

The Image of The Philippines as a Tourism Destination in Finland

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<p>This research report examines the image of the Philippines as a tourist destination perceived by the Finnish residents. The Philippines is a country with great possession of various beautiful natural resources that create a great impact on tourism, however, the industry is weaker in comparison to other destinations with similar possession. The main objective is to gather useful information on the images and assumptions that residents in Finland believe about The Philippines. The interests of Finnish residents are determined as well as their concerns and willingness to travel to the Philippines are recognised.</p> <p>Understanding the importance of the destination image, its useful components, its formation and how it is measured are highlighted in the literature review of the report. To clearly understand and analyse the results, several theories and background studies about the Philippines as a destination and Finnish residents' traveller behaviours are introduced.</p> <p>Quantitative research is the methodology used to systematically investigate the image of The Philippines through the traveler's perspective. A survey was conducted primarily online through social media and other public forums to collect research data due to the global pandemic. The data collection was conducted at the turn of 2019 and 2020 and received 93 samples.</p> <p>The results of the research indicate that the Philippines is perceived as a destination with beautiful nature and beaches, friendly people, warm weather and delicious food. The Philippines seems to possess all of the major characteristics that the Finnish residents are interested in terms of travelling. Regardless of their concerns about travelling to the Philippines, the majority of the respondents are interested to visit the country. In conclusion, the image of the Philippines perceived by Finnish residents appears to be promising. This could mean that the Philippines could increase the flow of from Finland if the marketing will focus on the concerns and interests of Finnish residents when travelling.</p>	
Keywords Destination Image, Tourism, The Philippines, Destination branding, Finland	

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Background of the Study	4
2.1	The Philippines as a Tourism Destination	4
2.1.1	Main Attractions	5
2.1.2	Accessibility	12
2.1.3	Amenities	14
2.2	The Connection Between Finland and The Philippines	16
2.3	Finnish Residents' Travel Behaviour	17
3	Literature Review	19
3.1	Tourism Destination	19
3.2	Destination Image - Definition and Importance.....	20
3.3	Conceptualization of Destination Image	22
3.3.1	Components of the Destination Image	24
3.3.2	Measuring Destination Image.....	25
3.4	Destination Image Formation Process	27
3.5	Destination Branding.....	30
4	Methodology	34
4.1	Research Methods.....	34
4.2	Preparation and Data Collection	35
4.3	Validity and Reliability Statistics	37
5	Results and Analysis.....	39
5.1	Background Information	39
5.2	Prior Experience and Preferences.....	41
5.3	General Image about The Philippines	43
6	Discussion and Recommendation	51
7	Conclusion	53
	References	55
	Appendices.....	67
	Appendix 1. The survey used for data collection	67

1 Introduction

The Philippines, an island country located in Southeast Asia of the western Pacific Ocean. An archipelago comprising of 7,107 islands and islets. Although the Philippines consists of many islands and islets only two-fifths of them are named. The three largest islands which divide as the main region of the country; Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Manila is the capital city of The Philippines located in the National Capital Region within the borders of its largest island, Luzon. (Experience Philippines 2010a; Wikipedia 2003.) One of the exceptional features of the Philippines is the irregular composition of the archipelago, the coastline which has the most beautiful beaches in the world, the mountainous countryside, coastal plains, trends of river systems, and amazing lake structures. The islands in the Philippines are mostly composed of volcanic rocks and corals. (Borloza, Cullinane & Hernandez 2015a.) Possessing these diverse features created an incredible impact on the tourism industry. However, in comparison to other countries in the southeast, The Philippines is a late bloomer in the destination game but it's developing fast and coming in strong.

The Philippines was host to a record high of 8.3 million foreign tourists in 2019 which dramatically increased from 5.4 million visitors in 2015, thanks to the country's tourism brand, "It's More Fun in The Philippines". As of 2015, 4.99 million Filipinos have been employed within the tourism division and rose to an estimated 5.4 million employees in 2019. During the first six months of 2019, the tourism industry earned over Php245 billion pesos from foreign visitors. The travel and tourism industry supplies 10.6 percent of the Philippines' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015 which widely increased by nearly 25 percent in 2019. Among its top tourist drawers is Boracay Island in Aklan, Puerto Princesa Underground River in Palawan which was voted in 2012 by the worldwide community as one of the New 7 Wonders of the World for being the longest safe underground stream. (When in Manila 2013.) Chocolate Hills in Bohol and the Banaue Rice Terraces in Ifugao, as well as the cities of Manila, Cebu, and Davao. (Department of Tourism Philippines 2019a.)

The Finnish international embassy in Manila was shut in 2012 because of cuts in Foreign Service allocations. In autumn of this year 2020, Finland is reviving the embassy in Manila. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs plans to designate assets to nations whose political and financial load for Finland is developing. The quantity of Finns traveling and living in the Philippines has been on the expansion for a considerable length of time. Finnish or-

ganizations likewise enrol an ever-increasing number of prepared laborers from the Philippines. The relations among Finland and the Philippines are excellent, and the reviving of the international embassy is accepted to carry the nations significantly closer to one another. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020.)

With this study, the researcher's goals are to determine how people from Finland perceive the Philippines as a tourist destination, discover their travel interests, acknowledge their willingness to travel to the Philippines, and identify their concerns about travelling to the country. In addition, the researcher also hopes to develop a better approach to help increase the Finnish residents' awareness about the Philippines as a tourist destination. This research is not focusing necessarily on Finnish citizens but for other nationalities who are residing in Finland. In this case, the data is gathered generally from the people who are traveling from Finland to the Philippines.

To be able to gather data from the target group, various speculations are clarified to create an understanding of the subject. There are different types of research methods that use different tools for data collection. With the objectives above mentioned the researcher aims to answer the goals of the study using a quantitative approach and survey; Quantitative research gathers data from existing and potential clients utilizing testing strategies and conveying survey, for example, and the results of which can be analysed in numbers and compared between variables. (Bhat 2019.) An online survey is created to collect information from the residents of Finland and to know their perception about the Philippines as a tourist destination and if it is an interesting country to visit. The survey was created in the autumn semester of 2019 when the researcher started the writing of this thesis. The link to the survey continually being open until the spring semester of 2020. Due to the global pandemic, the data collection stayed online and reached only the social media and Finnish public forums online. The limited obtained information through the survey is carefully analysed with the help of theories.

This research topic is taken from the personal interest of the author since the Philippines is her country of origin. The author also worked for the Philippine Department of Tourism (PDOT), London office that leads the promotion of Philippine tourism in Northern and Southern Europe. The past jobs include representing the Philippines and promoting the Philippines as a tourism destination in MATKA2018 in Helsinki, Panorama World Festival 2018 in Stockholm and Fitur2019 - 2020 in Madrid. During these events, it became more interesting to the author to collect data on tourist behaviours and how they perceive the Philippines as a tourist destination, especially in the Finnish market. For the reason that

after the MATKA2018 in Helsinki, the PDOT stopped participating in the event due to low market interest. Conducting this research study can help determine the issue and create a possible solution or market strategy.

This report paper is divided into four main chapters: (1) background of the study, (2) literature review (3) research approach and methods, and (4) result analysis and conclusion. To deeply understand the purpose of the research, the first two chapters are devoted to explaining the theoretical part of the study. First, the general information about the Philippines as a tourist destination is described. This consists of the main attractions, accessibility of the Philippines from Finland, and the amenities. In addition to the discussion is the connection of Finland to the Philippines and how the residents of Finland behave when it comes to traveling. Secondly, the definition, conceptualization, formation, measure, and function of destination image and branding are stated. Various theories from different researchers are summoned to create a strong statement about the topic. Thirdly, is the introduction of the methods and materials used to collect information for the research. The definition of different approaches is explained to clearly understand the chosen method. In this section, the preparation, the process of data collection, and the instrument used are stated. One of the most important parts is the verification of the reliability and the validity of the gathered information which is also discussed at the end of the section. And lastly, the results and analysis of all collected data and the conclusion. The results are presented in tables, charts, and graphs to visually show the gathered information to be able to easily compare and analyse the outcome. Discussions and evaluations of the analysed results are stated and considered as the final part of this report. The researcher's personal thoughts and conclusions are given in the section of recommendations for future studies about the topic.

2 Background of the Study

This chapter introduces the general idea of the Philippines as a tourism destination; main attractions, amenities, accessibility of the country from Finland and other tourism products and activities it offers. In this chapter, the relationship of Finland with the Philippines is discussed and the travel behaviours of Finnish residents are also revealed.

2.1 The Philippines as a Tourism Destination

The Philippines, an archipelagic country located in Southeast Asia of the western Pacific Ocean, and it is surrounded by the Philippine Sea from the east, the Celebes Sea from the south, Sulu Sea from the southwest, and South China Sea from the west and north. The island country consists of 7,641 islands. It is the world's fifth-largest island country with an area of about 300,000 square kilometres. Although the Philippines is composed of many islands and islets only two-fifths of them are named. These islands are divided into the country's three main regions; Luzon group of islands which consist of Luzon Island, Mindoro, and Palawan, the Visayas group of islands which consists of Bohol, Cebu, Leyte, Negros, Panay and Samar and lastly, Mindanao in the southern part of the country. (Borloza, Cullinane & Hernandez 2015b.) There are 81 provinces and are grouped into 17 regions based on geographical, cultural, and ethnological characteristics. (Wikipedia 2004a.) As of 2019, the population of the Philippines is over 109 million and ranks number 13 in the list of countries by population. (Worldometers 2020.)

The name, Philippines is derived from the name of the Spanish king, Phillip II during its colonization which lasts for 333 years. The culture of The Philippines came from Spanish colonization, mainly the religion which is Roman Catholicism. Islam also has a large number of followers specifically in the southern Philippines, it was brought to them in the 15th century from Brunei. The United States of America took the country from Spaniards and rule it for another 48 years and educated the people. Despite its prominence of Anglo-European culture, the people of the Philippines are Asian in consciousness and aspiration. The official language during the Spaniards' colonial rule was Spanish. Under the American occupation, English became the language used in public schools. Tagalog, the native language, was nominated in 1937 to become the national language. (WorldAtlas 2016.) Native languages and dialects spoken in the Philippines are estimated a total of 150, suggested by scholars. Since there are many ethnic groups in the country, they use different ethnic dialects depends on their region. (Borloza, Cullinane & Hernandez 2015c.) The Philippines is one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world because it is the

second language spoken by the people after the national language, Tagalog. (Experience Philippines 2010a.)

As a tropical country, the climate in the Philippines is classified into two seasons which is the dry season and rainy season. November to February is said to be the coolest month and a good time to visit if travellers do not enjoy the heat and dry weather. For those who do not mind the heat and enjoy the outside, March to May is the summer month. June to October are rainy months and in between them; July to September are characterized as typhoon months. The temperature in the Philippines averages 30 degrees C and had a 77 percent humidity. Highlands, like Baguio and Tagaytay, has a cooler temperature compared to other areas of the country. (Experience Philippines 2010a.)

2.1.1 Main Attractions

The Philippines are made of islands that possess various beautiful places to visit and explore. The country is known for its rich bio diversities like; beaches, mountains, rain forests, islands, diving spots, and even heritage towns and monuments. Its rich historical and cultural heritage, including its festivals and indigenous traditions, are the attractions of the Philippines as well. (Wikipedia 2005.)

Boracay

Boracay is heaven for guaranteed sun-admirers everywhere throughout the world. It is a small island, seven kilometres long and one kilometre wide, located in Western Visayas and an hour flight from the international airports in Manila and Cebu. Boracay is surrounded by stunning white-sand beaches and clear blue waters (see image 1 below). For beach experts, Boracay competes with the foremost excellent beaches in more well-known destinations such as the Caribbean and the South Pacific and neighbouring countries Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, as well. (Wikipedia 2004b; Wikitravel 2005.)



Image 1. Boracay's famous white beaches. (Guide to The Philippines 2019a.)

The main attractions of the island are the *Puka Beach*, a quiet stretch of white sand along the northern tip of the island, *Baling Hai Beach*, a quiet little cove for swimming, snorkeling, and dining in a relaxed, peaceful environment, *Bulabog Beach*, a place for kiteboarders doing crazy tricks, *The Bat Cave*, home to small insectivorous bats and a place for a short hike through the forest to the mouth of a cave and the famous *White Beach*, where more tourists are in the island for. The White Beach is the commercial center of the island. The long white-sand beach is divided into three sections; Station 1, the northernmost and has the widest beachfront where most prime hotels and resorts are located, Station 2, the center of the White beach and the center of it all for shopping, eating, partying, etc. and Station 3, the quieter and the least developed part of the beach. Boracay might be small but it is a paradise full of numerous outdoor and activities. Various activities like scuba diving, snorkelling, kiteboarding, skimboarding, and boat tours are offered in different places. To go around, local tricycles and taxis are available everywhere on the island. There are available scooters, mountain bikes, sailboats, and motorized outriggers for rent at very reasonable prices. (Wikitravel 2005.)

Tripadvisor named Boracay as the seventh most beautiful beach in Asia and one of the top 25 most beautiful beaches in the world. The 10 square kilometre island hosted over 2 million tourists in 2017, a ratio of 66 tourists for every resident. In 2018, Boracay suffered from over-tourism and was closed temporarily by the government for tourists for six months. This 'rehabilitation' period was utilized to restore the island to its former beauty.

Since reopening in October 2018, new regulations are applied to avoid the phenomenon from happening again. There is a limited number of tourists allowed on the island and providing a pre-booked hotel will be allowed to take the boat to the Island. (EHL 2019; Lonely Planet 2008.)

Palawan

The last ecological frontier, Palawan is the country's affluent provinces in terms of natural biodiversity. It is covered with sugary beaches, cays, and limestone formations that are very gorgeous and unique unlike any other (see image 2 below). Palawan's beaches simply are incomparable, and with countless islands to explore, the archipelago offers boundless opportunities for those looking to escape reality for a few days or longer. El Nido, Puerto Princesa, Coron, and San Vicente are the main attractions of the island and must-go destination for travellers who enjoy, the beach, snorkelling, scuba diving, island hopping, and even mountain climbing. (Larena 2019a.)



Image 2. Palawan's famous rock island formations and pristine water. (Guide to The Philippines 2019b.)

Palawan is the largest province in the country in terms of the total area of dominion. It is about an hour and a half flight from the international airports in Manila or Cebu. Puerto Princesa is the capital city of Palawan where the world's second-longest subterranean

river, *Puerto Princesa Underground River* is located. (Wikipedia 2004c.) The Puerto Princesa Underground River was voted in 2012 by the worldwide community as one of the New 7 Wonders of the World and attracts thousands of tourists. Tour operators offer packages to explore the river and cave. The journey from the jump-off point in Sabang Wharf gives a refreshing view of the rural landscape as the trip continues to the underground river with the outrigger boat. There is a quick trek through a jungly trail and wooden pathways to reach the cave opening where adventurers use paddle boats and enjoy the experience of paddling through the long underground stream. The cave holds stalactites and stalagmites of various shapes and sizes; resembling vegetables, dinosaurs, and religious icons. (Larena 2019.)

Palawan is well-known for scuba diving and snorkelling. The highlight is *Tubbataha Reefs National Park*, a unique atoll reef with a very high density of marine species located in the middle of the Sulu Sea. It is accessible only by liveaboard boat and divers are allowed from late March to mid-June. *El Nido* and *Coron* are famous for their turquoise waters and dazzling coral reefs and the most visited places in Palawan. Both of them hold beautiful lagoons explored by kayaking and boat tours. Numerous activities make travellers occupied; diving, snorkelling, rock-climbing, hiking, kayaking, sailing, trekking, cliff climbing, and top on the list is island hopping. Palawan, having 1780 islands, visiting these beautiful pieces of nature by motorized outrigger is the no. 1 on tour operators' list called island hopping. Maldives-like-sandbars are also lying in the islands of Palawan. (Bloom 23 May 2019.) Based on activities and sights, natural attractions and beaches, food, friendliness, and overall value, the Travel+Leisure's "The World's Best Awards 2019." claimed Palawan as the second-best island in the world. Other travel websites agree that Palawan is the most beautiful island in the world. (Rappler 2019.)

