

# Flight Shame: Shame as a Tool to Change Consumer Behavior

Eveliina Korkea-aho

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## **ABSTRACT**

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu  
Tampere University of Applied Sciences  
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KORKEA-AHO, EVELIINA:  
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In 2018, an environmental movement called Flight shame has started to spread around the world with Greta Thunberg, a young Swedish climate activist as its head figure. In Sweden the air passenger numbers have started to fall, and this is likely due to Flight shame. In this thesis shame is studied from the point of view of consumption, particularly in air travel, in order to find out how shame affects people's consumption decisions and whether shaming is an effective way to get people change their consumption behavior. The purpose of the thesis is to discover whether the feeling of shame is stronger than desire to travel and fly.

The research was carried out by using an online survey which was to give an understanding of how the people in Finland perceive Flight shame and its effectiveness. The results are based on 74 answers of young adults.

It is clear that in Finland people are worried about climate change and do recognize the climate impact of air travel. Many people see the need to reduce flying in general and are at least considering that air travel might be something that one should be ashamed of. Still, most have not experienced shame for their flying and those who have, show signs that the shame arises often elsewhere than other's effort to make one feel ashamed. Despite air travel being perceived shameful, people are still highly willing to justify their own air travel, which suggest that there is a battle between what is morally right and what one desires, reluctance to shift to a new slowly emerging social norm.

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Key words: flight shame, air travel, climate change, shaming

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

CO <sub>2</sub>	carbon dioxide
GHG	greenhouse gas
ICAO	The International Civil Aviation Organization
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
VBN	Value-Belief-Norm Theory
NO <sub>x</sub>	nitrogen dioxide

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Air travel is one of the fastest growing source of greenhouse gases and currently, it is responsible for 2% of all carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions (ICAO N.d.). Thus, it is a great contributor to climate change of which people worldwide are more or less aware of. It is addressing a threat to not only to the environment we live in but also to humans themselves but despite of all the information and facts available, people are flying, and the numbers are forever increasing. There are different potential ways to decrease the emissions, but many of them are inadequate to cut down emissions the needed amount due to the increase of air travel demand (Markham & co. 2018, 206). For that reason, an effective aid would be a change in consumer behavior.

Especially lately, the climate concern has been under debate as the young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has been actively protesting for climate around the world. She has also given the face for the new environmental movement called "*Flygskam*", Flight shame, which aims to get people rethink their flying habits and feel ashamed of the environmental harm their air travel is causing. The movement has fast spread internationally and raised a lot of discussion, for and against. Also, the shaming has taken steps to more aggressive opinion building as people have started to judge each other's, especially influencers', flying behavior which could also be described as public shaming.

Flying is perceived as social norm and unavoidable even though only a small amount of population is responsible for whole of air travel (Gössling & co. 2019, 2). Flying is something we put a high importance on and towards which we are generally reluctant to change behavior even if we are aware of the harm it causes. This pro-environmental behavior (or the lack of it) has been studied and there is no evidence of consistency found between environmental concern and behavior (Hares & co. 2009, 469).

However, in Sweden, the passenger numbers have been falling lately and this suggests that people are getting more concerned and are rethinking their flying habits, likely due to Flight shame (Hoikkala & Magnusson 2019). Social norms determine what is shameful (Talvio 2011, 159). As the Flight shame movement is aiming to make people ashamed of their flying, it is at the same time aiming to change the social norm of air travel.

### **1.1 Thesis topic and objective**

The aim of this thesis is to obtain information on how shame can be used to affect people's consumption decisions. The focus will be on the Flight shame movement and how it is affecting people and their air travel decisions, what kind of reactions the movement receives and whether the shaming is working effectively in changing people's consumption behavior to the wanted direction.

The purpose of this thesis is to clarify whether the feeling of shame caused by others is stronger than desire to fly and travel in the minds of people in Finland. It will be investigated what the status of Flight shame currently in Finland is, why are people reluctant to change their flying behavior and is shame effective in getting people to change their behavior when it comes to air travel. Also, since the flight shaming has been taken online and targeted especially to public figures and influencers, one of the questions to be answered is whether in people's minds, some people are thought to be more privileged to fly than others.

### **1.2 Working methods and data**

In this thesis there will be used secondary and primary data. The theoretical background will be based on secondary data collected from other studies, articles and online sources. An online survey is conducted to collect the primary data in order to gain an insight of the status Flight shame movement has in Finland. People are asked questions in three parts about their flying habits, environment and Flight shame. The first two parts are to support explaining the answers to the last part.

### **1.3 Thesis process**

The theoretical background of this thesis on the chapter 2 discusses about air travel and its climate impact, consumer behavior with the focus on the environment and the feeling of shame: what causes it and how it affects a person. In chapter 3 the focus is turned into the Flight shame movement. In chapter 4 the research methods will be explained as well as how the research was conducted. In the chapter 5 the results of the research will be introduced, and this is followed by discussion and conclusions in chapters 6 and 7. As an appendix one can find the online survey which was used to collect the research data.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Air travel and the climate change

Within the last few centuries the air temperature has risen about 0,9 Celsius (NASAa N.d.). This is especially due to the increase of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the atmosphere and this is causing the climate to change. For instance, heat waves, now experienced also in northern Europe, are just one of many effects of it. Many of the problems causing climate change are a result of human behavior (NASAb N.d.).

Flying as a transport method has become more and more popular over the years. During the last 50 years the number of air passengers has increased up to 3.7 billion (Markham, Young, Reis & Higman 2018, 206) and this number is not showing any signs of decrease (Alcock & co. 2016, 136) but the opposite; the air traffic industry is expected to increase almost 5% a year (Hares & Dickinson 2009, 466; Markham & co. 2018, 206).

Sustainable tourism researcher Gössling & co. (2019, 2) talks about flying as a social norm. It has become a habit to fly with especially the cheap short haul flights having experienced a rise in popularity (Cohen, Higman & Cavaliere 2011, 1072). It is easy for the population to take short distance flights for “get-aways” such as a shopping weekend trip in Paris or a bachelor party in Amsterdam. When the cost of flying abroad is only slightly more expensive (if at all) than choosing to stay in one’s home country, it motivates people to travel. Especially airlines and aviation organizations are supporting this social norm of flying by supporting these cheap flights and, for instance, offering loyal customers benefits through different frequent flyer programs (Gössling & co. 2019, 2).

However, only a small and privileged part of the humanity is responsible for a whole lot of global air travel. Although, it could be thought that the rise of low-cost airlines got more people to fly because of its affordability, the reality shows that it has resulted in the already flying part of population to fly even more. (Gössling & co. 2019, 2). This excessive consumption of air travel of some people even shows

signs of a behavioural addiction. This results in ignorance of the harm their air travel consumption does in order to get the immediate self-benefits. (Cohen & co. 2011, 1072.)

Flights are taken either for business or leisure purposes and these two can be further divided in sub-categories such as education and visiting friends and family. Especially the demand for the latter one has increased massively. Between 1990 and 2008, the holiday flights taken almost tripled in numbers (Morten, Gatersleben & Jessop 2016, 298). There are many factors that have been in favour for this increase to occur in air travel. Most importantly flying has become affordable, if not half-free, compared to other alternative transport methods. This is possible because the jet fuel is excluded from taxation, the air traffic is not regulated, and the air travel market has been liberalized. (Davison, Littleford & Ryley 2014, 13; Cohen & co. 2011, 1074.) Also, the general increase of income and of leisure time are supporting the popularity of air travel (Davison & co. 2014, 13). The tourism marketing is also saturated (Cohen & co. 2011, 1074). All in all, air travelling has ensured its place as transport method and embedded in our lifestyle.

### **2.1.1 Air travel's impact on climate**

As the tourism grows, and the number of flights is increasing, it means forever more emissions are also let in the air. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO N.d.) reports that currently the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of air travel are estimated to be responsible for 2% of all global greenhouse gases (GHG). Climate scientist Aamaas, Air quality and GHG researcher Borken-Kleefeld and climate researcher Peters (2013, 276) reports in their study that compared to car as a transport mode, air travel has much bigger specific impact on climate which, for example, in Germany rises up to 45%. Globally aviation caused nearly 859 million metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2017. Besides CO<sub>2</sub> air travel causes indirect harm to the climate via other emissions, such as NO<sub>x</sub> and water vapor which are affecting the air temperature in either cooling or warming way. (Liikenne ja viestintäministeriö & co. N.d.) When all the factors are taken into consideration, the climate impact of aviation rises to 3,5% of all the human caused emissions (ICAO N.d.).

Aviation is one of the fastest growing sources of GHG emissions (EU Commission N.d.) and it is predicted the air travel as a source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions could rise to be over 15 % of all the emission sources by 2050 (Hares & co. 2009, 466).

### **2.1.2 Alternative ways to reduce emissions**

For air travel to become sustainable, its emissions need to be dramatically reduced. There are several ways identified how the emissions could potentially be reduced in air travel.

To achieve “carbon neutral growth” at 2020 emissions levels out to 2050 would requires almost complete replacement of petroleum-based jet fuel with sustainable alternative jet fuel besides the implementation of aggressive technological and operational scenarios. (ICAO, 2016.)

It states this on the Environmental Report (2016) of ICAO. But as for example Steg & Vlek (2008, 309), Hares and co. (2009, 466) and Markham and co. (2018, 206) point out, technological advances are still likely to be inadequate to reduce emissions as much as needed due to the fact that the demand for air travel has increased significantly and thus leading the emission savings gained from these improvements to become outstripped. This means technological improvements alone will not take away the problem aviation is for the environment.

