Consideration of sexual minorities in tourism of Helsinki

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Abstract

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This thesis was commissioned by a higher education co-operation Vastuullisen Matkailun Portaat -project, where the objective is to create complementing education model to develop the learning of responsible tourism. The purpose of this work is to study how tourism companies take into account sexual minorities and how these companies consider social sustainability as part of sustainable and responsible tourism. This study is made from the traveller's point of view. The desired outcome of the thesis was a comprehensive information package that introduces the subject of sexual minorities in tourism for the potential students of Vastuullisen Matkailun Portaat -project. The information package was conducted together with a fellow student working on a similar subject.

The process of composing the thesis began in August 2019 and working on it lasted until November 2019. The information for the theoretical part was gathered by studying existing literature of the subject and around the subject, as reliable and up to date literature was rather difficult to find. The information for the empirical part was gathered by interviewing and observing. This study was done with exploratory approach and with qualitative methodology. The qualitative research methods were executed during October and November 2019.

The scope of the research was delimited so that sexual minorities were not studied as individual differing groups but rather the community as a collective whole. This study focuses on the consideration of sexual minorities in Helsinki, not nationally or globally. However, examples from national and global level were used.

The key findings of the study consist of three different themes: social sustainability regarding tourism of sexual minorities, information distribution in tourism of sexual minorities and future potential of sexual minorities in tourism. The results revealed that the tourism companies in Helsinki seem not to take advantage of the good situation of equality in Finland. Regarding information distribution theme, the results showed that information about sexual minorities is the base for everything, and the tourism companies in Helsinki might not be aware that they lack information. Finally, the study showed that there is potential and purchasing power in the tourism of sexual minorities in the future. Nonetheless, the study showed that there are various factors that influence how a sexual minority traveller experiences and feels these matters. In conclusion, the information concerning sexual minorities in tourism should be increased and the tourism companies in Helsinki should take advantage of the good situation with equality rights and laws in Finland.

Keywords Sexual minorities, social sustainability, tourism, Helsinki

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1   Introduction

Today, the significance of sustainability has grown among the functioning of society as a whole. Sustainability can be divided into three different topics: environmental, economic and social sustainability. Especially environmental and human rights issues are growing their importance for the sake of leaving a good and safe place to live for the future generations. This study focuses on social sustainability and deeper on its sub topics of equality and consideration of sexual minorities. Often equality as a topic focuses on inequalities between men and women. However, today the conception of gender and sexual orientation reaches further than male and female. Tourism as an industry contributes to social sustainability and therefore has the potential to take responsibility and develop it. As a conclusion for this, the exact subject for this study is to review how sexual minorities are considered in the tourism of Helsinki and what can be done in the future to improve the current situation. Throughout the text terms sexual minority and a general acronym LGBT(Q) are both used to describe the biggest groups of sexual minorities, as they equally mean the same thing. These terms are further explained in chapter 3. Sexual minorities in tourism.

1.1   Objectives

Purpose of this work is to study how tourism companies take into account sexual minorities and how these companies consider social sustainability as part of sustainable and responsible tourism. This study is made from the traveller's point of view. The purpose of the work also serves as the main research question, and in addition, there are sub-questions to be answered:

1.   Are companies involving equality consideration when cultivating social responsibility practices?
2.   How can knowledge about sexual minorities be improved in the companies in the tourism industry?
3.   Is there potential for market growth if all sexual minorities felt that they are welcome to the destination?
4.   How can Helsinki improve visibility of established equality?

These questions are attempted to answer with the found insights from an empirical study in order to demonstrate the state of consideration of sexual minorities in tourism of Helsinki, and also to find potential areas to work on to improve the status quo. The results of the thesis are not only intended to help professionals and students in the industry but also the sexual minority travellers by collecting the information into a brief package (appendix 6). The wished outcome is to invite reflection on the subject, not to educate. The topic is

not extensively studied yet, so this study is largely based on people's different experiences and emotions and not measured in numbers, therefore it is of qualitative nature. The commissioning party is a higher education co-operation Vastuullisen Matkailun Portaat -project, where the objective is to create complementing education model to develop the learning of responsible tourism (JAMK, 2019). Aiming to be sustainable is a part of ideal responsible business. As social sustainability is one aspect in sustainability, it is important to consider it as well, together with economic and environmental aspects. Social sustainability may in many cases be overshadowed by environmental sustainability, so it is important to talk about it, so that it is not forgotten. In todays changing world equality and understanding that people are different can be understood as one act when aiming to be sustainable from social sustainability point of view.

1.2   Justification

Tourism business is growing as people are being able to travel more, this makes the competition of potential customers between different countries and between different cities to grow as well. Companies must understand the potential in this and be able to first reach the potential customer and then serve them in a correct and suitable way. The generalized understanding of sustainability drives companies to be transparent in order to convince customers that they are actually doing what they promise regarding sustainability, throughout their whole process.

Sustainability has been an interest for the author since the beginning of the studies and especially social sustainability as a topic has seemed fascinating. The deeper interest towards this topic came with a discussion with a fellow student working on a similar subject. That evoked thoughts whether the author had any experiences or knowledge about the consideration of sexual minorities in tourism, even after studying Tourism Management for three years. As mentioned earlier, the topic seems not to have been widely studied before, and there hasn't been profound survey about the consideration of sexual minorities in tourism of Helsinki.

1.3   Structure of the thesis and research outline

The thesis is structured into a theoretical framework, section explaining research methodology used, a section for the results where the results are interpreted and finally the discussion part where questions for further research are presented. The theoretical part consists of academic research information and it aims to answer the research problems from academic point of view. The theoretical part starts with a definition of sustainability and moves to more specified social sustainability with the explanations and global and national

frameworks for it. After this subject, sexual minorities are explained, including definition, concepts, trends and segmentations. Later the visibility of consideration of sexual minorities in tourism in Helsinki is studied. The research as a whole tries to deal the subject and collect the data from the traveller point of view, not how the employees are treated in tourism companies. Finally, the data is gathered to a compact information package (appendix 6) on how sexual minorities are considered in tourism of Helsinki and how it could possibly be improved in the area. This info package is made together with a fellow student working on a similar subject. As the subject is not yet widely studied from this point of view, the theoretical framework aims to cover related and influencing matter in order to get better understanding of the current state of the consideration and evolvement of the tourism of sexual minorities.

1.4   Research method and scope

The research is done in an exploratory approach since the topic is not yet explored thoroughly. Because of the nature of the work, the research is done in a qualitative nature where the point is to research the subject comprehensively through people's real life, experiences and emotions and thus it is a better choice than quantitative research method based on numbers. For this work, expert interviews, focus group interviews and author's own observations will be used as data gathering techniques. (MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 140-153; 118-138.) The interviews will be done with a semi-structure approach, as it leaves room for open discussion, but still has certain decided topics to be covered. The characteristics of the interview approach match the nature of the work, again being the best way to go through real life experiences. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 199-204; MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 118-122; Payne, G & Payne, J. 2004, 129-133.) Focus group interview is a good method to again get emotional experiences and discussion specifically within the target group, that's why it is chosen for this work. (MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 123-129; Payne, G & Payne, J. 2004,103-106.) Last qualitative method, observation, is chosen to complement the two other methods. Observation is done with comparing beforehand decided companies' websites with beforehand established criteria. This gives the study the final piece of triangulation of evidence, where the researcher uses at least three different methods to collect data. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 207-212; MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 89,129-133.) The scope of the research is delimited so that sexual minorities are not studied as individual differing groups but rather the community as a collective whole. This study focuses on the consideration of sexual minorities in Helsinki, not nationally or globally. However, examples from national and global level are used.

2   Social sustainability in tourism

Sustainability is a theme that concerns many different terms and definitions. The United Nations has defined sustainability in 1987 as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Academic Impact 2019; United Nations 2019a). Sustainability itself consists of three topics: environmental, economic and social sustainability and they all need to be considered for achieving more sustainable future (Clift, R. & Druckman, A. 2016, 49). This work focuses on the social part of sustainability and sustainable development.

Sustainable development has been defined the same way as sustainability, but as development. It is development that meets the needs of the present in that way that the future generations have the ability to meet their own needs as well. Sustainable development has also three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. It is pivotal to harmonize these core elements in order to achieve sustainable development. They are interconnected for the well-being of individuals and societies. Requirement for sustainable development is also to abolish poverty in all its forms and dimensions. To succeed on this, there needs to be improvement of sustainable and fair economic growth, creation of greater and equal opportunities for everyone, reduction of inequalities, raise of basic standards of living, improvement of fair social development and promotion of integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems. (United Nations 2019a.) More importantly regarding social sustainability, social inclusion refers to every individual or group in society to be involved and to take part in society. The process of social inclusion increases the ability, dignity and opportunity of people with social disadvantages to take part in society. Later in this work, there are described non-discriminatory facts stated on Fundamental Rights of European Union by European Union. The most common identities that cause exclusion, are same that are stated in these non-discriminatory facts. (Das, M., Evans, T., Palu, T. & Wilson, D. 2017, 8.)

Social sustainability is one element in sustainability and sustainable development. It can be defined in many ways. It is a life-enhancing and positive condition within communities, the process within communities to get to this condition and equity of access to key services (McKenzie 2014, 23: Dixon, J., Perkins, H. & Vallance, S. 2011). Social sustainability is very closely linked to economic and environmental sustainability. They all are influenced and supported by each other (McKenzie 2014, 3).

Sustainability is a theme in tourism industry as well. According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2019a) sustainable tourism is defined as a tourism that takes full account

of the present and future economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism and which address the needs of the industry, visitors, the environment and the hosting regions. Social sustainability is an important part of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism should respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their heritage and traditional values and improve the inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. (UN-WTO 2019a.) There are various international and national organizations that give guidelines for the actors of the tourism industry about sustainability. Social sustainability is covered in these guidelines either briefly or in some more deeply.

2.1 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

As the United Nations has been over decades an organization that has a mission of the maintenance of international peace and security, it is one important player also in the tourism sector for giving certain guidelines and instructions (United Nations 2019c). In 2015, the United Nations launched its Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity (WTTC 2019). The Sustainable Development Goals are a plan for achieving a better and more sustainable future. The Goals interconnect and the target is to achieve every goal by 2030. (United Nations 2019b.) The Agenda consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and these goals includes 169 specific targets. Travel and Tourism sector has a role to play in each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. (WTTC 2019.)

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2019b.) are: No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and last Partnerships. From these goals can be seen how all the sustainability elements, social, economic and environmental, are covered.

2.2 Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2019b.) has established a comprehensive set of principles for guiding key-players in tourism industry and development. This set of principles is called Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and it includes guidelines for responsible and sustainable tourism. The Code consists of ten different articles: Article 1: Tourism's contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies, Article 2: Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfilment, Article 3: Tourism, a

factor of sustainable development, Article 4: Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and contributor to its enhancement, Article 5: Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities, Article 6: Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development, Article 7: Right to tourism, Article 8: Liberty of tourist movements, Article 9: Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry and Article 10: Implementation of the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

The Code aims to help maximize tourism industry's benefits while trying to minimize its potential negative impacts on the environment, cultural heritage and societies across the world (UNWTO 2019b). It is addressed to governments, the travel industry, communities and tourists. Following, the socio-cultural guidelines for tourists and societies are discussed and specifically from the tourists' point of view.