Cordillera Region

The Cordillera is the Philippines' Premiere Highland Region in the northern part of the Philippines. The region offers a cooler atmosphere, unforgettable adventures in stunning surroundings, and the chance to experience the traditional tribal culture. The region is home to ancient traditions and indigenous cultures of different tribal ethnicity. Nearly the entire region is sited in the mountainous Cordillera Central range located the second highest mountain in the Philippines, Mount Pulag, ascending at 2,922 meters. The Cordillera region is composed of the provinces of Abra, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province and Apayao where Baguio City is the center of the region. (Vigattin Tourism 2013a.) It is more than an hour's flight from Manila to Baguio and more than 5 hours ride by bus. *Baguio* is an inland city in the heart of the province of Benguet. It serves as a portal to the

Cordillera region. Domestic and foreign visitors' getaway to escape the city heat. (Santos 2019.)



Image 3. The Banaue Rice Terraces. (Guide to The Philippines 2019c.)

The world-famous *Banaue Rice Terraces* in the province of Ifugao considered as the "Eighth Wonder of the World" and truly lives up to its name (see image 3 above). The estimated 2000 years old rice terraces described as "where land merges with the clouds to meet the heavens" and the rice terraces are the stairways. (Department of Tourism Philippines 2018a.) Banaue is in the province of Ifugao and approximately three hours and a half drive away from Baguio. Travelers who came to the Cordillera region cannot miss the truly fascinating *Echo Valley* in Sagada, known for its hanging coffins on limestone walls. Hanging coffins is a tradition still practiced to this day believing that the deceased is considered to be closer to their gods. Ancient coffins can be seen stacked in the mouth of the nearby burial cave, a very unique scenery only in Echo Valley. The Cordillera Region is also visited for a chance to experience the tribal culture. In the midst of a creative colony, nine traditional tribal quarters have been reassembled just outside Baguio in Tam-awan Village. Experience the night stay in a genuine Ifugao or Kalinga living with a bonfire, surrounded by native dance and music exhibitions. The Cordillera Region magnets the nature adventurer who enjoys hiking, trekking, strolling, and biking. Various outdoor and nature activities are offered to those who are fearless and ready to touch the sky. (Selective Asia 2017.)

Cebu and Bohol

Cebu is one of the most established provinces in the Philippines. It is one of the exceptionally urbanized urban areas in the country besides the capital, Manila. Cebu City is the first capital and the oldest city in the Philippines. The Mactan-Cebu International Airport makes the city easier to access internationally and domestically. (Wikipedia 2004d.) Cebu is the traveller's fantasy of a tropical island come true with refreshing climate, flawless beaches, crystalline waters, and lavish resorts with all the decorations of modern living. Cebu serves a global gateway for business trades, tourism, shipping, furniture-making, and heavy industry. (Department of Tourism Philippines 2018.)

In 1521, the Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan planted the Cross of Christianity in the name Spain in the province of Cebu. The cross is housed in a small chapel in the city of Cebu and named *The Magellan's Cross*. It is one of the popular attractions in Cebu City. The island, Cebu offers a mix of history, culture and beautiful beaches and stunning products of nature. (Department of Tourism Philippines 2018; Vigattin Tourism 2013b.) *Kawasan Falls* is one of many waterfalls in Cebu and is the most well-known. White sand beaches and crystal clear waters are found in *Malapascua Island* where tourists flock to dive, snorkel and swim with thresher sharks. Cebu is also known for its festival called *Sinulog Festival* attracts more than 2 million tourists every year. The festival happens yearly, every third Sunday of January. It is celebrated to honor Cebu's patron saint, Santo Niño. (Ramos 2019.)

Traveling to *Bohol* is probably the most famous side trip from Cebu because it is easily accessible via a ferry trip and only 2 hours away. Bohol is where the famous *Chocolate Hills* is located. The Chocolate Hills is an amazing series of 1,268 perfectly symmetrical, haystack-shaped hills and measured about 30 meters from the ground (see Image 4 below). This unexplainable beauty of these hills changes colour to either green or brown depending on the season. One of Bohol's popular destinations is *The Loboc River* where the unique experience onboard in Loboc River cruise, a floating restaurant that serves buffet meal while cruising the river. (Bohol Tourism 2015.) There are numerous other attractions in Bohol island. One of these is the stunning white powdery sand beaches best location is in *Panglao Island*, the most visited, *Alona Beach*. Scuba diving, snorkeling, dolphin/whale watching, mahogany forest tour are some of the travellers' reasons for coming to Bohol. *The Philippine Tarsier* is a must-seen creature when in Bohol. It is the world's tiniest primate, monkey-like animals with huge eyes. (Bohol Philippines 2018.)



Image 4. The famous Chocolate Hills in Bohol. (Guide to The Philippines 2019d.)

Davao

Davao is located in Mindanao, the southern region and second-largest island in the Philippines. Davao City is the biggest urban focus in Southern Philippines and the third biggest metropolitan area in the country. (Wikipedia 2004e.) A flight from Cebu to Davao takes only an hour while Manila to Davao is about two hours long. Davao is well-known for its natural attractions; white-sand beaches, nature parks, and rainforests, many of which are easily accessible from the city center. Pristine white-sand beaches in *Samal Island* is an hour away from the airport. The island is well-enjoyed by tourists, relaxing on the beach in the beautiful resorts, island hopping tours, and other outdoor and water activities. Another most visited places in Davao is *Eden Nature Park*, a man-made ecological mountain resort. The park is perfect for tourists who aim to experience nature at its finest. Various activities and sight-seeing are offered inside the park and resort. *Mount Apo*, the highest peak in the Philippines and Southeast Asia. Trekking in Mount Apo is a must-try activity while in Davao. Hikers choose from various trails depending on the level of difficulty to reach the top of the Philippines, expected the breath-taking panoramic view and beautiful sunrise and sunsets. (Detourista 2020; Larena 2019b.)



Image 5. The beautiful face of the Philippine Eagle. (Guide to The Philippines 2019e.)

Mindanao's rainforests are home to the incomparable *Philippine Eagle* (see image 5 above), the nation's national winged creature, and one of the biggest birds in the world. Travelers purchase tour packages that include the visit to the Philippine Eagle Center, home for 36 Philippine Eagles, *Davao Crocodile Park*, the wildlife experience, accommodating thousands of crocodiles and reptiles and taste the abundant and rare fruit of Davao, *Durian*, a fruit known for its bad smell and good milky taste. (Larena 2019b.)

2.1.2 Accessibility

Finland is about 9,080 kilometres away from the Philippines. Several airlines offer affordable flights from the airports in Finland to the airports in the Philippines. It takes approximately 13 hours by plane including the stopover which is the fastest flight possible because there are no direct flights from Finland to the Philippines. There are several ways to fly to the Philippines from Finland. Some of these flights are from Helsinki-Vanta International Airport (HEL) to different airports in the Philippines; Manila International Airport or Ninoy Aquino International Airport (MNL), Mactan-Cebu International Airport (CEB), Clark International Airport (CRK), Davao International Airport or Francisco Bangoy International Airport (DVO) or Bacolod-Silay International Airport (BCD). The two other airports in Finland, Tampere–Pirkkala Airport (TMP) and Turku Airport (TKU), also offer flights to Manila airport. Finnair, a Finnish carrier, operates flights from Helsinki to two main airports in the

Philippines which are in Manila and Cebu with one stopover. Major carriers such as Cathay Pacific, Turkish Airlines, Qatar Airways, SAS, Lufthansa, and KLM operate flights to the Philippines in collaboration with the two main airlines in the Philippines, Philippine Airlines (PAL) and the Cebu Pacific. (Momondo 2020; Rome2rio 2020.)

The best recommended time to visit the Philippines is from December to February. This is when the temperature is perfect around 24 - 30 degrees Celsius. At this time when the country is fully accessible, including its many beautiful islands and more remote areas. Travelers usually do not mind the summer (March-May) heat even when the temperature reaches more than 34 degrees Celsius especially when the trip is about spending time on the beach and do water activities. The wet season (June-October) is not as bad, the rain doesn't pour constantly and rarely impacts on travel plans. Travelers still enjoy the heat of the sun, with fewer crowds and green scenery. (Audley Travel 2015) The prices of flights to the Philippines vary depending on the time of the year. Traveling to the Philippines around September and October are usually cheaper. High flight prices to the Philippines are expected in the country's dry season (November- May) and even higher in December (Christmas time). In addition, July and August in Finland when most employed people are taking their summer holiday, the flight tickets to the Philippines are also increased. However, planning and booking the flights in advance give possible cheaper and great flight deals. (Momondo 2020)

Finnish passport holders are allowed to stay for 30 days, while other travellers can stay in the Philippines for 21 days without the presence of a Visa, provided a valid passport of at least six months while at stay and a return ticket or the next point of entry to another destination. For an extended stay, tourists can obtain a Visa Extension either from the Philippine Consulate or Embassy before traveling to the Philippines or from the Bureau of Immigrations once in the country. (Filippiinit-seura 2019; Experience Philippines 2010a.)



Image 6. A very colorful jeepney of Manila. (Seatops/Alamy 2019)

Getting around in the Philippines is not as easy as taking one train to reach the next destination. The Philippines is made up of thousands of islands and to move from one island to another involves cruising or flying. The country listed at least 41 airports in different parts of the country and ports in every inhabited island. Land transportations are available everywhere, such as cars, taxis, trains, buses, motorbikes, and jeepneys. Jeepneys are the main modes of transportation available in cities and towns. *Jeepneys* (see image 6 above) have routes listed on their windshields, accessible by hailing as they pass by. It is highly recommended to learn how the jeepney works before riding it for the first time. Local commuters and drivers are very helpful when asked. Most tourists in the cities use taxis to easily go around. Renting cars is also possible with several car rental agencies. In small towns and rural areas, motorbikes are the main modes of public transportation. It works like jeepneys, with routes or as taxis for private rides. Buses mostly operate long-distant travel inside the big islands. (Gap Year 2015.)

2.1.3 Amenities

There is a multitude of options in terms of available accommodations within the Philippines. Hotels and resorts in tourist destinations around the Philippines are easy to find. Landlocked destinations are usually where hotels are located while beach resorts are usually found in coastal towns and islands. These types of accommodation have a diversity of

choices from 1-5 stars hotels, luxurious, modern to rustic or bamboo hut on a beach. (Rough Guides 2023.)

The best accommodations, the Philippines can probably offer are the private island resorts in Palawan. Perfect for travellers who wish to escape the busy world and for those who have a lot of money to spend. The luxurious hotel and resort named *Amanpulo* ranked on top of the list and is located in Pamalican Island, a private island in Palawan. This Maldives-like island resort is the most expensive resort in the country. El Nido Resorts owns four other top-rated island resorts; Lagen Island, Apulit Island, Miniloc Island, and Pangulasian Island. The location of these private island resorts is spectacular. (El Nido Resorts 1998.) These resorts don't just offer the usual white-sand beach fronts and world-class accommodations but bring a whole new unforgettable experience in the middle of crystal clear water and stunning sandbars. Although most guests are honeymooners, there are various complementary offerings to accommodate other types of guests, for instance, families, couples, and large groups. (Luxury Travel Magazine 2019.)

Budget hotels, motels, hostels, backpackers inn, and homestay are available as well in different tourist destinations for budget-friendly accommodation. Airbnb is one of the most popular ways to get an affordable place to stay. There are about 60,000 properties listed on Airbnb in the Philippines. Using Airbnb is the easiest way to check out properties and experience a simple Filipino way of living. (Dot Property 2017.) Other destinations outside cities or towns, for example, mountains, forests, or isolated islands don't have a proper hotel or resorts to offer. Camping is the only possible way to stay overnight in these remote places. (Guide to The Philippines 2019f.)

The Philippines may be a relatively small country however it is known to have numerous shopping malls. The capital, Manila has it all, from modern and gigantic shopping malls to traditional and busy markets. Major Philippine shopping center chains are found all over the county, such as SM Supermalls, with 70 shopping centers serving across the country. Highend shopping can be done in Ayala Shopping Centers with 14 branches around the country. (Garcia 2020.) Ayala Shopping Centers sells a variety of luxurious and expensive clothes, shoes, bags, and jewellery in different shapes, colours, and brands. The Philippines is the best destination for cheap and bargain shopping as well. Diversity of items are sold in the flea markets and open market, for instance, Divisoria, Market! Market! and Greenhills are the most popular ones. (Wikivoyage 2020.) Local products are found in small-town markets in different provinces or island destinations. The Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT) aims to make the country as a destination where

shopping is fun, unique, and affordable. 38 percent of the most common tourist activity in the country is shopping based on the DOT's Visitor Sample Survey in 2018. (Garcia 2020.)

Tourists visit the Philippines for many reasons, the culture, nature, or local people, as well as varieties of local cuisines, are waiting to be discovered. Filipino cuisine has lately been rising its way up in the culinary world. The Philippines' different influences throughout history, the traditional cooking strategies and the people's skill for combining flavours results in a very unique, unpretentious, and rich in flavours cooking. Pork is commonly used in most Filipino dishes. Most Filipino dishes are eaten with freshly cooked white rice. Meat, vegetable, or seafood dishes accompanied by cooked rice are called viand. Local Filipino cuisines are best tasted in each region of origin and cooked according to their unique way and own tradition. (Olar 2020.) For instance, Cebu is well-known for its dish called *Lechon* (roasted pig). Lechon a special dish on the menu of several restaurants in the region. There are thousands of different restaurants all over the Philippines. Manila has over 22,000 restaurants. However, Filipino street foods are catching the interest of most tourists. The streets are flooded with vendors selling a diversity of grilled, barbecued and roasted savoury Filipino food. These dishes can be found in the menus of bars and restaurants as well. (Philippine Tourism USA 2017.)

The Philippines offers a variety of activities after dark. Nightclubs and bars in the cities or next to the beach create a unique picture of nightlife in the Philippines. Boracay is the most popular place to party at night. Manila holds numerous nightclubs and bars full of friendly people. (Banerjee 2019.) Karaoke bars are the Filipinos way of having fun. These types of bars are found in every corner of the Philippines, serving food and drinks. (Sood 12 August 2011.)

2.2 The Connection Between Finland and The Philippines

There is a very good relationship between Finland and the Philippines. On average, Finland and the Philippines are better known to each other compared to other distant countries. The history of these two countries started in 1952 when the Miss Universe from Finland, Armi Kuusela, married a Filipino. The Philippines was again recognized in 2000 when two Finnish nationals were taken hostage by the Abu Sayyaf guerrillas in the Philippines. Despite the negative event, the Philippines and Finland maintained a good relationship. As of 2019, approximately 5,594 Filipinos are residing in Finland including Finnish spouses. The diplomatic relation between the two countries started in 1955. Due to cuts in

Foreign Service entitlements, the Finnish embassy in Manila closed in 2012. The embassy in Malaysia became the temporary handler of Finland relations with the Philippines. In autumn of this year 2020, Finland felt the need to reopen the embassy in Manila due to the expansion of Finland’s commercial interests, expanding provision of consular services, prominent future trade, and growing tourism between the two countries. For the past years, the number of Finns traveling and migrating in the Philippines is increasing. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2015; Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020.) Although the Philippines is not commonly receiving visitors from Finland compared to Thailand, there is more than a 50 percent increase in the past ten years shown in Figure 1 below. According to the statistics by the Philippine Department of Tourism (PDOT), there were 7,219 visitors arrived in the Philippines from Finland in 2018.