Other potential change could be targeted at market-base. Currently the international aviation enjoys the privilege of being exempt from the fuel taxation since the World War 2 (Transport & Environment 2019). Chicago Convention, which regulates the international air transport, prohibits taxation of the fuel that is already on board of an arriving air plane, and though there is no mention about the fuel taken onboard before the departure, the aviation industry interprets the exemption cover also this part (Transport & Environment 2019). By putting a price tag on carbon would be a way for governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That might work as a push for the air travel industry to invest and seek for cleaner fuel technologies and in the long run, increase the prices of the airline tickets and thus decrease the demand (Markham & co. 2018, 207). Still, as the research of Hares & co. (2009, 470) shows, people were ready to pay more if that

would free them from the need to change travel behavior. This means only very high taxes on fuel would translate to decreasing demand of air travel. Also, these kinds of changes are not praised and supported by the airline industry and it would also not be easy to execute due to the resolution by the ICAO (Hares & co. 2009, 466).

Although the taxation of fuel is not supported, in 2016 the aviation emissions have been addressed by ICAO with the introduction of a global Carbon Off-setting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) which demands airlines to offset their emissions growth starting from 2021 in order to stabilize CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. (EU Commission N.d.; ICAO N.d.) As for individual passengers, many airlines offer a chance to compensate their own CO<sub>2</sub> emissions with a voluntary extra cost which is then directed, for example, to reforestation (KLM N.d.) which will then reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the future (UN environment N.d.). Offsetting is not the answer in a long term, but temporarily it is better to do so than not do it even though offsetting flights may also have a risk of people “buying a clear conscience” and believing the offset is a justification for not having to change behavior (UN environment N.d.; Cohen & co. 2011, 2082).

The key to emission reductions in air travel lies in people’s flying habits. Technological changes or taxes alone will not be enough to reduce emissions significantly, so a change in consumer behavior is needed. Aamaas and co. (2013, 279 – 280) identify three points where air travel behavior could be changed when aiming to reduce the climate impact. Besides reducing the amount of flights, choosing another mode of transportation or flying shorter durations would all directly reduce the emissions (Aamaas & co. 2013, 279 – 280). Despite the facts and information available on climate change and air travel’s climate impact, and despite flying being identified to be the most important way to reduce emission, people are not ready to reduce their holiday flights (Morten & co. 2016, 297; Hares & co. 2009, 472).

Social benefits and environmental consequences of air travel contradict, which could mean a political interference is needed to resolve the problem. One way for politics to impact on the consumer behavior is to enforce regulations which would force people to change their behavior. Such could be limiting the right to fly or

restricting marketing of holiday flights. (Alcock & co. 2016, 137.) This would evidently not be simple. For example, in the United Kingdom the government has a strong preference to use non-regulatory policy tools to drive behavior to the wanted direction in order not to step on to the individual's freedom (Alcock & co. 2016, 137). The question of how to persuade people to change their behavior voluntarily and fly less is remaining.

## **2.2 Consumer behaviour and the environment**

As humans affect the well-being of the nature, the nature also has an effect on humans' well-being (Davis, Le & Coy 2011, 257). Rationally thinking, people should be motivated to take care of the environment because it also benefits them indirectly. Since it has been identified that a behavioral change is the key to make a difference when it comes to flying and climate change, it is behavior and the barriers standing in the way of behavioral change, that need to be researched.

### **2.2.1 Theories**

There are two theories that are critical in explaining pro-environmental behavior: The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Value-Belief-Norm theory (VBN). The Value-Belief-Norm theory suggests that a feeling of a moral obligation drives an individual to perform a specific behavior. To what extent the person is aware of the consequences of his or her actions and to which degree that person takes responsibility for the problems defines how strong the individual's personal norms are. (Bouscasse, Joly & Bonnel 2018, 206.) VBN has been successfully applied to cases of low-cost environmental behavior (for example occasional recycling) and "good intentions", including willingness to change behavior, but it is not so effective in explaining cases when the change does not come without a behavioral cost and is inconvenient (Steg & co. 2008, 311).

In these situations, the Theory of Planned Behavior has a greater power in explaining behavior (Steg & co. 2008, 311). According to TPB, the individual's intentions (which are predicted by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control) to engage to some behavior are the best determinants of one's behavior (Fielding, McDonald & Louis 2008, 319). This includes the rational evaluation of pros and cons of the individual's specific behavior. A person is also more likely to engage in a behavior which is perceived easy to perform. TPB has been successful explaining for example mobility behavior. (Bouscasse & co. 2018, 206.)

One must take into consideration when working with these two theories that neither VBN nor TPB do take habits into consideration. Some of people's behaviors are driven by habits and these behaviors are occurring without much thinking beforehand, and the stronger the habit is, the less the attitude affects this behavior. (Bouscasse & co. 2018, 207.)

When it comes to air travel, there is no consistency between people's attitudes and behavior. In general people are aware of the impact that air travel has on the climate. Despite of this, in the research of Hares & co (2009, 469) some participants did not recognize that their own holiday flights are having an impact on the climate. Also, environmental concern was having an effect on no one's holiday decision making. As the environmental concern is not reducing the willingness to fly, in some cases it is causing even the opposite: The fear of possible future restriction or increased prices drive some people to fly even more, now that it is still easy and affordable. (Hares & co. 2009, 469.)

There can be seen a connection between environmental attitudes and household pro-environmental behavior, but this behavior does not reach out to flying behavior. The pro-environmental behavior in everyday life, for example recycling, can act in people's minds as a justification to fly. (Alcock & co. 2016, 145.) Holidays are also seen separate from everyday life in which people are more open to take responsibility of the climate (Hares & co. 2009, 467). The awareness and understanding of climate change are not reflecting to actions and this so-called Attitude-Behavior-gap is one major challenge to be solved when facing the problem of

climate change (Hares & Co. 2009, 472), and means also that information alone is not enough to support the change (Davison & co. 2014, 13).

The existence of cognitive dissonance is often brought up when it comes to pro-environmental behavior and air travel. Cognitive dissonance is based on the idea that people have a need to be consistent when it comes to attitude and behavior (Talvio 2011, 46). Any inconsistency between these causes discomfort and will make the person try to adjust either his or her attitude or behavior to gain the consistency again (Hares & co. 2009, 472; Talvio 2011, 46). Since people show reluctance in willingness to change their behavior when it comes to flying, this predicts that they may change their attitude to match the behavior, not vice versa (Hares & co. 2009, 472; Bouchasse 2018, 219).

### **2.2.2 Barriers of behavioral change**

Hares and co. (2009, 472) found three barriers standing in the way of behavioral change: flying is seen only viable option for travel, personal responsibility for climate change is not recognized and holidays are highly valued. These barriers are getting support from other studies. The research of Cohen & co. (2011, 1070) back up the importance that holidays (and thus air travel) have in people's minds: Air travel is associated with holidays and freedom and people feel reluctant to give up those two things because it is perceived as their individual right. It distances people from their everyday life and brings them positive feelings such as the feeling of escape from responsibilities (including the responsibility for environment) and relaxation. Cohen & co. (2011, 1070) also aptly compare flying to smoking cigarettes the immediate benefits of which overrule the long-term negative effects and brings the question of behavioral addiction to the table.

Although holidays (and flying) are seen as a right and re highly valued, studies show that close to half of the leisure flights of international students, were considered less important or even not important at all. Especially the ones of short duration trips were the last group. This suggests that the trip's purpose makes a difference in desirability and necessity of flights. (Gössling & co. 2019, 8.)

When it comes to the responsibility, there is a distrust towards the government since it is not acting itself as an example for the people to change their behavior by limiting their amount of flights (Hares & co. 2009, 471). Also, since the jet fuel for air planes is excluded from taxation and is thus privileged, the air travel is further reinforced by the government. This creates mis-messages to the public. The other people's lack of action for change also limits the person's willingness to act and change (Hares & co. 2009, 471 – 472). The responsibility of an individual is also often denied claiming that an individual is powerless in front of climate change and instead the responsibility of climate change is viewed as one of others such as governments and big businesses. Still, there is a sign of increasing moral concern and new views to personal accountability. (Gössling & co. 2019, 8.)

The cost of a flight is another key factor to determine whether a flight is seen as necessary. If the price would go up significantly, it is likely to make some, "the unnecessary" part of the flight disappear. Also, if the price would get higher, the demand would decrease because of the economic circumstances and might thus not be viewed as forced sacrifice. (Gössling & co. 2019, 3.) Still, flight numbers decreased due to economic reasons do not necessarily mean the level of concern for the environment has changed.

## **2.3 Shame and consumer behavior**

### **2.3.1 Shame**

In the research of Brennan and Binney (2009, 144), shame was defined "as an emotion that individuals experience when other people who are significant to them become aware of their socially unacceptable behavior". This means, shame occurs always in relation to other people and when a person cares about what other people thinks of him or her. People live in interaction with each other and, also evaluate and judge both themselves and others. People are afraid to lose their face and feel ashamed when having the feeling that someone is negatively evaluating one's character or actions. (Talvio 2011, 27.) Shame often occurs in cases where other people become aware of one's wrong doing, and thus

shame can be related to foolishness, embarrassment and humiliation (Brennan & co. 2009, 144), but shame is not always negative as it also drives people to respect the norms of the society and adjust behavior (Talvio 2011, 15). Still, shaming is not necessarily an effective way to make people fix their behavior.

Shame makes a person think through self-appraisal that there is something wrong in his or her actions or character (for example “I am bad/stupid”) (Achar, So, Agrawal & Duhacheck 2016, 168) and the acceptance of responsibility can make the person to feel his or her self-image is being threatened (Birau & Faure 2018, 103). People protect their psychological and emotional well-being through different coping mechanisms to keep the negative feelings from influencing them (Brennan & co. 2009, 145). Common coping mechanism include compensation, downplaying or hiding of the thing causing shame (Talvio 2011, 30). For example, a person might deny one has done wrong or justify it in some way.