Article 1 is about mutual understanding and respect between societies and peoples. It is stated, that both the foundation and the consequence of responsible tourism is to understand and promote the ethical values common to humanity, with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of philosophical, religious and moral beliefs. It means that stakeholders and tourists should observe the social and cultural traditions and practices of all peoples, including minorities in indigenous people, and to recognize their worth. It is also discussed, that tourism activities should be performed in a way that it doesn't respect only the traditions but also the laws and practices of the host regions and countries. Article 1 declares that it is the host communities' and professionals' responsibility to find out and educate themselves about tourists' lifestyles, tastes and expectations in order to contribute to a hospitable welcome. And on the other hand, it is visitor's responsibility to familiarize themselves with the characteristics of the countries they visit. (UNWTO 2019c, 3.)

Article 2 is about equality and respecting diversity of people. It is clearly written that when tourism is practised with an open mind, it is an irreplaceable factor of self-education and mutual tolerance and for learning about differences between peoples, cultures and their diversity. The tourism activities should respect the equality of men and women and they should promote human rights of everyone. (UNWTO 2019c, 3.)

Article 7, Right to Tourism, is stating that discovering and enjoying planet's resources forms a right equally open to all the world's inhabitants. In Article 8 the same theme is continuing. It is about liberty of tourist movements. Based on Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights everyone should have access to places on transit and stay and to cultural sites and tourism, without being discriminated. (UNWTO 2019c, 5.)

2.3 National principles for sustainable tourism by Visit Finland

During spring 2019, Visit Finland has updated the national principles for sustainable tourism in cooperation with different stakeholders. They have decided ten different principles which have a central role in making Finland more sustainable as a destination. The principles are: cooperation, ecological sustainability, cultural sustainability & cultural heritage, social sustainability & wellbeing, perseverance and localism, quality and safety, climate change & resource wisdom, responsibility communications, economical sustainability & competitiveness and commitment. (Business Finland 2019.) In this commitment, it is made clear, that social responsibility and sustainability are important when it comes to sustainable tourism. It is stated, that everyone should be treated fairly and respectfully. They want to improve wellbeing, human rights and equality. All the employees, visitors and residents of the area should be treated equally and respectfully apart from their background. They promise also to take into consideration people's special needs in their action and guiding and educating the personnel to act responsibly.

2.4 Criteria for Sustainable development by Visit Finland: Socio-cultural sustainability

In 2018 Visit Finland established criteria for sustainable tourism. These criteria are helping companies to embrace sustainable modes of operations. The criteria are divided into three categories: ecological sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability and economical sustainability. (Business Finland 2019.) These categories are the same than in World Tourism organization's definition of sustainable tourism. This chapter focuses on socio-cultural sustainability criteria.

In socio-cultural sustainability criteria, there are many similar statements than in Visit Finland's National principles for sustainable tourism. Criteria take into consideration locality, cultural heritage, wellbeing, communications between company and customer and highlights the importance of choosing stakeholders which share the same values. The criteria also include equality, parity and competence in encounters of personnel and customers. This includes also specific target groups such as sexual minorities. (Business Finland 2019.)

2.5 Equality and Non-discriminatory act

When researching sustainable development and especially social sustainability, gender equality appears in many articles and existing sources. These articles consider usually

only equality between traditional classification of gender, men and women. Gender equality is defined as a goal, where the differences between women and men have been eliminated and where women and men enjoy the equal opportunities (Johnsson-Latham 2004, 16; Johnsson-Latham 2007, 17).

There are two Acts concerning equality in the Fundamental Rights in the Finnish Constitution (731/1999). The first one is Gender Equality Act (609/1986) and its purpose is to prevent discrimination between women and men and to prevent discrimination towards gender identity and gender expression. (Yhdenvertaisuus.fi, 2019) The second one, Non-discriminatory act is based on equality between identities and demographical features of humans. The purpose of Non-discriminatory act (1325/2014) is to promote equality and prevent discrimination. The law prohibits direct and indirect discrimination. The prohibited grounds of discrimination are: age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, family, relationships, health, disability, sexual orientation or any other personal reasons. (Yhdenvertaisuus.fi, 2019.)

2.6 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility as a subject in this work will be studied from the perspective of a traveller or a customer, not the perspective of a company or an organization and their internal practices. Nonetheless, a customer is one of the stakeholders of an organization or a company, so the relationship between stakeholders and Corporate Social Responsibility values are shortly reviewed. Diversity and equality towards employees are subjects in Corporate Social Responsibility, but this work doesn't focus on these subjects. As mentioned earlier, in this work, all the matters are viewed from the customer's point of view. When studying this topic, literature and reliable sources about Corporate Social Responsibility of the customer's point of view was very limited. For this reason, this topic is studied shortly.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is essentially a concept by which companies integrate social and environmental considerations in their business operations and decision making. Business practices are transparent and respectful to employees, communities and the environment and values are ethical. Sustainability and sustainable development are also a part of CSR, and in CSR too, environmental, social and economic elements need to function. (Dahlsrud, A., 2006, 7.) From stakeholders' point of view, transparency of an organization is important. In addition to earlier mentioned customers, also companies, investors, employees, consumers, non-governmental organizations, suppliers and

regulators are stakeholders of a company (Hawkins, D. E., 2006, 142). Through this transparency, the stakeholder's can estimate, if the organization's values meet their own values. Especially, when sustainability is a big matter nowadays, organizations come under more pressure to be transparent and make the right choices so that they meet the requirements of the stakeholders. Organization always needs the input of the stakeholders, so it puts the stakeholders into the centre of an organization functioning. (Chandler, D. & Werther Jr., W. 2011, 27, 34-37; Hawkins, D. E., 2006, 144.) Even if this subject is reviewed from the customer's point of view, the employees' conditions and rights in the organization cannot be left out. Employee performance is affected by the working environment and working conditions. Hereby, at every stage of the production chain and processes, how employees are treated and managed affects to the output performance. Also, poor health and safety in the organization reflects directly on performance and this can have a major impact on the cost profile. Employees performance shows not only to the stakeholders but more importantly always to the end customer. (Hawkins, D. E., 2006, 144.)

3   Sexual minorities in tourism

People, whose sexual orientation is something other than heterosexual or who define their gender to something else than traditional male or female, fall into the group of sexual minorities (Seta 2019a). Under are listed some of the most known main definitions and terms for sexual minorities and words linked to these minorities (table 1). It still needs to be remembered that especially in this field, perceptions are changing in time and everyone has a unique and different understanding of themselves and their sexual identity.

Table 1. Terms and definitions linked to sexual minorities

Term	Definition
Bisexual	A person, who may be attracted to both sexes. For some who identify themselves as a bisexual, the sex of the other person doesn't matter. (Guaracino 2007, 16; Seta 2019a.)
Closeted, in the closet	A term that refers to a person who doesn't necessarily want to reveal his or her sexual orientation or gender identity (Guaracino 2007, 16).
Gay	A term referring usually to men who are sexually and/or affectionally attracted to other men. The term gay can also be used to describe any sex feeling sexually and/or affectionally attracted to the same sex. (Guaracino 2007, 17; Seta 2019a.)
Heterosexual	A person who feels sexual and/or affectional attraction to someone of the opposite sex (Guaracino 2007, 17).
Lesbian	A preferred term for women, who are sexually and/or affectionally attracted to other women (Guaracino 2007, 18).
LGBT	An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender". Sometimes letter Q is also added to this acronym and it stands for queer. Often used to describe the whole community of sexual minorities. (Guaracino 2007, 18.)
Queer	A political and often academic point of view that questions the norms of society regarding sexual orientation and gender. Sometimes it is also an identity when a person doesn't want to define their sexual orientation or sex. The term is still not neutral, and it might be offensive or pejorative. (Seta 2019a.)
Rainbow-coloured	An adjective, which represents many matters regarding sexual- and gender minorities (Seta 2019a).
Transgender	A term that refers to people whose biological gender and gender identity are not the same (Guaracino 2007, 20).

Sexual orientation is a trait that explains to whom a person feels emotional or erotic attraction to or falls in love with. There is no unambiguous explanation to one's sexual orientation, because it is usually explained more generally by the gender of a person and by the gender of the loved one. Sexual orientation diversity is a concept that refers to all the different sexual orientations that people can have. There are also people, who don't want to determine their gender at all with the general idea of male or female sex. That is why sexual orientation cannot be determined only by gender. There is no specific time for people to start perceiving their sexual orientation, as everyone has a different pace for individual development. Sexual orientation can also transform during the life cycle. (Seta 2019b.) Sexual orientation is not explicit, and it might differ to whom a person feels sexual attraction to. Many people, who define themselves for example straight might still have desires

to someone with the same sex than them and might have been in a sexual intercourse with them. And the other way as well, someone who is interested in the same sex than they are, might have sexual desires to the opposite sex. Hence, sexual behaviour is not directly related to sexual orientation. Defining sexual orientation is always a matter of self-determination. (Seta 2019b.)

Different symbols create community and the sense of fellowship. Sexual minorities are usually associated with rainbow colours and rainbow flag called "the Pride Flag" is their most known and important symbol (picture 1). The colours of the flag represent different things: red represents life, orange healing power, yellow the sun, green the nature, blue is for harmony and purple stands for togetherness. (rannelliike.net 2009.)

Picture 1. The Pride Flag (Wikipedia 2005)

In Finland there is a Bureau of Statistics, which has statistics about the population. Bureau of Statistics doesn't offer direct statistics about the number of sexual minorities in the population of Finland. In 2013 they had estimated that approximately 5-15 % of the population of Finland consists of sexual minorities (Tilastokeskus 2013). However, there are still available statistics about registered relationships and rainbow families. Registered relationship was a juridical way to make same sex relationships official from 2002 to 2017 in Finland (Seta 2019a). Rainbow family is a family, where at least one of the parents belongs to the group of sexual minorities (Seta 2019a). In 2012 there were over 4500 people in a registered relationship (Tilastokeskus 2013). In 2012 in Finland there were 578 400 families with kids. From this number, only 0,1 percent were rainbow families. This is approximately 400 families. In March 2017 there was a reform in the Finnish law and after this, it was possible for the same sex couples to get married (Tilastokeskus 2019). Earlier possibility to register the relationship was abolished. After this law reform, in the end of year 2018, all in all 6928 people were either married to or living in a registered relationship

with a person with same sex. (Tilastokeskus 2019.) In 2018, there were almost 1,5 million families. To this number is also counted families without kids. From this 1,5 million families, only 3262 families were rainbow families. Number of families with kids in 2018 was approximately 562 000 and number of same sex families with kids was 785. (Tilastokeskus 2019.)

3.1 LGBT Segmentation in tourism

Traveling of sexual minorities is increasingly understood as a new segment in which money can be made (Guaracino & Salvato 2017, 10). This market segment compares well with other minority groups, such as Asian Americans, African Americans and other nationalities, even though always has to be remembered the fact that there are sexual minorities within these nationalities too. (Guaracino 2007, 34.) One important factor stood out when researching LGBT tourism. The LGBT community is a group of people who share common struggles, but still have distinct traits, outlooks and characteristics. Apart from belonging to a sexual minority group, it must be remembered that they don't only have different nationalities but also different cultures, ages and other characteristics. (Guaracino, J., & Salvato, E., 2017, 18; UNWTO 2017, 43.) It can still be said, that generally, for LGBT travellers, though safety of a destination remains a top concern, it is no longer a factor restricting them to a small number of destinations (Hughes, H., 2006, 71; UNWTO 2017, 41). For a destination, there are many political, economic and social factors that influence how inclusive and diverse it is, but there is one common principle that is true: places that are good for LGBT people to live, make great places for them to visit as well (UNWTO 2017, 38). Also, the approval of same-sex marriage sends a brand image of equality, open-mindedness and respect and thus results and increase in LGBT visitors at a destination (UNWTO 2017, 52).

All lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender minorities have their own general preferences and standards for travelling. There is a common perception, that especially gay men are frequent and intensive holidaymakers and they are mostly still "dual income, no kids" (DINK) market (Hughes, H., 2006, 47; Guaracino, J. & Salvato, E., 2017, 35). For gay men, there is a quite strong need of the companionship of other homosexuals and traveling to gay-friendly destinations (Borzyszkowski, J. & Lubowiecki-Vikuk, A., 2015). For lesbians, the researched literature says, that when they travel, their usual approach is: women first, then lesbians, with the meaning of when they leave the house the first thing visible is their gender, not their sexual orientation (Guaracino, J. & Salvato, E., 2017, 20). They are also more likely to look for a relaxing holiday, slightly less likely to book a holiday with gay-friendly company than gay men and also more likely to travel as a couple and not

seek to meet other people (Hughes, H., 2006, 60; Guaracino, J. & Salvato, E., 2017, 21). Bisexuals are an elusive group regarding travelling. They are harder to identify and less readable in public, since they are read as either gay or straight. Usually this depends who are they travelling with and this affects how they are serviced. The lack of literature is influencing the outcome of this part about bisexual travel behaviour and preferences. (Guaracino, J. & Salvato E., 2017, 24; UNWTO 2017, 44.) Also, about transgender travellers there was not much literature and information available. Some findings about this minority group's travelling could still be gathered. One of the most valued aspect when transgender people are choosing a destination is that the destination has non-discrimination and trans-friendly policies and laws. They also appreciate the education level, because sensitivity, acceptance and safety are important factors to them. (Guaracino, J. & Salvato, E., 2017, 26; UNWTO 2017, 79.) In addition to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender groups, there are also a lot of various sexual minority groups who travel as well.

For LGBT travellers and heterosexual travellers, a certain number of features are common regarding their travel. These come from the division of the tourist movement, for example duration, kind and type of travel. Both of the "sexuality groups" also tend to search good weather, cultural offerings, activities and value for their money while deciding the destination. Another similarity within these groups is that they both have visiting friends and relatives as one possible motive for travelling. (Borzyszkowski, J., & Lubowiecki-Vikuk, A., 2015; UNWTO 2017,40.) The differences are more in the motivation of travel. While for heterosexual people travelling is more of a voluntarily nature and selecting the destination depends more on what they prefer and like. LGBT travellers are still more inclined to choose a specific location in certain aspects. The most common aspects of this kind are need for safety, escapism through anonymity, gay-identity acceptance and affirmation. It has long been assumed that LGBT travellers tends to have higher levels of disposable income and therefore spend more also on travel (Borzyszkowski, J., & Lubowiecki-Vikuk, A., 2015; UNWTO 2017, 42). According to Travel Industry Association, also spending of the money differs between LGBT and heterosexual travellers. During a trip in small groups, LGBT people spend on average USD 3070 while heterosexual only USD 2870. (Borzyszkowski, J., & Lubowiecki-Vikuk, A., 2015.)

3.2   Trends in LGBT tourism

LGBT travelling has certain trends according to UNWTO (2017). A big factor about the attractiveness of a country for LGBT travellers is now and will be in the future the reality and

daily life quality of LGBT citizens of the country. Where the living conditions for LGBT citizens are good, there is the most potential for growth in this segment. The influence of social media can also be seen in the travel of LGBT segment. Nowadays social media is the go-to forum for public speaking and consumer marketing. People around the world can form communities online, sharing same interests or for example sexualities. It has been a major factor about people around the world to be more aware about differences of human kind and for sexual minorities to get support from people who are in the same situation as them. In the travel market, the power of social media should not be underestimated. It allows for precise targeting of different segments and to companies and destinations to reach LGBT travellers. With the growth of social media has also come the online dating apps. These allow LGBT people to meet easily new people, connect them even from the other sides of the world and it is a way for them to ask local people advices about the things to do and where to go at the destination. Nowadays these dating apps can also be used for informing LGBT people about sexual health and travelling safely for instance in countries where homosexuality is seen a s a crime. (UNWTO 2017, 66-68.)

During last few years destinations and travel businesses have invested in Chinese outbound market. Based on the estimates and studies by Community Marketing & Insights (CMI) there are 65 million LGBT people living in China and the purchasing power of them is around USD 470 billion per year. The most visible LGBT Chinese are among the younger generation, born after 1980. According to UNWTO (2017) the young Chinese have started to explore the world and they will be a major source of LGBT traveller for the next several decades internationally. Chinese LGBT travellers differ a bit from their peers from other nationalities. They tend to behave very similar than non-LGBT people. Only similarity between Chinese and other LGBT is that they highly value safety. (UNWTO 2017, 68-89.)

3.3 Purchasing power of the LGBT segment

There are many different estimates of the LGBT segment of the travel market. These estimates vary and some of the researchers question the accuracy of these numbers. But overall many studies show similar levels of spending and purchasing power within the segment. (Guaracino & Salvato, 2017, 9.) Purchasing power represents the amount of money that can be spent on i.e. entertainment, travel, food and rent after paying the taxes and obligations (Guaracino 2007, 33).

Generally, it is very difficult to estimate the number of LGBT travelers, since they can be "invisible" (Guaracino & Salvato, 2017, 9). Travelers can be easier segmented for example by their nationality by using only eyes. However, technology improves more and more over the time the ability to track for example same-sex households, sexual orientation and gender identity in surveys. In 2015, a financial firm LGBT Capital estimated that the global spending power of the LGBT segment is USD 3.7 trillion per year while the LGBT population was estimated to be about 450 million. (Guaracino & Salvato 2017, 9.) In the Netherlands in 2015 Out Now Consulting predicted that the global potential value of LGBT leisure travel market would reach USD 200 billion. This estimate was based on the innovative and groundbreaking LGBT 2030 research, which is measuring LGBT consumer spending habits, brand preferences and purchasing habits in twenty-four countries. (Guaracino & Salvato 2017, 10.) Another estimate was done in 2011 by Gary J. Gates, the William Distinguished Scholar at the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law and coauthor of *The Gay and Lesbian Atlas.* Since 2004, Gates conducted 11 large surveys in the United States and internationally and he found out that nearly 9 million Americans, which is 3,8 percent of adults in the United States, self-identified themselves as LGBT. (Guaracino & Salvato 2017, 10.) Later, in 2016 there was an analysis carried out by a company called Witeck Communications. They estimated that in the year 2016, the purchasing power of LGBT consumers in the United States was approaching USD 917 billion, and this number came from an estimate of 7% of adults identifying themselves as LGBT. (UNWTO 2017, 42.) According to UNWTO (2017, 44), out of all the 1.235 million overnight visitors who travelled to international destinations in 2016, 36 million were part of the LGBT community. From these numbers and estimates can be interpreted that it is hard to know the exact size of the segment and their money consuming. However, the estimates show, that there truly is a big purchasing power among LGBT segment in any case.

3.4 The importance of showing the consideration of sexual minorities at a destination

As earlier mentioned, safety is an important factor of LGBT minorities choosing a destination to travel to. There are also other reasons why these minorities don't travel to all the places and destinations in the world. The first reason is homophobia. Some people might believe that homophobia is disappearing, but that is not the whole truth. From a qualitative study made for gay men in Britain, it can be interpreted that from their point of view there are risks of discomfort, discrimination and physical attack. (Hughes 2006, 72.) There are still many countries where LGBT people can be executed and killed just because who they are and especially these kinds of destinations, gay men would avoid (Hughes 2006, 73; Guaracino & Salvato 2017, 2). Community Market Incorporate (CMI) released its 11th

Annual Gay and Lesbian Tourism Profile in 2006. The research was done with 7500 LGBT people via mailing lists, subscribe to gay publications and visit gay websites and surveys. The study researched factors of deciding the travel destination. Safety, accepting gay marriage and policies that don't discriminate against gay people were strong factors for the decisions. (Guaracino 2007, 34.)

Other reason is that all the countries of the world, communities or business don't necessarily welcome LGBT travelers. LGBT travelers don't automatically assume that they are welcome at a particular destination, if the destination doesn't actively reach out to them. Hence, some kind of an invitation for sexual minorities is needed for getting the segment and their purchasing power to the destination. (Guaracino & Salvato 2017, 2.) In the United States, the destination management organization Visit Philadephia decided to devote significant resources for creating a genuine invitation to LGBT travelers for visiting the city. They added more images of LGBT people within the "mainstream" images to their website and increased the number of stories, pictures and videos that touch directly the potential LGBT visitors. By this, they made sure that LGBT travelers know that they are welcome to the city. Also, in Fort Lauderdale in the United States, they made a specific campaign to LGBT travelers as an open invitation to them. After this campaign, Fort Lauderdale was nominated as a top destination for LGBT travelers and they also welcomed 1.3 million LGBT visitors in 2013. The LGBT visitors were 10 percent of all the visitors to the city and they spent there $1.48 billion. (Guaracino & Salvato 2017, 3.)

3.5   Existing sources of information regarding sexual minorities for tourism industry

There are many ways for players in tourism industry to find information about sexual minorities in general, their needs and desires and their characteristics. Internet is full of different sources, but the information seeker needs to remember to read them critically and find the relevant ones for their business. Under are listed some of the most important international and Finnish sources of information for tourism industry regarding sexual minorities.

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association ILGA was founded in 1978. It is a worldwide federation of 1616 member organizations from 158 countries. They campaign for lesbian, gay, bisexual and intersex rights (ILGA 2019a). They provide information and reports on issues pertaining to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (ILGA 2019b).

The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association IGLTA is a global travel network which is connecting and educating both LGBT travelers and businesses welcoming them (Guaracino & Salvato 2017, 133). On the official website (IGLTA 2019), IGLTA is described to be the world's leading network of LGTBQ welcoming tourism business. IGLTA plays a role in the history and development of LGBT traveling. In the early 1990s economic slowdown increased a search for market niches and interest towards gay and lesbian travel segment was born. This led also to companies improving their public images. And by the mid-1990s the gay and lesbian rights demonstrations became high-profile and the rights of gay and lesbian progressed. All this led to International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association to grow tremendously. The association was founded in 1983 in Florida in the United States and it was originally called International Gay Travel Association IGTA. The organization grew to include more than 30 airlines, nearly 400 travel agents and over 1100 members in 42 countries. (Clift & Luongo & Callister 2002.)

In Finland there is one website, Gay Travel Finland (Gay Travel Finland 2019a.) which provides information to the visitors coming to Helsinki and they also have a We Speak Gay community and certificate for companies, who want to express their consideration of sexual minorities. For the companies in the industry, there are no other specific websites or information pages about sexual minorities and especially their travel patterns.