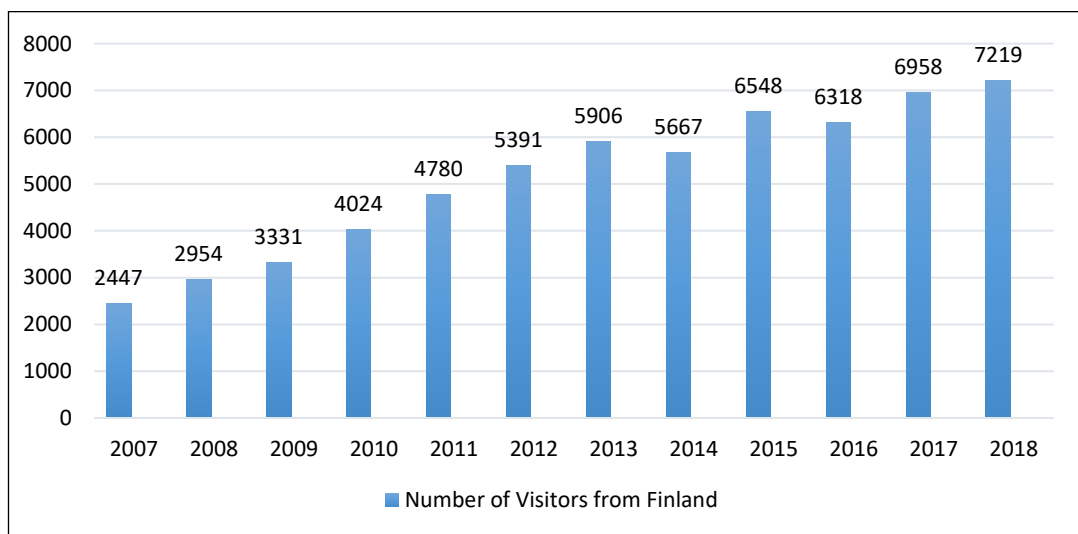


Figure 1. Visitor arrivals to the Philippines from Finland. (Department of Tourism Philippines 2018b.)

2.3 Finnish Residents’ Travel Behaviour

The Finnish residents made 8.2 million different leisure trips abroad in 2018. It is recorded that 6.2 million of these trips were with an overnight stay in the country of destination, excluding the overnight cruise to the neighbouring countries. Figure 2 below shows the Finnish residents’ travel activities from 2012 to 2018. Estonia is the number one destination for these trips which covers 23 percent of all the leisure trips while around 20 percent is made in Sweden including visiting friends and family. Traveling to Spain is a long-time favourite destination for Finnish residents' leisure trips. The trip to Canary Island is commonly taken in the winter season in Finland while throughout the year, Continental Spain continuously attracts Finnish travellers. (Statistics Finland 2019.)

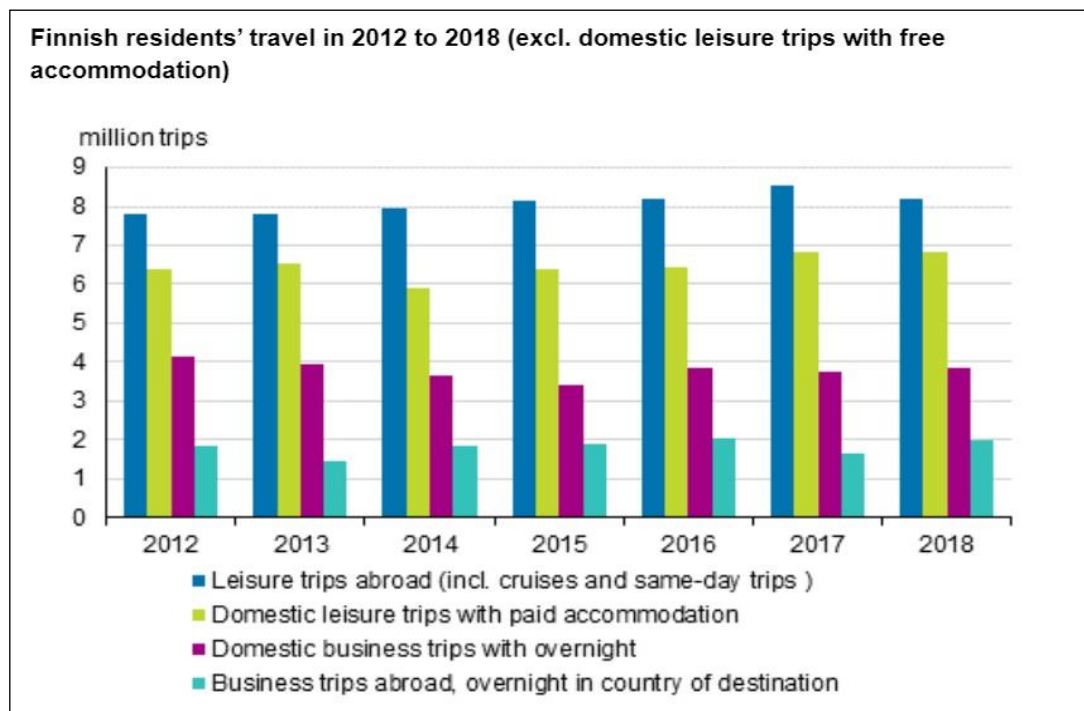


Figure 2. Finnish residents' travel from 2012 to 2018. (Statistics Finland 2019a.)

From the past years, the number of travels outside Europe slightly increased. These travels are headed in the American continent and in Asia, most particularly in Thailand, one of the most favourite Asian countries visited by travellers from Finland. Travel reservations, for instance, flights and accommodation, for these trips are nearly 80 to 90 percent reserved or paid online. Considering the demand for internet booking and creating independent travel is becoming easier, the number of sold package tours are unchanged from the previous years. Twenty-six percent of the overnight leisure trips in 2018 came from package tours. In 2016, approximately 91 percent of Finnish residents, from 15 to 84 of age, went for an overnight leisure trip at least once. (Statistic Finland 2019.)

Traveling to foreign destinations, Finnish travellers are particularly interested in experiencing the local culture and local way of living. This is according to the survey conducted by Matka Travel Fair 2019. The result of the survey proclaimed that Finnish residents are primarily traveling for relaxation and to experience different food and cultures. The respondents are mainly interested in shopping in local markets than in large shopping centers. It also showed that 62 percent of these people would rather choose a non-touristic place than a popular tourist destination. Eating street-food is preferred by 75 percent of the respondents than dining in a fancy and famous restaurant. Mainly the influence of friends and acquaintances travel experiences lead the Finnish travellers to decide the next travel

destination. The advertisements of the marketed destinations by tour operators, airlines, and hotels are also influencing these people to travel. The photos and videos of friends, influencers, and bloggers on social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, create a great impact on the travel inspirations and travel decisions of Finnish residents especially the younger generations. (Töre 16 January 2019.)

3 Literature Review

This chapter explains the definition and general knowledge about tourism destination and how it is developed. It also includes the research information on destination image and branding, definition and its importance, measures, components, and how it is formed.

3.1 Tourism Destination

Tourism is defined as a process or an act of spending time away from home in the interest of entertainment, unwinding, and pleasure while making use of the commercial arrangement of services. A destination is a place to which someone is journeying or where something is being taken. Together, a tourism destination is a place or area where travellers or visitors spend time and manifest tourism products such as attractions, support facilities, and other tourism resources complete with established management, physical and administrative sections, and a well-known image. Over the centuries, tourism created a huge impact on the world and become the most important economic sector of most countries. (Mutuku 2013; Walton 2015.)

At the moment, many countries are developing areas for tourism and the destination choices accessible to consumers proceed to expand. Moreover, consumers today, encouraged by increased leisure time, a rising amount of expendable income, and more effective transportation systems, are able to select among a much larger variety of destinations. As a result, tourism marketers are recently faced with influencing consumer decision making in an increasingly compound and competitive global market. The need for a compelling positioning strategy for a tourist destination is one of the most crucial marketing challenges emerging from these circumstances. To be promoted effectively in the selected markets, a destination must be well separated from its competition or certainly positioned in the minds of the consumers. The creation and management of an exclusive and

engaging perception or image of the destination is the key component of this positioning process. (Calantone, Di Benetto, Hakam & Bojanic 1989.)

3.2 Destination Image - Definition and Importance

Image is defined as “the general belief or impression of an individual or organization projected to the public. The same rule is amplified towards destination image. It is commonly described as “someone’s impressions or perceptions of a place”. (Echtner & Ritchie 2003, 41.) Image is also interpreted as an emotional experience formed based on a consumer's rational and emotional interpretation that creates both cognitive and affective components. (Dobni & Zinkhan 1990.) Konecnik (2002) concluded in a literature review on this topic, that the destination image is a compound opinion that may be analysed from various points of view and the creation of different individual beliefs that associated with the diverse product or service attributes. (Konecnik 2002.) The term “destination image” is not precisely defined although many researchers shared their definitions of the term, some important definitions are shown in Table 1. The prior studies stated that most of the definitions are quite unclear and, in several cases, the term is not even discussed or defined. (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, 41.)

Table 1. Definitions Used by Selected Destination Image Researchers. (Echtner & Ritchie 2003, 41; Tasci 2007.)

Authors	Definitions
Hunt (1971)	Impressions that a person or persons hold about a state in which they do not reside.
Crompton (1979)	An image may be defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination.
Reynolds (1985)	An image is the mental construct developed by the consumer on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions comes into being through a creative process in which selected impressions are elaborated, embellished and ordered.
Gartner & Hunt (1987)	"Impressions that a person ...holds about a state in which they do not reside"
Dadgostar & Isotalo (1992)	The overall impression or attitude that an individual acquires of a specific destination. This overall impression is considered to be composed of the tourist’s perceptions concerning the relevant qualities of the destination.
Milman & Pizam (1995)	A sum total of the images of the individual elements or attributes that make up the tourism experience.

Walmsley & Young (1998)	A common structure or schema of evaluations that can be used to differentiate between tourism destinations.
Choi et al. (1999)	People's beliefs, ideas, or impressions about a place.
Sussmann & Unel (1999)	The result of composite perceptions which are, in turn, dictated by attitudes to result in a positive or negative image.
Coshall (2000)	The individual's perceptions of the characteristics of destinations.
MacKay & Fesenmaier (2000)	A composite of various products (attractions) and attributes woven into a total impression.
Bigne-Alcaniz et al. (2009)	It consists of all that the destination evokes in the individual; any idea, belief, feeling or attitude that tourists associate with the place
Matos et al. (2012)	Image is a set of complex mental impressions and total feelings that a potential tourists hold of a product, place or tourism destination.

The image of a destination is formed based on a person's idea or experience in different parts of the destination. Tourists decide where to travel based on the destination images being marketed or based on their idea or impression of a destination coming from different sources, such as past experiences with a destination. To be able to understand the travellers' behaviour and to plan an effective tourism marketing approach, the image of a destination stands an important role. It highlights the need to develop strategies to measure the beliefs or impressions comprehensively and precisely. Many of the destination image researchers support that there are three different ways, the behaviour of a tourist is influenced by the image of the destination. First is *a priori* image, the basis of the decision before visiting the destination. The second phase is the image *in loco*, the evaluation made on the destination when the tourist actually visited. And the third phase is *a posteriori* image or the revisit and recommendations, the future intentions made after visiting the destination. (Echtner & Ritchie 2003; Selby & Morgan 1996; Tasci & Gartner 2007.)

Moreover, it has been very interesting to tourism researchers, as well as, to industry specialists and destination marketers, the analysis of a destination's image. Echtner & Ritchie (2003) acknowledges the importance of destination image to distinguish a destination from its competitors and its great part in the decision making of the travellers. The com-

petitiveness of a destination could be escalated by creating and publishing a flattering image to the potential target tourists and markets. (Gartner 1993; Konecnik 2002.) The favourable image of a destination stimulates awareness and evokes emotions towards the process of decision-making of the traveller. (Phau & al. 2010; Sönmez & Sirakaya 2002.) In this matter, the findings from the study of Phau & al. (2010) highlights prioritizing aspects, for instance, affordable trips, great deals, political steadiness, economic improvement, and family-friendly destinations to develop positive and distinguished destination image between competitors. Furthermore, the role of the destination image is to provide the groundwork for a successful and well-planned future development of the destination. (Echtner & Ritchie 2003.) Therefore, tourist destinations marketers spend a lot of money, time, and effort to create a flattering image to help attract potential travellers to visit their destinations. (Konecnik 2002.) Destination image is direct or indirectly connected to domestic and foreign investments, encourages new residents, jobs, growth of societies, keeping political and international relations and educations. (Hankinson 2005; Warnaby & Davies 1997.) Modern events and international affairs create a unique image in the minds of tourists. It is important to completely understand the conceptual framework of the destination image. (Echtner & Ritchie 2003.)

3.3 Conceptualization of Destination Image

In the early '70s, the conceptualization of destination image with the studies of Hunt (1971) and Gunn (1972). (Gartner 1986.) Crompton (1979) conceptualized destination image as a combination of cognitive beliefs and affective impressions that a person holds on a specific destination. (Byon & Zhang 2010.) The conceptualization of destination image is naturally complicated and observed and measured from various perspectives. Given its relevance, one of the most discussed areas in tourism research is the study of the destination image. Extra work and effort are needed to investigate the multi-dimensional nature and image formation process for a better understanding of destination image. (Gartner 1989.) Echtner & Ritchie (1993) proposed a rather unique conceptualization of the destination image formation after working in the exploration of the multidimensional nature of the destination image and re-examine the remaining literature between 1975 and 1990. The concept of destination image is linked to the common area of image measurement by Etchner & Ritchie (1993) where imagery is the base of the measurement. Furthermore in their research, significance was put on the functional, psychological, common, unique characteristics of destination image (shown in Figure 3.) Echtner & Ritchie (1993) signified the composition of the destination image which is the perceptions of individual attributes,

and the holistic impressions. Components based on attributes refers to an individual feature of the destination, for instance, the amenities and hospitality of people. Components based on holistic impressions refer to the created mental imagery of the destination. (Echtner & Ritchie 2003; Tasci & al. 2007.)

The image of the destination can have unique trademarks which are the functional characteristics or auras which are the psychological characteristics of a destination. A unique trademark, for instance, the main attractions that a destination possesses which are not found in other destinations. While aura is referred to a certain feeling or atmosphere from the destination, for example, Paris is commonly perceived as a romantic place. These type of characteristics are difficult to create since it is about emotions. A destination can evoke unique images or impressions, however, an individual can create their own concept of the destination, for instance, based on prior experience. (Echtner & Ritchie 2003, 43-44.)

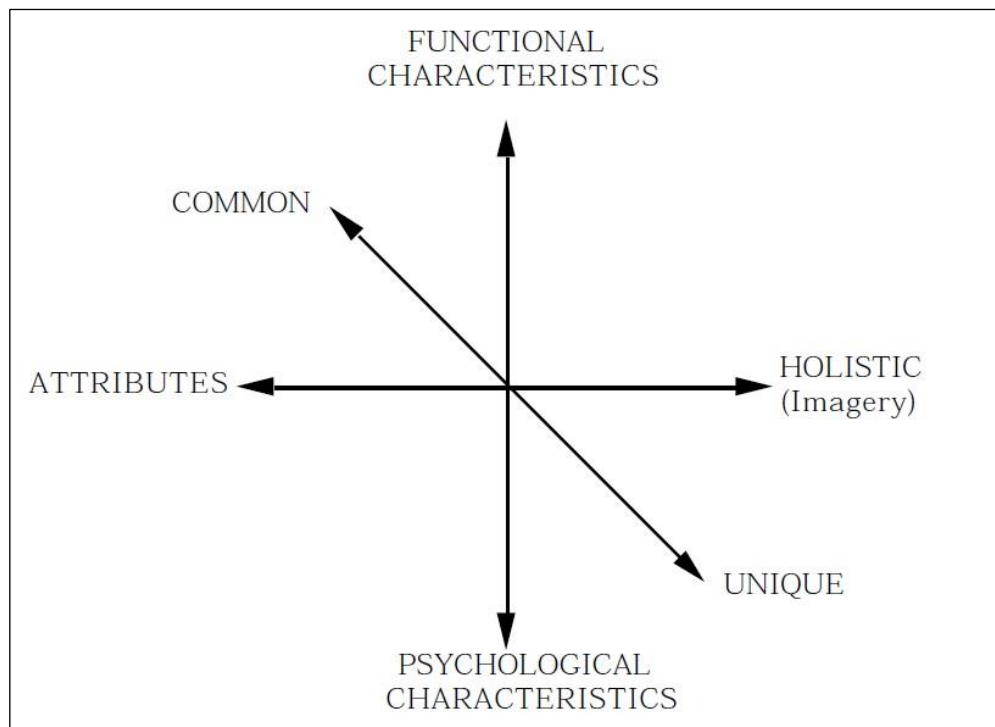


Figure 3. Components of Destination Image. (Echtner & Ritchie 2003.)