### **2.3.2 Shame in consumption**

Shame is also occurring in consumption. A person might feel shame when his or her consumption behavior is not according to what is viewed as acceptable or when failing to consume some thing or service according to social norms. (Talvio 2011, 58.) Things that are against very strong norms, for example drinking while being pregnant, causes a strong feeling of shame. However, when there is not a clear norm existing to a certain behavior, it will not necessarily make someone feel ashamed. Social comparing is an important factor in the evaluation if the performed behavior is something that should be ashamed of. Human beings compare themselves to others and their behavior give them a frame of what is acceptable. (Talvio 2011, 45.) People choose what they see to benefit the most from: if the shame arising, for example from a purchase of some product, is greater than the benefits gained from that product, people do not buy the product (Talvio 2011, 85). For example, buying products of some Chinese brand might cause shame for the consumer and to avoid that they choose to buy other brand’s products (Koshkaki & Solhi 2016, 125). Also, if one is acting against his or her moral, against the rules of the society, it can lead to

the feeling of shame. Still, it is studied that people tend to underrate their guiltiness when facing moral conflict and for some, shame is only experienced if they are caught doing something that is thought immoral, for example taking a bus ride without a ticket. (Talvio 2011, 99 – 100.)

Social norms of the society affect which things people of that society perceive as shameful (Talvio 2011, 159). For example, during the economic depression of 1990, over-consuming publicly when others could not, was causing shame. Nowadays there are ethical problems, such as not-environmentally friendly consumption, that are causing shame (Talvio 2011, 22). As mentioned earlier, it is more likely for individuals to feel shame when there is a strong and clear norm existing against the performed behavior. When it comes to air travel, it can be wondered whether there is or will be a new norm against it. The falling numbers of air travel passengers especially in wealthy countries like Sweden points to the direction that more people are rethinking their flying behavior and new points of views of personal responsibility are forming (Gössling & co. 2019, 3).

### **2.3.3 Shame in marketing**

In marketing, emotions can be used to affect consumers decisions (Achar & co. 2016, 166). By basing the marketing communication on shame (or other relevant emotion) it is possible for marketers to influence people's behavior and decisions in consumption (Koshkaki & co. 2016, 126). Applying shame to a marketing campaign with the goal of encouraging people to change their undesired behavior to one that is socially acceptable is common especially within non-profit and government organizations (Brennan & co. 2009, 140 – 141; Talvio 2011, 161). The idea of using negative appeals is that an emotional imbalance will be created, from which the target group will try to recover by performing a desired behavior (Brennan & co. 2009, 141) For example blaming consumers for waste to convince that recycling should be adopted.

However, for example in the research of Brennan & Binney (2009, 142) shaming was not viewed positively and public shaming was thought to be unacceptable. When focusing only on the wrongdoings, it has a high possibility to backfire

and be perceived as a threat in the minds of people (Birau & co. 2018, 103). As the feeling of guilt, which makes a person to think his or her moral obligations, is studied to be more likely to make people accept the personal responsibility and to be more effective when it comes to people's behavioral change, shame is more likely to lead to negative attitudes (Brennan & co. 2009, 143 – 144). Marketers should try not to blame directly people but distant actors as well as lower the difficulty level of the wanted behavior (Birau & co. 2018, 112).

### 3 FLIGHT SHAME

“Flygskam”, or Flight shame, the feeling of being embarrassed or ashamed to take the plane because of the environmental impact” (Henley 2019).

Flight shame, originally “*Flygskam*”, is a relatively new environmental movement originating from Sweden. It refers to the feeling of shame that rises from the environmental harm flying causes. It is to encourage people to stop flying in order to cut down carbon emissions and choose more sustainable transport method such as the train.

Initially the term has been used by Björn Ferry, a Swedish former Olympic Athlete and current sport commentator, who decided 2017 to start living more sustainably and has a goal of being carbon free by the year 2025. This included also stopping flying and due to this, he has for example travelled for two days to a competition in Slovenia by train. (Rueter & Brändlin 2018.) It was still the increased environmental activism in Sweden, Greta Thunberg as its leader, that brought Flight shame to the light.

Greta Thunberg, a 16-year old Swedish climate change activist, who gained her popularity by school-striking for the climate and setting this movement in motion globally, has also claimed herself to be a non-flyer since 2015 for environmental reasons and is being an example and inspiration for many others around the world. To deliver the message, she travelled to the United States by sailboat to speak about the climate change at the UN climate summit in September 2019. (Irfan 2019.) Other public figures also have embraced the non-flying lifestyle, including Thunberg’s own mother, opera singer Malena Ernman (Coffey 2019).

### 3.1 Reactions to Flight shame

The Flight shame movement has not come unnoticed. This can be seen in many ways: dropping air passenger numbers in Sweden, the home of Flight shame, airline companies are feeling the need to respond to it and arising “tågskryt” (train bragging).

The passenger statistics of Swedavia (2019a) show it clear: In January 2019 the passenger numbers have dropped almost 3% from the ones of the previous year. In August of the same year there could also be seen that the trend continues with decrease of 4% compared to the August of last year (Swedavia 2019b). This is at least partly due to the ongoing climate debate (Hoikkala & Magnusson 2019).



PICTURE 1. Passenger numbers at Swedavia's airports (Schroders 2019)

As air travel is decreasing in popularity, train travel is experiencing a rise in passenger numbers. More people are choosing to take a train in order to travel more sustainably. (Hoikkala & Magnusson 2019.) “Tågskryt”, or “train bragging” is lifting its head. It is “cool” to travel by train, and this has led to 37% of Swedes to choose a train instead of plane whenever it is possible (Mynewsdesk 2019). It is evident that in Sweden there is happening some level of habitual changes when it comes to travelling.

Flight shame is also putting pressure on the airline industry and forcing them to respond. Scandinavian Airlines (SAS), owned by the Swedish and Danish governments, has also experienced a small decrease in passenger numbers (Berton 2019) and is acting to reduce emissions by making replacements of aircrafts and wanting to use more biofuel. The Chief Executive of SAS does not believe in stopping to fly but supports the idea of needing to make air travel more sustainable and trusts the technology to eventually be able to make a substitute for the current jet engine. (Hoikkala & Magnusson 2019.)

The Dutch airline KLM has also responded to the Flight shame movement. In the summer 2019 it launched a campaign called “Fly Responsibly” with which it is encouraging individuals as well as companies to join them to make more sustainable choices when it comes to air travel. For instance, it invited companies to partner with them and make sure the business flights are as sustainable as they can be by using biofuel. For individuals KLM is supporting them to offset their emission and thus neutralize them and advising to pack as little as possible because the more weight the more fuel consumption. Besides that, KLM is even encouraging to fly less and choosing other transport modes especially for shorter journeys. (KLM N.d.)

Topi Manner, the CEO of the Finnish airline Finnair has also commented the Flight shame and says Finnair is working hard to make the aviation more sustainable. Still, Finnair sees no decrease in the passenger numbers which indicates that the Flight shame has not had influence there. (Whyte 2019.)

## **3.2 Shaming of influencers and public figures**

### **3.2.1 Aningslösa Influencers on Instagram**

Sharing life events such as a perfect holiday picture on the beach in Bali or a holiday-hype picture from the airport is easy on social media. When a person with a lot of followers does that, the event and feeling is shared by all of those followers. It might also work as a trigger for followers to also head on a holiday far away in a hope to experience the same. This is an example of how influencer, a person with an influence power over his or her audience on social media, can affect the consumption behavior of other people (Influencer Marketing-Hub 2019). And this is the problem some climate change activists see.

As social media has made it possible to share life events with the world, it has also made it possible for the Flight shame movement to spread so wide so fast. Flight shame has also taken a more aggressive way of spreading the acknowledgement online as, also anonymous, private people have started to shame others for their travelling choices. On social media, influencers, such as bloggers and celebrities, have got their part in shaming. This is because they often have thousands of followers and power to influence their choices.

An account on the social media photo platform “Instagram” called “Aningslösa Influencers”, translated to “clueless influencers”, has been created to get influencers, and their followers, to think and to be responsible for their travelling effects on the environment. It responds to influencers’ holiday pictures by sharing those pictures again on its own account with the detailed information about how much emissions the flight to this specific destination has created. In some cases, they are also questioning these influencers for double-moralism



PICTURE 2. Flight shaming on Instagram part 1 (Aningslösa Influencers 2019).

The account, which currently has nearly 60 thousand followers, has been created in December 2018 by two anonymous Instagram users. They have commented the case and said they had first tried to address the issue privately but since that had led to ignoring and blocking by the influencers, the “Aningslösa influencers” was created. They also do state that they are aware that not everyone likes the way they drive their opinion. (Hammarskiöld & Cosar 2019.)



PICTURE 3. Flight shaming on Instagram part 2 (Aningslösa Influencers 2019).

This public shaming has got many of these influencers to block the “Aningslösa Influencers” or some to respond either directly on Instagram or on a blog post. For example, Swedish influencers Tess Montgomery, Isabella Löwengrip and Alexandra Nilsson have defended themselves.

It is clear we all must take responsibility and fly less – – to keep naming and shaming influencers as “clueless influencers” is not right and creates more hate than less CO<sub>2</sub>. Unfortunately, it is much more about a greed for sensations than love for the environment. – – Instead, we should have clueless importers, clueless big businesses and clueless flight companies. (Montgomery 2019.)

Greta Thunberg and you behind Aningslösa Influencers – I am impressed with your engagement and I am not clueless. I just haven’t known how to work long-term. I will take responsibility. Hiring a CSR-manager to our company, is my first step to be more aware and slowly but surely make sure the sustainability questions are there in everything we do. (Löwengrip 2019.)

Right now, it is a witch hunt of all who likes to travel. I understand partly why it is happening but at the same time I cannot help but to think that it is not smart. I really believe that is not the best way to convince people to stop travelling. It was like when people tried to convince me to be vegetarian, all the nagging made me stubborn and I did not feel like doing it. But right after it calmed down, I was ready to try – – Unfortunately I will never look positively at being shamed and that will not make me listen. That is just how it is. (Nilsson 2019.)