Some general information about sexual minorities in Finnish can be found and one source for the basic knowledge is Seta Ry -website. Seta Ry is a human rights organization in Finland. Its objective is a transformation of society, so that human rights and well-being come to fruition in Finland and internationally despite people's sexual orientation, sexual identity and the expression of the sex (Seta 2019c). Seta Ry belongs to ILGA association. Seta Ry has very thorough information about sexual minorities on their website in Finnish. They are providing a rainbow vocabulary, which aggregates the definitions and terms concerning sexual- and gender minorities (Seta 2019a).

4   Visibility of the consideration of sexual minorities in tourism in Helsinki

In 2009, a tourism network called Gay Friendly Helsinki was founded by the city of Helsinki. During its six years of operations from 2009 to 2015, it gathered together companies in Helsinki region which were ready to invest in travelling and services of sexual minorities. (Yle 2015.) The companies that joined the network got a free education about the most well-known sexual minorities at that time and marketing abroad. After this education they received a Gay Comfort -mark. The companies were for example hotels, airlines, travel agencies and hairdressers. (Yle 2009.) During the years of operation, the companies involved started to become less active, so the network's operation faded as well and at the end it wasn't profitable anymore.

Destination management organization Visit Finland has made an article called Celebrate (with) Pride in Finland on their website (Visit Finland, 2019). In this article they promote the liberal and friendly atmosphere of Finland with these words: "There is no staying in the closet in Finland. This is the country where you can send your postcards home with gay erotic stamps and take part in endless rainbow-coloured activities throughout the year". Especially they highlight yearly Pride festivals in the biggest cities of Finland. The capital city of Finland, Helsinki, is one of these cities. Pride festivals are usually parades and parties lasting from one day to one week and they are excellent opportunities to connect with the community of sexual minorities and for companies to reach target customers directly (Guaracino 2007, 19; Guaracino & Salvato 2017, 51; Visit Finland 2019). In Helsinki, the Pride week was arranged 24.6.-30.6.2019 and it hosted over 120 volunteers, 50 program organizers and many other actors and organizations and in the parade, there was approximately 110 000 people marching (Pride 2019).

In the article, Visit Finland also promotes the "year-round pride", which means that in Finland and especially in Helsinki, the activities for sexual minority groups are not limited to only this once-a-year pride festival (Visit Finland 2019). They bring up that Helsinki has many gay-friendly cafes, restaurants and hotels. Helsinki has also a concept and a community called Design District Helsinki, which brings together creative people in the heart of Helsinki (Design District Helsinki 2019). On Visit Finland's article Celebrate (with) Pride in Finland they tell about Design District Helsinki and advice to try the unique shops and boutiques of the District. In this part they advertise especially a company called Finlayson, which has made a collection of sheets, bags and other textiles about Tom of Finland. Tom of Finland is a Collection of Touko Laaksonen's art by designer Sami Vulli. Touko Laaksonen was a Finnish artist who created art by drawing homoerotic pictures (Yle 2019).

Finlayson's collection sends a message about respect and freedom and this message represents everyone's right to be themselves and live a full life (Finlayson 2019).

In 2018 a Finnish man called Hannu Medina launched a website called Gay Travel Finland. The website promotes Finland and Finnish gay-friendly brands to sexual minority travellers around the world. (Gay Travel Finland 2019a.) Medina quotes on the web-page, that "Finland is one of the most gay-friendly countries in the world, but we have not been very good in promoting it". He started educating brands, companies and destinations on gay-friendly marketing and communication.

After launching Gay Travel Finland and starting to educate the companies, he and the partner companies came up with a slogan "We Speak Gay" as a tool for companies for branding and communicating the values every day. They established a community, which was named after the slogan, We Speak Gay. It is described to be "a community of open-minded companies and events that are welcoming LGBTQ customers creating a safe atmosphere in which you can feel valued and respected" (Gay Travel Finland 2019a). As a result, they offer certificates and after a company accomplishes it, they get We Speak Gay -stickers on the windows of the companies or logos (picture 2) on their websites to express their values of diversity and inclusivity. The sticker and the logo are needed to communicate about the attitudes of the company towards diversity and making everyone feel included. (Gay Travel Finland 2019a.) Medina says on the website, that of course the sticker or the logo only is not enough. The companies really need to understand diversity and make actions to promote the values in real life.

Picture 2. We Speak Gay logo (Gay Travel Finland 2019b)

On Gay Travel Finland's website (Gay Travel Finland 2019b), there is a list of companies and events that belong to the We Speak Gay community. These companies are all located around Finland. In Helsinki area, next listed companies and events belong to the community. First one is Taksi Helsinki, which is a taxi company with more than 1300 taxis in Helsinki area. Helsinki International Film Festival – Love & Anarchy, has been held every year since 1988 and LGBTQ themes have been represented since the beginning. Sideways Festival is a festival held in Helsinki and it is taking account the diversity aspect from audience and performing artists perspectives. Hotel Klaus K in Helsinki offers earlier mentioned Tom of Finland -themed weekend packages. Hotel Helka is described at Gay Travel Finland's list to be a hotel for responsibility, diversity and inclusion. Hotel Both is described to be driven by their values of sustainability, tolerance and multiculturalism. Hostels are also represented on the list. Fist, Hostel Suomenlinna, located in a UNESCO world heritage site on the island of Suomenlinna. Second hostel is Myö Hostel, few kilometres from Helsinki downtown. It is know by offering jobs for people with disabilities and in this way communicating about inclusivity and diversity. Last hotel in the list in Helsinki area is Hotel Krapi, which is more of a mini resort. Restaurants and cafes in Helsinki that are a part of We Speak Gay -community are: Roots Kitchen and Café Damascus. Two boutiques have joined the community too. First one is World of TRE, which is a lifestyle store for Finnish design, and it belongs also to Design District Helsinki community. The second one is Taiga Colors design store. Other members of the community in Helsinki are: The Island of Lonna, Happy Guide Helsinki and Music Theatre Kapsäkki. On the website, in the end of the listing of the companies belonging to the community, there is also a map provided, where the customer can see where all the companies are located.

On the Gay Travel Finland website (Gay Travel Finland 2019c) there is also a section "LGBTQ Guide Finland". This is a guide for sexual minorities visiting Finland. It is introduced in the guide, how the LGBTQ scene is mainly focused in Helsinki and that Finland and above all Helsinki area is safe and liberal these days. After this introduction, there is a list of recommendations for bars, clubs, coffee places, saunas, cruises and theatres which are specifically targeted for the sexual minority segment.

5   Methodology

In this chapter, the choices that will be made for the methodology are described. The objective of this work is to exploratorily gather information about the consideration of sexual minorities in tourism of Helsinki. The qualitative research type and methods intended to be used for this work will be introduced more deeply. According to Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara (2008, 133-135) there are four different research categories which are: exploratory, explanatory, descriptive and causal. For this work exploratory will be chosen, because it fits best to the objective of the work and even though the collective data is found relatively well, the matter is continuously evolving, and information found might not be as valid anymore as it was when the research was made. And because the research will be done with an exploratory approach, the qualitative methodology is the most suitable and not the quantitative. This topic can't be examined with numerical data, and in quantitative methodology the basis is on numerical data and more precisely it is quantifying the research problem through how a variable may affect to another variable. In qualitative methodology the point is to research the subject generally comprehensively and it is more based on real life. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 133-136, 156; MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 155; Payne, G & Payne, J. 2004, 175-179.)

5.1   Research type and method

There are various types of qualitative data gathering techniques such as: interviews, focus groups, ethnography, observations and diaries (MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 118-138). For this work, expert interviews, focus group interviews and author's own observations will be used. The theoretical part of the thesis doesn't answer to all of the research questions and therefore the qualitative research and all of its selected methods will be executed.

Table 2. How theoretical data and research methods answer to research questions

Research sub questions	Theoretical part	Observations	Expert interview	Focus group
1. Are companies involving equality consideration when cultivating social responsibility practices?	2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.4	x		
2. How can knowledge about sexual minorities be improved in the companies in the tourism industry	3.5, 2.5, 2.6		x	x
3.Is there potential for market growth if all sexual minorities felt that they are welcome to the destination?	3.3, 2.5, 3.2		x	x
4.How can Helsinki improve visibility of established equality?	3.4	x	x	

The author has formed a table (table 2) where is shown which sub questions occur in which chapter of the theoretical part, and from which qualitative method is wanted to get more information and answers to the research questions. The main research question is how are sexual minorities taken into consideration in the tourism industry in Helsinki? The sub-questions are listed in the table (table 2).

5.1.1 Interview type and method

Interviewing is a data-collection method which involves a direct linguistic interaction between the researcher and the respondent. There are three different approaches of an interview: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interview has an aim to ensure that every interview is presented with the same questions and order. Unstructured approach is closer to an everyday conversation and it has no defined questions, although usually the interviewer has certain topics in mind they want to be discussed. Semi-structured interview is an approach between structured and unstructured approaches. There the interviewer usually has predefined questions, but the interview is still more open-ended and leaves room for discussion. The approach is chosen by the type of the project, the nature of the research participants and the time limitations. It is important to select an approach suitable for the work, because it often determines the project success. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 199-204; MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 118-122; Payne, G & Payne, J. 2004, 129-133.) For this work, semi-structured approach appears to suit best and therefore it will be used.

As mentioned earlier, the intended approach for the interviews is semi-structured. There will be a set of pre-determined questions, but also a space for free conversation and sharing thoughts and experiences. The point of the work is to explore the impact that the consideration of sexual minorities in tourism causes said travellers, therefore free conversation and time to gather opinions and knowledge of the interviewees will be important. Because the author and the interviewees are native Finnish speakers, the interviews will be done in Finnish language. After the interviews, they will be translated to English to the authors best knowledge. There might be some changes in expressions in order to make sentences understandable in the other language. The interview questions (appendix 3) will comprise of ten questions regarding the topic and the research questions. The questions will be formed in a brain storming session with a fellow student working on a thesis with similar subject.

The expert interview questions will be tested multiple times before executing. First, the questions will be sent to a tourism professional working in TUI Finland and asked to give

comments and thoughts about the questions. After their professional insight, the questions are to be modified if needed and sent to the author's native level English speaking acquaintance to test the precision of the translations of the questions. Before the execution of the interviews, the questions will be sent to the thesis mentor to review the validity of the questions and relevancy to the topic and research questions.

5.1.2   Focus Group type and method

The second prospected data gathering technique focus group interview is a group discussion, where the data is collected in one go from several people who usually share common experiences or are willing to share their opinions concerning a specific topic. The respondents are usually group members of equal status and they do not know each other beforehand. The data is produced from the interaction among those involved and this interaction is usually guided by the interviewer. (MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 123-129; Payne, G & Payne, J. 2004, 103-106.)

Focus group interview will be semi-structured, where there is a frame for the interview and pre-determined questions, but plenty of room for the open discussion. The point is to collect qualitative data based on experiences and emotions. The author has certain topics to be covered during the discussion, but the most important thing is to have conversation between the respondents, therefore semi-structured interview type fit the best. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 199-204; MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 118-122; Payne, G & Payne, J. 2004, 129-133.) The focus group interview will be executed in Finnish language, because all the respondents are expected to be Finnish native speakers. The answers will be then translated to English to the author best knowledge. Five interview questions (appendix 4) were formed together in a brain-storming session with a fellow student working on a similar subject. Interview questions were then tested with practise participants that consist of friends and family of the author. After testing the questions and focus group situation, the interviewees decided to modify the questions to a slightly better appearance.