The attribute and holistic structure of destination image introduced by Echtner & Ritchie (1993) have been comprehensively embraced by the other researchers to conceptualize destination image. A serious investigation of earlier studies on destination image showed that the researchers have not been entirely conceptualized and operationalized a destination image successfully. Researchers have been unable to accurately record the holistic components of the destination image since they depend too much on the use of structured

methodologies. It indicated that in the majority of the studies, the psychological characteristics have not been measured enough and concluded that in designing the future destination image, the conceptualization created in the discussion of these features should be considered. They also highlighted that;

- Destination image should be visualized in two main components; those that are based on attributes and those that are holistic.
- Contents of each of these components of destination image should be functional, or more tangible, and psychological, or more abstract, characteristics.
- Images of the destination can vary from those based on functional, or more physical and psychological characteristics to those based on more unusual or even unique characteristics, happenings, emotions or auras.
- A combination of structured and unstructured methodologies should be used to measure destination image in order to capture all of these components.

(Echtner & Ritchie 1993, 46.)

3.3.1 Components of the Destination Image

The components of the destination image introduced by Echtner & Ritchie (1993) which include the functional, psychological, common, unique characteristics with attributes and holistic framework. Most tourist destination studies focused on functional or physical characteristics that are measured and observed directly through, for instance, the prices, size, and climates. Other studies have tried to include the hard to measure, less tangible or psychological characteristics, such as the emotion or atmosphere of the destination. 'Friendliness' of locals is the only psychological variable measured in the majority of studies, Ross (1994) commented in his study on the psychology of tourism. (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, 41-43; Jenkins 1999, 5; Ross 1994.)

Most tourism concerns are to go somewhere unique or different from the everyday environment. For this reason, it is surprising that the common/unique components of destination image introduced by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) (shown in Figure 3) is frequently disregarded. *Common functional* attributes, such as climate, price, types of accommodation, are the features that can be compared with most destinations. *Unique functional* attributes consist of unique trademarks and special events that create part of the image of the destination. *Common psychological* or abstract attributes are composed of the friendliness of the locals of fame or beauty of the scenery, while *unique psychological* attributes include emotion connected with places where some historical events happened or places of the religious excursion. (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, 41-43; Jenkins 1999, 5.)

One of the common struggles of tourist destination research is when destination images are holistic characterizations of a place. Researchers are forced to at particular parts or attributes to be able to measure the image of the destination. However, some aspects of this image cannot be analysed, such as the aura or atmosphere. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) proposed a model that introduces attributes and holistic as one of the three components. With this model, those parts of destination image that can be resolved into attributes are captured and the rest are holistic impressions. The dimension shows the functional and psychological attributes on one end and the functional and psychological holistic images at the opposite end, regarding the general impressions, the atmosphere, or mood. The model shown in Figure 3 should be visualized in three dimensions: attribute/holistic, functional/psychological, and common/unique. (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, 41-43; Jenkins 1999, 5.)

3.3.2 Measuring Destination Image

The presented definition of destination image indicates that a complete operationalization requires measuring both attributes and holistic impressions. These components should be measured concerning both functional and psychological characteristics. Moreover, in the process of measuring destination image, capturing those unique features or auras which differentiate a certain destination should be considered not only obtaining information on features similar to other destinations. Two basic approaches have been revealed from the examination of the techniques used in the previous researches on product image measurement. These approaches are *structured* and *unstructured*. In Table 2 below, created by Jenkins (1999) shows a clear comparison of structured and unstructured methods. (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, 44; Jenkins 1999, 6.)

Table 2. Methods used in destination image research: structured versus unstructured (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, 44; Jenkins 1999, 6.)

	Structured	Unstructured
Description	Various common image attributes are specified and incorporated into a standardized instrument and the respondent rates each	The respondent is allowed to freely describe his or her impressions of the destination. Data are gathered from a number of respondents. Sorting and categorization techniques are then used

	destination on each of the attributes, resulting in an 'image profile'	to determine the 'image dimensions'
Techniques	Usually a set of semantic differential or Likert type scales	Focus groups, open-ended survey questions, content analysis, repertory grid.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Easy to administer •Simple to code •Results easy to analyse using sophisticated statistical techniques •Facilitates comparisons between destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Conducive to measuring the holistic components of destination image •Reduces interviewer bias •Reduces likelihood of missing important image dimensions or components
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Does not incorporate holistic aspects of image •Attribute focused - that is, it forces the respondent to think about the product image in terms of the attributes specified •The completeness of structured methods can be variable - it is possible to miss dimensions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Level of detail provided by respondents is highly variable •Statistical analyses of the results are limited •Comparative analyses are not facilitated.

The attribute components of the destination images were concentrated in a strong selection for *structured* methods. The use of these methods, such as Likert and semantic differential scales, requires an individual to subjectively measure a series of pre-determined attributes or to characterize incentives using standardized scales. (Timmermans & al. 1982, 191.) In structured methodologies, the respondent is forced to consider the attributes of the product image specified by the scales. The holistic impressions are not directly described even if it may be referenced by the respondent when completing the scale items. Furthermore, the aim of the scale items is not to measure the unique feature of the product. Rather, the respondent is forced to rate the product using general and common features. The structured methodologies' completeness is highly changeable depending upon the procedures used to generate the attributes of images shown in the scales. As in the case of destination image, where the attribute components are no doubt to be diverse and numerous, perhaps it is required to conduct wide research to guarantee that all have been

exposed. Particularly, according to the conceptualization of the destination image recommended in the previous section of this report, to completely measure the destination image, both functional and psychological characteristics of product attributes should be addressed. (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, 44.)

The other form of measurement used in product image research is the *unstructured* approach. This method uses free form descriptions to measure images. The attributes of the image in the use of this approach are not specified at the onset of the research, instead, the respondent is allowed to more freely describe personal impressions of a product. Gathering of data using this method is through focus groups or open-ended survey questions. To be able to determine the dimensions of the image, categorization techniques, content analysis, and various systems are then used. Thus, unstructured methodologies are more beneficial to holistic components measurements of the product image as well as to capturing unique features and auras. Since the number of details depends upon the multiple provided responses and knowledge on the product are given verbally or written by the individual, the measures used in unstructured methodology is highly variable. Furthermore, the statistical analyses of the results are limited because of the qualitative nature of the data. In particular, benchmarking across several products are not simplified by unstructured methodologies. (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, 44.)

3.4 Destination Image Formation Process

A feature that interests and captures the attention of many researchers was the process of destination image formation. In most of the earlier research studies included destination image formation models that influence the process of image formation. These models include *socio-demographic*, *information sources*, and psychological factors. The *socio-demographic* is the characteristic of the population. (Dobronte 2013.) Beerli & Martin (2004) advised that the internal factors or the characteristics of an individual affect the formation of an image. The characteristics, such as age, gender, income, education, ethnicity, residency, etc. are generally considered to identify the differences in a perceived image of a destination and motives in the choice of travels. For this reason, the importance of socio-demographic variables to the behaviour of the consumers is an accepted phenomenon. These variables act as one of the influential factors in destination image formation. (Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martin 2004.)

According to Reynolds (1965), the formation of images is a development of act created mentally based on beliefs and impressions selected from a flood of information. Considering the intangible nature of tourism, as product or service, causes uncertainty in tourist's minds, hence, seeking *information* from a variety of *sources* can create confidence in decision making. In the instance of destination image, numerous sources that creates this 'flood of information', such as advertising material like, travel brochures and posters, word of the mouth from travel agents or family/friends, and the general media in forms of newspapers, magazines, television, books or movies. Furthermore, first-hand information and experience can affect and modified the perceived image, this is by actually visiting the destination. (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, 38; Reynolds 1965.)

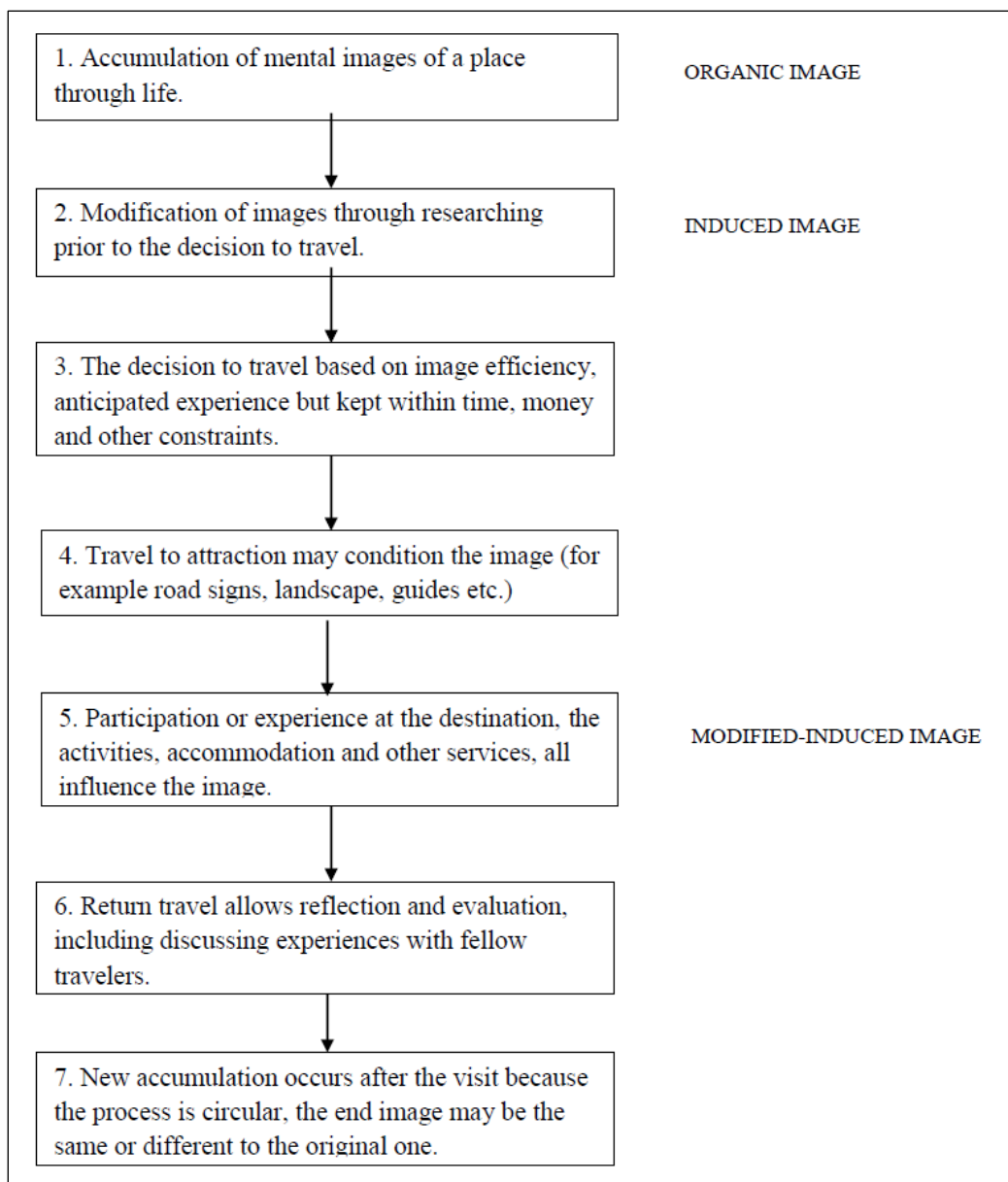


Figure 4. Seven phases of the travel experience. Gunn (1988, in Jenkins 1999.)

Gunn (1988) explains in his model (shown in Figure 4), the seven phases of the travel experience where three areas of destination image formation are identified at Phase 1, 2, and 7. The formation of images based on secondary sources of information is in Phase 1 and 2, whereas the actual first-hand information in Phase 7, which is commonly used to modify the image of the destination. The image formed in Phase 1 is labelled as *organic images*. These images are generally absorbed from non-touristic or non-commercial sources, for instance, general media, school courses, or opinions of family or friends. The more commercial sources of information are shown in Phase 2 and labelled as *induced images*. In this stage, marketed information of a destination is used, for instance, travel brochures or guidebooks and travel agents. Additional information from these sources can modify the image formed in organic sources. However, the destination image is derived from a much wider scale of information sources. One of the important cases is the connection between the country's tourist image and the national image, meaning, the destination image is absorbed from historical, political, economic, and social factors. (Kotler 1987; World Tourism Organization 1980.) Thus, the difference between organic and induced images is rather unique to the formation of destination images. Nevertheless, these images can easily be modified through actual experience. Through this experience, the induced images are modified. In the last stage of the destination image formation, Phase 7, the images are more realistic and distinguished after visiting the destination. (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, 38-39; Gunn 1988.)

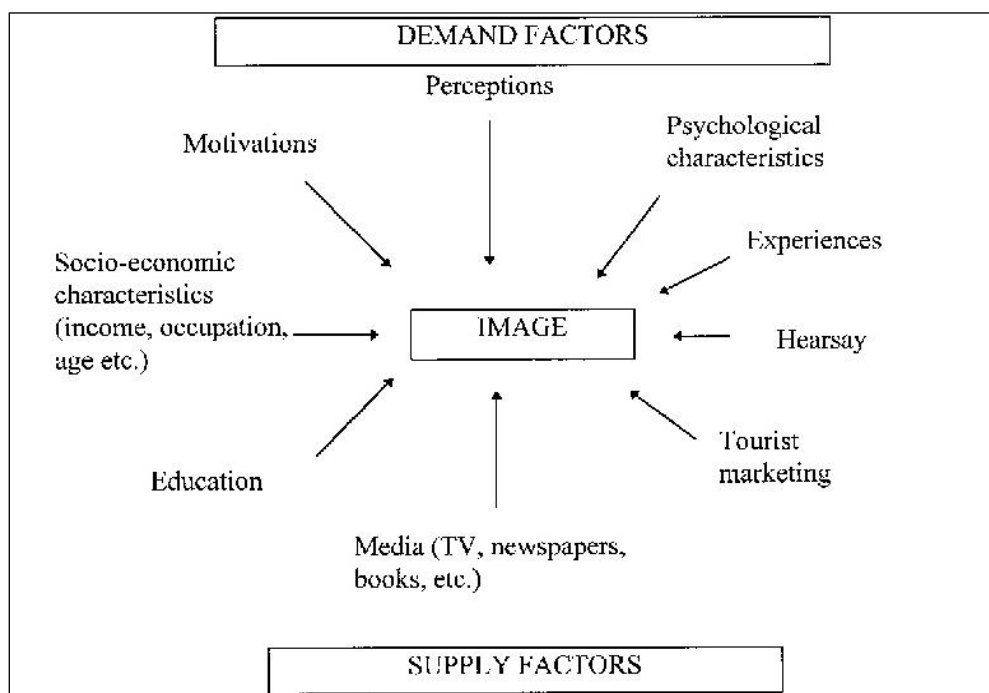


Figure 5. Factors Influencing the Formation of Consumers' Tourist Image Stabler (1988, in Jenkins 1999.)