Several influencers, including the ones above, have taken a defensive stand as a respond to the shaming they have received. Some have reacted to shaming in a more sensitive and vulnerable way and bring up how the shaming has affected them. “The hate which I have received over the past week about this [travelling] has honestly broken me” writes a British lifestyle blogger Zanna Van Dijk on her Instagram account. As some of the defensive responds can be sensed to be more aggressive and determined, these kinds of responds show the mental harm shaming can cause to ones experiencing it and send a signal asking for mercy appealing that one is only a human too.



PICTURE 4. Reaction to flight shaming (Van Dijk 2019).

### 3.3 Shaming and celebrities

Not only have the bloggers been criticized of their travelling but also other public figures. A British Oscar winning actress Emma Thompson, who has campaigned for the environment for years, has received a lot of criticism for being hypocritical due to her decision to fly over the Atlantic to London to join a demonstration for the environment. Thompson has herself admitted she might have act hypocritically by flying, but that she is conscious and has reduced flying a lot. Still, she needs to fly for work sometimes. According to her, only thing she feels shame of is she not being able to do as much as the young demonstrators. (McCarthy 2019; ITV Report 2019.)

The spokesman of Extinction Rebellion demonstration defended Thompson and said that the platform she uses is valuable and though se flying to protest is harmful, it is the bigger picture is what matters (James 2019).

Another example of pilloried public figures are the members of the British royal family, lately especially the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle who are both active environment campaigners. They are claimed to

be hypocrite because as Prince Harry is posting about how every(one's) choices and action makes a difference on Instagram, they are taking private jets, which are less fuel efficient because the carbon footprint per person is bigger than in commercial flights. (Britton 2019.)

The criticized private jet flights to Nice and Ibiza were defended by Prince Harry himself as well as John Elton, a famous singer and song-writer, who had paid for the private jet for them, by saying they were used due to protection matters. Also, Elton assures the flight's emissions were neutralized by making a contribution to Carbon Footprint™. (Britton 2019.) Prince Harry also reminds in his defend that 99% of his flights are commercial and he always offsets his flights (The Telegraph 2019).

## **4 RESEARCH**

### **4.1 Research objectives**

The purpose of this thesis was to determine whether the desire to travel is stronger than the feeling of shame which is caused by other people (influencers). It is wanted to know how people in Finland perceive Flight shame and shame as tool for “better” consumption behavior when it comes to air travel.

#### **4.1.1 Research questions**

1. What is Flight shame and what is its status in Finland?
2. Why are people reluctant to change their air travel behavior?
3. Is the feeling of shame an effective and working way to get people change their flying behavior?
4. In people’s minds, are some people more privileged to fly than others?

### **4.2 Research method**

The research was done by conducting an online survey. Since it is wanted to know, what is the status of Flight shame in Finland, it is important to receive as many answers as possible from the target group to get more reliable results. With an online survey it is possible to gather data easily and fast, and for this reason, it was chosen to be the research method. It also allows the participant to answer anonymously to more sensitive questions too.

The online survey is a quantitative research method and aims to find answers to questions like “What”, “How many?” and “How often?”. It generates numerical data based on which it is possible to describe a phenomenon (like Flight shame in this case). In quantitative research it is vital to get large enough of amount of answers so it can be thought reliable. (Heikkilä 2014, 7 – 8.)

Most of the questions in the online survey were multiple choices to make it attractive for the participant to answer and easy for the author to later examine. Besides these quantitative questions the online survey had qualitative features too. Some of the multiple-choice questions were followed by an open question “Why?” in which the participant was able to explain the previous answer. These were not mandatory, and the participant was able to skip them if wanted. The open-questions were seen as needed, because the some of the questions were expected to make some participants to want to clarify why they think in certain way. These answers are also useful when trying to better understand the results.

### **4.3 Target group**

Since it was to be discovered how strong the Flight shame is in Finland, it was decided that the target group will be limited to people who are living permanently in Finland. Finland is geographically next to Sweden and it could be assumed that the movement might have spread also there. Also, as Finland is geographically in a different place than for example Germany or France, the transportation options and lengths of journeys are also different and might thus affect the results and lead to false interpretation of the Flight shame status in Finland.

Besides the geographical limitations, the target group is also limited age wise to cover only people of 20-30 years of age. The reason for this is that the climate concern of the younger generation is getting bigger all the time, and this can be seen as increasing climate activism all over the world. In the future, there can be expected to be significant changes due to emission reductions in order for Finland to reach the goals of Paris climate conference. These changes will affect especially affect the lives of the young people and so the concern of climate change is a very relevant for the young. (Piispa & Myllyniemi 2019, 61 – 64.)

Also, people aged 20-30 can be assumed to be in charge of their own decisions and providing for themselves thus being responsible for their own consumption decisions. In Finland, a lot of people within this age group do not yet have children or big financial commitments (e.g. mortgage) which could also affect the people's travelling behavior for example in reducing way.

#### **4.4 Conducting the research**

The online survey was conducted by using the survey tool "Google Forms" with which the survey was easy to build and share. The link to the online survey was shared on the social media channels (Facebook, Instagram) and on WhatsApp to the acquaintances of the author with a hope of the link spreading further too. The online channels were determined to be the most effective way to spread the link because the target group was young adults who can be assumed to be active online. Also, the link spreads faster online and the chances to get answers all over Finland and as much as possible are better.

The questions of the online survey were based on the background theory and the research questions. The survey was divided into three parts: Flying habits, Environment and Flight shame. There were total of 25 mandatory questions, 4 open questions and 4 background questions (Appendix 1). The survey is relatively long, but the first two parts were seen very meaningful and important when thinking about the result analysis of the main questions (part 3), and thus were not left out. In the end of the survey, background information was asked in order to the author to be able to eliminate answers not fitting into the target group.

The participants were only told that the survey was to collect information on air travel behavior and opinions about it. The Flight shame as a topic was not mentioned so that it would not have any affects to the answers prior to the ones about Flight shame, because some people might associate words such as "shame" and "climate change" in the context of air travel to negative things (for example judgement), and since that might affect whether they answer truthfully, those were not mentioned before absolutely needed in order to get as reliable data as possible.

## 5 RESULTS

The online survey was able to collect answers from total of 103 people. After eliminating those answers outside the target group (people not living permanently in Finland nor are not aged within 20-30 years old), there were 74 answers left to be analyzed. All the upcoming results are based on these 74 remaining answers.

### 5.1 Flying habits

The first part was to gather knowledge of the person's flying habits with the focus on finding out how involved a person is with air travel in the first place. Those participants (2) who do not fly, were automatically proceeded from the first question to the next part of the survey.

The results show the participants varied a lot when it comes to the frequency of air travel. The results can be divided roughly to three parts, each of which cover about one third of all the results. People who fly maximum of once a year (33%), people who fly approximately one to two times a year (34%) and most frequent fliers who fly minimum of three times a year (33%). The most common single answer was 1-2 times a year. All the flights are considered so that one time equals to one round-trip (in practice, this means two flights assuming the destination is reached with only one flight).

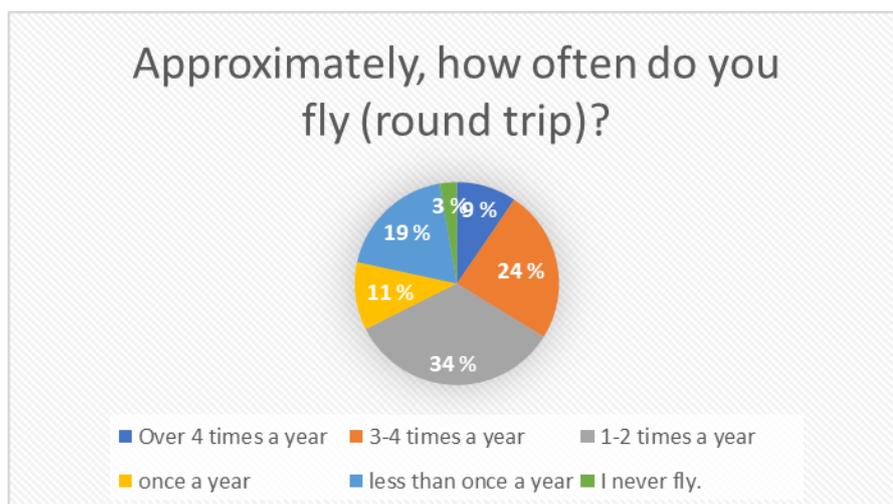


FIGURE 1. Approximately, how often do you fly?

Among all the participants the most common purpose for a trip they traveled by plane was a holiday. This was supported by 64 people of all the participants which means 86% of the participants travel (also) on a holiday (in its traditional meaning) by plane. Visiting family and friends was the second most common answer with 40 votes, which means 54% of all the participants. Third most common answer was “Other leisure holiday” which got 14 votes. Only 27% of the people had some business or education related purpose for their trip, education having nine votes and business trip only five. In recent years, the most participants (64) had flown to Europe (excluding Nordic countries) or outside of Europe (32). Third most common destinations with 17 votes were the Nordic countries. 8 people had flown within Finland.