5.1.3   Observation type and method

Last intended technique observation can be beneficial approach for collecting rich information to elucidate and supplement the research. Observation involves monitoring and recording of natural situations, activities and/or events. There are different techniques for observations, and these can be divided into systematic and involved observations. There are more different titles for these techniques that can be found from the literature, but the contents remain the same in all. Systematic technique is more structured, and the observer is an external player. Involved is more freely formed in the situation and usually the

observer is participant in the group. Systematic technique is either direct or indirect observing. Direct observing is used when the observer directly distinguishes the event and documents it. Whereas indirect observation happens after the event and there the observer observes the situation afterwards, for example with technological aids. For this work, systematic indirect approach will be chosen, since the observation will be done comparing and observing beforehand chosen companies' web pages with different criteria chosen also beforehand. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 207-212; MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 129-133.)

5.2   Sampling structure and execution

In this section shall be described the nature of the sample and how the interview and focus group participants will be chosen. Sampling is a process where a subset of people to be studied are selected from the larger group to which they belong. There are two general sampling approaches, probability and non-probability, and since this work is of qualitative nature, the non-probability sampling appears to suit the best and therefore will be used. Probability sampling is a way to reach samples from entire population of interest and include random selection, thus these samples are often called random samples. Non-probability sampling involves a sample, which is particularly chosen based on specific characteristics. (MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 160-163; Payne, G & Payne, J. 2004, 209-210.) Execution of each method will be explained in each method's subheadings.

5.2.1   Interview sampling structure and execution

According to the purpose and objectives of the study, random samples for the expert interviews will not be needed nor wanted. The interviewees will be selected based on their expertise on sexual minority matters and their insights and experiences in this topic. Expert interviews will be executed together with a fellow student working on a thesis with similar subject. The expert interviews will be conducted with a face-to-face approach in order to get a deep conversation with the interviewees. Interviewees will be invited to the interview with an e-mail invitation (appendix 1), where will be stated the place and the time for the interview. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences offers very optimal group working space in Haaga Campus and this will be the place for the interview. The interviews will be recorded.

5.2.2   Focus group sampling structure and execution

For focus group interview, the random samples will also not be functional. The focus group will be wanted to consist of LGBT(Q) minorities in order to get their valuable insight

and personal experiences concerning the topic. For these reasons the non-probability approach will be the best choice for the study.

The focus group interviews need more planning because there are more variables when there are more interviewees involved. The author is planning to contact Helsinki Pride community in order to get help from them for getting as diverse group as possible for the interview, since the acquaintances of the author doesn't represent sexual minority groups. According to MacIntosh & O'Gorman (2015, 123) focus group usually consists of small groups of individuals and for this work, the author and the fellow student will be inviting five interviewees. MacIntosh & O'Gorman (2015, 126) also mention, that it is essential that the discussion that emerges from the interview, is driven by the focus group guide or guides. For this reason, five interviewees will be a small enough group for the guides to direct. The Interview will take place in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences premises in October 2019. According to a teaching video of Mod U (Preparing for Focus Groups: Qualitative Research Methods 2016, 1:20) the easiest way to collect the data from focus group interview, is taking a video, so that the answerers need not to be guessed afterwards. Therefore, this focus group interview will be videotaped.

5.2.3 Observation sampling structure and execution

The author has applied few earlier listed observation methods to fit the subject of the observation. As earlier mentioned, observations will be done by observing beforehand selected web pages with selected criteria, so non-probability sampling will be used. This gathered information will be performed as a table (table 3) and then explained written.

Table 3. Observation matrix

Company and website	Is the We Speak Gay-logo visible?	Is the consideration of sexual minorities visible?

The observed websites will be the same that are listed to belong in the We Speak Gay -community in theoretical part chapter 4. Visibility of the consideration of sexual minorities

in Helsinki. These companies' websites will be observed to verify, if the We Speak Gay -logo is visible and if they show the consideration of sexual minorities on their website in some other way.

5.3   Data analysis

The research data can be analysed in multiple ways. For quantitative and qualitative methods there are different techniques to analyse the collected data. The analysing methods can be roughly divided into two categories: explanatory approach and comprehensive approach. In the explanatory approach, statistical analysis is often used and then again in the comprehensive approach qualitative analysis. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 219; MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015.) For qualitative material, the most common analysing methods are: thematic analysis, template analysis, discourse analysis, hermeneutics, and computer aided qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) (MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 88, 140-153). Thematic analysis and coding will be used in this work in order to analyse all the collected qualitative data. In thematic analysis the basis is on recognising, analysing and enlisting themes and patterns within the collected data. In thematic analysis the starting point is in familiarisation with the data. The data is first transcribed and read actively while possibly writing down notes at the same time. The entire read data and the notes are then systematically organized into codes, and here, the author decided that colour coding the expert interview and focus group results will be the best way to divide results into three different categories that answer to the research problems. The final step is to write the analysis and results with commentary and carefully picked examples. (MacIntosh & O'Gorman 2015, 143-145.)
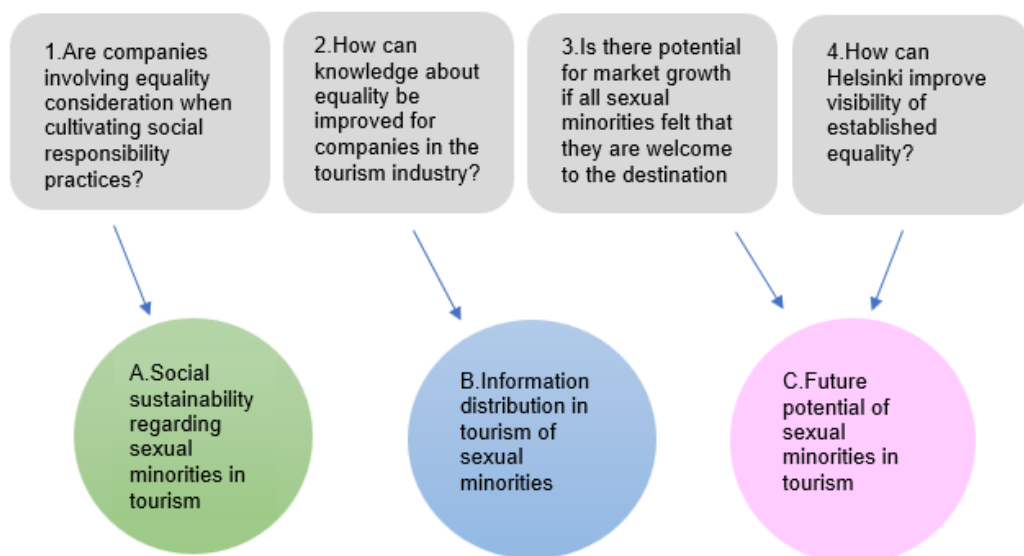

Figure 1. Demonstration how sub-questions were divided into three themes

6   Findings

For the expert interviews three potential interviewees were contacted via e-mail. Out of the three potential interviewees, two answered to the e-mail, one of them answered affirmative and other one stated that because of the resource issues they can't participate. The arrangements for the interview were done via e-mail with the interviewee. The interview took place on the 18th of October in 2019 at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences' premises. As planned beforehand, the approach for the interview was face-to-face and held with a fellow student working on a similar subject for their thesis. The language of the interview was Finnish. In total, the interview took an hour and 40 minutes. The nine interview questions for the expert interview were decided beforehand and the template can be found in the appendices (Appendix 1). For the focus group interview, help for getting as diverse group as possible was requested from Helsinki Pride community via e-mail. To this e-mail, a reply was never received. After the expert interview, the interviewee offered help for gathering participants for the group, by posting the invitation (Appendix 2.) to a Facebook group called Sateenkaari-Suomi with the authors contact information. This group consists of 7700 people who belong to LGBTQ community. Within two weeks, no contacts were received by the date of planned focus group interview. Since there were no willing participants, the focus group interview didn't take place at all. Despite this, one LGBTQ community member was willing to give a theme interview. A theme interview is semi-structured research method which focuses on certain topics. Theme interview can be used to explore an individual's thoughts, feelings and experiences. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 47-48.) The beforehand conducted focus group questions were then modified to fit to an interview of one person. This interview took place in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences premises on the 1st of November 2019 and it took 43 minutes. Observations were done with researching beforehand selected websites with beforehand defined criteria. The time spent on the observation was relatively short, shorter than expected. The selected websites were relatively easy to go through and therefore researching one website didn't take that much time. The observations were carried out in October 2019 all in all within one week.

Earlier in chapter 5.1 Research type and method was introduced a matrix (table 2), that demonstrates which sub questions occur in which chapter of the theoretical part and from which qualitative method is wanted to get answers to the research questions. In chapter 5.3 Data analysis, is demonstrated how all findings from the qualitative methods were divided into three different themes: A. Social sustainability regarding sexual minorities in tourism, B. Information distribution in tourism of sexual minorities and C. Future potential of sexual minorities in tourism.

Table 4. Key findings as themes matrix

Research sub questions	Theoretical part	Obser-vations	Expert inter-view	Theme inter-view
1. Are companies involving equality consideration when cultivating social responsibility practices?	2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.4	A, B	A.	A.
2. How can knowledge about sexual minorities be improved in the companies in the tourism industry?	3.5, 2.5, 2.6		B.	B.
3. Is there potential for market growth if all sexual minorities felt that they are welcome to the destination?	3.3, 2.5, 3.2		C.	C.
4. How can Helsinki improve visibility of established equality?	3.4		C.	

Here, the author has used the same matrix than in table 2, for demonstrating from which theme the answers to each research sub questions were found with which research method (table 4). As the focus group interview didn't take place, theme interview results are reviewed instead.

6.1 Social sustainability regarding tourism of sexual minorities

It turned out during the expert interview, that many tourism companies in Finland and Helsinki rely on how good the situation of sexual minorities is in Finland from the legal point of view. According to the interviewee, one third of the sexual minorities live in countries, where it is a crime or not socially accepted, this is a reason why no one in the tourism business in Helsinki or the whole Finland should rely on the situation here, because many of them welcomes travellers from other countries as well. The interviewee mentioned that in many cases, when tourism companies state that "they are open for everyone", when asked how they represent it, their answer is that this sentence is enough. According to the expert interviewee, this has to be made clear not only for the customers but also to the employees of the company, by acting on it and not only saying. The interviewed expert mentioned, that social sustainability and equality should not be only viewed from Finnish markets perspective, especially in tourism, the focus should be also in travellers with other nationalities. "The challenge is that in Finland we live in equal society, so we don't have to fight for our rights or hide ourselves…especially in very conservative countries, people have to hide themselves, so travelling to more permissive countries is one of their life-lines" stated the interviewee. On the other hand, the theme interviewee mentioned, that if they are travelling to a conservative country, they are not promoting their sexual orientation, but rather adapts to the local culture because they don't want to limit travel destinations because of it.

Even though the discussion was to view this topic from the traveller's point of view, the expert interviewee mentioned that from sexual minority representatives in Finland, only a bit more than 10 per cent feel that they can truly be themselves at work and this shouldn't be the case, everyone should feel that they can be whoever they are. They continued, that the companies have a big role on employees' well-being, and this is linked to the matter if a person can be themselves at work, or do they have to hide themselves. The theme interviewee mentioned, that for them as a traveller and a customer, it is important thing if the well-being of employees in the companies whose services they use, is visible and good, and they pay attention to it. Also, the expert interviewee said that within the business world, if companies are investing in enhancing the diversity, in many cases it is about the equality of men and women and sexual minorities are less important in this subject.