As shown in Figure 5, Stabler (1988) introduced the factors influencing the formation of a consumers' destination image and divided them into two factors; demand factors and supply factors. The *demand factors* nearly represent the organic image formation of Gunn's model (shown in Figure 4.), while the *supply factors* represent the induced image formation. The summary of these factors are shown in Figure 5. (Jenkins 1999, 2-3.)

Two important points underlined in the process of destination image formation. Firstly, the destination image exists even when an individual has never travelled to the destination or ever seen any commercial sources of information. Secondly, it is advisable to differentiate the images from individuals who have visited the destination and to those who have not, since there are modifications of destination image before and after the visitation. Measuring these base images are very useful in designing marketing strategies. By doing so, the destination's different strengths and weaknesses, as well as, accuracies and inaccuracies are addressed successfully in the design of marketing materials. (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, 39.)

3.5 Destination Branding

The idea of product branding initiated in the literature more than 50 years ago. Mentioned in most literature, Aaker's (1991, 7) definition of a brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition". In other words, it is also emphasized that a brand is more than a slogan, symbol, or promotion. (Therklesen and Gram 2010.) All brands are in fact products in the beginning and later developed into brands through creativity and exceptional value. (Cai and Hobson 2004.)

In the late nineties, came the branding in tourism. The theme, "Branding the Travel Market" in the Annual Conference of the International Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) in the year 1998 is the first initiation towards conceptualizing the branding in tourism. The conference intended to discuss the different cases of branding destinations. It was then visualized that product brands and destination brands are alike. Destination brands have a visible impact on the marketing plan that can be trusted by the visitors, the impressions before the visitation, and the image in the form of experience and memories. Destination brand and destination branding have been represented in different perspectives by the previous researchers. (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998.) Developing a unique identity or personality for a tourist destination is the process of destination branding. The created

identity is communicated to tourists using a name, a tagline, a symbol, a design or a combination of all to produce a positive image. (Harish 2010.) The destination needs to create a brand to help set the destination and highlights the uniqueness of the place. (Pereira & al. 2012.)

Several authors who studied about destination branding suggested specific processes in destination branding and made numerous statements in improving tourism destination marketing and the importance of branding. Most of their topics are based on the claims that a strong brand can have a definite different marketing impact because; 1) it attracts more pleasing features and gains impressions and general selections, 2) it can also attract higher prices and 3) it can cause in consumers care to easily communicate and reachable in a more positive way. (Hoeffler & Keller 2003.) Moreover, a destination brand can serve tourists in combining and strengthen their perceptions of the destination after their travel experience. (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998.)

Table 3. Measures of Destination Brand Performance. (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998.)

ROLES	MEASURE
SELECTION	• the extent to which the destination is chosen over others
Sub-Components	• degree of recognition/association
Identification	
Differentiation	• lack of confusion with other destinations • lack of confusion with other products/services
Anticipation	• the extent to which brand generates a desire to visit the destination • the intensity of the desire to visit that the brand generates
Expectation	• the nature and importance of the specific benefits the visitor expects to realize for the destination experience
Reassurance	• the extent to which the brand provides a “cloud of comfort” for the visitor – a feeling that all is, or will go well during the destination visit
RECOLLECTION	• the ease, frequency, and strength of recall of the destination experience • the extent to which the brand helps create memories of the destination and the visitor’s experiences • the intensity or warmth of memories elicited • the degree of comfort provided that the future/current choice was/is a sound one
Sub-Components	• the ability of the brand to serve as a catalyst to tie together the many “bits” of memory of the destination experience
Consolidation	
Reinforcement	• the ability of the brand to “cement” the consolidated memory of the destination experience

Ritchie & Ritchie (1998) claim that the primary roles of a destination brand are to provide; *pre-experience*, the Selection role and *post-experience* which is the Recollection role, summarized in Table 3. To clearly understand the functions of each structure, Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) created Figure 6, attempting to express the 'layered' functioning of a destination brand while fulfilling the role of *pre-experience* and its main components; selection and reassurance. Other sub-components are; *identification*; creating awareness, *differentiation*; image/knowledge, *anticipation*; preference/choice, and *expectation*; the desire. These roles are positioned one on top of the other in a complementary manner (as shown in Figure 6.) However, the "Reassurance" function of the brand performs as an outer "cloud of comfort" making sure everything goes well. Moreover, in Figure 7 visualizes the post-experience role of a destination brand. With the "Recollection" function shown in Figure 7, the destination brands play an important role in combining and strengthen the memories of the destination experience. In reality, it serves as an instrument to bind or secure the various pieces of memories into a holistic impression of the experience. (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998.)

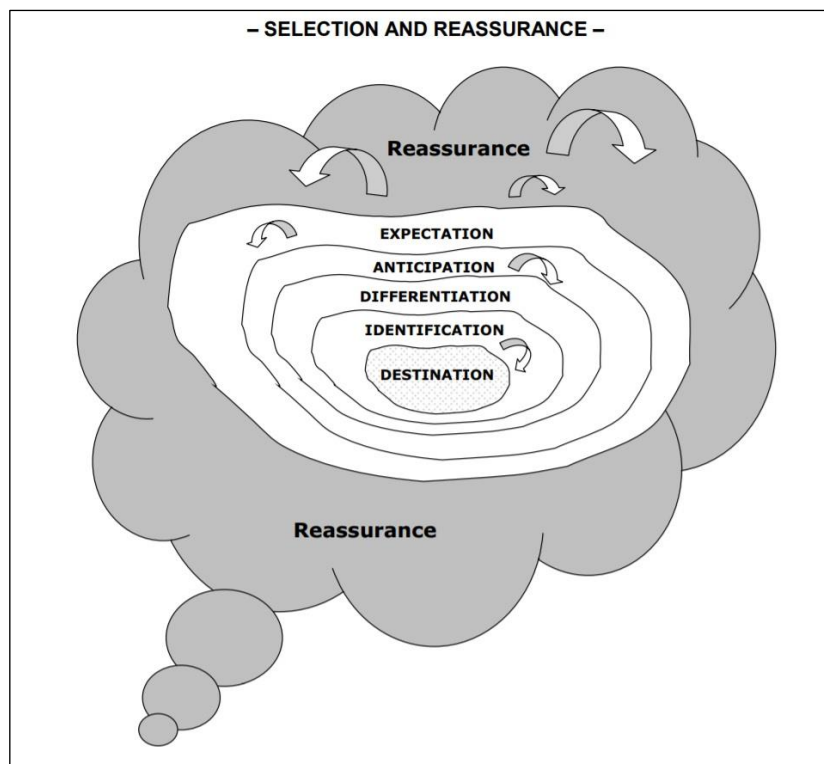


Figure 6. The Pre-Experience Structure and Functioning of a Destination Brand. (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998.)

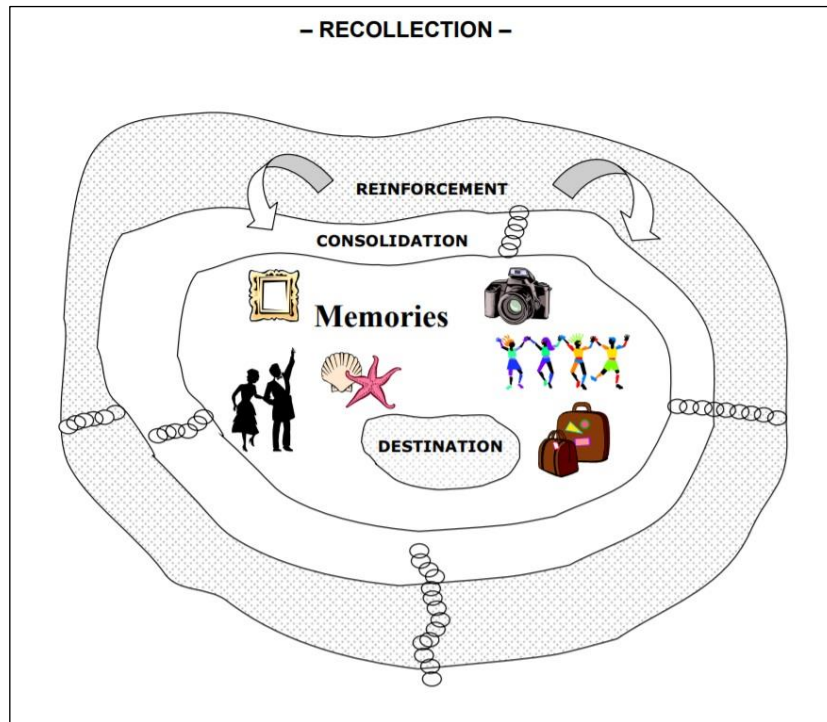


Figure 7. The Post-Experience Structure and Functioning of a Destination Brand. (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998.)

Branding a tourism destination is preferably done as a continuous process for an effective destination branding. The process of destination branding modelled by Moilanen and Rannisto (2009) involves five stages;

- 1) *Start-up and organization stage* during which the commitment of key stakeholders should be secured, networks among the actors built, and the visibility of the project enhanced
- 2) *Research stage* during which the image of the destination is analyzed both externally and internally by for instance focus group interviews aiming at identifying the core identity of the brand
- 3) *Forming brand identity* during which stage the elements of the brand identity are chosen and tested and a strategic plan for communicating the brand prepared
- 4) *Execution and enforcement plan* during which operational plans for the brand are prepared
- 5) *Implementation and follow-up* when the brand is further tested and the development of service processes and physical infrastructure continue.

(Moilanen and Rannisto 2009.)

In regards to branding destinations, the branding strategy needs to originate from the actual motivators of the destination. (Kotler and Gartner 2002.) Effectively, considering the personality of the brand as the key factor to success. Destinations should focus on underlining the unique attributes of the destination, features that are not possessed by the main competitors. (Garcia & al. 2012.)

4 Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher will tackle the research methodology being used in conducting this study. Readers will know about the different types of research methodologies their meaning and why it is used by the researcher.

4.1 Research Methods

There are three basic types of research methodology used in conducting such studies, they are; *quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research* methods. Which have different approaches and use according to the kind of study research is conducting. *Quantitative* research methodology uses numbers in finding and explaining experiments. It relies on collecting data and using it to provide a statistical analysis of the study. The general motive of quantitative research is to describe, predict, or investigate connections, explain current states or explore possible impacts of the result. The information being researched using this method is “conjectural” which means that the conclusion is built based on incomplete data. (Creswell 2003.) In situation, for instance, that researcher intends to study how a given variable influence another neglecting the reaction of other variables. *Qualitative* research methodology, rather than the quantitative that uses numbers and statistics, qualitative research uses descriptive procedures on generative meaning about a study or a phenomenon, it also uses open-ended questions, unlike quantitative research that uses close-ended questions. Using this method, the researchers describe the type and quality of a subject while explaining and trying to understand a circumstance. It enables the researcher to use wordings or texts to explain the results. To be able to get a full understanding of the case study, the researcher combines both methods. *Mixed* research methodology, as the name mentioned, mixed research uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods on the same study which usually results in profound research. (Techo 2016.)

The researcher chose the quantitative method for this study to achieve a more statistical base of the result to respond to the objectives of the research. A survey (Appendix 1) is used as an instrument to collect data and determine the statistical outcome of the research. A survey under the quantitative research method is used in conducting the gathering of data on the study. Surveys have dependent and independent variables that define the scope of the study, it is the means of gathering information about the characteristics, actions, and opinions of a large group of people, it is also used to assess needs, evaluate demands and check impact. Surveys are used to answer questions to determine whether

or not objectives have been met and establish baselines for future comparisons. (Glasow 2005.)

The questions stated in the survey of this research are generally structured which means that the answers are already provided and compared possible answers and select one or multiple depending on the question. The perfect example of this type is multiple-choice questions. However, there are few partially closed-ended and open-ended options where the respondents are allowed to freely write the answer using few words. (Glasow 2005.)

The main objective of the survey is to collect information on the perception of Finnish residents about the Philippines, is the country interesting for them to visit or is there any concerns that hinder them to travel. The data collection method of a survey commonly includes face-to-face or telephone interviews, self-completion questionnaires, for instance, through the post, email, online, or SMS. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. Collecting data using self-completion questionnaires, for instance, the advantage is that it gives respondents time to consider their answers or consult others, however, the major disadvantage is the high rate of non-response. Yet the responses can be improved using some techniques such as well-written introduction message, deadline response time, and follow-ups. (Kabir 2016)

4.2 Preparation and Data Collection

The survey is created based on a tested sample from previous researches on destination image and branding. The components and methods in data collections are also carefully reviewed and considered in creating the questionnaires. The survey (see Appendix 1) is created using a web tool called Webropol. This tool is easy to use and perfect for a simple survey and faster distribution using online links. The link is intentionally distributed to the target groups. The target respondents are the residents of Finland who are; Finnish nationals or other non-Filipino nationalities who are permanently residing in Finland. For that reason, the questionnaire is written in two languages, in Finnish and in English. Through technology and the internet, the survey can potentially reach a large number of respondents.

In the autumn semester of 2019, the data collection for the research study started. The researcher intended to finish the paper sooner than expected. Due to the limited time and effort put into the preparation and data collection, the research study was postponed until the spring semester of 2020. In the beginning, the printed copies of the survey are used to personally ask the questions to people in the streets of Helsinki. The link of the survey is

sent as well through emails, social media sites, for instance, Facebook, Instagram, or direct message via Whatsapp or ordinary SMS. A raffle is also included to make people interested in responding. The respondents have a chance to taste Filipino cuisine. At the end of the survey, three winners of the raffle will receive a free meal in a Filipino buffet restaurant named Ravintola Kainan in Iso Omena, Espoo. Through this simple technique, the respondents are given the inspiration to clearly consider the questions and the restaurant was marketed at the same time. A flyer (shown in Image 7) is later created with QR code (Quick Response) which can be scanned using the mobile devices and automatically directed to the link with the survey questions. The flyer made the distribution easier and appealing to people.



Image 7. The flyer used to collect data with the use of QR codes.

The data collection extended for another six months due to the rescheduling of thesis writing. Although the survey was active for a certain amount of time, the range of time with active responses was only approximately two weeks; from October 24 to October 31, 2019

and March 15 to March 20, 2020. After the end of October 2019, there were no follow-ups to the non-responses and only later in March 2020, the follow-ups began and few active responses were received in addition to the previous responses. The researcher aimed to reach more respondents after the follow-ups in March 2020, but due to the *global pandemic*, the data collection was limited only online. The printed questionnaires and flyers that suppose to be given to more people on the streets were not used due to the recommended social distancing and enhanced home quarantine. To reach more people, the survey was shared on a couple of website forums; etleht.fi and pallontallaajat.net. The link for the survey was closed at the end of April 2020 and received a total of 93 *complete responses* including the few face-to-face responses using the printed questionnaires which were later on transferred manually to Webropol.

4.3 Validity and Reliability Statistics

The evaluation of the measurement method considers two main dimensions; *validity and reliability*. Well-conducted quantitative research can be achieved through these two measurements. These measures are used to confirm the quality and to understand the scores of the data being measured. The research must be broadly documented in a way that displays the connections between the result and the conclusion together with the reason behind the created decision in order to be considered valid and reliable. *Validity* of research can be explained as an extent to which a subject is measured accurately. It means that the findings from the data gathered truly indicate the case that is claimed to be measured. For a researcher to make a final judgement in a study, the reliability of the research is one factor to consider or take into account. *Reliability* refers to the consistency of the case being measured. It means, when using the same instrument, other researchers are able to generate the same result. It is important to consider both validity and reliability in data collection, for instance, a research finding can be reliable because it consistently gives the same result with the same method yet it is not valid because the subject being measured is not correct. (Heale & Twycross 2015; Kananen 2012, 164-165.)