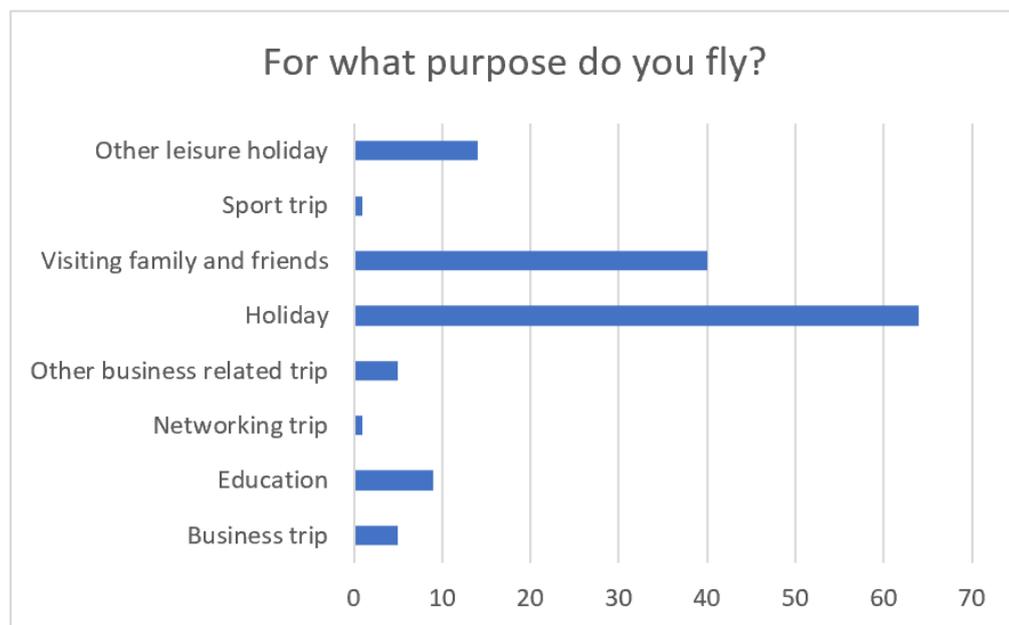


FIGURE 2. For what purpose do you fly?

When the participants were asked to answer whether they could have traveled to the latest destination (which is unknown to the author) by some other transport method, a clear majority (40 participants) said yes but the journey would have taken too long. 16 people said flying is more convenient and 18 said it is cheaper, which are also reasons they chose flying over some other transport method. Only 4 people chose to fly because it is more comfortable than other options. 27 people, which counts to 38% of the people answered that flying was the only viable option to go to their destination. Interestingly, since people had a possibility to choose more than one option, there were a few answers in which the participant

had chosen one of the answers indicating that there was another option available but also the answer stating there was no other option. The participants were also asked what affects their decision on transport mode, and it was apparent that the cost and the duration of the journey were what counted the most. Sustainability of the transport mode was affecting the decision of 26 participants.

In the previous questions, the participants were asked to give facts of their flying habits as last three questions were meant to put the participant think of their habits and the possibility to change them. With the questions “Would you be able to reduce flying?” it was wanted to know whether the participant feel he or she could reduce flying as the question “Do you think you should?” was aimed to make the participant to think if he or she thinks the habits are not okay as they are. The last question was to find out if the participants would choose the environmental benefits over the benefits that air travelling allows themselves.

56% of the participants said they would be able to reduce flying but 58% do not think they should reduce. 26% think they are not able to reduce flying and 25% think they should reduce flying. To both questions, about the same amount of people answered, “I don’t know.” Over half of the people (56%) were willing to reduce flying if they knew it benefits environment in a long term.

## **5.2 Environment**

The questions of the next part handled the environment with the focus on air travel. These questions were to give a better understanding of whether the person is concerned of the environment and he or she believes his or her individual consumption decisions affect the environment. The later questions can be better understood when it is known how the person feels about environment and his or her actions impact. Also, possible gaps between actions and attitudes can be explained with these questions. For example, if is not concerned of the environment in a first place, it would make sense why that person would not be willing to change his or her flying behavior to a more sustainable direction.

The results show there is a real concern of the climate change among the participants. 92% are concerned and many of them feel it is affecting their lives at some level. Many of the participants say they have started to make more conscious decisions in their everyday life. This include stopping to eat meat, choosing public transportation, recycling and avoiding buying unnecessary things. There was also a number of people that the climate concern made them feel anxious and worried about their children's future.

"I try not to buy unnecessary stuff and clothes. I walk and cycle a lot, use the train, think twice before going on a trip, reduce eating meat and reduce buying imports." Participant 56

"I have reduced eating meat, I recycle everything I can, I use public transportation and walk, I prefer domestic products. Mainly I try to make more sustainable decisions in everyday life." Participant 16

"I have decided not to fly without a good reason, besides that the climate concern affects what I eat, what I buy, who I vote and whether I will have children etc." Participant 40

Interestingly there are a notable number of participants (8%) saying the climate concern has affected (also) their flying behavior in some way. This change was either avoiding flying or reducing all unnecessary flight or stopping to fly. Since this was an optional open-question, there is a possibility of more people having change their flying behavior but only did not mention it.

Although the question was simply asking if the climate concern affects the person's life somehow, not implying it should be looked from the point of view of air travelling, a few participants did also reason why they cannot or are not reducing flying.

"Of course, I am worried. Except for air travelling I think I am living in a very environmental-friendly way. (mainly vegetarian food, minimalistic consumption habits, I do not have a car etc.)" Participant 59

“I do try to make more sustainable choices. Reducing flying is still not an option, because I am born with dual citizenship.” Participant 57

The next three questions surveyed how people viewed the environmental impact of their own consumption decisions including flying. As 74% of the people agreed that their individual consumption decision have either negative or positive impact on climate change, only 58% of the people thought their flights have an impact on the climate. As mentioned earlier, two of the participants are not flying at all which explains partly why there are more people saying their flights do not affect the climate. Still there is a higher amount of people who do not see the impact of their air travel although they recognize their own consumption decision do have an impact.

As most participants thought their flights and own consumption decisions do have an impact on climate and climate change, still 53% did think their decisions to reduce flying were not significant or were less significant for the environment (on a scale 1-5, one meaning very significant and five meaning not significant at all). 24% thought it was either very significant or quite significant. Rest, 23%, fell in the middle.

### **5.3 Flight shame**

The last part of the survey is focusing on the Flight shame, shame as consumer behavior changer and moral questions such as how people perceive who has a right to fly. This is the most interesting part of the survey research wise to which the previous questions will be reflected to.

The results show the Flight shame movement is not very known in Finland as only 28% did know what the movement is and 72% did not know what it was or were not sure. The participants were given a brief definition (see below) of the Flight shame to allow them better to understand the context of the upcoming questions. After having read the definition, the initial opinion of the Flight shame was mainly neutral. 23% thought negatively about it and 22% positively.

Flight shame refers to a feeling of shame which arises from the climate impact of the person's own air travel. The Flight shame movement aims to get people understand the impact their flights have on climate and be ashamed of it. It also encourages people to make another kind of transport mode choices. (Online survey)

The participants were asked if they had experienced shame because of their flying habits and whether someone had ever tried to shame them for their flying. The clear majority had not experienced neither shame or shaming for their flying habits. 32% had felt ashamed but only 19% said they have been tried to shame for their flying habits.

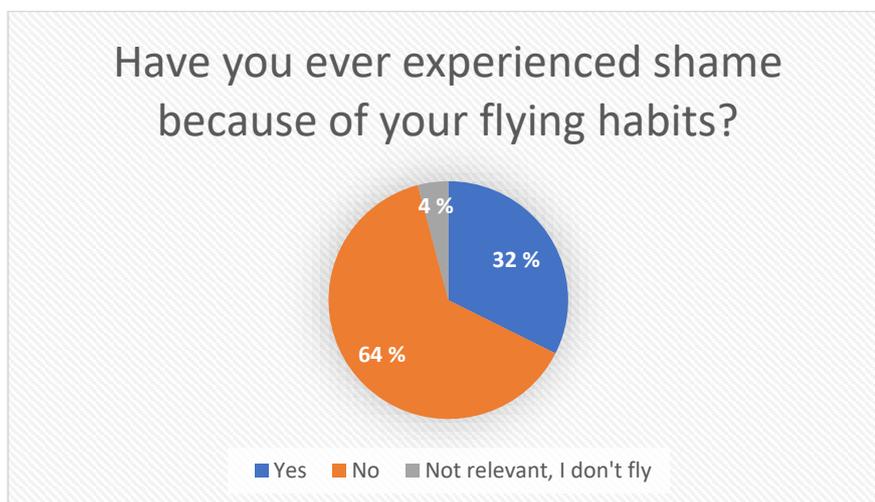


FIGURE 3. Have you ever experienced shame because of your flying habits?

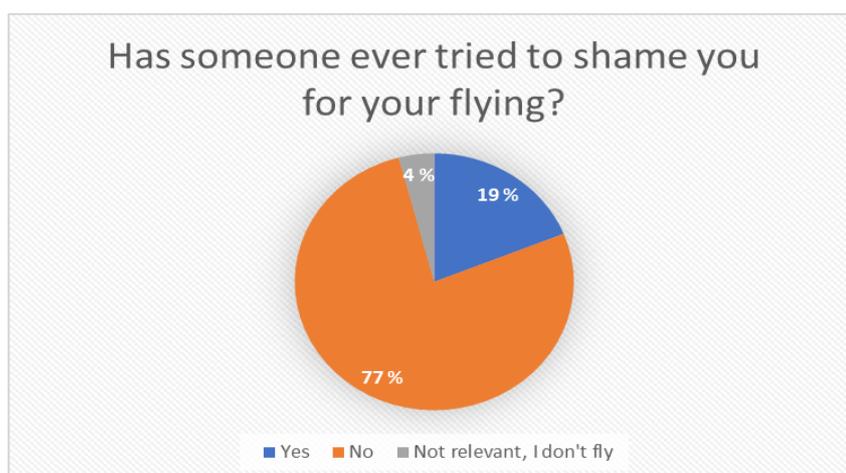


FIGURE 4. Has someone ever tried to shame you for your flying?

69% agreed flying generally should be reduced but 57% thought flying is not something that one should be ashamed of. Still, there are quite many people (26%) who were not sure about it. When asked if the participants think shame is a good and effective way to get people change their flying habits, even more people (64%) disagreed. This means even some of the people who think flying is something to be ashamed of do not think shame will make people to change their flying behavior. There were bigger differences to be seen when people were asked whether flying is avoidable, Still, a slight majority (46%) answered “No”, but it was followed by the opinion “Yes” with 39% of support.