The expert interviewee mentioned, that sustainability and responsibility as themes are nowadays featured, and these are usually represented in corporate social responsibility, but after that, it should be represented in their communications and marketing. They also continued, that usually within these themes, social sustainability is not that big matter, but rather a lot of companies are focused on environmental sustainability. Continuing more on the topic, the interviewee mentioned that some companies cover the social sustainability and equality matters with attending to Pride for one week or month of the year, and then all the other weeks or months don't act on these subjects at all. The theme interviewee shared this opinion too, and they told that this should be all year round. The theme interviewee also had a suggest of companies making a bigger act on equality during the winter time, when this topic is not featured that much anywhere, this could enhance the company's credibility and reliability upon this matter. The expert interviewee also had a comment, that when companies have some kind of certificate concerning all aspects of sustainability, they show that they genuinely act on the matter.

When being asked if sexual minorities should be segmented as their own traveller group, the expert interviewee said that it is important now, especially because of the reason mentioned in last sentence and because that if people talk about it now, hopefully some day it becomes normal in every company and in every country. They also mentioned, that of course different customers should be segmented and recognized from the marketing point of view as well, the company has to know to whom they are marketing. The theme interviewee answered that on their opinion it's not necessary, they anyhow agreed, that these topics should be discussed, so that in the future sexual minorities are a normal matter in everyone's life.

The observation was completely focused on social sustainability and to verify if companies are involving equality consideration when cultivating social responsibility practises, and are they showing the consideration of sexual minorities on their websites. Out of the observed hotels and hostels (table 5), three out of six has the We Speak Gay -logo (picture 2) visible on their website. Four hotels and hostels out of the total observed six however had the consideration of sexual minorities visible on their website. Two out of six had neither the logo visible nor the consideration of sexual minorities.

Table 5. Observation matrix for hotels and hostels

Company and website	Is the We Speak Gay-logo visible?	Is the consideration of sexual minorities visible?
Hotel Klaus K https://www.klauskho-tel.com/en/	No	Yes. They have the earlier mentioned Tom of Finland – package. They also promote to donate 10% of the revenue of the package to support more tolerant attitudes about sexuality
Hotel Helka https://www.hotelhelka.com/	No	No. Only on their blog could be found article about Pride from the year 2017
Hotel Both https://chooseboth.fi/	Yes	Yes. The topic is easily found on the website. They tell that they welcome people no matter who they are or who they love
Hostel Suomenlinna https://www.hostelhel-sinki.fi/en	Yes	Yes. They tell the hostel to be discrimination free zone
Myö Hostel https://myohos-tel.com/en/home/	No	Not directly. They tell that they play fair and do their best to make working world more inclusive for everyone but refer to people with disabilities in this
Hotel Krapi https://krapi.fi/en/	Yes	Yes. They have an own page for We Speak Gay. They tell that they don't tolerate any kind of discrimination

Four shops and restaurants were listed to belong to the We Speak Gay community and therefore their websites were observed (table 6). Two of them were shops and two of them restaurants. None of the companies had the We Speak Gay -logo (picture 2) visible on their websites. Two out of total four shops' and restaurants' websites observed, had the consideration of sexual minorities visible some other way. Two out of the total four shops and restaurants had neither the logo nor the consideration of sexual minorities visible on their website. These two companies were both restaurants.

Table 6. Observation matrix for shops and restaurants

Company and website	Is the We Speak Gay-logo visible?	Is the consideration of sexual minorities visible?
World of Tre https://www.worldoftre.com/	No	Yes. Even though they don't have the logo visible on their website, they promote to be part of We Speak Gay Community
Taiga Colors https://www.taigacolors.fi/#borneo	No	Yes. Even though they don't have the logo visible on their website, they promote to be part of We Speak Gay -Community and value all kind of diversity
Roots Kitchen https://rootskitchen.fi/	No	No
Café Damascus http://www.cafedamascus.fi/	No	No

Last observation category was other companies, including different companies and festivals (table 7) and the number of these observed companies was six.

Table 7. Observation matrix for other companies

Company and website	Is the We Speak Gay-logo visible?	Is the consideration of sexual minorities visible?
Taksi Helsinki https://taksihelsinki.fi/	No	Not on the website. But their official Facebook page profile picture is in the rainbow colours.
Helsinki International Film Festival – Love and Anarchy https://hiff.fi/en/	Yes	Yes. They announce to fight for equality with love and anarchy and they signed the International 5050x2020 pledge for Gender parity and inclusion in 2019.
Sideways Festival https://sidewayshelsinki.fi/home	Yes	Yes. They promote at the website to be an equal event and welcoming everyone as they are. They do not condone discrimination of any kind and asks for participants to contact security personnel if they see behaviour like this
The Island of Lonna http://www.lonna.fi/en/lonna/	No	Yes. They promote that they welcome everyone with open mind regardless of gender, age or origin
Happy Guide Helsinki https://www.happyguide-helsinki.com/	Yes	Yes. They tell to be official and proud member of We Speak Gay community
Music Theatre Kapsäkki https://kapsakki.fi/kapsakki-in-english/	No	Yes. They still promote to be part of We Speak Gay -Community and to celebrate and support LGBTQ community wholeheartedly

Three out of the total six had the We Speak Gay-logo (picture 2) visible on their website. Five out six had the consideration of sexual minorities visible on their website in some other way. One out of six had neither the logo nor the consideration of sexual minorities

visible. They however had a picture of their Facebook profile picture on the website, and that was rainbow-coloured.

All in all, out of all the sixteen companies six had the We Speak Gay-logo visible on their website. Eleven out of sixteen companies had consideration of sexual minorities visible on their website in some other way. Five out of sixteen companies had neither the logo nor the consideration of sexual minorities visible.

6.2   Information distribution in tourism of sexual minorities

The expert interviewee mentioned in discussion with the interviewers, that different terms are ever changing and there are more and more to come. This might lead to people to be afraid to talk about these matters, because they are afraid to refer to a wrong term. The interviewee said that people shouldn't be afraid to talk about these matters because of the fear of saying something wrong but rather talk about it without reserve and then ask if something is unknown. Also, in Finland overall, the companies seem to be afraid to lose customers, if they consider sexual minorities visibly and they might think that then they have to take all the other minorities visibly into account as well. The theme interviewee shared these experiences, and from their experience, some companies might avoid promoting too much sexual minorities and their consideration, because they don't want to give a false image of representing only one group of people.

It turned out in the expert interview, that sexual minorities are "new and strange" area for many companies, and they don't know that they don't have enough information about sexual minorities. Sometimes tourism companies even have the thought, that saying that "everyone is welcome to use our company's services or products" is enough, but according to the expert interviewee, if this is the situation in some company, it is not enough to really cover this topic only with one sentence and then not act on it. The Interviewee also mentioned, that it is important to raise awareness in companies overall about sexual minorities and everything starts from the information. It is not necessary according to interviewee, that all the tourism companies act greatly in favour of sexual minorities, but that they would at least be aware about different people and different potential customer segment. The interviewee introduced that there are different stages of support for sexual minorities and these are: allies, advocates and activists, and not everyone and every company need to be an activist, but they could act as allies, who support the sexual minorities.

If sexual minorities are one desired target group, as mentioned earlier, the expert interviewee highlighted the importance of companies to get to know the target group, their

characteristics, what they value and expect and how to reach them. All this increased information within the companies leads to natural external representation. The theme interviewee mentioned that for the majority of people, in Finland especially, it is not every day to see for example transgender people, so for customer servers this might be a new situation when they are serving them. This might lead to unexpected situations, if the employees don't have information about different people. Therefore, the theme interviewee thought, that it is important that the information about sexual minorities comes already from inside the company. The expert interviewee agreed on this, and according to them, the companies cannot guarantee that every employee exactly shares the company's values, but it is still the company's responsibility to signal these values externally.

Both interviewees agreed, that social media is a big factor for companies to promote their consideration of sexual minorities. The expert interviewee mentioned, that nowadays consumers are actively following companies on social media, and in many cases get their first impression through social media. The theme interviewee pointed out, that social media is a good channel to promote this matter and also to share information. However, they also pointed out that if companies are using social media as a tool, they need to make sure that the marketing is not too stereotypic, and it is genuine. Another point from the theme interviewee was, that also consumers share the information and/or experiences and opinions about companies to other consumers with social media tools.

When talking about the future of information distribution and the most important measures, the expert interviewee answered that first and most important step is to raise awareness, invite reflection on the subject and help removing the prejudices. The theme interviewee mentioned that especially tour operators could think in the future if they would offer tours to areas, where LGBT community is strongly represented, not only to sexual minorities but for every people who is interested about knowing more about the subject. This would also represent the company's values and the consideration of sexual minorities to the customers. The theme interviewee also suggested, that tourism companies could highlight their values and consideration of sexual minorities already in the job advertisements when they are searching for new employees. It would possibly help companies to bring up their brand and give courage to potential new employees who are for example part of some sexual minority group or then just share same values, to apply for the job.

6.3 Future potential of sexual minorities in tourism

Both interviewees stated, that in tourism, sexual minorities are a customer segment that generally uses a lot of money, because most of them don't have kids, so they have more

money to spend to themselves. This is why it is an important traveller group and there is a lot of potential, agreed both interviewees. The expert interviewee pointed out, that tourism is a very big actor regarding what kind of image travellers get from Finland and Helsinki, and yet tourism industry seems conservative about considering sexual minorities. As earlier mentioned, Finland has very good situation with laws regarding this subject and tourism companies should use it as an advantage. When talking about how the situation is around the world, and what could Helsinki learn from other destinations, the interviewee said that there are many destinations around the world where they for example have dedicated marketing for sexual minorities. For example, Gay Friendly hotels are a huge phenomenon around the world, and according to the interviewee, it is researched that after the price, for sexual minorities this "Gay Friendly" concept is one of the most important criteria when booking a hotel. On the contrary, the theme interviewee was of the opinion, that this Gay Friendly concept should be outgrown from. They also mentioned that: "We are already living in the future in that sense, that it shouldn't be necessary to mention about being gay friendly".

The expert interviewee mentioned, that even if many tourists fly to and from Helsinki, and it is important that sexual minorities are considered in Helsinki, but that Finland as a country and destination also has an advantage of sexual minorities being considered in tourism companies also all over Finland, in Lapland for example. And also, that typically smaller tourism businesses are more open and active about consideration of sexual minorities than bigger companies. As earlier mentioned, the expert interviewee has an opinion, that tourism companies shouldn't necessarily think that they have to start treating sexual minority customers in a different way than other customers, but rather to meet and serve everyone as an individual. In Helsinki, there is only one actor in the field of improving the knowledge of sexual minorities in tourism and offering Gay Friendly certificates, and the expert interviewee is hoping that these actors would increase during next years. This way, if there were more acts on behalf of consideration of sexual minorities in tourism in Helsinki, and the tourism companies would be more open to this topic, other destinations could also learn from Helsinki in the future, tells the expert interviewee.