Different types of validity were used, such as *face validity* refers to whether the study measures what it is supposed to measure and it is the easiest form of validity yet the weakest. *Construct validity* which assesses whether a measurement tool truly represents the subject being measured. (Middleton 2016.) *External validity* refers to the degree where the result of the study can be generalized to a wider population. In this case, the focus is the sample and how well it can be generalized in the population drawn to it. (Laerd Disser-

tation 2012.) The survey that is used as an instrument in data collection aims to collect information on how Finnish residents perceived the Philippines as a tourism destination. Using the concept of destination image mentioned in the literature review (Chapter 3) of this report as a reference to create the survey which is the method used by other researchers on destination image. The structured method was applied in the creation of the questionnaire for easy analysis. The sample collected in this study is 93 from 5.5 million of the Finnish population. Shown in Table 4 the correspondence of Finland's population and the samples on this research. (Statistics Finland 2019b.)

Table 4. Background information on the population and sample (Statistics Finland 2019b.)

Background		(%) Population – 5.5 million people	(%) Sample – 93 respondents
Gender	Male	49	39
	Female	51	61
Origin	Finnish Citizen	93	69
	Immigrants	7	31

Table 4 shows that the percentage of the male population is lower than the female population and corresponds to the sample as well. The study took samples not only from the Finnish citizens but from other non-Filipino citizens who permanently residing in Finland. The reason for this is to get a general image of the Philippines from travellers originating in Finland.

The survey questionnaire was made in three main parts; the first part, which asked general information of the respondents like gender, age and nationality, and occupation background to generalized the result. In addition, the question if they have a history of travel in the Philippines or other Southeast Asian countries is also included to determine whether the image they are projecting is perceived through imagination, commercial and non-commercial sources or based on experience which strongly affects the formation of the image of a destination. The second part contains the attributes used to measure destination image, such as climates, accessibilities, amenities, attractions, etc. The respondents are asked to rate whether they agree or disagree on the features or attributes given about the Philippines. And lastly, the question about their possible concerns in traveling to the Philippines and whether they are interested in visiting the country despite their concerns are asked as well. Knowing this information, the researcher aims to form useful information in developing the image of the Philippines. In conclusion, the validity of the data collection is confirmed since it measures the correct information that is intended to be measured

5 Results and Analysis

This chapter contains the result and analysis of the collected data through the survey which is divided into three major parts. The analysis is supported by figures and tables from the result of the survey.

5.1 Background Information

The total number of respondents in the survey is 93. The ratio of male and female respondents is 36 males which is 39% and 57 females that is 61% of the collected answers. The age groups vary from less than 20 years old to more than 60 years old. In Figure 8 below, the numbers of male and female respondents according to their age groups are shown.

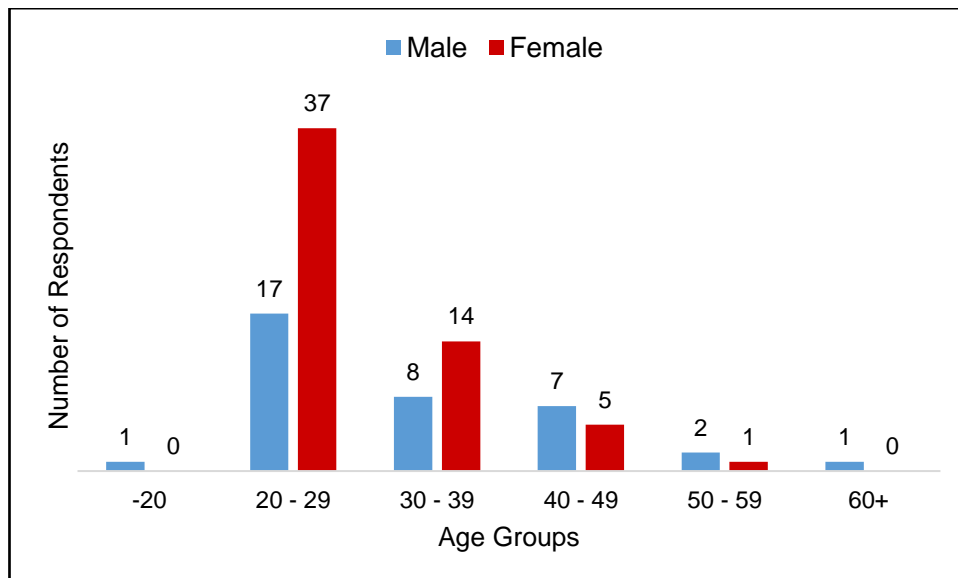


Figure 8. Gender and age groups of the respondents (N=93)

Female respondents are higher than males in age groups ranging from 20 to 39 years old. The male respondents are greater than females in other age groups. The majority of respondents (58%) from both genders are received from the age group of 20-29 years old. The other 24% of the respondents came from the age group of 30-39 years old and 13% is from 40-49 years old. The minority came from the age group of 50 years old and above which is the three percent and one answer came from a male less than 20 years of age. The data collection or the survey reached the people mainly through social media and online web pages. This is probably the reason why the respondents from older age groups

are too low compared to the age groups who are most likely reachable online and familiar with the tool used in data collection.

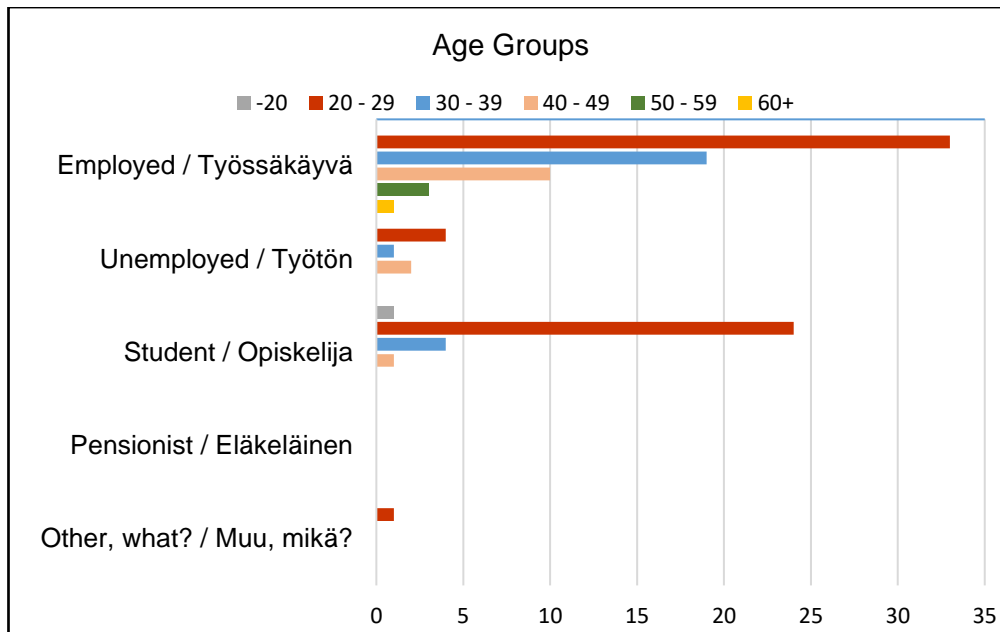


Figure 9. Occupation of the respondents per age groups (N=93)

The current occupation of each age group is presented with a chart in Figure 9 above. In the questionnaire, the respondents are asked whether they are employed, unemployed, student, pensioner, or other, an option where they can freely provide the answer if their occupation is not stated. The respondents are also allowed to choose multiple answers according to their status, for instance, one can be a student and employed at the same time. The result shown in Figure 9, the majority of the respondents are employed, this covers 71% of the sample while 32% of them are students. Seven of the respondents are unemployed, none of them are pensioners and one chose the open-ended question and wrote entrepreneur. In the 93 samples of this report, 58% belong to the age group of 20-29 years old, 33 of these respondents are employed, 24 are students, four are unemployed and one is an entrepreneur. The age group of 30-39 years old has the next highest rate of employed and students and only one is unemployed. The 12 respondents that belong to the age group of 40-49 years old, ten of them are employed and one of these employed respondents is also a student while two of them are currently unemployed. The rest of the age group respondents from 50 years old and above are all employed and one less than 20 years old is a student.

5.2 Prior Experience and Preferences

To clearly understand the perceived image of the Philippines and examine the image formation, the respondents are asked if they have visited the country already. The result shows that 72% of these people have never been to the Philippines and 28% have visited the country at least once. Figure 10 below presents the number of males and females who have said yes or no to this question. This shows that the respondents who have been to the Philippines are mostly male, however, the high number of female respondents have never been to the Philippines. To follow-up, the question about the purpose of the trip was asked for the respondents who have already visited the country in which they are allowed to choose whether they travelled for business purposes, vacation, visiting family or friends or others, where they can freely state the reason for travel if it is not mentioned in the listed options. The 26 respondents who have travelled at least once in the Philippines including the 15 (58%) of them who travelled for leisure, 14 (54%) who travelled to visit friends and family, and the rest, which is the 15% who travelled for business purposes.

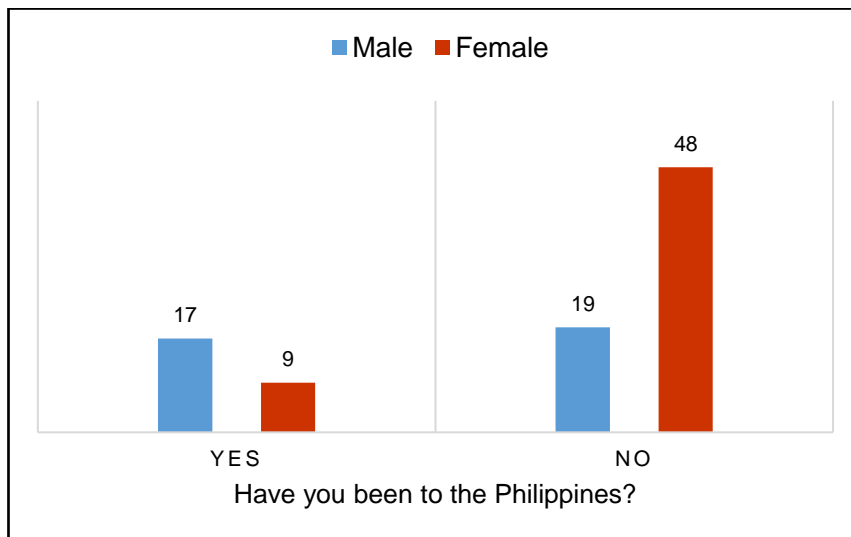


Figure 10. Respondents who have been and have not been in the Philippines by gender (N=93)

To understand the travel experience and behaviour of the respondents, they are asked if they have been in other Southeast Asian countries, such as Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The purpose is to know whether these people have chosen other Southeast Asian countries than the Philippines in their previous travels. The comparison of the result is shown in Figure 11 below. As presented in the chart below, 26 respondents who have been in the Philip-

piners, 20 of them have also been to other Southeast Asian countries and 6 have not visited these other countries. However, the rest who have never been to the Philippines, 22 of them have been to other Southeast Asian countries and 45 of them have never been to any Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines. In addition, the main destination of the respondents who have travelled to Southeast Asian countries is Thailand with 83% of the 42 total respondents. This result corresponds to the Finnish residents' travel behaviour stated in chapter 2 section 3 of this report.

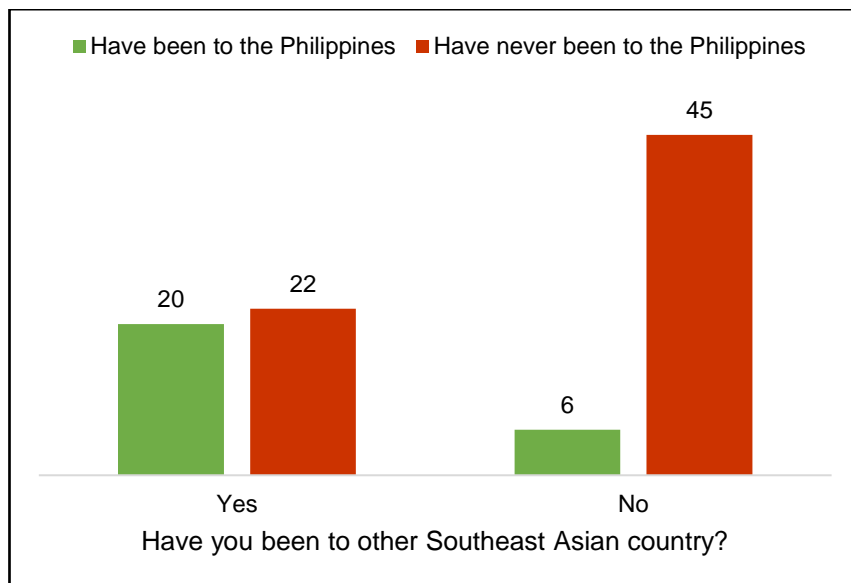


Figure 11. Respondents who have visited the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries (N=93)

Furthermore, the respondents are asked about personal interests when traveling abroad. Lists of attributes are provided and respondents are entitled to choose multiple answers from the given options. These attributes include attractions, culture, history, events, activities, art exhibitions, beaches, weather, animals, nature, shopping, local people, local food, and others, another open-ended option where respondents can freely state the answer if it is not in the options provided. Shown in Figure 12 below are the listed attributes and the number of males and females who provided their interests in traveling abroad. The figure displays that the main interests of the respondents are attractions, culture, local food, weather, and beaches. The sights or attractions collected the majority of answers which scored 58; 38 from females and 20 from the males. The male respondents' major interests are local food chosen by 22 of them (61%), culture and beaches selected by 21 of them (58%), and attractions answered by 20 of them (56%). However, for females, they are more interested in attractions, weather, culture, beaches, and local food. 68% of them

chose attractions, 51% selected weather and culture, and 49% voted for beaches and local food. In comparison to both genders, males are more drawn to local food and people than females. Females tend to visit attractions, know the history, and do some shopping than males. Six of the respondents chose the open-ended option and added the relaxation, nightlife, and music.

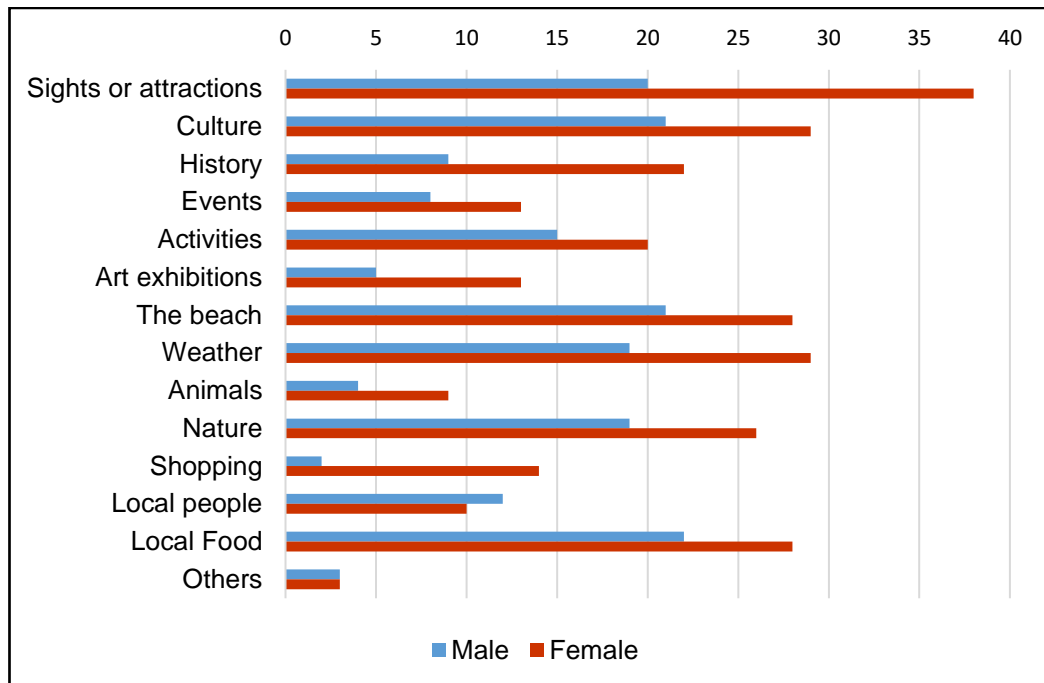


Figure 12. The respondents' interests when traveling abroad by gender (N=93)

In general, the respondents are least interested in animals, local people, art exhibitions, and events when traveling. Which means, these features are not their main reason when deciding their travel destinations. These people tend to visit a destination in order to see attractions, know the culture, feel the warm weather, enjoy the beach, and taste local food.