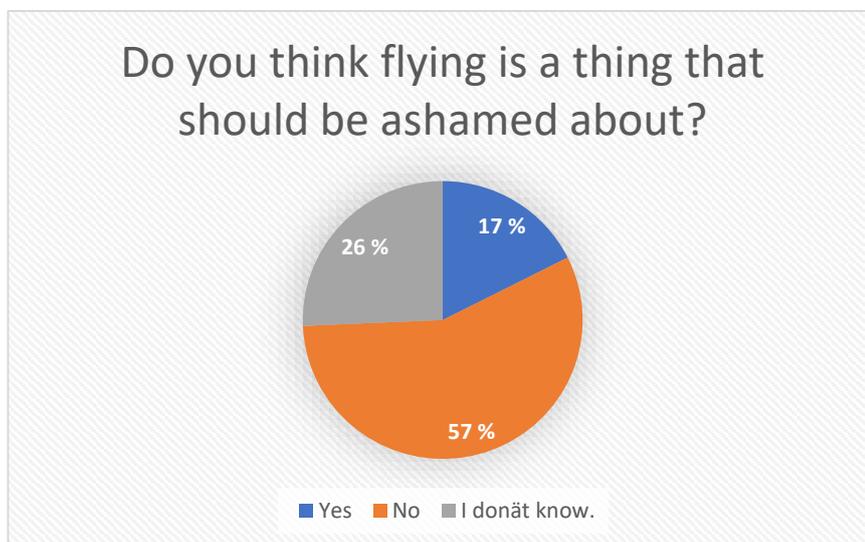


FIGURE 5. Do you think flying is a thing that should be ashamed about?

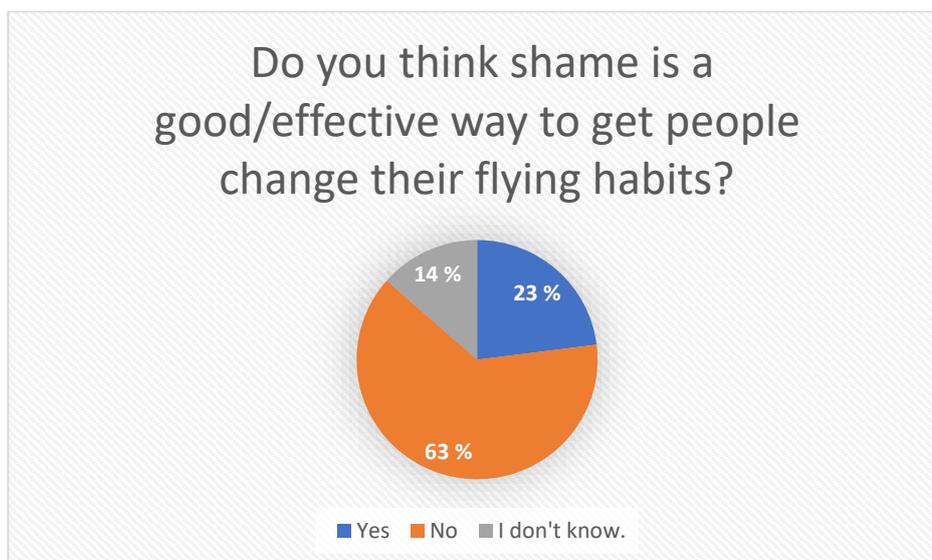


FIGURE 6. Do you think shame is a good/effective way to get people change their flying habits?

Lastly, the participants had to think about flying from the point of view of who deserves to fly and if individuals are equal when it comes to air travel. Also, questions concerning responsibility were asked.

The participants were told that public figures and influencers such as bloggers have been experiencing public shaming for their travelling and asked if these public people deserve to be criticized for their travelling for environmental reasons. The answers divided almost in half between “Yes” and “No”. They were given a chance to explain their answer which 42 people used.

Among the people who thought the public figures and influencer do deserve to get criticized there were a lot of arguments that claim public figures and influencers do a lot of unnecessary (and some cases short) trips such as PR-trips which could, in their opinion, be done closer to home or by using online methods. Many of the participants clarify that whether they should be criticized is depending on the purpose of the trip. Still, many had the idea public figures and influencer fly too much and also “just because they can”. Others thought the reason they should be criticized is the fact that they do have a lot of influence power over so many people and this power comes with the responsibility. They are acting as example for others and should, instead of promoting travelling, promote a good and responsible image and thus take the responsibility of their influence power.

There was more variety when it comes to the arguments against public figures and influencer deserving to be criticized. Many of the participants thought they are also “just people” and deserve to fly just as everyone else. They did not distinct the public figures and influencers from themselves. Also, a few of the participants felt annoyed by the fact that some people are criticizing others instead acting themselves, and also brought up the possibility of double moralism: people criticize others while not having a clean conscious themselves. It was also mentioned that shaming might have long-lasting negative effects on a person’s life such as losing a job. The motivation to reduce flying is better to be inner motive and rise from oneself, not outer motive rising from shaming. Negative ways such as shaming will not make long-term changes and is just not right morally, some of the participants thought.

Other kinds of arguments against shaming was that flying is one of the safest and fastest ways to travel. Also, not everybody flies, and flying is not the only cause of environmental damage. Many also commented by giving recommendations how the issue should be handled instead, such as encouraging people to want to give a better image of themselves and their consumption choices.

68% thought people are equal and have the same rights when it comes to flying. Again, there was a possibility for the participants to comment their answer and 29 did. There was a common mutual opinion that some reasons to fly made the flying more acceptable. Visiting family and friends and if a person had an important job (for example a politician or a doctor) that required travelling abroad were widely seen acceptable than for example trips made with the key purpose of partying.

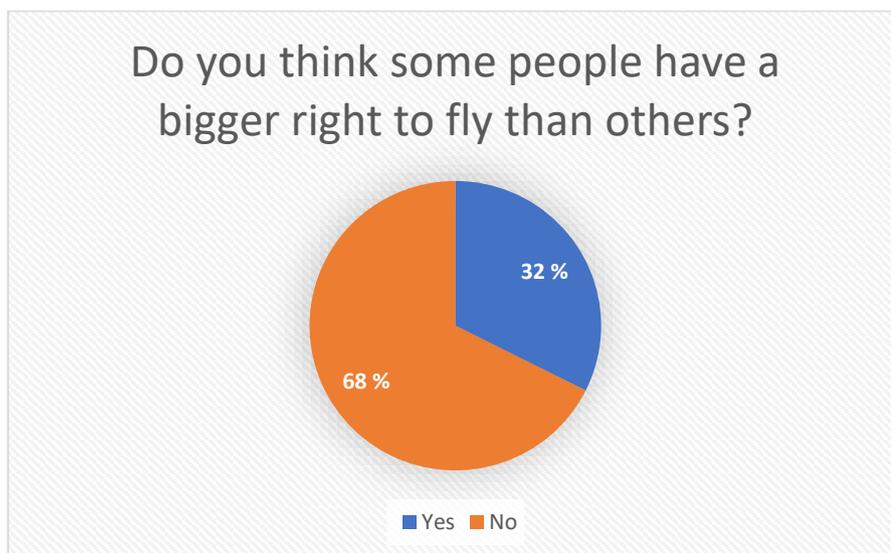


FIGURE 7. Do you think some people have a bigger right to fly than others?

To the question about whether one thinks he or she deserves to fly the division between answers was similar to the previous question. 74% thought they do deserve to fly as 26% thought they do not. 30 people clarified their answer most of which were those who perceive they do deserve to fly. The most common supportive argument was that since he or she fly only seldom one thinks it is okay. Many also felt the deserve to fly because they live otherwise sustainably in everyday life. Some reflected the fact that they deserve to fly to the fact that air travel is available for everyone and for that reasons he or she deserves it too just as everyone else. Also, visiting family and friends was brought up again.

Participants who were against them deserving to fly could be seen to have thought the question from a broader point of view. Their comments express that not them or anyone else deserves it without a heavy reason because flying does not contribute to a common good. Despite the feeling of not deserving to fly it does not translate to total abstention from flying with most participants.

“I don’t deserve [flying] particularly, but I allow it to myself in rare times, as I do nowadays.” Participant 41

These last two questions could be seen to be more difficult for many participants because they were moral questions that makes them question their own actions. Although the questions had no right or wrong answer, it could be seen that the questions about someone being more privileged or deserving to fly caused frustration among some of the participants because the wording of the question was perceived negatively since it refers to a person rather than to the purpose of trip. Deserving to fly was not seen as the point of the problem of reducing emissions and, also counter questions like “What does one need to do to deserve to fly?” was presented.

The participants were asked what they personally think would be the best and most effective way to reduce the increasing emission from air travel. They were given several options that were based on the potential options that were brought up in the theory part of this research. It was only possible to choose one but there was an option to suggest something else. 39% believed technological development and improvements were the best way to reduce emissions. Passenger offset their emissions was second most answered with 20% of support and on the third spot came education about emission’s impact on climate with 10% of support.

With the last question of the survey, the author wanted to know who the participants thought was responsible for reducing emissions. They had a chance to choose more than one option and it was possible to write an own answer. According to the results, the airline companies are seen as the most responsible as 78% of the participants chose the option. 66% thought the government was (also)

responsible. The businesses and the air passenger were too seen responsible for over half of the participants. Besides these some also had given a separate answer indicating everybody is responsible, which would raise the percentage of each of the previous options.

#### **5.4 Cross-tabulation**

Participants in general are worried about the climate change. Half of the worried ones think flying should be reduced and they themselves would be willing to reduce if they knew it benefits the environment. 25% think flying should be reduced but are not willing or not sure if they are willing to reduce flying for the environment even if they knew it benefits it. Those participants who are worried about climate change but do not think flying should be reduced, 6% would still be willing to reduce for environmental reasons. This means there are people who might not recognize the air travel's impact on climate.