As a conclusion concerning the future potential headline, the expert interviewee mentions that still nowadays especially gay travelling is often in connection with sex and searching partners. For Helsinki, overall in LGBT tourism, the biggest competitive factors will be the good situation with the laws and diversity and the values of Finland, not promoting with sex and sexuality. The theme interviewee had a point where they hoped that in the future, whole sustainability theme should be increased or even added to curriculums in Finnish

schools if it's not there yet, and specifically not forgetting social sustainability, equality and sexual minorities.

7   Discussion

As mentioned earlier, the main objective of this research is to find answers to research question: How are sexual minorities taken into consideration in the tourism industry in Helsinki? Also sub research questions: Are companies involving equality consideration when cultivating social responsibility practices? How can knowledge about sexual minorities be improved in the companies in the tourism industry? Is there potential for market growth if all sexual minorities felt that they are welcome to the destination? How can Helsinki improve visibility of established equality? are answered.

The first sub chapter examines the findings and conclusions of the research using the help of the theoretical part. The conclusions of the research results provide a solution to the sub- and main research questions. After answering to the research questions, benefits of the work to the commissioner are introduced and reliability and validity of the research are reviewed. Further research suggestions are introduced and finally the personal learning is discussed.

7.1   How are sexual minorities taken into consideration in the tourism industry in Helsinki?

As the main research question and the first sub-research question whether companies are involving equality consideration when cultivating social responsibility practises are closely linked to each other, they can be discussed simultaneously here. The visibility of the consideration of sexual minorities was studied in chapter 4 of this paper. Already from there it can be concluded, that there is only one active actor in this area of subject and while doing the research, other sources were not easy to find. It turned out from the expert interview that there is indeed only one active actor on this matter. Therefore, also the information about companies involving equality consideration when cultivating social responsibility practices was rather difficult to find, as it is as a topic similar to the main research question. The observation made in chapter 6.1 verified, that even companies who tell that they are gay friendly and belong to earlier in chapter 4 mentioned We Speak Gay community, don't necessarily show it on their website. However, if the observation was made based on whether the We Speak Gay logo was visible on their concrete premises, the result could have been different. Also, some of them might have neither the logo nor any specific mention about consideration of sexual minorities on their website, yet they might feature for example rainbow colouring (picture 1), which is presented in chapter 3 Sexual minorities in tourism, on their social medias.

As it was found already in chapter 3.4, LGBT travellers don't automatically assume they are welcome at a particular destination. Hence, it is important to show the consideration with some kind of visible invitation to them. (Guaracino & Salvato 2017, 2.) This theory was confirmed also in the expert interview. However, it may vary in the sense of every person having their personal experiences towards this and it may vary how people with different nationalities feel about this, because the situation in their country might be totally different. As it turned out in the theme interview, they didn't share the feeling of companies having to express their consideration of sexual minorities. Also, some insights for the third sub research question, whether there is potential for market growth if all sexual minorities felt that they are welcome to the destination, can be interpreted within the same discussion. If the earlier mentioned invitation to LGBT travellers was somehow sent, this could lead to potential market growth. Again, here should be mentioned, that it depends on an individual and their feelings and experiences, how they feel about the invitation. However, both of the interviewees agreed, that there is a lot of money among the LGBT travellers, since usually they are still couples without kids and therefore having the opportunity to spend all the money to themselves. These discussed findings and suggestions also apply to the fourth sub research question, how Helsinki can improve visibility of established equality. It would be beneficial for tourism companies in Helsinki to use the good situation of the equality laws and diversity as competitive factors. Helsinki should also take advantage of the good values of Finland and promote them to incoming foreign travellers.

Based on the study made in chapter 3.5, information about sexual minorities generally and in tourism can be found on the internet on various websites. However, the expert interview showed, that tourism companies in Helsinki don't necessarily even know they lack information and only rely on the good situation of Finland concerning sexual minorities. From chapter 2 Social sustainability, it can be seen how many guidelines about sustainability for the actors of the tourism industry from the international and national organizations leave social sustainability and especially sexual minorities aside and concentrate on other aspects of sustainability instead. These organizations don't only give guidelines, but also information to the actors in tourism industry, and therefore the information about sexual minorities and the importance of social sustainability should already be covered there. In chapter 2.5 Equality and Non-Discriminatory act, is discussed how the laws are in Finland considering equality and non-discrimination. It proves the point, that in Finland these matters are in a good form, just as the companies seem to be thinking. However, again, here needs to be taken into account that majority of incoming tourists come from outside of Finland. In other countries the situation might differ and therefore the companies shouldn't just think that it's enough that in Finland the equality and non-discriminatory matters are in good form.

Corporate social responsibility was discussed in chapter 2.6. As mentioned already in that chapter, the information concerning this subject from the customer's point of view was rather hard to find. However, it was discovered, that company values are important from the stakeholder's point of view. As customers are one stakeholder group, the information concerning company's values should be easy for the customer to find. (Hawkins, D. E., 2006.) It turned out already in the chapter 2.6, and in the interviews, that the communication about values for example to all the employees is the company's responsibility and it should be consistent. As Hawkins (2006) states, companies should aim to be transparent. All the internal and external information and communication are increasing the feeling of transparency for the employee and customer. This leads to a conclusion of the importance of not only being able to communicate the company values, but also sharing the information concerning sexual minorities and finally enhancing consideration of the minority. How can knowledge about sexual minorities be improved in the companies in tourism industry was the second sub research question. A good point from the theme interviewee was that spreading the information could start from adding the social sustainability theme into curriculums in Finnish schools. As this work's desired outcome is to create a compact information package concerning sexual minorities in tourism sector (appendix 6), it will hopefully help to raise awareness, invite reflection on the subject and to remove the possible prejudices at least among the future professionals in tourism business. That way if the information is accessible already before becoming a professional, it might help to change the ways of reflecting on diversity and equality.

On the last note, it can be said that the failure of arranging and executing the focus group interview also proves to make a point. The whole subject of consideration on sexual minorities in tourism of Helsinki is very personal from the traveller's point of view. In the Facebook group where the invitation was posted, there are 7700 group members. As none of them never replied, it can be interpreted that the inhabitants of Finland and Helsinki also see the ongoing overall situation regarding sexual minorities and their consideration positive just like most of the tourism companies do. Again, it must be remembered that majority of the incoming travellers are foreign, so this topic should not only be reviewed from the Finnish representative of sexual minorities point of view.

The author has again used the same matrix than in tables 2 and 4, with an addition of key findings column, to demonstrate the summary of the key findings. The matrix (table 8) shows from which theme the answers to each research questions were found with which research method, and what was the key finding.

Table 8. The most important key findings to the research sub questions

Research sub questions	Theoretical part	Observations	Expert interview	Theme interview	Key findings
1. Are companies involving equality consideration when cultivating social responsibility practices?	2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.4	A, B	A.	A.	In Helsinki, the tourism companies don't necessarily show it, because they might not even know they lack information.
2. How can knowledge about sexual minorities be improved in the companies in tourism industry?	3.5, 2.5, 2.6		B.	B.	Raising awareness, inviting reflection on the subject and removing the possible prejudices are the base for improving the knowledge level in tourism companies.
3.Is there potential for market growth if all sexual minorities felt that they are welcome to the destination?	3.3, 2.5, 3.2		C.	C.	There is a big purchasing power among sexual minority travellers and showing the consideration might encourage them to visit and use the money in certain destination.
4.How can Helsinki improve visibility of established equality?	3.4		C.		Helsinki should promote the ongoing good equal and non-discriminatory situation and values of Finland.

The matrix (table 8) summarises briefly all the most important findings discussed in this whole chapter. All in all, every sub research question is shifting around same kinds of themes and the importance of knowledge is recurring over and over again.

7.2 Benefits of the work to the commissioner and to anyone it may concern

The main benefit of the work to the commissioning party Vastuullisen Matkailun Portaat -project is a study about the consideration of sexual minorities in tourism of Helsinki combined into a compact information package (appendix 6). The research functions as primal contact into the subject of consideration of sexual minorities in tourism of Helsinki as it has not been widely studied before with similar criteria and leaves opportunities for further research. The desired impact of the results is to invite reflection on the subject among the tourism students and professionals and potentially expand their knowledge on sexual minorities in tourism. As mentioned already in chapter 1.1 Objectives, this study is aiming to help to get social sustainability as equal as environmental sustainability as a subject when considering responsible tourism. Especially in tourism business, which moves different people from all around the world, it is important to understand that there are different people. With the complementing education model about responsible tourism, Vastuullisen Matkailun Portaat -project may get even more tourism professionals and students to think about responsibility and sustainability, and also equality and sexual minorities from social

sustainability topic with this works result: information package about sexual minorities in tourism (appendix 6).

7.3   Reliability and validity of research

Reliability of research means whether the measurement results are reproducible and consistent. If the research is reliable, the measurements are consistent regardless of who does the research and the results were similar if the study was repeated. Whereas validity is that if the results of the research are right, the right matters have been studied in a way that accurately captures the characteristics and answer to the problem. There are several external factors that may affect the reliability and validity of research, such as time, accessibility and money restrictions. The terms reliability and validity are usually linked more to quantitative researches but also validity and reliability of qualitative researches must be discussed. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 226-228; Payne, G & Payne, J. 2004, 195-199, 233-237.)

When discussing validity and reliability concerning this study, it can be notified that there are some deficiencies in the research. These can be explained by external factors such as the lack of resources and time that the author had in use. For the focus group interview, the author couldn't gather a group of sexual minorities despite all the effort they put in such a short time. The e-mail for requested help was never responded and the author didn't have suitable representatives in their contacts. After the expert interview, the interviewee offered help by posting an invitation to a Facebook group of 7700 people, despite that, the author didn't get any contacts. The focus group interview would have given more perspective on the study. However, this research was based on experiences and emotions because of its qualitative nature and therefore the answers from the focus group interview or theme interview could vary nevertheless. The results cannot be the same, when the question is about people's personal feelings. The answers could also vary for example depending on the nationalities of possible respondents, because this issue doesn't appear the same in every country of the world. Because of quite short notice arranged theme interview, the interview questions were not tested beforehand. Also, both interviews were executed with semi-structured interview approach. This leaves a lot room to discuss about different topics, and with different interviewees these topics and all the findings from those might vary. In spite of these deficiencies, it can still be said that this research led to several valuable insights.

7.4   Further research

As this study was made with a qualitative research without succeeding to arrange a focus group interview, the results are not generalizable to all people from sexual minority

groups. As earlier mentioned, it depends on different external factors as well, how the sexual minority travellers feel about certain matters. As this study is concerning the consideration of sexual minorities in tourism of Helsinki, it would have been desirable to get also foreign incoming travellers from different sexual minority groups for the focus group interview. A suggestion for further research would be to do a research with quantitative research methods. For example, a survey for foreign incoming travellers from different sexual minority groups would be a good option for further research. Also, it would be fitting to explore the consideration of sexual minorities further with a survey from tourism companies based on Helsinki point of view. Another more specified study that could be led from this work is to research the consideration of a specific group of minorities in tourism of Helsinki or even more generally. For example, transgender traveller's point of view, since the knowledge on this is still very limited.

7.5   Personal learning

The process of the whole study was educational but at the same time very challenging. The theoretical research taught the author even more to critically view the literature and other sources. One of the challenges that the author faced was to find sources which were reliable and up to date. Also, it was challenging to define the scope and research the information needed precisely for this work.