5.3 General Image about The Philippines

The main part of the survey is to gather information on how the Finnish residents perceive the Philippines as a tourist destination. To receive a much reliable and compact response, the respondents are asked to write openly the first thing in mind when they think about the Philippines. By doing so, their first impression and image they hold about the Philippines are clearly stated. The words given by the respondents were analysed. Similar words are

combined, some words are translated from Finnish to English, and sentences were simplified. A word cloud shown in Figure 13 was created using the words given by the respondents. The sizes of texts vary according to the number of times the words are mentioned. For instance, beaches are mentioned 30 times, beautiful islands are seen 21 times and friendly people are repeated 19 times. As presented in Figure 13, most of these words are positive such as, smiles, sea, sun, white sand, delicious food, warm weather, beautiful nature, and exotic. However, some words are negative such as poverty, poor, earthquakes, crime, storms, and dangerous. Despite some negative answers, the major impression of the respondents about the Philippines are beautiful islands and beaches, warm weather, and friendly people.



Figure 13. Word cloud made from the words given by respondents about the Philippines (N=93)

Overall, knowing that only 26 of the respondents have visited the Philippines, it is safe to say that the image perceived in Figure 13 are mainly images accumulated mentally or induced images from different sources. In addition to data collection, the open-ended question was asked before the structured question in the hopes of receiving a raw answer from the respondents and avoid leaking ideas provided in the structured question. The structured question is about the Philippines as a tourist destination and the attributes that it is offering. The respondents are requested to answer whether they agree or disagree on the listed 18 features about the Philippines. The respondents can rate the features from 1-5; 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither nor, 4=agree or 5=strongly agree. One

means, the respondents strongly disagree and the Philippines do not have the said feature. Two, the respondents disagree but somehow not sure of their answer. Three means, they have no opinion or do not have any idea whether the Philippines possesses the feature or not. Four, they agree but somehow not fully convinced that the country offers the feature perfectly. Five meaning, the respondents strongly agree that the feature is absolutely held by the Philippines. The answers are presented in the form of a chart to clearly visualize the result and comparison (shown in Figure 14 below).

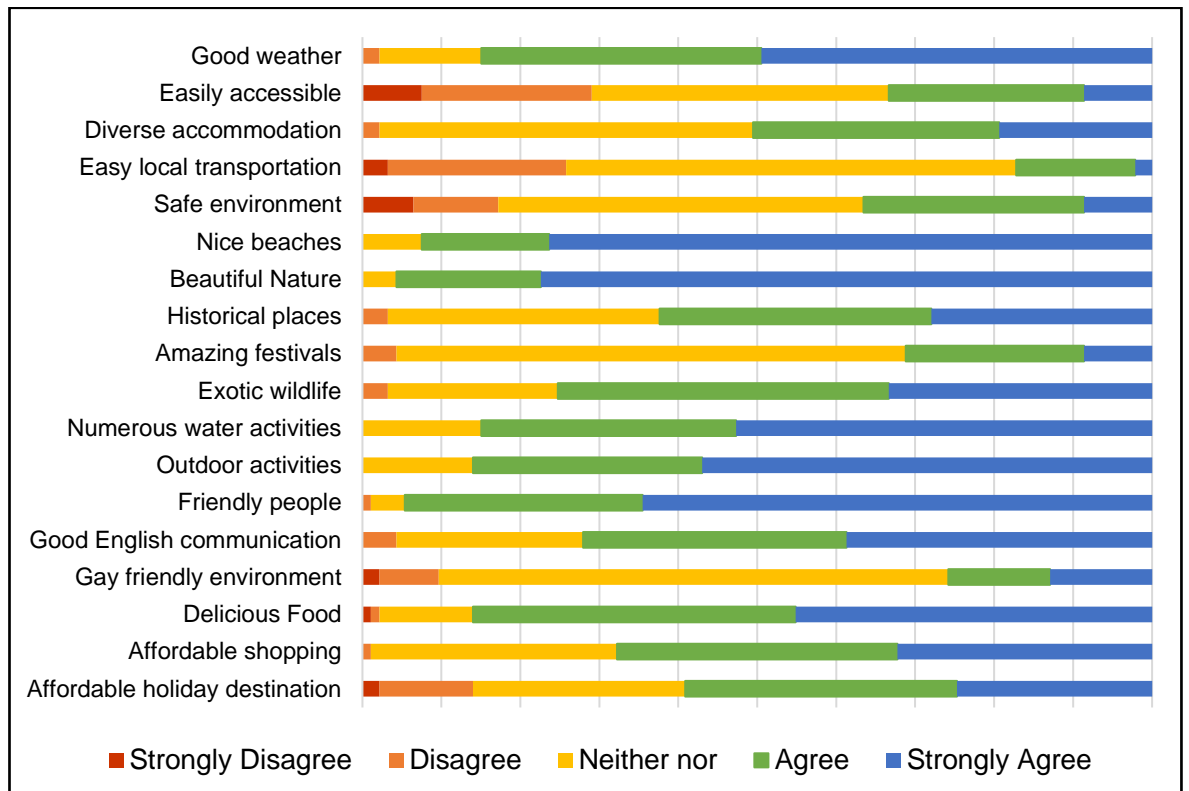


Figure 14. The general image of the Philippines and the features it offers (N=93)

In analysing the figure displayed above, the colours blue, green, and yellow which represents; blue=strongly agree, green=agree, and yellow=neither nor are the main colours seen in the chart. This highly indicates that the provided statements are either agreeable or the respondents do not have enough knowledge about the Philippines. The majority of the respondents seem to strongly agree on two features which are nice beaches and beautiful nature. As shown in the result, they as well agree that the Philippines offer numerous water activities and outdoor activities, good weather, delicious food, and friendly people. The respondents appear to not have a clear knowledge or opinion on whether the Philippines offers amazing festivals, a gay-friendly environment, diverse accommodation, easy local transportation, and a safe environment. Few of them seem to disagree that the

Philippines is easily accessible, has easy local transportation and a safe environment. Moreover, four outstanding features that no one disagreed on are the Philippines having nice beaches, beautiful nature, numerous water activities, and outdoor activities. Generally, the respondents appear to see the Philippines as a destination with beautiful beaches and nature, friendly people, good weather and offers various water and outdoor activities.

The result is a lot more interesting when the answers from respondents who have been to the Philippines are compared to those who have never visited the country yet. Table 5 below shows the same result shown in Figure 14 but presented in tables and with the comparison. Through the table presented, it is clearly determined that respondents who have never been to the Philippines have a high percentage chosen the number 3 option which means they don't have enough knowledge to agree or disagree with the given statement. For instance, 40% of the respondents who have never been to the Philippines neither agree nor disagree that the country possesses historical places while 50% of the respondents who have travelled to the Philippines strongly agree on the statement. Although respondents have never been to the Philippines, they seem to agree on most statements and chose to answer number 4 which means, they agree but they are not entirely sure otherwise they just choose to neither agree nor disagree. However, respondents who have visited the Philippines appear to have a positive image of the country and mainly agree to most of the statements that the Philippines has to offer except for easy local transportation where two of them strongly disagree and seven chose to disagree, as well as the safe environment that received three answers who disagree and one who strongly disagree.

Table 5. Attributes of the Philippines, scaled from 1-5 and compared to respondents who have been and never been to the Philippines (N=93)

		1	2	3	4	5
Good weather	Have been	0%	4%	8%	35%	54%
	Have never	0%	1%	15%	36%	48%
Easily accessible	Have been	0%	12%	19%	46%	23%
	Have never	10%	25%	45%	16%	3%
Diverse accommodation	Have been	0%	4%	12%	38%	46%
	Have never	0%	1%	61%	28%	9%
Easy local transportation	Have been	8%	27%	35%	23%	8%
	Have never	1%	21%	66%	12%	0%
Safe environment	Have been	4%	12%	19%	35%	31%
	Have never	7%	10%	57%	25%	0%
Nice beaches	Have been	0%	0%	0%	8%	92%
	Have never	0%	0%	10%	19%	70%
Beautiful Nature	Have been	0%	0%	0%	15%	85%
	Have never	0%	0%	6%	19%	75%

Historical places	Have been	0%	8%	19%	23%	50%
	Have never	0%	1%	40%	39%	19%
Amazing festivals	Have been	0%	4%	38%	31%	27%
	Have never	0%	4%	75%	19%	1%
Exotic wildlife	Have been	0%	8%	19%	42%	31%
	Have never	0%	1%	22%	42%	34%
Numerous water activities	Have been	0%	0%	8%	27%	65%
	Have never	0%	0%	18%	34%	48%
Outdoor activities	Have been	0%	0%	15%	15%	69%
	Have never	0%	0%	13%	34%	52%
Friendly people	Have been	0%	0%	0%	15%	85%
	Have never	0%	1%	6%	36%	57%
Good English communication	Have been	0%	0%	0%	31%	69%
	Have never	0%	6%	33%	34%	27%
Gay-Friendly environment	Have been	4%	4%	50%	15%	27%
	Have never	1%	9%	70%	12%	7%
Delicious Food	Have been	4%	4%	8%	19%	65%
	Have never	0%	0%	13%	49%	37%
Affordable shopping	Have been	0%	4%	15%	27%	54%
	Have never	0%	0%	37%	39%	24%
Affordable holiday destination	Have been	0%	0%	8%	38%	54%
	Have never	3%	16%	34%	33%	13%

Respondents who have been to the Philippines are more confident to answer and strongly agree on the statements while a high percentage of respondents who have never been to the country chose to neither agree nor disagree. It is fairly understandable that the respondents who have never been to the Philippines do not have enough knowledge to claim their opinion, yet most of them seem to have a good mental image of the Philippines since they agree in most statements even though they are not entirely sure. It indicates that their impression of the Philippines accumulated possibly from friends' experiences, commercial or non-commercial sources, or social media. However, it is important to understand the opinions of the respondents who have already travelled to the Philippines since their testimonies are powerful and can have a great impact on the image of the Philippines. Overall, the table shows a huge difference between respondents who have been to the Philippines and those who have not. Regardless of these differences, both types of respondents seemed to believe that the Philippines offers beautiful nature and nice beaches, good weather, friendly people, and delicious food.

Subsequently, the respondents are asked what concerns them in traveling to the Philippines. Options are listed such as safety, hygiene, language barrier, low in finances, natural disasters, local transportations, and others, where they can add or state directly their concerns if it is not on the list provided. They are allowed to choose multiple answers if

they have multiple concerns. The chart in Figure 15 illustrates the result chosen by the respondents comparing the different age groups; -20 to 29, 30 to 39, and 50 to 60+.

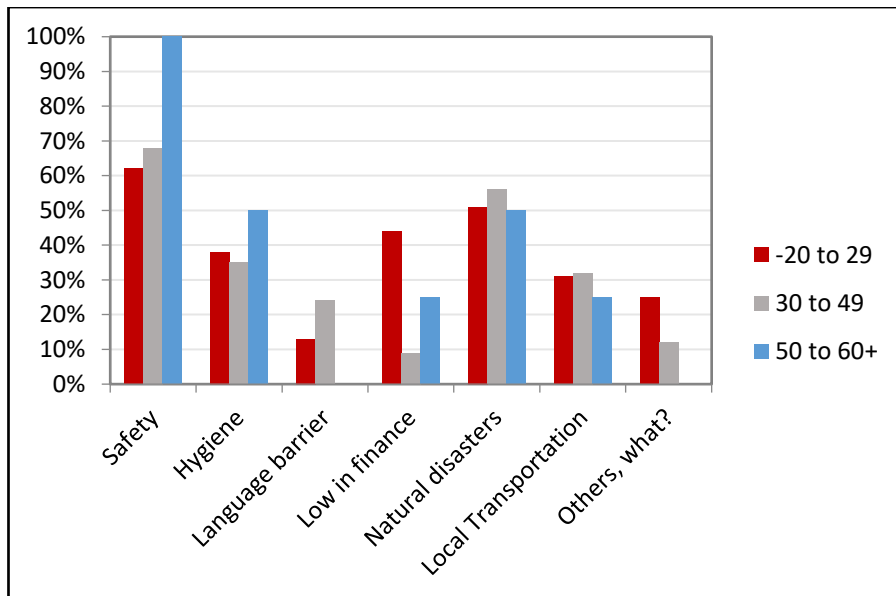


Figure 15. Concerns in traveling to the Philippines with different age groups (N=93)

It is apparent that different age groups have different concerns about traveling. The confirmation of this statement is shown in Figure 15. Respondents from age groups 50 to 60 above tend to be more concerned about safety and hygiene compared to other age groups. They are less concerned in the language and finances than age groups younger than 20 to 29 years old. Age groups 30 to 49 years old are more concerned about natural disasters and local transportations and less concern in finances and hygiene compared to other age groups. The main concerns of the younger age groups are their safety and natural disasters. However, they are more concerned about low finances compared to other age groups. Few of the respondents also stated that they are concerned about the flights, the distance of Finland from the Philippines is far and no straight flights. In addition, five of the respondents said they do not want to travel alone to the Philippines, while, one is worried about the local transportation traffic and the other one is concerned about the government.

Furthermore, to analyse deeply the concerns in traveling to the Philippines, answers are compared between respondents who have been to the Philippines and those who have never been in Figure 16 below. In comparison, respondents who have never been to the Philippines are most likely more concerned in all of the given options than the respondents who have already travelled to the Philippines. As an exception, respondents who have been to the Philippines seem to know more about the local traffic hence they are

more concerned about local transportation. 61% of the respondents who have never been to the Philippines are worried about their safety while only 37% of the respondents who have visited the country are worried about it. This indicates that the worries about safety are less when the knowledge about the place is based on experience. 37% of the respondents who have never been to the Philippines are concerned about the finances considering only 12% of the respondents who have been in the country are concerned about this matter. This could possibly mean that people who have been in the Philippines know that spending a holiday or vacation in the country is affordable and does not need to be worried about having low in finances. Moreover, respondents who have been in the Philippines are less concerned about the language barrier than those who have never been which means, the respondents who have visited the country know that English, is communicated everywhere. However, the distinction between the answers concerning the natural d is small. Both respondents who have been or not been in the Philippines are concerned about natural disasters since the Philippines is prone to typhoons, floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters.