Participants were asked questions about how significant they perceive their consumption decisions. 52% of all thought their flights and their own personal consumption decisions do have an impact on climate. From the point of view of the environment, the way they graded the significance of their individual decision to reduce flying varied a lot. 31% thought it would be quite significant as 33% did not think it was that significant. 23% of all the participants agreed or were at least considering that their personal consumption decision did have an impact on climate but did not recognize the impact of their air travel and though their decision to reduce flying would not be significant.

##### **5.4.1 Flight shame**

69% of the participants agreed air travel should be reduced and 25% of them recognized flying as something that one should be ashamed of. Also, 34% of them were unsure if it should be ashamed of. This means that almost 60% of participants who thought air travel should be reduced were also at least considering that air travel is also something to be ashamed of. Although 69% of people

thought flying should be reduced, 59% these people did not think they should themselves reduce flying. Of these people who thought others should reduce but not them, 65% flew approximately more than one roundtrip a year.

56% of all participants did not think flying is something to be ashamed of and 88% of them had not felt shame for their flying habits. Most of these people themselves flew annually, 43% of them at least three times a year. Also, besides not having experienced shame for their flying, most of these participants (53%) also said no one had tried to make them feel ashamed of it. Of these people 19% flew maximum of one time a year, 32% maximum of two times a year and 21% flew over two times a year.

Of the people who had experienced shame for their flying and thought it is a thing to be ashamed of, 75% flew once or twice a year. There can be seen a correlation between attitude and behavior, because those who flew noticeably more, were the ones thinking flying is to be ashamed of.

44% of the participants had not felt ashamed of their flying habits and thought it is not an effective way to get people change their flying behaviour. Most of these people were those flying more than once a year. Only 30 % of the ones who had experienced shame of their flying habits thought shaming was an effective way. This suggests that though people might feel ashamed, they are not most of the time leading to a behavioural change. Still, of those people who said they had been tried to make feel ashamed of their flying behaviour, 57% said they have experienced shame for their flying behaviour. This result interestingly proposes that shaming would be an effective way to get people to feel shame. It is still obvious that the shame experienced is also rising from elsewhere too, possible from the person itself, because 67% of the ones who had felt shame had not experienced shaming from others.

Almost all the people who had felt shame for their flying and say other people had tried to shame them for it were flying more than one time a year. 38% of them flew 1-2 times a year and 50% 3-4 times a year. This indicates that many have not changed their behavior and reduced their flying activity, at least not too notably. Interestingly, the ones who had felt shame for their flying habits without being

shamed for it by others, did not fly so often: 28% of them flew maximum once a year and 72% maximum of twice a year. This suggests that shame which arises elsewhere than from other people's shaming could be more effective to make people change their behavior.

There is a possibility that other factors explain these numbers. It could be also the people who fly once or twice a year are just not the target of shaming in other people's minds. Despite that, it is good to take notice of the small number of people (8%) who say they have been tried to shame for their flying.

#### **5.4.2 Equality of flying**

The participants, who thought some people are more privileged to fly, 64% of them thought they do deserve to fly.

When it comes to the influencers and public figures, just over half of the participants said they do not deserve to get shamed for their flying for environmental reasons. What is interesting, is that many of the people (44%) who thought flying is not something to be ashamed of or were not sure if was, still thought influencers and public figures deserve to be shamed for their travelling for environmental reasons.

11% of all the participants do not think flying is something to be ashamed of but still thought public figures and influencers deserve to be shamed for their travelling also thought they themselves do deserve to fly. 13,5% of the people who don't know whether flying should be ashamed of think the same way.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to study if the desire to fly and travel is stronger than the feeling of shame caused by others. In this section the results will be discussed in the light of this purpose in mind.

The participants of this research are very involved in air travel with almost 80% flying at least once a year. Simultaneously they are evidently worried about the climate change and do see the connection between climate change and air travel. As almost all of participants saying they are concerned and as almost 70% of them support the idea that flying should be reduced, it indicates that people understand that air travel has a negative impact on the climate.

With these facts in mind it can be assumed that the Flight shame movement could have a favorable ground to spread to Finland and start action towards the social norm of non-flying. However, as over 70% of the people do not recognize Flight shame or are not sure if they do, it indicates that it has not become a well-known matter in Finland, at least not yet. Flying still appears to be a matter that has made quite many people ponder whether it is a shameful thing. Although within the participants 57% thought flying is not to be ashamed of, it should be taken in to account that in a country where flying is clearly embedded into a lifestyle, such a high percentage is still questioning whether it is a right thing to do. Also, people seem to be relatively optimistic about whether flying could be avoided, considering that also many of the participants who are frequently flying also think this way.

The results suggest that shame towards flying has also other sources than the Flight shame movement. One third had still experienced Flight shame which is more than those people who were sure what the Flight shame movement was. Also, only 19% experienced that someone else had tried to make them feel ashamed of flying, which is again less than all the people who have felt shame.

When considering the effectiveness of shaming in order to change consumption behavior the common response was negative. This result suggests that people do not accept shaming in general and have a strong opinion about it even though they would not have an experience of it. The comments left by some participants support this idea. Shaming is seen as a wrong approaching method which leads to rejection. It is still interesting, that 44% of those who had not experienced shame considered it to be an effective in getting people to change their habits as of those who had felt shame, only 30% thought it is effective. This suggests that shame has more power in those people's minds who have not (yet) experienced it, but in practice is less effective to actually lead to a behavioral change. Still, as the results showed, the effectiveness to change behavior seems to also be dependent on where the shame arises from. The people who felt shame without being shamed for it, flew much less than those who felt shame and had been shamed.

In the research of Birau & Faure (2018, 111) it was concluded that instead of blaming and using negative appeal, it is better to encourage the people to act in a wanted way. That leaves one to wonder that the efforts put in shaming in a hope to get people travel more sustainably are in most cases just leaving the person feeling shamed as the air travel keeps thriving. As learned about shame, it can cause a person negative effects such as humiliation that (Brennan & co. 2009, 144), so it should be questioned whether shaming really is a smart way to fight for climate. An inner attitude change towards air travel does seem to be more effective. It was seen in the current research that over half of the participants were willing to reduce flying if they knew it helped the environment so a right kind of encouragement could be likely to have a wanted impact on behavior.

As air travel is available to everyone, it is up to one's own conscience how much he or she flies and sees acceptable. Considering that almost all were concerned of the climate change and were willing to reduce if it would be beneficial for environment, this leaves one to think that either people do not recognize the impact of their flights to the climate, think they already are flying within acceptable (one's own interpretation of what is acceptable) limits or have a cognitive dissonance meaning that their attitude is not matching the behavior (Talvio 1011, 46).

Most people are aware of the impact of their consumption decision to the climate but only half of them considered that also their flights have an impact on it. This means people do not have a clear picture of the impact or do think they fly less enough not to have big impact. Also, the common idea of how significant the own decision to reduce flying was not seen that significant for the environment. This fact could be a justification to some not to reduce flying even though they would think flying should be reduced. Also, for those flying frequently, feeling their personal decisions will not make a difference could help them to remain a better conscience.

People perceive they deserve to fly. This was argued in many different ways, some appealing that it is necessary, if not obligatory because they have family and friends abroad, some reasoned this because they only fly rarely, and some pointed out that they live sustainably in other aspects of life. Besides this, there were other arguments and it was clear, as over 40% wanted to “explain”, people might have felt their answer would be judged otherwise.

Most survey participants also think people are equal when it comes to flying although one third thought some people, for example individuals doing important international work or individuals having relatives and friends, are more privileged because their purpose for the trip is more acceptable. Widely, it was often brought up that visiting family and friends is an acceptable reason to fly as well as work and education, also among those who did not travel for those purposes themselves. There were still no comments on how many flights for these reasons were “allowed” and what if a trip had several motives (for example visiting a friend but also enjoying the beach and sights or going to party). As Cohen & co. (2011, 1073) said in their research, many trips could be even “masked” with visiting friends and family. Also, most of the ones thinking some are more privileged, included themselves to the ones deserving to fly.

Although 67% thought no one is more privileged than other when it comes to flying, much more than the remaining part of the people feel influencers and public figures deserve to be shamed and criticized for their travelling. What is even more curious is that even among those people not thinking flying should be

ashamed of, there is an opinion that influencers and public figures are an exception and they deserve to get shamed. These results and the comments received points to the fact that influencers are distinguish from others when it comes to responsibility. Some individuals do have more responsibility in the eyes of others due to their influence power, but it can also be sensed that there are also resentment arising from other factors than influence power or environmental reasons. It could be that people feel frustration, maybe even jealousy, towards the people who appear to have more holidays and are wealthier which makes one feel they have a right to criticize them. These motivations can be hidden behind the environmental damage because it is socially more acceptable reason to criticize than for example jealously.

Clearly there are moral questions that people are pondering when it comes to air travel. The Flight shame movement is not as strong in Finland as in Sweden, but it can be seen that people are weighting their attitude towards flying and whether they should shame it and reduce it or not. Morally, there is a part already thinking maybe flying is not acceptable, but the desire to fly is also strong which can be seen as many people having the need to justify their flying habits. Also, as seen in the results, almost 70% of the people think flying should be reduced yet 60% of them do not see the need for themselves to reduce even though they are frequent fliers. Among the participants, it was easy to sense frustration or annoyance in several comments, which makes one think that the topic is sensitive, and people feel distress when they experience someone is questioning their actions. This also shows signs of people understanding the negative causes of their flying habits but at the same time feel strongly that they deserve to do it.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to study if the desire to fly and travel is stronger than the feeling of shame caused by others. The research was conducted with an online survey with which the aim was to discover how people are perceiving Flight shame and shaming and how spread the Flight shame movement is in Finland, whether shame is perceived as an effective way to change behavior and whether some people are more privileged to fly in the minds of people. The survey gathered background information thoughtfully about flying habits and environmental concern in order to better understand and interpret the answers to questions about the Flight shame. Each aspect relevant to the thesis topic (air travel and climate change, pro-environmental consumer behavior and shame) were carefully studied in the theoretical background and they worked as a base for this research.

