiatives to promote their own services.

Nonetheless, EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM already has customers from Nordic countries, especially there are a notable amount from Sweden. There were even testimonials written by Swedish travellers used the company's services published on their official website (Evivatour 2017g). It is easily explained, as EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM has participated in the tourism fair of TUR Gothenburg in Sweden in the past years and has strategic partnerships with Sweden-based travel agencies and operators. The company has also applied cold marketing methods by sending emails and conducting sale calls to promote themselves. The same method can be used to market their products and services to Finnish consumers.

In conclusion, according to the research conducted, EVIVA TOUR VIETNAM has a great capability to attract Finnish consumers if they are well prepared before entering the market. More precisely, the destination management company should conduct more in-depth researches to have more insights on the market potential. In addition to that, it is more than crucial to understand the own role of the business in delivering luxury services and products to consumers and improving cooperation with their strategic partners.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. The questionnaire

#### Part I:

1. Please select your age group:

- A. Less than 25
- B. Between 25 and 39
- C. Between 40 and 55
- D. Over 55

2. Are you a:

- A. Female
- B. Male
- C. Other

3. How much is your yearly income?

- A. Below 20000 EUR
- B. Between 20000 EUR and 40000 EUR
- C. Over 40000 EUR
- D. Prefer not to say

4. How much are you willing to spend on travelling per year?

- A. Under 2000 EUR
- B. Between 2000 to 4000 EUR
- C. Between 4000 to 10000 EUR
- D. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. How do you often plan your trips?

- A. I plan my own trip
- B. I use services of Finnish travel agencies and tour operators
- C. I use services of the local travel agencies where I would travel to
- D. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part II:

1. How much are you willing to pay for a luxury or customized tour?

- A. Under 1000 EUR
- B. Between 1000 and 2000 EUR
- C. Between 2000 and 5000 EUR
- D. Over 5000 EUR

2. How often do you travel?

- A. At least once a month
- B. A few times per year
- C. Once a year or less
- D. Never

3. Are you interested in travelling to Vietnam, Lao and Cambodia?

- A. Yes, I am interested and I would consider travelling to at least one of the destinations.
- B. Yes, I have travelled to at least one of the destinations and I would love to come back.
- C. No, I have travelled to at least one of the destinations and I do not plan to come back.
- D. No, I am not yet interested.

4. How many people would you travel with in a luxury and tailored tour?

- A. I would travel alone
- B. I would travel in a group of 2 to 5 people
- C. I would travel in a group of 6 to 10 people
- D. I would travel in a group with more than 10 people

5. What type of accommodations would you choose to stay in a luxury and tailored tour?

- A. 4 to 5-star hotels or resorts
- B. Private luxury villas or homestays
- C. Luxury cruises
- D. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What kind of transportations would you like to have in a luxury and tailored tour?

- A. Public transportations
- B. Shared transportations
- C. Private transportations
- D. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you have any preference of tour guides in a luxury and tailored tour?

- A. Verified and tested tour guides
- B. Local or ethnic tour guides

- C. I have no preference
- D. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. What kind of dining would you like to have in a luxury and tailored tour?

- A. Dining and experiencing the traditional street food culture
- B. Dining traditional dishes in fine-dinner or gourmet restaurant
- C. I have no preference
- D. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part III:**

1. What could be the motivation for you to luxury travel?

- A. Luxury travel is my lifestyles
- B. I would luxury travel on some special occasions, or as a reward for myself
- C. I want to try luxury travel just to know the experiences
- D. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Rate the importance of each criterion when you select a travel agent (TA) or tour operator (TO) from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very important):

- A. The popularity of the TA or TO: \_\_\_\_
- B. Quantity of guests: \_\_\_\_
- C. The price range: \_\_\_\_
- D. Reviews online: \_\_\_\_
- E. Quality of suppliers: \_\_\_\_
- F. The familiarity of the TA or TO: \_\_\_\_

IV. Effective ways to market Indochina luxury and tailored tours to Finnish consumers:

1. How do you often know about a travel agent or tour operator? (You could select more than 1)

- A. From my friends or family's recommendations
- B. From reviews or ads on online
- C. From social media channels
- D. From travel fairs
- E. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2. Respondents' answers on open-ended questions

*How much are you willing to spend on travelling per year?*

- It depends on the financial situation, but usually around 4000€
- Depends on the year and purposes, and if it is I am travelling by myself or with others.
- It really depends, I travel with my husband and kids, so it could range from 3000 - 8000, also depends on the destination and the year!