Even more challenging for the author was time management. The time for writing the thesis and doing the study was rather short, since the study was started on August 2019 and it was needed to be finished in November 2019 in order to the author to graduate in December 2019. At the same time as doing the research and writing the thesis, the author was working in shifts nearly full-time. Some weeks it was rather difficult for the author to find any time for the research and writing because of long working days. However, fortunately the thesis mentor was rather flexible with the meeting times and deadlines for each earlier defined sector.

It was surprising for the author, how some of the contacted parties didn't answer at all, even though the study could possibly support their work or at least was related to the work they do. Waiting for the answers from different parties took time, and therefore some of the decisions were needed to be made with a rather short notice. Also, the fact that from 7700 Facebook group members no one answered to the focus group interview invitation surprised the author in large measure. However, the author wasn't discouraged about that, because as earlier mentioned, that also proves to make a point and, in the end, they had two very fruitful interviews.

As the work progressed, the importance of studying this subject became apparent to the author. The whole process of the research was interesting, as the author had only little knowledge about the subject and they learnt new on the way. As a future professional in tourism management, they think this is valuable knowledge that can be utilized in the future. Even though the research has some deficiencies, in its entirety, it was successful and led to several valuable insights.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Expert interview invitation e-mail

Hei

Olemme kaksi Haaga-Helian Matkailun liikkeenjohdon kolmannen vuoden opiskelijaa ja teemme opinnäytetöitämme aiheesta seksuaalivähemmistöjen huomioiminen matkailualalla. Teemme kaksi erillistä opinnäytetyötä, joista toinen keskittyy enemmän Helsingin alueen matkailuun, ja toinen yleisemmin globaalisti.

Töiden tarkoituksena on kartoittaa, kuinka matkailualalla huomioidaan seksuaalivähemmistöjä. Töiden tavoitteena on lisätä tietoa yhdenvertaisuudesta ja seksuaalivähemmistöistä matkailualan yrityksissä sekä laajentaa saapuvien matkailijoiden potentiaalia lisäämällä tietoa ja yleistä hyväksymistä seksuaalivähemmistöille.

Haluamme toteuttaa empiirisen osan opinnäytetyöstä asiantuntijahaastatteluiden avulla, ja siksi otammekin yhteyttä sinuun. Olisiko sinulla kiinnostusta osallistua haastatteluumme? Haastattelussa toivomme löytävämme vastauksia ja näkemyksiä seksuaalivähemmistöihin liittyvissä kysymyksissä, ja erityisesti matkailun näkökulmasta.

Haastattelupaikkana toimii Haaga-Helia Ammattikorkeakoulun Haagan kampuksen toimipiste osoitteessa Pajuniityntie 11, 00320 Helsinki.

Ajankohdaksi ehdottaisimme jo jotakin seuraavista:

Perjantai 18.10 klo 10.30-11.30
Perjantai 25.10 klo 13.30-14.30

Olemme kuitenkin joustavia aikataulun suhteen, joten jos nämä eivät sinulle sovi ja haluat haastatteluun osallistua, voit ehdottaa myös jotain toista ajankohtaa. On myös mahdollista järjestää haastattelu Skypen välityksellä.

Kiitos jo etukäteen.

Ystävällisin terveisin

Janet Arkkukangas
Emma Wheatley
Haaga-Helia Ammattikorkeakoulu

Appendix 2. Focus group interview invitation

Olemme kaksi matkailun liikkeenjohdon opinnäytetyötä tekevää opiskelijaa ja aiheemme on "Seksuaalivähemmistöjen huomioiminen matkailualalla". Toteutamme työtämme varten Focus Group -ryhmähaastattelun, ja sitä varten etsimme mahdollisimman monipuolista edustajistoa jakamaan kokemuksiaan kartoitustamme varten. Lähtökohtana on ensisijaisesti kokemusten jakaminen ja niistä ohjatusti keskustelu, teemana matkailu. Kaikki ryhmähaastatteluun osallistuvien antamat tiedot käsitellään luottamuksellisesti. Emme kirjaa ylös emmekä paljasta mitään henkilötietoja vaan pelkästään työn kannalta oleelliset tiedot.

Ryhmähaastattelu järjestetään Haagassa Haaga-Helian kampuksella osoitteessa Pajuniityntie 11, perjantaina 1.11 klo 12:30 ja sen kesto on korkeintaan yksi tunti.
Toivoisimme saavamme haastatteluun viisi henkilöä. Tutkimuksen tulokset ovat luettavissa Theseuksessa loppuvuodesta.

Terveisin Emma ja Janet
Haaga-Helia Ammattikorkeakoulu

Appendix 3. Expert interview questions

1. Does it matter whether sexual minorities are segmented apart from other travellers? Could you explain further?
2. Sexual minorities are already visible for example in the media but not necessarily as much in marketing of tourism. Do you have an opinion why?
3. Are tourism companies interested to learn and understand more about sexual minorities?
4. By what methods would you advise tourism companies to take sexual minorities more into consideration?
5. What can an individual in tourism related company do to improve consideration of sexual minorities?
6. From your point of view, what should be changed on a global level of tourism, so that the limitations of traveling would decrease for sexual minorities?
7. Is there a country that Finnish tourism could learn from regarding the consideration of sexual minorities?
8. Can other countries learn something from what Finnish tourism is doing to consider sexual minorities? Please give an example.
9. Do you have any concrete examples of what is done "well" or "poorly" in Helsinki, regarding sexual minorities?

Appendix 4. Focus group guidance questions

Before the interview the authors do a short introduction on why they chose this subject for the thesis work and what is it for, who is it aiming to help and why.

1. Do you feel that planning and going on travels is different than for a "straight" traveller?
2. Based on what criteria do you choose a destination for travels?
3. Do you have an example of a company that explicitly considers sexual minorities?
4. Are sexual minorities included in marketing often enough in your opinion?4
5. Do you think sexual minorities should be considered more specifically in tourism? Or even just generally in everyday life?

Appendix 5. Theme interview questions

1. Do you feel that planning and going on travels is different that for a "straight" traveller?
2. Based on what criteria do you choose a destination for travels?
3. Do you think sexual minorities should be considered more specifically in tourism? Or generally in everyday life? Why?
4. Can you think of any concrete suggestions that tourism companies could do to enforce equality?
5. Are sexual minorities featured in tourism marketing often enough in your opinion?
6. Have you noticed that some tourism companies take stand/support the LGBTQ community only at the time of Pride festivals, but outside of it don't make efforts to show support?
7. How do you think information could be distributed, especially in tourism as it is quite old fashioned (especially in Finland)?

Consideration of sexual minorities in tourism

Informative package about sexual minorities in tourism for Vastuullisen Matkailun Portaat -project.

Janet Arkkukangas & Emma Wheatley

Equality in: health, education, transport, housing & recreation
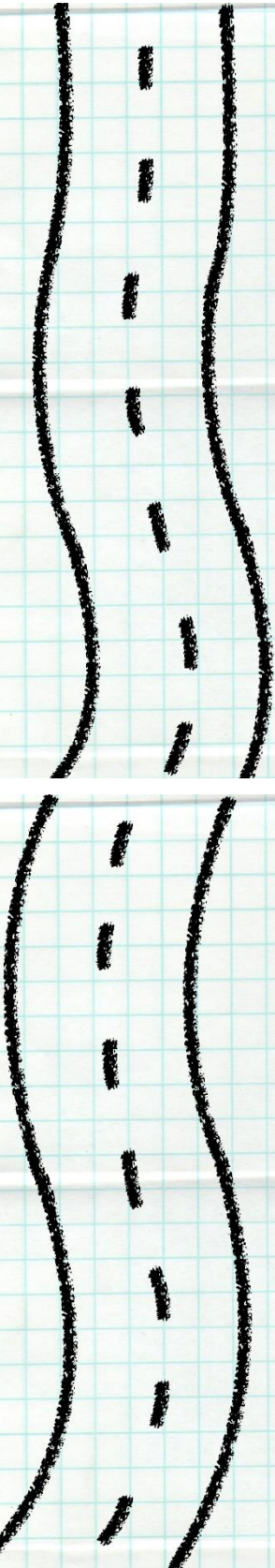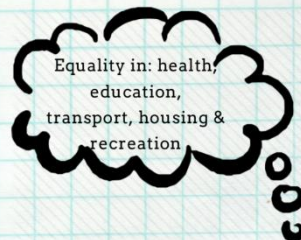
Social sustainability in tourism

Social sustainability focuses on not only to improve the quality of life but to maintain it for the future generations.

Sustainable development is defined as development that is considerate of the present, without the compromise of future generations and their needs.

Sustainable development requires mutual efforts globally to achieve a sustainable, *inclusive* and resilient future for the planet and *people* living on it.

Tourism professional, note these global and national guidelines for social sustainability

Global guidelines	Finnish guidelines

• Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
  By the World Tourism Organisation
	• National Principles for Sustainable Tourism
	  By Visit Finland

• Sustainable Development Goals
  By United Nations
	• Criteria for Sustainable Development
	  By Visit Finland

Sexual minorities

Sexual minorities = People whose sexual orientation is something other than heterosexual or who define their gender to something else than traditional male or female. Often described with a general acronym of **LGBT(Q)**

Psst... Keep in mind, that the diversity grows less dependent to the traditional male and female genders, so new definitions are constantly emerging!

Tourism professional, know your terms!

Lesbian A preferred term for women who are sexually and/or affectionally attracted to other women.

Gay A term referring usually to men who are sexually and/or affectionally attracted to other men. Can also be used to describe any sex feeling sexually and/or affectionally attracted to the same sex

Bisexual Describes a person who can be attracted sexually and/or affectionally to both female and male genders

Transgender Refers to people whose biological gender and gender identity are not the same

Queer A term than can be used by people to describe themselves, who dont necessarily want to determiner their sexual orientation. Can still be taken offensively when used as a sobriquet

Heterosexual A person who feels sexual and/or affectional attraction to someone of the opposite sex

Rainbow family A family where atleast one of the parents belongs to the community of sexual minorities

Tourism of sexual minorities - Then and now

Victorian period - Gay travel starts

20th century beginning - Gay travel spreads to big European cities and USA

1914-1945 - WW I & WW II starts gay urban subculture

1950-1960 - First gay right protests, Gay neighborhoods "gayborhoods"

1970-1990 - Mainstreaming of gay travel

2000-Now - First legalisation of same sex marriage

Reasons, why sexual minorities should be considered in tourism

♡ Improves socially sustainable wellbeing for the people of the planet

🌳 Diversifies the brand image of responsible and sustainable tourism

🪙 DINKS (Double income no kids) = Big purchasing power

Current and future trends of LGBT(Q) tourism, you might want to look into

- Attractiveness of a destination based on *local communities wellbeing*
- *Social media* as an important tool for marketing and reaching sexual minorities
- *Rainbow families* travelling to destinations that are both gay and child friendly
- Expected growth in *same sex marriage* legalisation and *same sex adoption* approval

Tourism professional, what can **you** do to improve diversity in tourism industry

Employer! Educate your staff on diversity

Educate yourself on diversity

Invite others to reflect on diversity

Accept and be open towards diversity

Treat everyone equally with same kindness

Don't be afraid to ask and speak about sexual minorities

Psst... Keep in mind, that every LGBT(Q) individual experiences inclusion uniquely and not all feel left out

Overall, the intention is not to rave about sexual minorities, but to invite reflection on the subject in order to enrich diversity and inclusion in tourism globally and in Finland

Whatever you choose to do, remember to be genuine