Air travel is a social norm in Finland and the people are highly involved in it. At the same time, people are worried about the climate change and are recognizing the need to reduce air travel in order to protect the environment. Despite the lack of knowledge of the Flight shame movement itself, there are clear signs that some people have started to rethink whether air travel is acceptable in a way it currently is and whether air travel should be ashamed of. Still, shaming for flying is seen unacceptable and it is generally considered to be quite ineffective way to get people to change their air travel behavior. The people having experienced shaming for their air travel were still flying frequently as those people having felt shame without being shamed flew less. This suggests that the feeling of shame can possibly easier reflect to the behavior if it is not a result of other people making one feel bad about one's behavior but arises from elsewhere. This way the behavioral change possibly is perceived to be in one's own control and not forced. Also, when not shamed, one is likely to not have a need to defend one's self and might be more open to consider own actions through one's own moral without having to feel judged.

Clearly it seems people are deliberating the moral questions of flying as well as own individual benefits in contrast to environmental benefits. If not because of the Flight shame movement, it could be due to the current and widely spread debate of climate change matters in general that makes people, as one part of the big picture, also think about the sustainability of air travel. However, despite the willingness to choose the benefits of environment over one's own immediate interests that air travel brings to one, people are still believing they deserve to fly and that they are not the ones having to reduce. Desire to fly is seemingly high and people have a strong need to justify it. Justification to fly could be a family visit, the fact that one is flying only rarely or that one lives sustainably in other aspects of life. Many also see that the responsibility to reduce flying lies on someone else, for example on influencers and public figures who are seen to be more acceptable target for criticism for their flying. People are clearly struggling to accept the need for change in their personal travelling behavior while they do recognize the general need for change.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Online survey

(1/6)

### Kysely lentomatkustamisesta / Survey about air travel

#### Lentotottumukset / Flying habits

1. Kuinka usein lennät suunnilleen? / Approximately, how often do you fly (round trip)?
  - yli 4 kertaa vuodessa / over 4 times a year
  - 3-4 kertaa vuodessa / 3-4 times a year
  - 1-2 kertaa vuodessa / 1-2 times a year
  - kerran vuodessa / once a year
  - harvemmin kuin kerran vuodessa / less than once a year
  - n koskaan lennä. / I never fly
  
2. Mikä on lentomatkojesi syy? / For what purpose do you fly?
  - työmatka / business trip
  - koulutus / education
  - verkostoitumismatka / networking trip
  - muu työhön liittyvä matka / other business related trip
  - lomamatka / holiday
  - perheen ja ystävien tapaaminen / visiting friends and family
  - urheilumatka / sport trip
  - muu vapaa-ajan matka / other leisure holiday
  
3. Mihin olet lentänyt viimeisen kahden vuoden aikana? / Where have you flown within last 2 years?
  - Suomen sisällä / within Finland
  - Pohjoismaihin / to the Northern countries
  - Muualle Eurooppaan / to elsewhere in Europe
  - Euroopan ulkopuolelle / outside Europe
  - En ole lentänyt kahden vuoden sisällä. / I haven't flown within 2 years.
  
4. Olisitko voinut matkustaa viimeisimpään lentomatkohteeseesi jollakin muulla matkustustavalla? / Could you have traveled to your latest flight destination by some other transport method?
  - Kyllä, mutta matka olisi kestänyt liian kauan. / Yes, but the journey would have taken too long.
  - Kyllä, mutta lentäminen oli kätevää. / Yes, but it was more convenient to fly.

(2/6)

- Kyllä, mutta valitsin lentää koska se on mukavampaa. / Yes, but I chose to fly because it is more comfortable.
  - Kyllä, mutta lentäminen oli halvempaa. / Yes, but it was cheaper to fly.
  - Ei, lentäminen oli ainoa mahdollinen vaihtoehto. / No, flying was the only viable option.
  - En tiedä. / I don't know.
  - Muu / Other: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Mikä vaikuttaa matkustustapavalintaasi? / What affects your decision on transport mode?
- hinta / cost
  - vaivattomuus / convenience
  - ympäristöystävällisyys / sustainability
  - matkan kesto / duration of the journey
  - Muu / Other: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Olisiko sinun mahdollista vähentää lentämistä? / Would you be able to reduce flying?
- Kyllä /Yes
  - Ei / No
  - En tiedä. / don't know.
7. Oletko sitä mieltä, että sinun pitäisi vähentää lentämistä? / Do you think you should reduce flying?
- Kyllä / Yes
  - Ei /No
  - En tiedä. / I don't know.
8. Olisitko halukas vähentämään lentämistä jos tiedät, että se hyödyttää ympäristöä pidemmällä aikavälillä? / Would you be willing to reduce flying if it benefits environment in a long term?
- Kyllä / Yes
  - Ei / No
  - En tiedä. / I don't know.

## Environment / Ympäristö

9. Oletko huolestunut ilmastonmuutoksesta? / Are you concerned of climate change?
- Kyllä / Yes
  - Ei / No

(3/6)

Jos vastasit "Kyllä" edelliseen kysymykseen, vaikuttaako tämä huoli elämääsi jotenkin? Miten? / If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, does this concern affect your life somehow? How?

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10. Uskotko, että omilla lennoillasi on vaikutusta ilmastoon? / Do you think your flights have an impact on climate?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No
- En tiedä. / I don't know.

11. Uskotko, että henkilökohtaiset kulutusvalintasi vaikuttavat (positiivisesti tai negatiivisesti) ilmastonmuutokseen? / Do you think your individual decisions have an (positive or negative) impact on climate change?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No
- En tiedä. / I don't know

12. Ympäristön kannalta, kuinka merkittävänä pidät/pitäisit henkilökohtaista valintaasi vähentää lentämistä? / How significant do you think your individual decision to reduce flying is or would be for the environment?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Todella merkittävä / Very significant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ei ollenkaan merkittävä / Not significant at all

### Flight shame / Lentohäpeä

13. Tiedätkö mikä ympäristö liike "Lentohäpeä" on? / Are you aware of the environmental movement called "Flight shame"?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No
- En ole varma. / I am not sure.

14. Onko päällimmäinen ajatuksesi Lentohäpeästä... / Is your initial opinion of Flight shame...

- positiivinen /positive
- negatiivinen /negative
- neutraali /neutral

15. Oletko koskaan kokenut häpeää lentotavoistasi? / Have you ever experienced shame because of your flying habits?

(4/6)

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No
- Ei relevantti, en lennä / Not relevant, I don't fly

16. Onko kukaan koskaan yrittänyt saada sinut häpeämään lentämistäsi? / Has someone ever tried to shame you for your flying?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No
- Ei relevantti, en lennä / Not relevant, I don't fly

17. Pitäisikö lentämistä mielestäsi vähentää? / Do you think flying should be reduced?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No
- En tiedä. / I don't know.

18. Onko mielestäsi häpeän tunne hyvä/tehokas tapa saada ihmiset muuttamaan lentotapojaan? / Do you think shame is a good/effective way to get people change their flying habits?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No
- En tiedä. / I don't know

19. Onko sinusta lentäminen asia mitä pitäisi hävetä? / Do you think flying is a thing that should be ashamed about?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No
- En tiedä. / I don't know

20. Onko mielestäsi lentäminen vältettävissä? / Do you think flying is avoidable?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No
- En tiedä. / I don't know.

21. Julkisuuden henkilöt ja vaikuttajat (esim. bloggaajat) ovat kokeneet julkista häpäisemistä/kritisointia matkustamisestaan. Ansaitsevatko he mielestäni tulla julkisesti kritisoiduiksi matkustamisestaan ympäristösyistä? / Public figures and influencers such as bloggers have been experiencing public shaming for their travelling. Do you think they deserve to be publicly criticized for their travelling for environmental reasons?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No

Miksi? / Why?

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22. Onko mielestäsi jotkut ihmiset oikeutetumpia lentämään kuin toiset? / Do you think some people have a bigger right to fly than others?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No

Miksi? / Why? \_\_\_\_\_

23. Ansaitsetko sinä mielestäsi lentää? / Do you think you deserve to fly?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei / No

Miksi? / Why?

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24. Lentopäästöt kasvavat koko ajan ja niitä pitää vähentää. Mikä sinun mielestäsi olisi tehokkain/paras tapa vähentää näitä päästöjä? / Emissions from air travel are increasing all the time and need to be reduced. What do you think would be the best/most effective way to reduce these emissions?

- lisää opetusta lentopäästöjen vaikutuksesta ilmastoon / more education on emission's climate impact
- valtio alkaa varottaa lentokoneen polttoainetta (polttoaineen hinnan nousu) /government puts taxes on jet fuel (increased price of fuel)
- valtio rajoittaa ihmisten oikeutta lentää / government restricts individual's right to fly
- ihmisten vapaaehtoinen lentomatkamisen vähentäminen/ individuals voluntarily choose to fly less
- matkustajat kompensoi lentopäästönsä (lisähinta lipulle) / passengers offset their emissions (extra charge on ticket)
- teknologian kehitys ja parannukset / technological development and improvements

25. Kenen vastuulla sinusta lentopäästöjen vähentäminen on? / Whose responsibility do you think reducing emissions is?

- valtio / government
- lentoyhtiöt / airlines
- yritykset / businesses
- lentomatkustaja / air passenger
- Muu: / Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Background information / Taustatiedot**

## 26. Ikä / Age

- <20
- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- >50

## 27. Sukupuoli / Gender

- Nainen / Woman
- Mies / Man
- Muu / Other

## 28. Olen parhaillaan / I am currently

- opiskelija /student
- työssäkäyvä / employed
- työtön /unemployed
- eläkkeellä /retired
- Muu: / Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 29. Asutko pysyvästi Suomessa? / Do you live permanently in Finland?

- Kyllä / Yes
- Ei/No