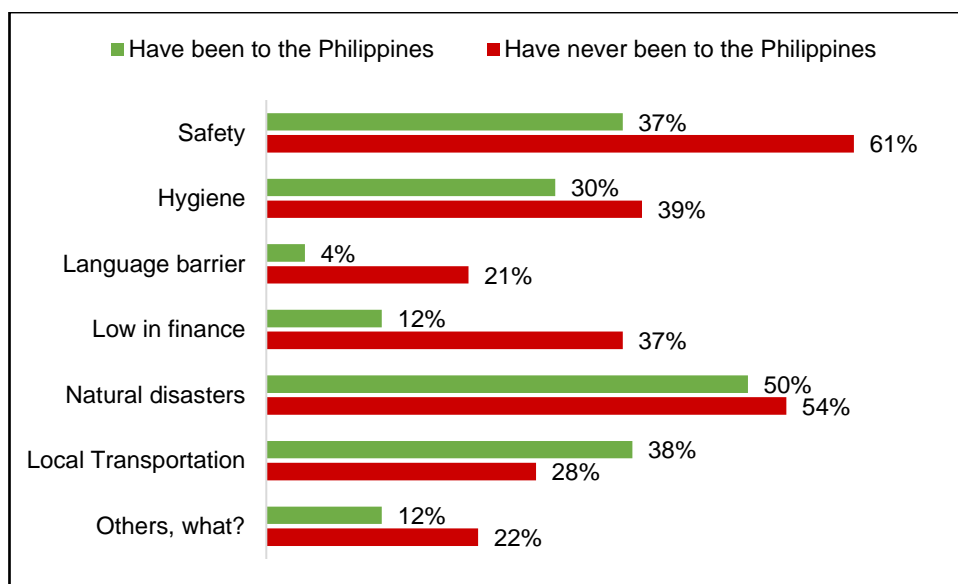


Figure 16. Concerns in traveling to the Philippines compared the respondents who have been to the Philippines and those who have not (N=93)

Given the several concerns about traveling to the Philippines, the respondents are asked whether they are interested in traveling or spending their holiday in the country. This measures the willingness to travel to the Philippines. The answer options; yes, no, and maybe are provided. If the answer is “No”, the respondent is requested to state the reason why they do not want to travel to the Philippines. The overall result suggested that 72 re-

spondents which are 78% of the sample are certainly interested in traveling to the Philippines. 18 respondents, the other 19% are unsure and chose the answer “Maybe” and the last three respondents, the rest 3% said that they would not like to travel to the Philippines. In Figure 17, the respondents’ willingness to travel to the country is compared once again from respondents who have been in the Philippines to respondents who have never been in the country. 96%, which is 25 out of 26 respondents who travelled to the Philippines at least once would like to go back for another visit and only one answered maybe. This could mean that these individuals had a great experience and made then wants to come back for more. The majority of respondents who have not yet visited the Philippines would like to experience visiting the country, it is from 47 respondents, which covers 70% of the total, 17 of these people answered maybe and three of them said no. One of the three expressed that the reason for not wanting to visit the Philippines is because of being afraid of getting vaccines. The other one proclaimed that there are other destinations that offer similar characteristics as the Philippines and they are located closer to Finland, such as Spain but would probably visit the Philippines if not traveling alone. The last one mentioned that visiting the Philippines is possible for research purposes but not for tourism.

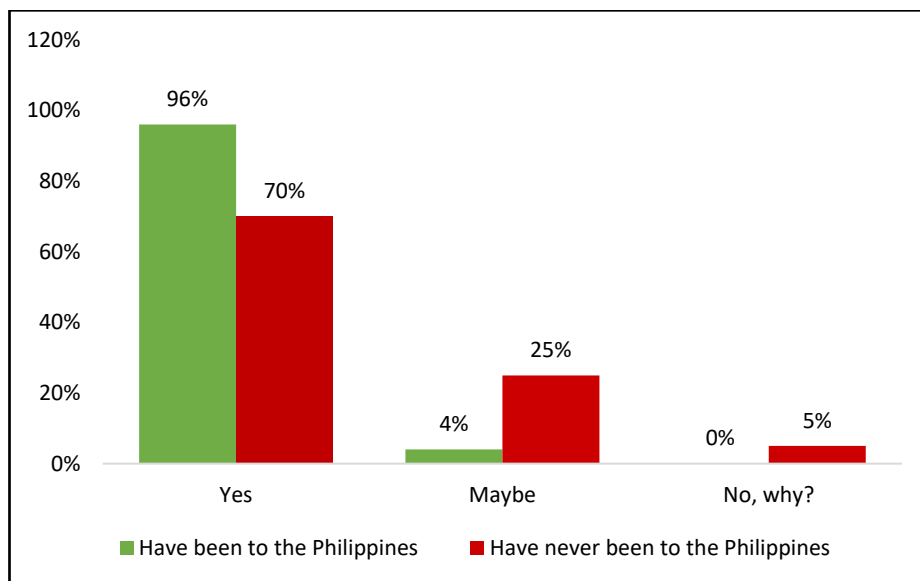


Figure 17. Willingness to travel to the Philippines by respondents who travelled to the Philippines compared to those who have not (N=93)

6 Discussion and Recommendation

The objective of this research stated in chapter 1 is to determine how people from Finland perceive the Philippines as a tourist destination. The research also aims to discover the Finnish residents' travel interests, to know whether they are willing to travel to the Philippines and to identify their concerns about travelling to the country. Apart from the main objectives, the researcher also hopes to develop a better approach to help increase the awareness of Finnish residents about the Philippines as a tourist destination.

According to the previous researches introduced in chapter 3 of this report, the image of the destination is very important. Most travellers' decision is based on the image of the destination being portrayed or the impression or belief coming from a different commercial or non-commercial sources and past experiences. In analysing the results from the collected data, the general image of the Philippines perceived by the people in Finland is mainly the beautiful beaches and islands, the friendliness of the people, and the warm weather. These main features of the Philippines are collected both from the structured and unstructured approaches. The majority of people agreed that the country is a destination rich in outdoor and water activities as well as delicious food. The common travel interests of the Finnish residents are recognised as well. Mainly, their interests are the attractions, culture, weather, beaches, and local food. These travel interests except the attractions, (which in general can be the major interests of any tourists) correspond to the Finnish residents' travel behaviour introduced in chapter 2 which are the local culture, different food, and relaxation. Further investigation, the results show that the features of the Philippines meet the interests of the Finnish travellers.

Considering the main factors of image formation, these images perceived by the respondents are based on organic, induced, and modified images introduced, in the literature review of this report (chapter 3), by Gunn (1988). To summarise these factors, the people who have never been to the Philippines hold an image of the country based on various sources, such as, social media, news, advertisements, or opinions from friends/family. These beliefs about the Philippines play an important role in whether they see the Philippines as their next travel destination. On the other hand, people who have travelled and experienced the Philippines hold a strong impression based on their personal travel experience. The result of this study shows that the respondents who have been to the Philippines draw positive feedback on their experience and all of them are willing to travel back to the country if given a chance. Moreover, the respondents who have never been to the

Philippines show a high interest in visiting the country in the future. Both types of respondents seemed to agree that the Philippines is a destination with beautiful beaches and nature, friendly people, good weather, and delicious food.

Acknowledging these positive results, however, there are concerns arising and hinders the decision making of the travellers. In this case, the respondents show a high level of concern about the natural disasters in the Philippines, the local transportations as well as the cleanliness and safeness of the environment. For the sake of the argument, the respondents who have been to the Philippines appear to have less concern than the respondents who have never been to the country. Specifically, the result shows that safety is the concern of most respondents who have never been to the Philippines, however, respondents who have experience visiting the country seem to know that it is safe to travel to the Philippines. The main concerns of the majority of the respondents are natural disasters which characterised as uncontrollable. This level of concern can only be suppressed by arming the travellers with clear knowledge and useful recommendations on how to avoid getting caught in the middle of these natural disasters. The rest of the concerns, such as local transportations and cleanliness are already a part of the National Tourism Development Plan stated in the Philippine Department of Tourism (PDOT) under the tourism strategy. (Department of Tourism Philippines 2019b.)

Furthermore, considering the characteristics of the samples such as age groups, gender, occupational status, different interests and travel backgrounds, the results can be interpreted differently. For instance, if the majority of the respondents are from older age groups, the results might be different considering their health, finances, and previous travel experiences. In this case, the majority of the respondents are from younger age groups because the collection of data is mainly online. For this reason, the different approach in data collection can improve the obtained sample and can create a different outcome. Moreover, most of the issues regarding the use of a quantitative approach, the components of the destination image are not measured completely such as the psychological characteristic which is based on emotions. Having very structured survey questions cannot measure the emotions of the respondents. While in this study, there are few open-ended options that the respondents can express their answers based on their personal views. However, these methods and processes are not enough to claim that the results of the study are completely accurate.

For further research on the image of the Philippines, it is highly recommended to consider all the components of the destination image to achieve a much successful result. The appropriate timing in data collection should also be considered since the data collection in this research fell unfortunately at the worst time which is the time of global pandemic where the data is gathered solely online. Moreover, reflecting on the results of the research, the Philippines as a destination can improve more on accessibility, for instance, airlines that offer direct flights from Finland. The local transportation in the Philippines can also be developed to a more reliable and safe means of transportation. The results also show that there is a need to promote the festivals of the Philippines since the majority of the respondents do not have a total recognition of these amazing festivals. The Philippine Department of Tourism (PDOT) can promote the country using other ways of marketing such as creating appealing photos and creative videos for social media channels, supporting bloggers and connecting with tour operators, airlines, and hotels. The recommendation is based on the background study on Finnish residents' travel behaviour (chapter 2.3) and the stated case in chapter 1 about the low market interests in Finland, the reason why the PDOT stopped attending the Matka Travel Fair. Hence, the awareness of Finnish residents about the Philippines can possibly increase.

7 Conclusion

This research study is about the image of the Philippines perceived by the Finnish residents. Considering the 93 respondents of the data collection, the results of the study indicate that the Philippines is a tropical country with beautiful nature and beaches. They also believe that the people in the Philippines are friendly, the climate is warm and the Filipino cuisine is delicious. Based on the background study and the results of this research, there is a big possibility to increase the flow of tourists from Finland to the Philippines. One of the main reasons is, the Philippines seems to possess all of the major characteristics that the Finnish residents are interested in terms of travelling. Regardless of their concerns about travelling to the Philippines being the natural disasters, local transportations, cleanliness and safeness of the environment, the majority of the respondents are interested to visit the country. It is also important to differentiate the images from individuals who have visited the Philippines and to those who have not. In this study, the results show that the respondents who have been to the Philippines hold a positive image based on their experience while the respondents who have never been to the Philippines hold a positive mental image based on different sources.

With the situation, the global pandemic arose during the data collection, the process of data collection was limited online and only reached certain age groups which are mainly 20-39 years old. Thus, the results might differ if the research is conducted with the good and perfect timing of data collection. The quantitative approach is an easy way to conduct this type of research yet does not completely measure all the components of the destination image. Future researches on the destination image of the Philippines can focus more on the different age groups and use a more effective data collection. The mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative is recommended for better measurement of different components of the destination image.

Overall, the outcome of this research study can be used to create marketing strategies that focus mainly on Finnish residents based on their interests and concerns. The knowledge about the image of the Philippines perceived by the Finnish residents are confirmed and can be considered in improving the brand of the Philippines as a destination. Although a high number of the respondents do not have a clear knowledge about the Philippines, the image of the Philippines in Finnish residents' perspective appears to be promising. This could mean that the Philippines can positively gain a great flow of visitors from Finland if marketed properly.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The survey used for data collection

What is your Image of The Philippines as a Tourism Destination

This survey is conducted by a Haaga-Helia AMK student for a research paper/thesis. The purpose of the research is to know the image of The Philippines as a Tourism destination in Finland. The result of the research can possibly be used to promote The Philippines as a tourism destination.

This survey will take about 5 minutes and answered anonymously.

Tämän kyselyn on tehnyt Haaga-Helia AMK opiskelija opinnäytetyötä varten. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää Filippiinien kuva turismikohteena Suomessa. Tutkimuksen tuloksia käytetään mahdollisesti Filippiinien mainostamiseen turismikohteena.

Tämä kysely kestää noin 5 minuuttia ja siihen vastataan anonyymisti.

1. I am a / Olen *

- Man / Mies
 Woman / Nainen

2. Age / Ikä *

- 20
 20 - 29
 30 - 39
 40 - 49
 50 - 59
 60+

3. Occupation / Asema *

- Employed / Työssäkäyvä
 Unemployed / Työtön
 Student / Opiskelija
 Pensionist / Eläkeläinen
 Other, what? / Muu, mikä?

4. Nationality / Kansalaisuus *

Finnish / Suomalainen

Other, what? / Muu, minkämaalainen?

**5. What interests you the most when travelling abroad? (Choose 3 option)
/ Mikä kiinnostaa sinua eniten matkustellessasi ulkomaille? (Valitse 3 asiaa) ***

Sights or attractions / Nähtävyydet

Culture / Kulttuuri

History / Maan historia

Events / Tapahtumat

Activities / Aktiviteetit

Art exhibitions / Taidenäyttelyt

The beach / Ranta

Weather / Saa

Animals / Eläimet

Nature / Luonto

Shopping / Shoppailu

Local people / Paikalliset ihmiset

Local Food / Paikallinen Ruoka

Others, what? / Muut, mikä?

6. Have you ever been to The Philippines? / Oletko koskaan käynyt Filippiineillä? *

Yes / Kyllä

En / No

7. If your answer is yes, what was the purpose of the trip? / Jos vastasit kyllä, mikä oli matkan tarkoitus?

Business / Työmatka

Leisure / Vapaa-aikan matka

Visiting family/friends / Vierailu sukulaisten/ystävien luona

Others, what / Muut, mikä

8. Have you ever travelled to any other country in Southeast Asia? / Oletko koskaan matkustanut muihin maihin Kaakkois-Aasiassa?

- Yes / Kyllä
 No / En

9. If your answer is yes, which country? / Jos vastasit kyllä, mikä maa?

- Brunei
 Cambodia / Kambodza
 East Timor / Itä-Timor
 Indonesia
 Laos
 Malaysia / Malesia
 Myanmar
 Singapore
 Thailand / Thaimaa
 Vietnam

10.

1. What is the first thing in mind when you think about The Philippines? Please answer in few words or adjectives. / Mitä tulee ensimmäisenä mieleesi Filippiineistä? Vastaa muutamalla sanalla tai adjektiivilla.

*

11. The Philippines as a tourism destination offers: / Filippiinit turismikohteena tarjoaa: *

In scale of 1-5, please evaluate the claims based in your own opinion. / Asteikolla 1-5, arvioi väittämiä oman mielipiteesi mukaan.

- 1 - Strongly disagree / Täysin eri mieltä
 2 - Disagree / Eri mieltä
 3 - Neither nor / Ei samaa eikä eri mieltä
 4 - Agree / samaa mieltä
 5 - Strongly Agree / Täysin samaa mieltä

	1	2	3	4	5
Good weather / Hyvä sää	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easily accessible / Helposti saatavilla	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverse accommodation / Monipuolinen majoitus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easy local transportation / Helppo paikallinen liikenne	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safe environment / Turvallinen ympäristö	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nice beaches / Kivoja rantoja	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Beautiful Nature / Kaunis luonto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historical places / Historiallisia paikkoja	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amazing festivals / Hienoja festivaaleja	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exotic wildlife / Eksoottinen villieläimet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Numerous water activities / Monia vesiaktiviteetteja	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor activities / Ulkoiluaktiviteetteja	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendly people / Ystävällisiä ihmisiä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good English communication / Hyvä englanninkielinen viestintä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gay friendly environment / LGBT-ystävällinen ympäristö	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delicious Food / Herkullista ruokaa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordable shopping / Edullista shoppailua	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordable holiday destination / Edullinen lomakohde	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. What concerns you in travelling to the Philippines? / Mitä huolia sinulla on liittyen Filippiineille matkustamiseen? *

Safety / Turvallisuus

- Hygiene / Hygienia
- Language barrier / Kielimuuri
- Low in finance / Alhainen Budjetti
- Natural disasters / Luonnonkatastrofit
- Local Transportation / Paikallinen liikenne
- Others, what? / Muut, mikä?

13. Would you like to travel to The Philippines? / Haluaisitko matkustaa Filippiineillä? *

- Yes / Kyllä
- Maybe / Ehkä
- No, why? / En, miksi?

Thank you for participating!

At the end of this survey, I will draw electronically 3 random participants.
The winners will get a free meal from our favorite Filipino food buffet - Ravintola Kainan in Iso Omena.
Winners will be contacted via mobile or email.

If you are willing to join the raffle, feel free to share your contact information below.

Note: Information given below is strictly use for the raffle purposes only.

14.

First name

Last name

Mobile

Email