*How do you often plan your trips?*

- It depends on the destinations and if I want to go backpacking, road trip or vacation tour with family.
- It depends on the locations. If it is in Europe, I'll try to plan myself. But if it is in Asia or America etc. I will use local's DMC
- Again, it depends, I plan my own trip if I travel alone or with friends. But I will use Finnish travel agency (aurinkomatkat) if I am too busy, or travel with my family.
- It depends, mostly self-planning for short trips and agencies for long-haul ones
- Depends on the trip.

*What type of accommodations would you choose to stay in a luxury and tailored tour?*

- I will search for nice airBnB or nicer homestays
- Depends on the destinations and people I travel with, all answers above could be chosen
- Depends on the destination, but I would prefer villas for more freedom

*What kind of transportation would you like to have in a luxury and tailored tour?*

- I usually travel alone on trips so taxis or uber are okay
- taxis, uber, etc.
- Because I usually travel alone so I would prefer Uber or taxis.
- Uber, Taxis, Lyft, besides public transportation

*Do you have any preference of tour guides in a luxury and tailored tour?*

- I want to figure out myself or with help of local friends.
- I want to explore the destination myself
- Local friends, couchsurf friends, airbnb host or free tour!

*What kind of dining would you like to have in a luxury and tailored tour?*

- Both can be good
- Both will be better
- Both!

*What could be the motivation for you to luxury travel?*

- if I have to spend a lot of money on luxury travel, I will go on trips to "retreat" and "relax" with family and friends on some holidays.
- I only have time to travel once a year, so I will combine luxury, relaxing and culture experiences in one trip if possible!
- Vacation with family
- business, incentive trips with company

- I am a travel vlogger/blogger so I usually backpacking, but sometimes I luxury travel if going to some business occasions or when I want to treat myself well a little bit.
- Business trips, family vacations, weddings
- Family trips when I do not pay for it ;)
- Business trips, I will buy tours if I am travelling far
- Travel on business trips
- Vacation with family, wedding attending trips, etc
- business, conference trips, relaxing vacation
- Family trips or self-treatment trips!
- Business and conference trips, Family holidays.
- Family trips when I travel with parents
- Travel is also a part of my job (travel vlogger), and I love travel!
- When I travel with my mom and brother, we usually spend a little more on fancy stuff
- Travelling with my extended family
- Vacation with parents and siblings, get-together

*How do you often know about a travel agent or tour operator?*

- mostly I will Google, or choose local agent like aurinkomatkat
- I usually search for tours on google, then tripadvisors. But mostly I plan my own trip because I am familiar to backpacking more than luxury tours.
- Aurinkomatkat and Tjäreborg are my go-to agencies, but if they don't have a tour that suit me, I may search for agencies in the destinations I want to visit
- I study Tourism so I like to collect some nice brochures at fairs like Matkamessut Helsinki, Gastro (for hotels)
- I like to go back to TUI Suomi, Aurinkomatkat or something I used before. But I am open to new quality services provider.
- From previous experience
- Google, Tripadvisor
- I will do some research first, if there is not any promising agency, I will find local ones like aurinkomatkat or tjäreborg
- Fairs like matkamessut, gastro (food is important too!) and search Google.
- I would research a lot before a trip, so every source of information is valuable when choosing the suitable one!
- Search engines
- Search engine's top results
- Familiar agency like Aurinkomatkat
- Google
- Familiar brands like TUI, aurinkomatkat, tjäreborg
- ITB Berlin
- Popular and trusted agencies such as Aurinkomatkat, TUI, Tjäreborg.
- Usually I will go on tours with my mother, father and siblings. So my parents will just book tours from Aurinkomatkat or some wide-known brands.